



## Cast offs

When a bloodied weapon (hammer, axe, fist etc) is moved through the air, droplets of blood may be released behind the moving weapon and form a pattern. If the weapon should stop in mid-air, the droplets may be released and keep going in the same direction the weapon was moving before it was released. These droplets are known as cast offs.

Cast offs may give the following information:

- the direction the assailant's blow came from.
- whether the assailant was right or left handed.
- how many swings were made.
- how the weapon was swung.
- how and where the assailant stood.
- the position of the victim during the attack.



## Artery damage and blood loss

An artery is a blood vessel that carries blood under great pressure from the heart to all the parts of the body. Hence blood coming out of a damaged artery will spurt a long way, in big jets, with each heartbeat, resulting in the loss of a lot of blood in a very short time.

Artery splashes are directly affected by the impact and so can be used to locate the origin of that impact.

Estimating the amount of blood lost can help determine the cause of death. If no body is found, it may determine that the victim must have died or that a person having lost so much blood could not have defended himself or herself or caused the assault.



A large puddle of blood may identify the place where a body lay immediately after the crime while the blood still flowed.

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## Questions

1. Describe four things that a Crime Scene Examiner may be able to determine from the shape of some blood splashes at a crime scene?
2. Suggest how the splashes below may have occurred.

(a)



(b)



(c)



3. What is a cast off? Explain how they are formed and what information a Crime Scene Examiner may discover from these spots.
4. If, during a violent attack, a victim's major artery is damaged, discuss the affect of this on the victim, and describe what an investigator might find afterwards at such a crime scene.
5. Describe the steps a junior police officer should follow if suddenly called to a violent crime scene where there is a lot of blood splashed around, and one person is found sobbing over what appears to be a body. Explain the reason for each step that you suggest.