A DETECTIVE’S GUIDE TO SHOE PRINTS

Police officers search for shoeprints at crime scenes.

Shoeprints can show:
- Entry and exit points of criminal at crime scene
- Residues which can indicate where else they have been
- How many people were involved
- The type of shoe worn, which can link a suspect to a location
- Shoe size can help eliminate suspects
- Wear patterns can indicate whether the suspect has a limp and even how tall or heavy the person might be.

There are three types of commonly found footprints:
1) Visible—often as a result of walking through something and then leaving it behind as you walk for example dirt, paint or blood.
2) Three-dimensional—caused by walking through something soft and mouldable for example sand, mud or snow.
3) Invisible to Naked eye—the oil and grime from shoes which is invisible to the naked eye can sometimes be recovered on wooden or tiled floors using forensic techniques.