

Locard's Exchange Principle

Criminal Justice

Every contact leaves a trace, and why that does not work in reverse.

When two objects meet, material transfers in both directions. Whether it survives and is found is another matter.

Contact → transfer → persistence → recovery

Fabric brushes a wall

May, not must

Fibres may transfer

Trace found on a coat

Says nothing of when

Contact is possible

No trace recovered

Weak evidence either way

Contact still possible

THE COMMON MISTAKE

× **No trace found, so no contact**

✓ **Traces may not persist or be found**

Transfer, persistence and recovery can each fail, so absence of a trace is weak evidence that no contact occurred.

Educational reference. Locard's principle explains why traces exist; it says nothing about when or how a transfer happened.