

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 99-43

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE
REPLACES/AMENDS: None

DATE: July 30, 1999

EVIDENCE INSPECTION AND AUDIT PROCESS

I. PURPOSE.

To establish an inspection and audit process for the departmental property management function. The intent of the process shall be to ensure that policy and procedural directives are being followed, and that the integrity of the system is properly maintained.

II. DEFINITIONS.

Audit - An official examination and verification of records.

Evidence/Property Inspection - An examination of the facilities, inventory, procedures, and/or other elements of the department's evidence and property administrative system.

Inventory - To conduct an itemized list of property.

III. EVIDENCE/PROPERTY INSPECTIONS.

Inspections to determine compliance with department procedures governing the control of evidence and property will be regularly performed on a semi-annual basis, or at the direction of the Chief of Police.

A. Semi-Annual Inspections

Evidence officers assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division shall be responsible to inspect the various aspects of the department's evidence and property control system on a semi-annual basis. Areas of concern should be:

- 1). Evidence/property storage areas are clean and orderly.

- 2). Integrity of property is being maintained.
- 3). Department directives concerning property are being followed.
- 4). Property is protected from deterioration or damage due to environmental deficiencies.
- 5). Property control records are current and annotated correctly.
- 6). Evidence/property is being disposed of promptly.

Upon completion of each semi-annual inspection, the senior evidence officer shall submit the findings (in writing) to the supervisor assigned to CID. This report shall then be forwarded up the chain of command to the bureau commander, at which time it shall be filed and maintained for a period of three years (a time period identical to that established for line inspections).

In the event the report details deficiencies or recommends corrective action be taken, remedial steps shall be instituted at the bureau level whenever possible. Should a deficiency require action by the upper command staff of the department, remedial steps will be instituted in accordance with fiscal and management priorities.

B. Unannounced Inspections

The Chief of Police shall direct unannounced inspections of the property control function as necessary. These shall generally adhere to the guidelines established for staff inspections (Refer General Order 98-10). It should be noted however, that the individual tasked to perform the inspection shall have no connection to either the property management function, or the supervisory or command staff which controls same.

IV. EVIDENCE/PROPERTY INVENTORY.

An inventory of all evidence and property shall be conducted whenever one of the officers responsible for the property management function has been reassigned to another position, or leaves the department. The inventory shall be jointly conducted by the newly appointed property custodian and the current senior evidence officer (who shall serve as the designee of the Chief of Police). The purpose of such an inventory shall be to ensure that evidence records are current and properly annotated. This will generally not require an accounting of each piece of evidence/property, but involve a sufficient sampling of same to ensure that the property management system has been administered according to established procedures.

Should discrepancies be discovered, they shall be documented by the newly appointed evidence officer in a report (Inter-office Memorandum) directed through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. In such an instance the Chief of Police may direct:

- 1). Corrective action be initiated by the bureau commander.
- 2). A full-scale audit be conducted.
- 3). An internal affairs investigation be conducted.

However, prior to either of the latter two courses of action being initiated, the discrepancies which are noted shall generally be of a serious or repetitive nature.

V. ANNUAL AUDIT.

An audit of evidence/property held by the department shall be conducted on an annual basis. The supervisor or officer designated to conduct such audit will be appointed by the Chief of Police, and shall be independent of (not directly connected to), both the property control function and the supervisory and command officers who control the administration of same.

The audit shall consist of a random sampling of approximately five (5) percent of the existing property/evidence inventory, and will be focused toward ensuring that those policies and procedures pertinent to the property management function are being followed.

At the conclusion of the audit, the officer assigned to conduct same shall draft a report (Inter-Office Memorandum) detailing their findings, and submit same to the Chief of Police. After reviewing the report, the Chief of Police shall subsequently discuss the audit with the Commander of the Investigations and Support Bureau and corrective action (should any be required) shall be initiated at that time.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 84.1.6