

Property Technician Basic Certification



Texas Association of Property & Evidence Inventory Technicians

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T.A.P.E.I.T. DISCLAIMER

Welcome to the T.A.P.E.I.T. Conference.

T.A.P.E.I.T.'s goals and objectives are to educate, guide, and direct you in working in a Property Room. T.A.P.E.I.T. will provide you with what we believe to be the "BEST PRACTICES" when dealing with property and evidence. T.A.P.E.I.T. will provide you with information on how to process, package, store, maintain chain of custody, inventory, audit and proper ways to dispose of the property and evidence. What we teach is information that can be used as a guideline in creation of Policy and Procedures that work for your department. Each department is unique and must adapt to different courts, prosecutors and follow both Federal and State Laws.



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Objectives

- Organization and responsibilities
 - To introduce the organization of the property room and the responsibilities within
- Property Types
 - To identify the different property types
- Packaging and Storage
 - To understand the proper materials for packaging and the proper methods of storage



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Objectives

- Safety
 - To understand the potential hazards and proper handling
- Standard Operating Procedure
 - To define SOPs and their use
- Audits and Inventories
 - To identify the difference between Audits and Inventories



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Objectives

- Laws
 - To identify the laws and resources pertaining to property and evidence
- Disposition and Destruction
 - To define dispositions and destruction procedures
- Ethics
 - To impress the importance of ethics and high moral character



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Organization & Responsibilities

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Function of the Property Room

- Receive, preserve, account for and dispose of property
- Document existence and custody
- Limited authority
- Limited decisions

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Organizational Placement

- Administration or Support Services
- Separate from patrol & detectives
- Reduces potential or appearance of conflict of interest

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Chain of Command

The line of authority and responsibility along which orders are passed within your department.

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Responsibilities

- Preserve all incoming property
 - Contamination
 - Theft
 - Loss
- Maintain and update property documentation
 - Tracking information

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Responsibilities

- Ensure all releases and property dispositions are legal
- Prepare and forward property related forms
- Serve as liaison
- Maintain current knowledge of all laws

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Responsibilities

- Provide for maintenance of the storage facility
- Inventory Property
- Ensure the property room is safe
- Transport Evidence to Forensic and Crime labs
- Provide courtroom testimony

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Organization is a
BIG deal!

It's Our
Responsibility!



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- We must know where our property and evidence is located.

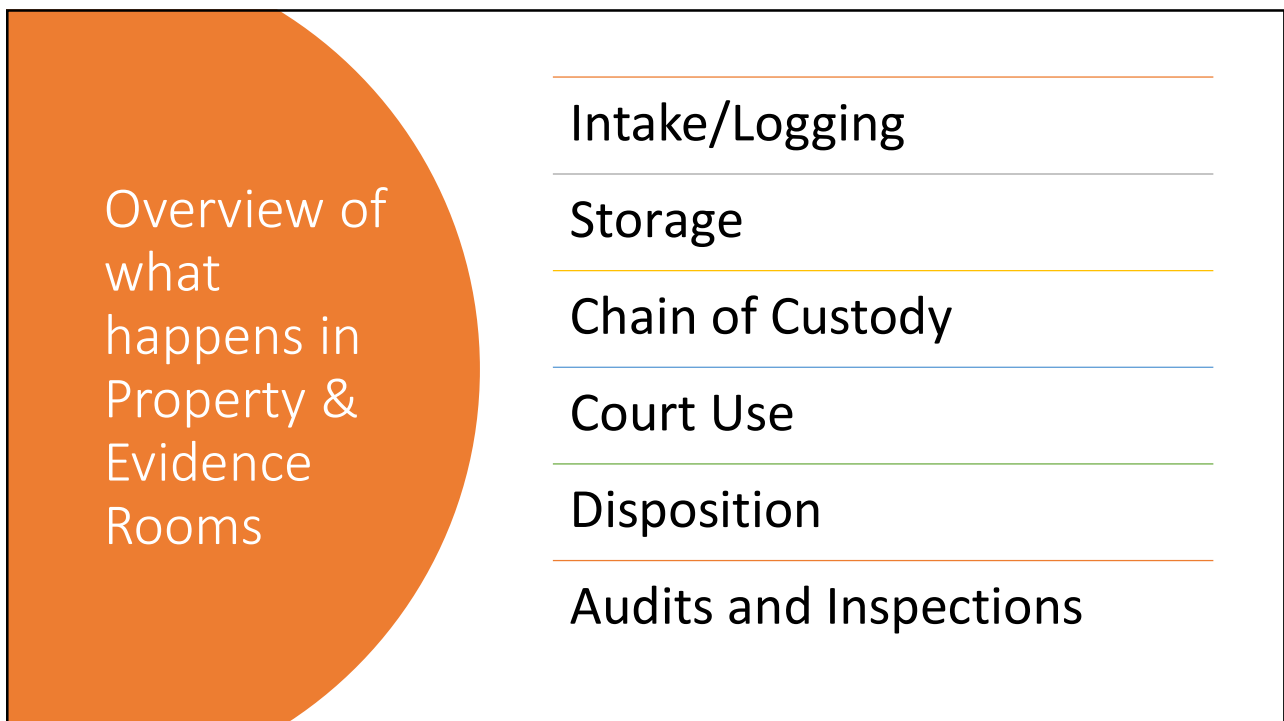
- Organization is KEY!



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Intake / Logging

Officers bring in items such as drugs, weapons, money, clothing, electronics, or personal belongings collected as evidence or property.

Each item is tagged, barcoded, or given a property number.

Staff carefully log details (who collected it, where, when, and why) into a chain-of-custody system.

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Storage

Items are stored in secure areas based on type (e.g., firearms in gun lockers, narcotics in a restricted area, currency in safes, biohazard).

The storage location has restricted entry.

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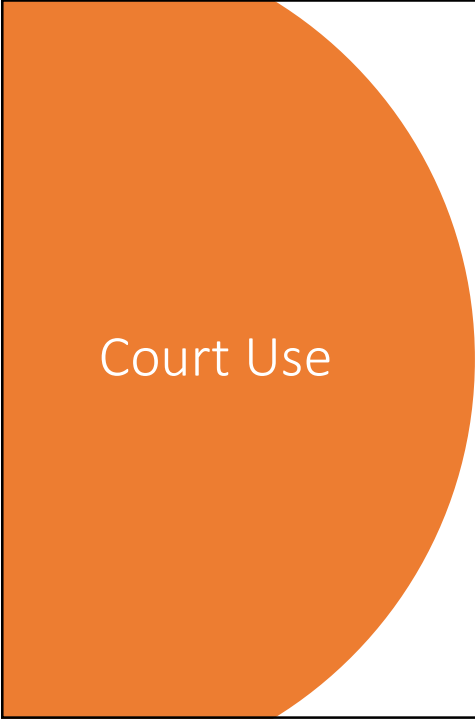


Chain of Custody

Maintaining a clear record of who handled the evidence is critical.

Whenever an officer, investigator, or forensic analyst checks out evidence, it's signed in and out so it can hold up in court.

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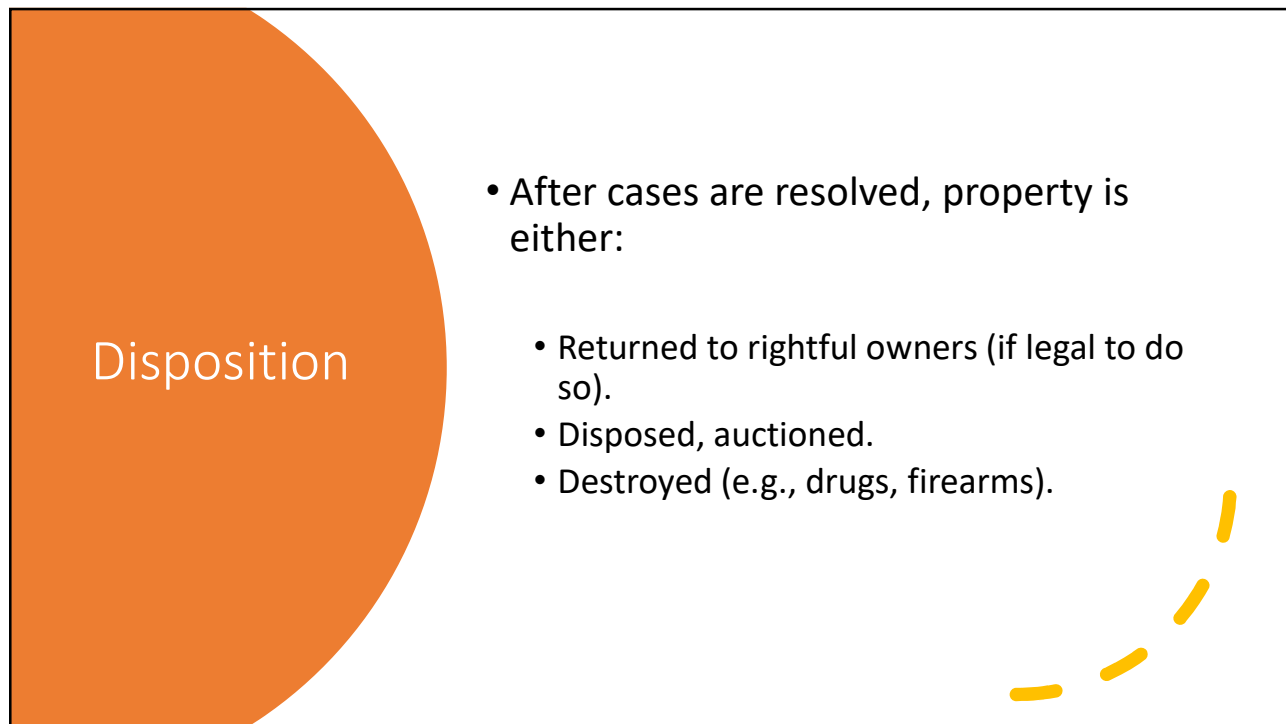


Court Use

Evidence is checked out when needed for trials.

The chain-of-custody documentation proves that the item presented in court is the same one collected.

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Disposition

- After cases are resolved, property is either:
 - Returned to rightful owners (if legal to do so).
 - Disposed, auctioned.
 - Destroyed (e.g., drugs, firearms).

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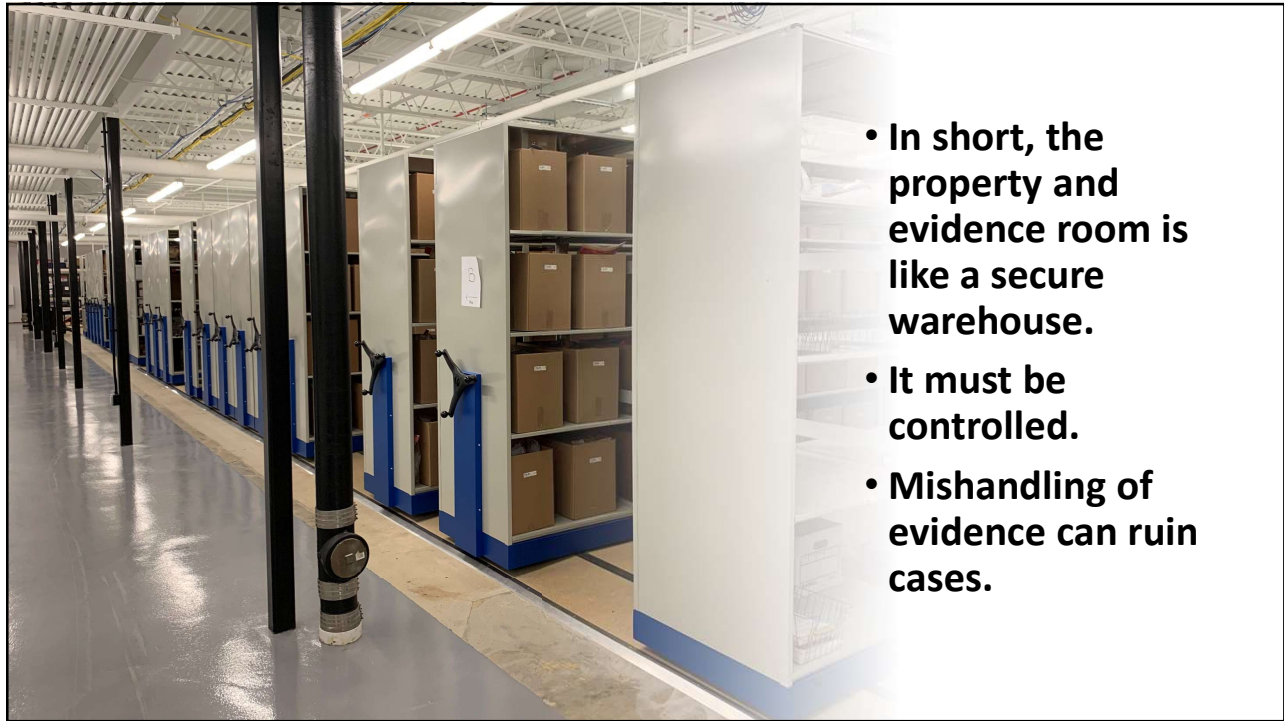


Audits & Inventories

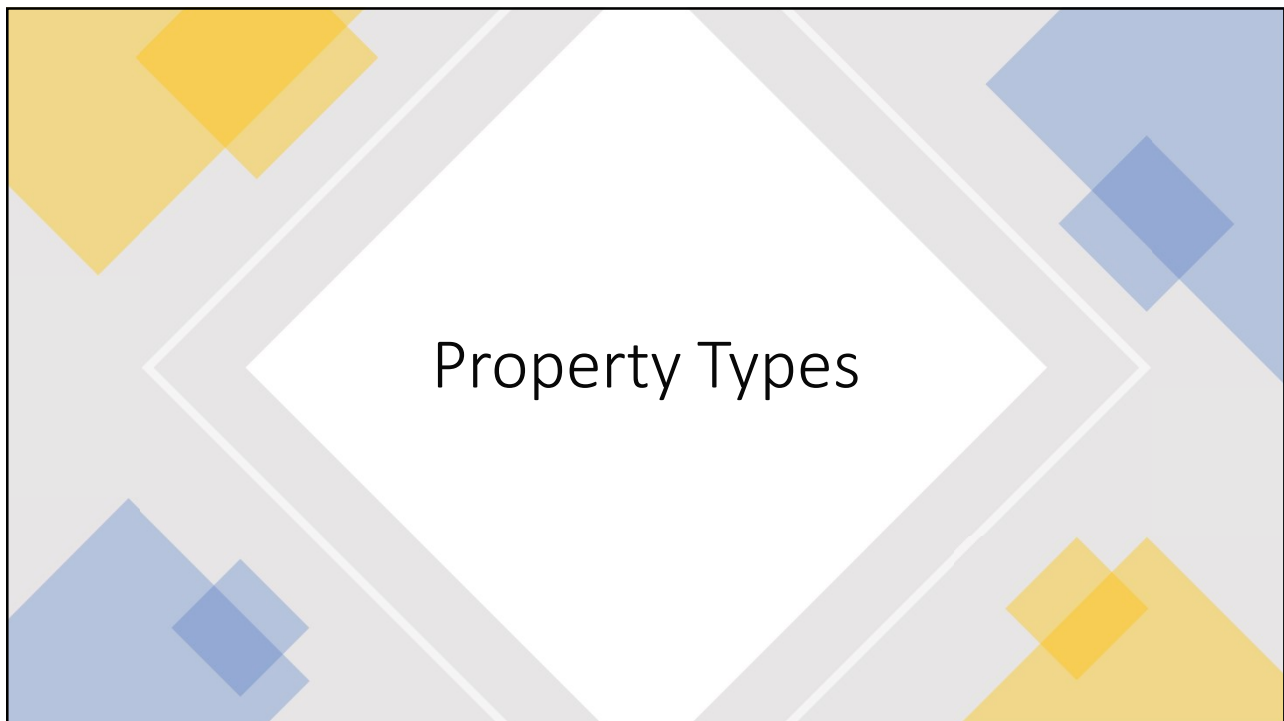
- Property rooms are regularly audited to ensure nothing is missing or tampered with.
- Mistakes here can lead to cases being thrown out of court
- (We will dig deeper into this later.)

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Property Classifications

Evidence

Found Property

Abandoned Property

Safekeeping

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Evidence

- “Physical evidence” means any tangible object, thing, or substance relating to a criminal action.
 - Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 38.35 (a) (5)

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Found Property

- Non-evidentiary property whose owner is unknown or who has not made themselves known
 - Hold for 30 days. CCP 18.17
 - No Finders/Keepers

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Found Property

- Non-evidentiary property whose owner is known
- Send Certified letter*
- **OR POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA***
- Hold for 90 days
- CCP 18.17

*mail a notice to the last known address of the owner of the [such] property by certified mail or place a one-time notice on the Internet website and social networking website of the law enforcement agency that seized the property.

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Abandoned Property

- Property, including property initially submitted as evidence but is no longer evidentiary, whose owner failed to claim the property after sufficient notification. CCP 18.17
- Unless prohibited by agency policy, items of abandoned property with no value may be destroyed without a court order.

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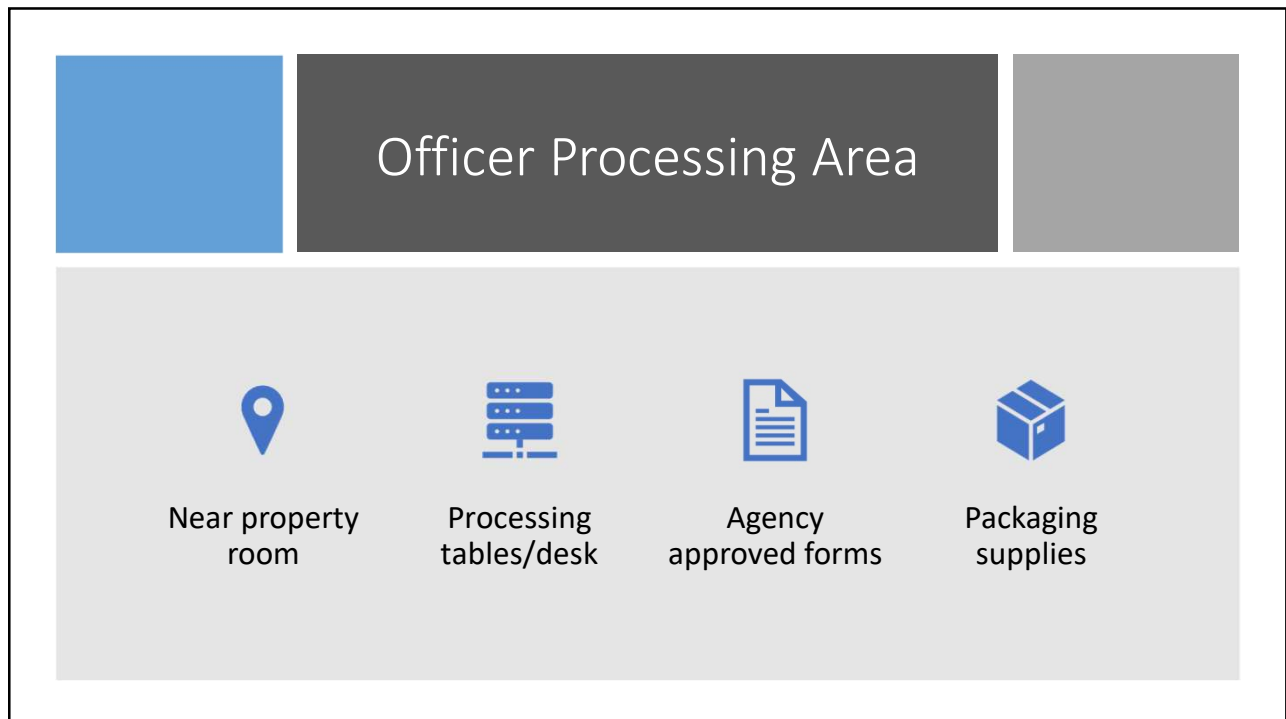
Safekeeping

- Non-evidentiary property in custody for temporary protection on behalf of the owner
- No legally stated time frame
- Departmental Procedure

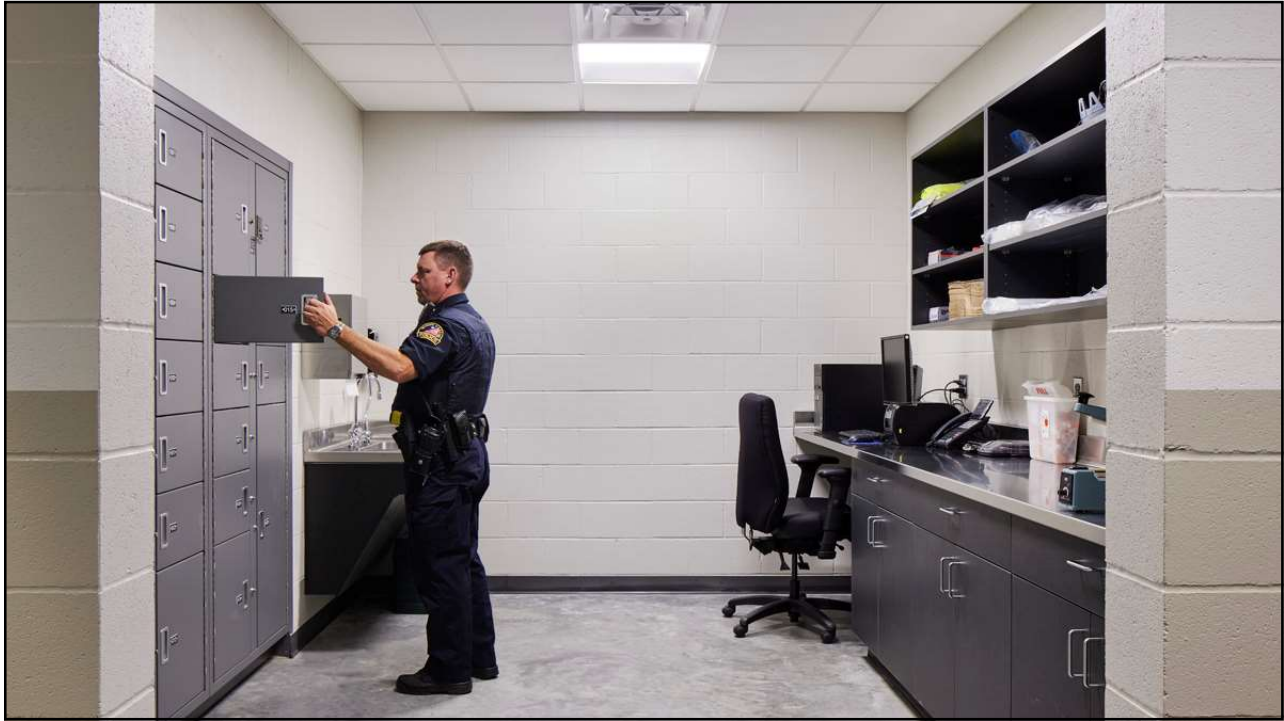
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Temporary Lockers

Accessible 24 hours

Types

- Pass-through
- Drying
- Refrigerated lockers

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Temporary Locker Examples

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Evidence Refrigerators



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Evidence Refrigerators- (on a budget-example)

- Locks on each refrigerator
- Maintain Chain of Custody

Example:

- Place evidence inside of the refrigerator.
- Lock the refrigerator.
- Place the key inside the evidence drop box.

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Packaging

- Guidelines
 - Written directives should be used and taught for the correct procedures of packaging and submitting items to the property room.
 - The directives should cover submissions of general evidence, drugs, large items, hazardous materials, money and weapons.

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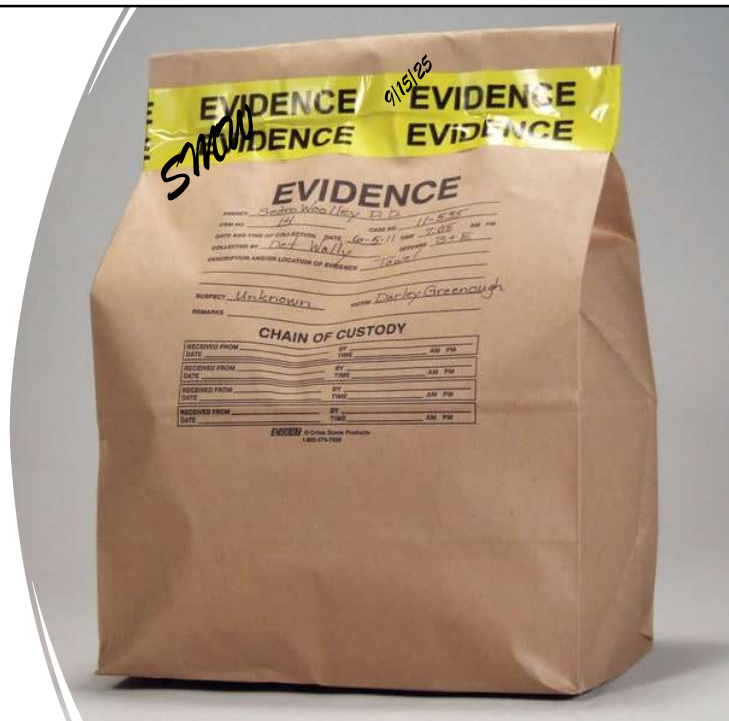
Packaging - Chain of Custody

- Definition
 - In evidence, the one who offers real evidence, such as narcotics in a trial of a drug case. Must account for the custody of the evidence from the moment in which it reaches his custody until the moment in which it is offered in evidence, and such evidence goes to weight not admissibility of evidence.
- Black's Law Dictionary
- Chain of custody starts at the time evidence is initially collected.

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Packaging – Chain of Custody

- Stickers
 - Applied to the bag or item
 - Signed each time the evidence changes possession or moves to a location outside of the evidence room
- Pre-printed bags
 - Usually have areas that allow for the tracking



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Packaging - Chain of Custody

- Forms
 - Usually associated with the specific items and are stored in the evidence room.
 - These forms do not leave the evidence room with the evidence.

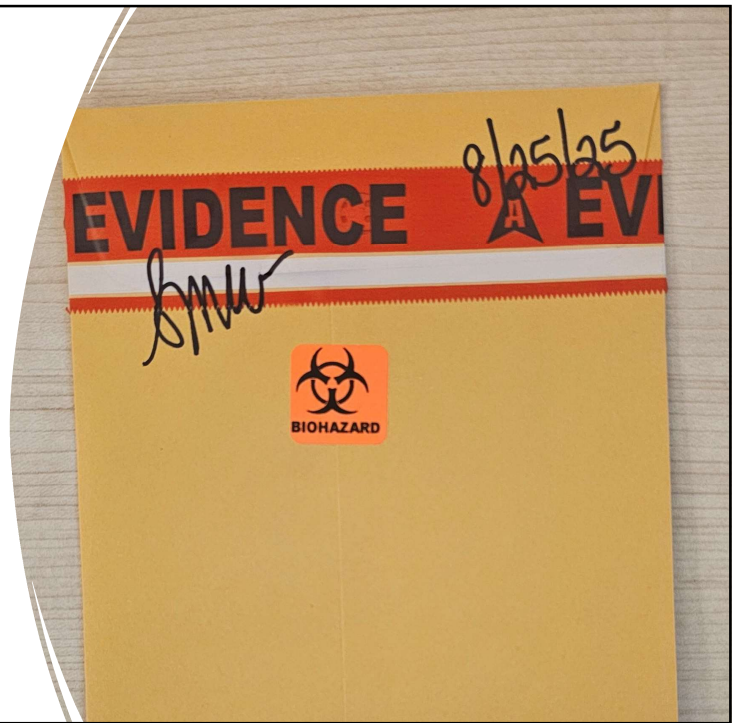
Description of Evidence		
Item #	Quantity	Description of Item (Model, Serial #, Condition, Marks, Scratches)

Chain of Custody				
Item #	Date/Time	Released by (Signature & ID#)	Received by (Signature & ID#)	Comments/Location

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Packaging – Chain of Custody

- Tamper proof evidence tape
 - On all packaging to also include:
 - Submitting officer's initials
 - Date sealed
 - Original seal
 - Do not break original seal
 - Open at new point of entry
 - Reseal with initials and date



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Sealed Packages



DO NOT BREAK THE
ORIGINAL SEAL



OPEN AT A NEW
POINT OF ENTRY



RESEAL WITH INITIALS
AND DATE OPENED



DOCUMENT WHY
OPENED

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Types of Packaging



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Paper Bag Storage

- Dried blood-stained items
- Evidence to be processed for prints
- Evidence that may contain DNA
- Digital Media
- Wet Marijuana until dry
- Any items that are wet should follow proper procedures to be dried down

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Types of Packaging Paper: Plain and Pre-Printed Bags



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Types of Packaging Paper: Envelopes & Roll



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Types of Packaging Paper—Cardboard Boxes



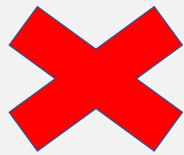
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Plastic Bag Storage

- Paper
- Jewelry
- Narcotics
- Dried Marijuana
- THC Cartridges
- Drug Paraphernalia

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Plastic Bag Storage



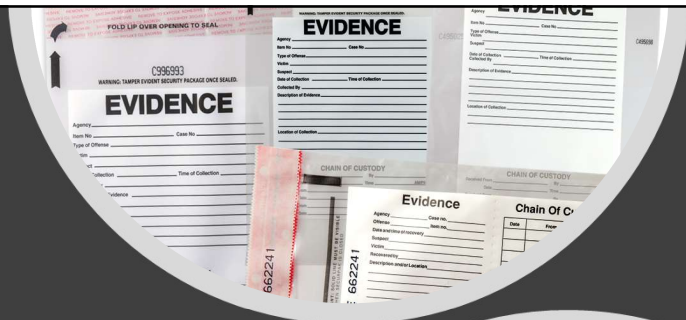
Do NOT store the following in Plastic:

- Biological Evidence
- Wet Items
- Electronics

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Types of Packaging

- Plastic:
 - Pre-printed
 - Plain
- Minimum of 4mil



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Types of Packaging

- Heat Sealing

- Bags
- Pouches
- Tubes



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Example of Property & Evidence Packaging Checklist (SOP)

1. Preparation

- ☐ Put on gloves (to prevent contamination and protect yourself).
- ☐ Gather correct packaging materials (paper bags, boxes, envelopes, plastic, Faraday bags, etc.).
- ☐ Prepare evidence/property labels and seals.

2. Item Handling

- ☐ Handle each item as little as possible.
- ☐ Keep items separate (never package multiple pieces in the same bag/box).
- ☐ Document condition of item before packaging (notes or photos).

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Example of Property & Evidence Packaging Checklist (SOP)

3. Packaging by Item Type

- ☐ Documents/Paper → Place in paper envelope or folder; avoid plastic.
- ☐ Biological Evidence → Air-dry first; package in paper bags/boxes only.
- ☐ Firearms → Make safe; secure in gun box with zip ties.
- ☐ Drugs/Narcotics → Seal in evidence envelope or heat-sealed plastic; mark as hazardous.
- ☐ Sharp Objects → Place in puncture-proof container or rigid box; label 'Sharp.'
- ☐ Electronics → Use Faraday or static-proof bag; pad if needed.
- ☐ Large Items → Tag directly; use tamper-evident seals if possible.

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Example of Property & Evidence Packaging Checklist (SOP)

4. Sealing

- ☐ Seal with tamper-evident tape or heat seal (depending on packaging).
- ☐ Sign and date across the seal.

5. Labeling

Each package must have:

- ☐ Case/Incident number
- ☐ Item number
- ☐ Date & time collected
- ☐ Location of collection
- ☐ Collector's name & ID/badge
- ☐ Description of item
- ☐ Hazard warning (if applicable)

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Example of Property & Evidence Packaging Checklist (SOP)

6. Documentation

- ☐ Complete evidence/property log or form.
- ☐ Record chain of custody entry (who collected, when, and where).
- ☐ Attach duplicate tag if system requires.

7. Storage

- ☐ Place in correct storage area:
 - Property storage
 - Biological evidence (dry/refrigerated/frozen)
 - Firearms locker
 - Narcotics safe
 - General evidence shelf
- ☐ Log transfer into storage system.
- ☐ Verify storage location matches records.

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Example of Property & Evidence Packaging Checklist (SOP)



Final Check

Package sealed, labeled, logged, and placed in secure storage with chain of custody intact.

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- Your SOP can include photographs.
- Idea: create a binder and leave near your property and evidence room as a guide.

- How do you train your officers on how to package evidence?
- Is that your job?
- If not, who does it?



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Test your
knowledge?

How should this
be packaged?



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Hammer

- 🧤 **Wear gloves** (change frequently to avoid contamination).
- 📷 **Document** the hammer (notes/photos) before packaging.
- 💧 If wet, **air-dry** in a secure, ventilated drying room (never plastic bag).
- 📦 Place on clean **absorbent paper** inside a cardboard evidence box or paper bag. Gun box works great!
- 🛡️ Use padding or secure with ties so it doesn't shift.
- ⚠️ Mark the box with "**BIOHAZARD**".
- 🔒 **Seal with tamper-evident tape** and sign/date across the seal.
- 🏷️ **Label** with case number, item number, date/time, location, collector ID, and description ("*Claw hammer with suspected blood*").
- 📁 **Log chain of custody** and transfer to the secure evidence storage area.

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Follow your Department's SOP's

- Do they need to be updated?
- Who has that responsibility?



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DNA Evidence

- Store in cool, dry area
- No sunlight exposure
- Refrigerate sexual assault kits biological samples
- Freeze Tissue samples

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Bio-Hazard

- Items should be stored in a container that will protect anyone handling it from accidental exposure.
- The package should be marked in a manner to indicate that it possibly contains bio-hazardous materials.
- Any wet items should be dried before packaging.
- Sharp items should be put in puncture proof packaging.

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Wet Items

- Dry them down
- Drying Cabinet
- Avoid cross contamination
- Butcher paper
- Paper bags



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How do drying cabinets work?

- Evidence drying cabinets work by using a fan to create a constant flow of filtered air to safely and efficiently dry forensic evidence, such as biological samples, while preventing cross-contamination.



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How do drying cabinets work? (continued)

- Air is pulled through the cabinet and over the evidence and then passed through a combination of HEPA and activated carbon filters to capture airborne particulates, pathogens, and odors before being returned or exhausted.
- Creates a controlled, safe environment for both the evidence and the personnel, maintaining the integrity of the evidence's chain of custody.

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What if we don't have a drying cabinet?

-  **Safe Alternatives to a Drying Cabinet**
- **Use a Clean, Secure Room (Temporary Drying Area)**
 - Designate a locked room with good airflow, separate from other evidence.
 - Place the item on **clean paper** or hang it on a drying rack (never use plastic or metal that could rust/contaminate).
 - Use fans for airflow if needed, but avoid direct blowing on evidence.
 - Cover the floor with butcher paper or clean sheets to collect any debris (trace evidence).

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What if we don't have a drying cabinet?

- **Paper Bag Method**

- Place damp evidence inside a **large, clean paper bag**.
- Roll the top loosely to allow some air circulation.
- Store in a secure, climate-controlled room until dry.
- This is slower but helps prevent contamination and cross-contact.

- **Evidence Drying Tents / DIY Setups**

- Some agencies use portable **mesh evidence tents** or garment racks with coverings.
- Items can be suspended with hangers or clips, with paper beneath to catch falling debris.

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What NOT to Do

- **✗** Don't use **plastic bags** for wet evidence → moisture causes mold and DNA degradation.
- **✗** Don't dry in **open, uncontrolled spaces** → risk of contamination.
- **✗** Don't apply **direct heat (like hair dryers or heaters)** → destroys DNA.

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Best Practice

Document	Document where and how you dried the evidence in your chain of custody / evidence log.
Repackage in	Once fully dry, repackage in clean paper bags or boxes. (May need to keep original packaging for trace items.)
Seal	Seal with tamper tape and label as usual.

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Currency

- “Rule of Two”
- Count by denomination
- Sealed in tamper proof bag
- Keep a log, either manual or automated
- Keep segregated from general storage
- Can be deposited into interest bearing account

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Jewelry/Valuables

- Valuables
 - Coin collections
 - Stamp collections
 - Precious metals
- Individually documented and packaged
- Enhanced security

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Firearms

- Firearms should have their serial numbers recorded and checked via TLETS for any wants or stolen status.
 - Firearms should be checked when they are submitted and when they are disposed.
- Firearms should be checked to make sure they are not loaded and made safe with either a nylon zip tie or barrel plug.

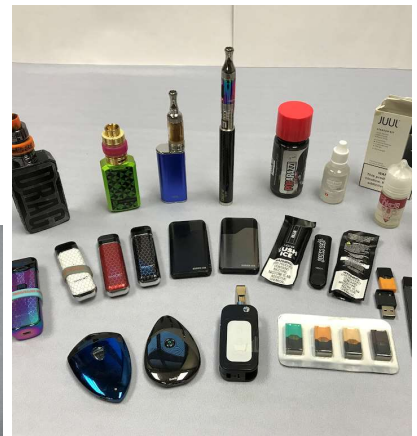
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Narcotics

- Narcotics should be submitted separately from paraphernalia and different types of narcotics should not be packaged together.
- Gloves should be worn if you have to directly handle narcotics or narcotic paraphernalia.
- Narcotics should be stored in a location that is separate from general evidence items and that is limited to the number of people who have access.

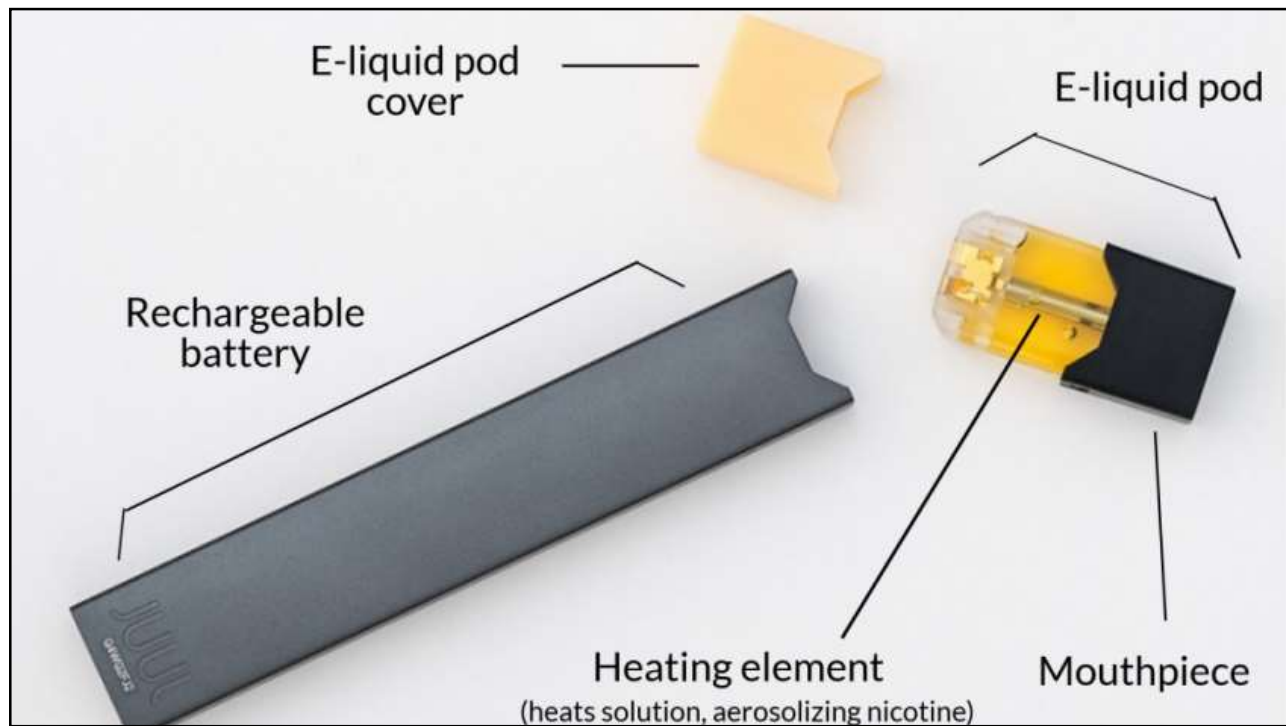


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THC Cartridges

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DPS Crime Laboratory Policy

4. All lithium-ion batteries must be removed from items submitted for seized drugs analysis (e.g., e-cigarettes) prior to submission.
 - a) *If unable to be removed, lithium batteries are treated as a flammable hazard, labeled, and isolated when encountered due to safety, explosion, and fire concerns.*



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Best Practice

- Remove lithium batteries PRIOR to submission to the property room.
- They are a fire hazard.



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How to dispose of lithium batteries?

- Lithium and lithium-ion (or Li-ion) batteries are commonly used to power computers, cellphones, digital cameras, watches, and other electronics. Lithium-ion batteries are often rechargeable, while regular lithium batteries are usually single-use.
- Unlike alkaline batteries, lithium batteries are reactive and contain hazardous materials.



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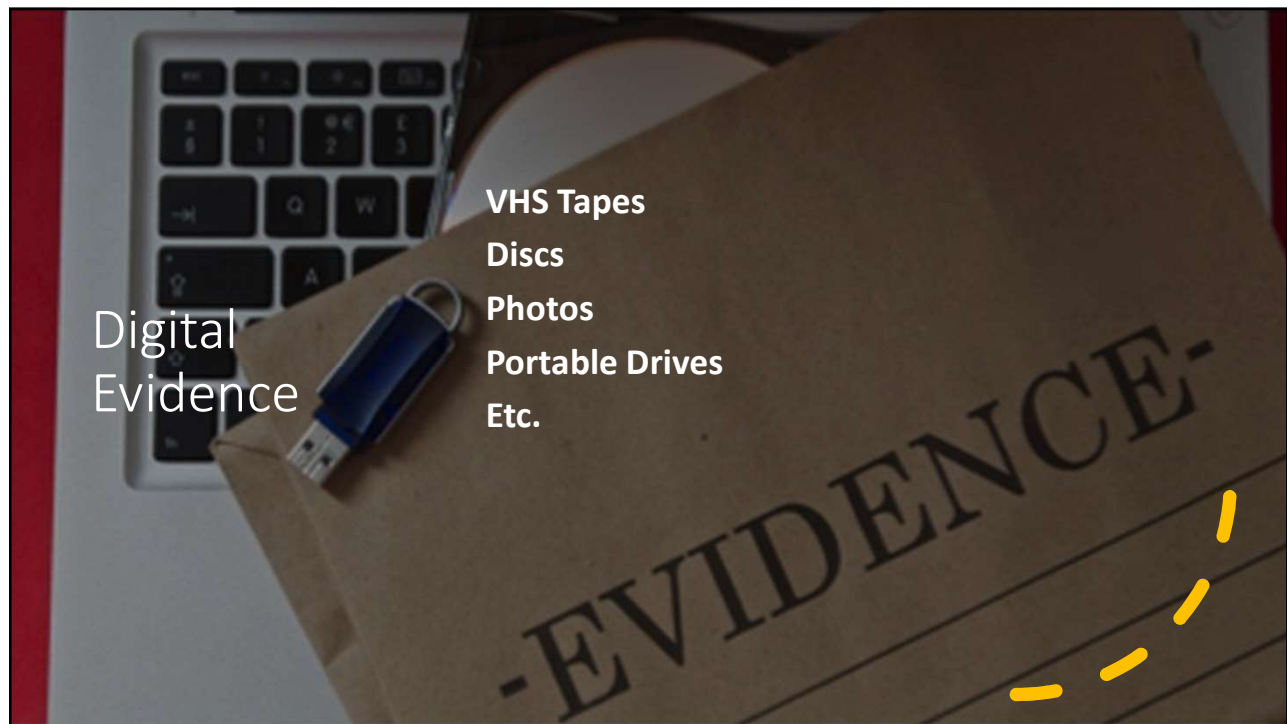


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Google where to dispose of Lithium Batteries in "YOUR AREA"

- Galveston-Specific Options
- **Galveston Recycle Center:**
 - Located at 702 61st Street, the center accepts rechargeable batteries and other items like appliances and car batteries. The center is open 24/7 for drop-offs, with staff available Monday-Sunday, 8:00 am - 4:45 pm.
- [Call2Recycle:](#)
 - You can find a Call2Recycle drop-off location at 702 65th Street for rechargeable battery recycling.
- **Retail Stores:**
 - Many major retailers, including Lowe's and Best Buy, partner with Call2Recycle to provide drop-off recycling for rechargeable batteries.
- [Earth911:](#)
 - Visit the Earth911 website for more information on electronics collection events and to find other certified recycling locations in your area.
- **Prepare Batteries:**
 - For safety, it's often recommended to tape the terminals of lithium batteries before recycling to prevent short circuits.
- **Check Acceptable Items**

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Media Type	Handling	Storage	Protection / Notes
VHS Tapes	Handle by edges; avoid touching tape surface; minimize playback	Store upright on shelves; cool, dry, low humidity; away from magnets	Avoid stacking; keep away from heat and sunlight
Compact Discs / DVDs	Handle by edges or center hole; avoid scratching; do not use adhesive labels	Store vertically in jewel cases or archival sleeves; cool, dry, dark place	Mark only on non-data side with soft-tip marker; avoid sunlight and heat

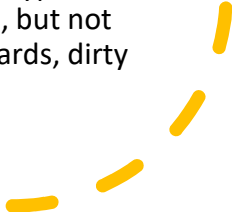
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Media Type	Handling	Storage	Protection / Notes
Photographs	Avoid bending or folding	Store flat in acid-free sleeves or envelopes; cool, dry, dark place	Avoid plastic sleeves unless archival quality; protect from UV exposure
Portable Devices / Cell Phones	Handle with gloves; airplane mode, avoid connecting or charging; note passcodes	Store in Faraday bags; secure, locked storage	Prevent remote wiping or signal interference; minimize handling; document locks/passwords
Other Digital Media (USBs, SD cards, external drives)	Handle by edges; avoid static discharge; do not format	Store in anti-static bags or containers; cool, dry, secure	Keep labeled; avoid magnetic fields; consider forensic imaging immediately

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Property
Classifications

- **Bio-Hazard**
 - **Biological**
 - Any property that contains any type of body fluids or excretions to include, but not limited to, blood, urine, feces and mucus
 - **Chemical**
 - Any property that contains any type of chemical agents
 - **Environmental**
 - Any property that contains any type of hazardous materials to include, but not limited to property from junkyards, dirty homes and construction sites



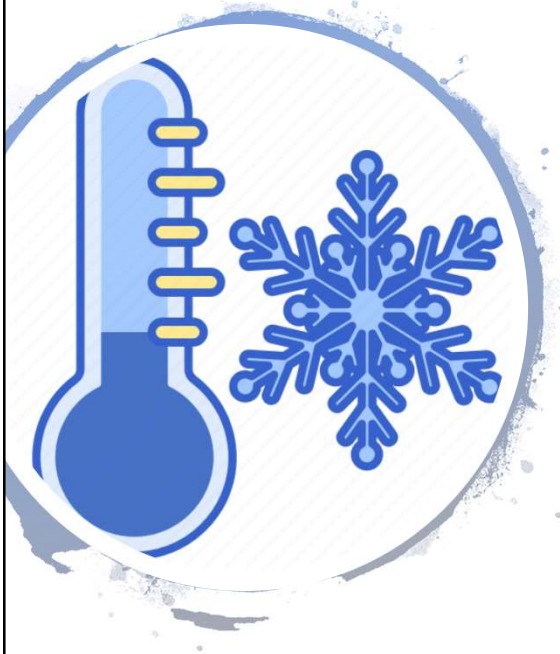
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Bulk

Items too large to fit in standard packaging can be tagged with either a paper or plastic tag or with a pre-printed sticker.

If the item has biological evidence on it or needs to be preserved for prints it can be packaged in paper.

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Cold Storage

- Items that need to be refrigerated should be handled as little as possible to help eliminate any damage that would result from changes of temperature.

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Flammable

- Although submission of flammable items should be avoided, they should be handled with extreme caution if they are submitted.
- Store away from all other evidence.
- Should be stored in a well-ventilated area away from any ignition points and away from any offices where people may be.

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Right of Refusal

- Written directives giving the property officer the authority to refuse acceptance of any item of property submitted in an unsafe, incomplete or otherwise improper manner

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Right of Refusal (Example)

- Property and Evidence Room personnel shall have the “Right of Refusal” of any item of property/evidence not properly packaged, tagged, sealed or marked by the submitting employee.
- When exercising the “Right of Refusal”, Property and Evidence Room personnel shall leave the property/evidence in question secured in the Temporary Evidence Locker used to submit the property/evidence to the Property and Evidence Room Unit. Any property/evidence improperly packaged, tagged, sealed, marked or found to be missing, will be reported immediately to the submitting employee’s supervisor.

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Reminder to Officers Submitting Evidence Right of Refusal

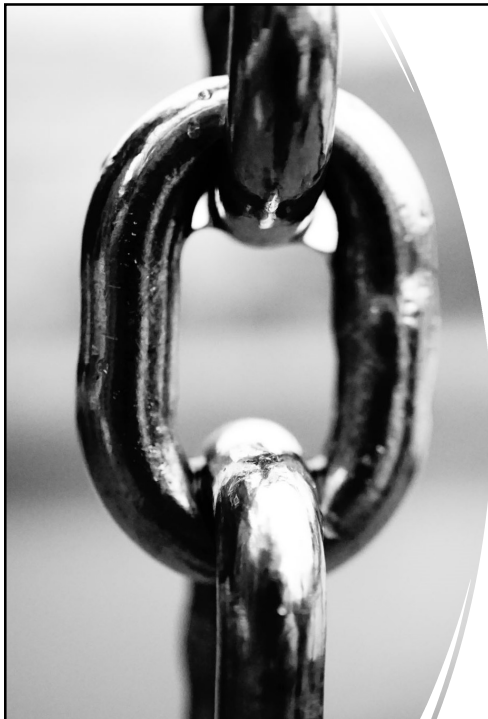
- Before submitting **any** property or evidence, ensure that it is:
- ☒ Properly **packaged**
- ☒ Properly **tagged**
- ☒ Properly **sealed**
- ☒ Properly **marked**
- Evidence Room personnel may **refuse** any item not meeting the above standards.
- Refused items will remain in the **Temporary Evidence Locker** until corrected.

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Reminder to Officers Submitting Evidence Right of Refusal

- Any deficiencies (improper packaging, missing tags/seals, unmarked items, or missing property) will be **immediately reported** to the submitting employee's **supervisor**.
- **Your Responsibility**
 - Submitting employees are responsible for proper packaging and documentation.
 - Supervisors will be notified of any submission deficiencies.
-  **Proper submission protects chain of custody and ensures evidence integrity.**

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What happens when
Chain of Custody is not
followed?

-
- If the chain of custody is broken, **evidence may be suppressed or deemed inadmissible**
 - Cases dismissed
 - Possible guilty subjects are set free

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Missing Evidence; Case Dismissed

- **Corpus Christi gynecologist accused of sexually assaulting his patients set to appear in court**
- Facing 14 charges of Sexual Assault
- He was arrested in December 2019 after several women came forward stating they had been assaulted
- “a box or two of evidence has been missing. No one knows exactly what is missing.”
- Corpus Christi police detective testified all evidence was delivered to DA’s Office and that office “lost the evidence”

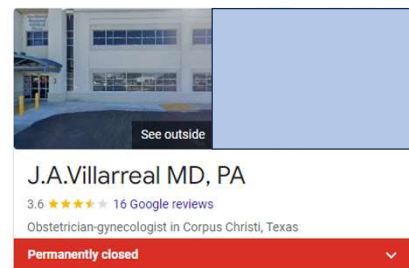
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And it continues...

OBGYN physician sexual assault case headed back to court

- Juan Villarreal had been dismissed after it was discovered the Nueces County District Attorney's Office had misplaced files related to the case.
- In a memorandum opinion from the Thirteenth Court of Appeals, the court found the decision to dismiss this case with prejudice was made in error.
- In that opinion, the court found that dismissal based on the loss of this evidence failed to demonstrate that the Nueces County DA's Office had lost or destroyed the evidence in bad faith.

May 20, 2024



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What Constitutes a Break in the Chain?

- **Discrepancies in Documentation:**

- Gaps in the record, such as missing signatures, incorrect timestamps, or unclear storage methods, create a weak chain.

- **Lack of Proof of Tampering:**

- If law enforcement cannot prove that the evidence was secure and that no unauthorized person had access to it, it can be considered a broken chain.

- **Improper Handling or Storage:**

- Any failure to follow protocols for sealing, storing, or transferring evidence can lead to contamination or loss, breaking the chain.

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Consequences of a Broken Chain

- **Evidence Inadmissibility:**

- A broken chain of custody can result in evidence being excluded from trial, preventing the jury from considering it.

- **Reasonable Doubt:**

- Gaps in the chain can plant a seed of doubt in the minds of jurors, weakening the prosecution's case and potentially benefiting the defendant.

- **Impact on Justice:**

- Maintaining a clear chain of custody is crucial for ensuring justice by preventing wrongful convictions and ensuring that only reliable evidence is presented to the court

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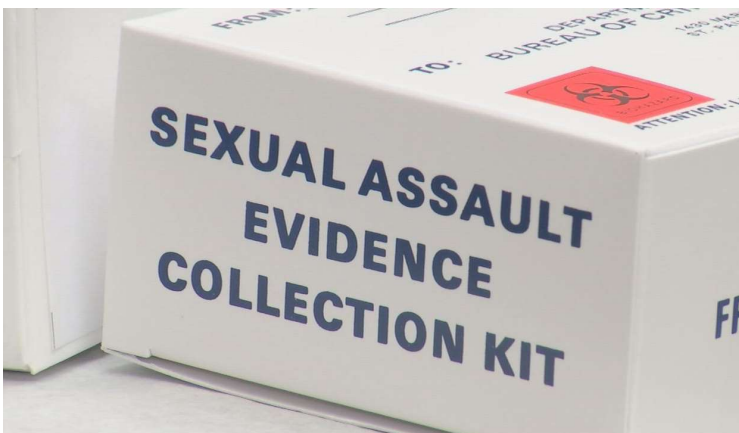
Bottom Line

- The chain of custody is the most critical process of evidence documentation.
- It is a must to assure the court of law that the evidence is authentic, i.e., it is the same evidence seized at the crime scene.



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Sexual Assault Kits



- Keep Separate
- Never Combine Items
- No Sunlight
- DPS Track-Kit
- 30 days to submit to the lab

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103

No one knew number of kits nationwide that had not been submitted for testing.

Most kits that had not been tested were in police custody, not in crime labs.

One first step to knowing the number and nature of unsubmitted kits is for local agencies to conduct audits.

104

Even if the police have a suspect, testing a kit can be useful for several reasons.

In most sexual assault cases, the victim knows the perpetrator, which may be one reason police might not have sent the kit to the lab — they do not need to confirm the identity of the suspect.

But DNA collected in cases with known suspects and entered into the national DNA database could link suspects to other crimes, including other sexual assaults.

105

Why

The Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking Program was created by the Crime Laboratory Service after the 85th Texas Legislature passed [House Bill 281](#), which added Section 420.034 to the Texas Government Code

Requiring DPS to develop and implement a statewide electronic tracking system for evidence collected in cases involving sexual assault or other sex offenses.

Texas Government Code 420.034 (h) requires the Department to publish the "Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report" by December 1st of each year.

106

Texas Government Code 420.034 (h) requires the Department to publish the "Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report" by December 1st of each year.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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NELDA L. BLAIR
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STEVE H. STODGHILL
DALE WAINWRIGHT

Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report

December 1, 2023

Texas Government Code 420.034 (h) requires the Department to publish the "Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report" by December 1st of each year. The report will use Track-Kit data to identify the number of kits that have not yet been submitted for laboratory analysis or for which laboratory analysis has not yet been completed. **Track-Kit only tracks evidence kits collected on or after September 1, 2019.**

The information below represents data available in Track-Kit.

September 1, 2019 - November 27, 2023	
Total Number of Kits	42,561
Unsubmitted Kits Within Statutory Time Frame	358
Unsubmitted Kits Past Due to Lab	293
Total Number of Unsubmitted Kits	651
Unanalyzed Kits Within Statutory Time Frame	1,919
Unanalyzed Kits Over 90 Days	2,011
Total Number of Unanalyzed Kits	3,930

Of the 2,011 kits which have been submitted and are beyond 90 days, 0 are in DPS inventory.

107

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Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report

November 30, 2024

Texas Government Code 420.034 (h) requires the Department to publish the "Statewide Electronic Tracking System Report" by December 1st of each year. The report will use Track-Kit data to identify the number of kits that have not yet been submitted for laboratory analysis or for which laboratory analysis has not yet been completed. **Track-Kit only tracks evidence kits collected on or after September 1, 2019.**

The information below represents data available in Track-Kit.

September 1, 2019 - November 25, 2024	
Total Number of Kits	53,208
Unsubmitted Kits Within Statutory Time Frame	280
Unsubmitted Kits Past Due to Lab	277
Total Number of Unsubmitted Kits	557
Unanalyzed Kits Within Statutory Time Frame	2,056
Unanalyzed Kits Over 90 Days	889
Total Number of Unanalyzed Kits	2,945

Of the 889 kits which have been submitted and are beyond 90 days, 138 are in DPS inventory.

108

- At least 37 states and Washington, D.C., have established or are committed to establishing sexual assault kit tracking systems, which allow survivors to monitor the status of their kits.



109

Michigan's New Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Tracking System

This site tracks sexual assault kits issued by the State of Michigan.

Authorizing caption:
Michigan's new Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Tracking System is a secure, online database that allows law enforcement agencies to track the status of their kits. The system is designed to be user-friendly and accessible to all law enforcement agencies in the state.

Instructions:
1. Log in to the system using your agency's credentials.
2. Enter the kit number and the date of the assault.
3. Select the kit's status (e.g., 'Not Tested', 'Tested', 'Not Found').
4. Click 'Save' to update the system.

Tracking Checklist
STEP 1: ENTER YOUR SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT NUMBER
STEP 2: ENTER YOUR ASSAULT DATE
STEP 3: SELECT YOUR KIT STATUS
STEP 4: CLICK SUBMIT

SAKI
Sexual Assault Kit Initiative

Courtesy: STACS DNA

RAPE KIT TRACKING STARTED IN WEST MICHIGAN

"Testing sexual assault kits is essential to public safety because it allows us to hold offenders accountable and secure justice for victims. Launching this statewide tracking system and implementing this grant are important steps in our work to give victims of sexual assault the justice they deserve and prevent future sexual assaults."

Josh Stein
Michigan Governor

Arkansas State Crime Laboratory

SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE

WA SAK Tracking System Statewide Training Schedule

Tacoma Area	Marysville Area	Olympia Area	Vancouver Area	Spokane Area	Kennewick Area	Seattle Area
☐ Pierce ☐ Thurston ☐ Kitsap ☐ Mason ☐ Snohomish ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom	☐ Grays Harbor ☐ Lewis & Clark ☐ Mason ☐ Pacific ☐ Skagit ☐ Whatcom

Planned Statewide Implementation Complete: 10/2018
Statewide Refresher Trainings: 11/2018

110



- The bill requires the system to track the status and location of each item of evidence through various stages of the criminal justice process, allow entities involved in the handling of the evidence to update and track the status and location of evidence, and allow survivors to anonymously track or receive updates on the status of evidence.
- Participation in the tracking system is **required by any entity that collects evidence of sexual assaults or other sex offenses or investigates or prosecutes such offenses.** HB 281 requires DPS to implement the tracking system by September 1, 2019.

111

- Track-Kit is a secure, web-based SAK tracking system that is easily accessible to all users state-wide.

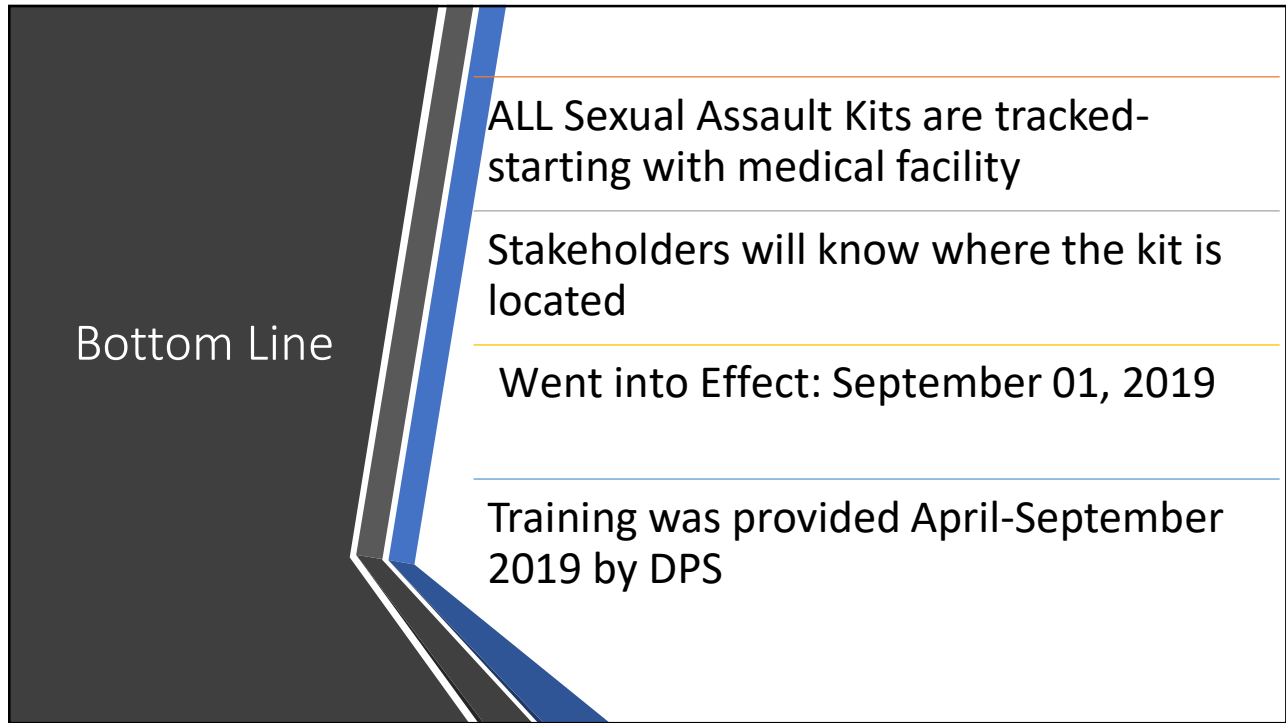
- Each user has their own secure portal :

- medical facility
- law enforcement agency
- Laboratory
- outsourcing/private laboratory
- Prosecutor
- compliance oversight team
- policy (admin) center
- kit distributor
- survivor



- Track-Kit provides start-to-finish sexual assault kit and inventory tracking to deliver accountability, transparency and information-sharing among all stakeholders.

112

A graphic with a dark grey background on the left and a white background on the right. The text 'Bottom Line' is in white on the dark grey background. The right side has three horizontal lines (orange, yellow, blue) separating four text items.

Bottom Line

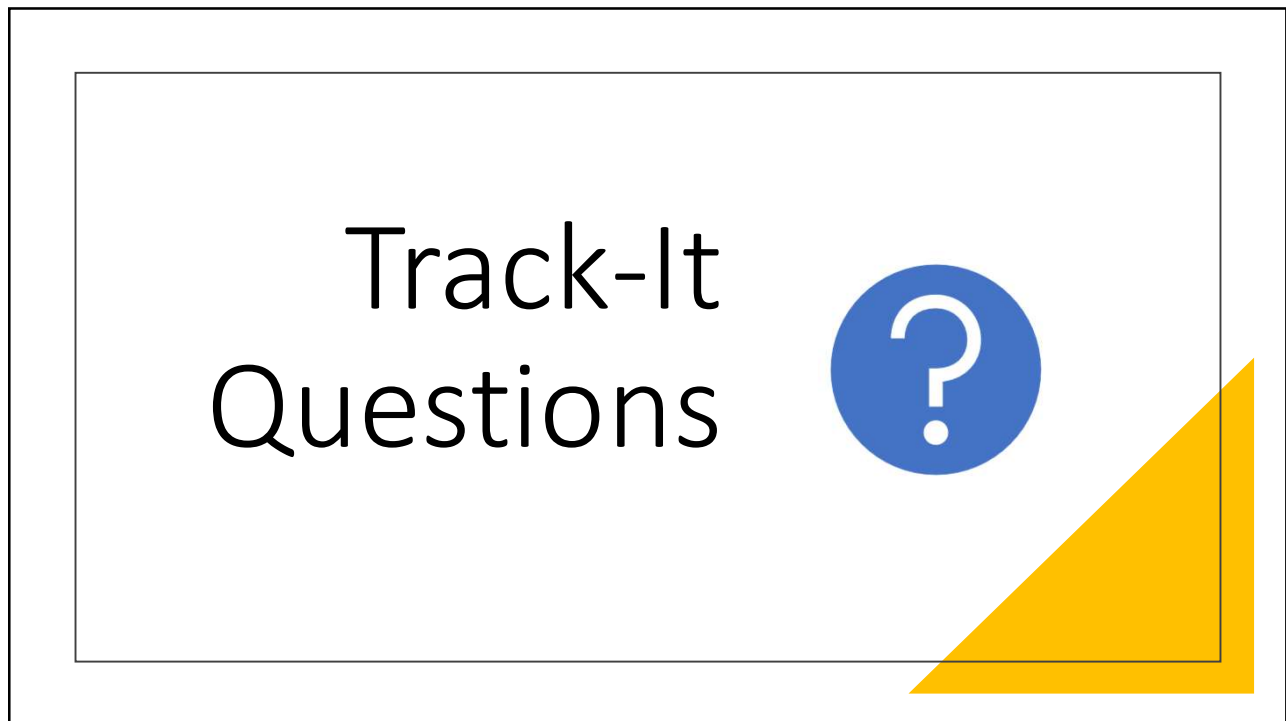
ALL Sexual Assault Kits are tracked-
starting with medical facility

Stakeholders will know where the kit is
located

Went into Effect: September 01, 2019

Training was provided April-September
2019 by DPS

113

A graphic with a white background. The text 'Track-It Questions' is in large black font. To the right is a blue circle with a white question mark. A yellow triangle is in the bottom right corner.

Track-It
Questions



114



115



116



117



Property & Evidence Room

- Organized
- Be able to locate items

118



119



120



121

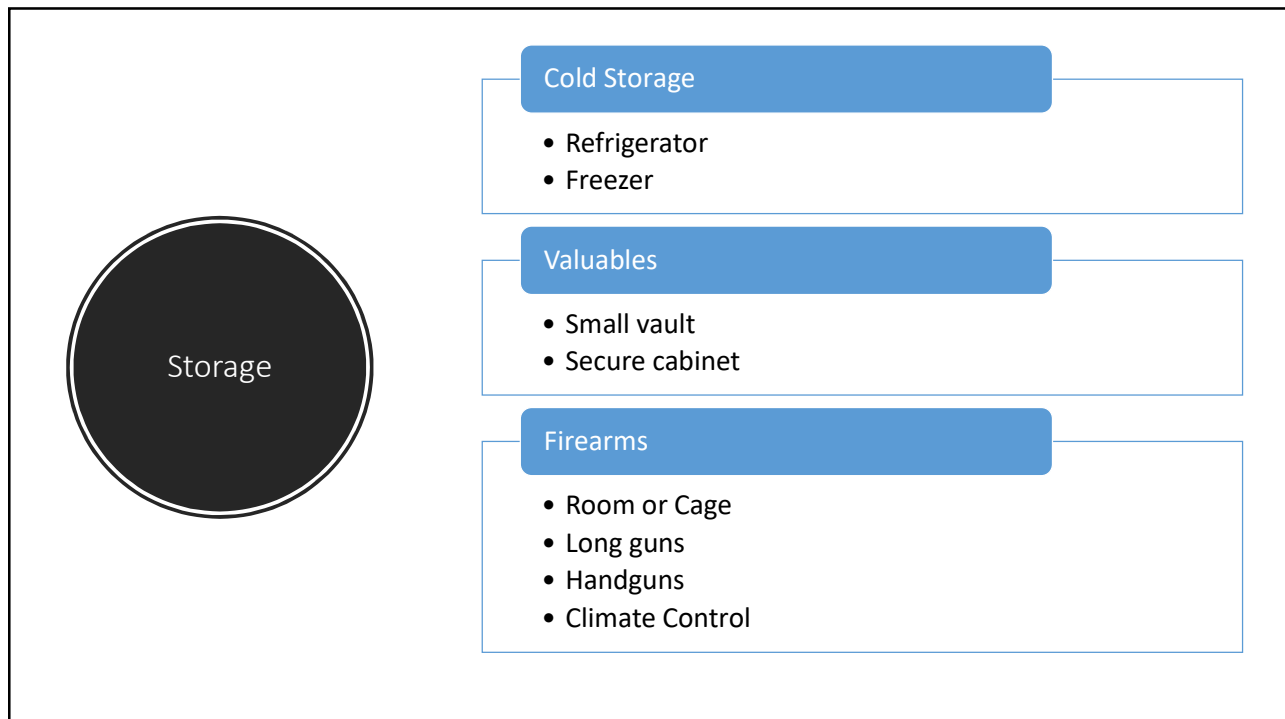


Firearm Storage

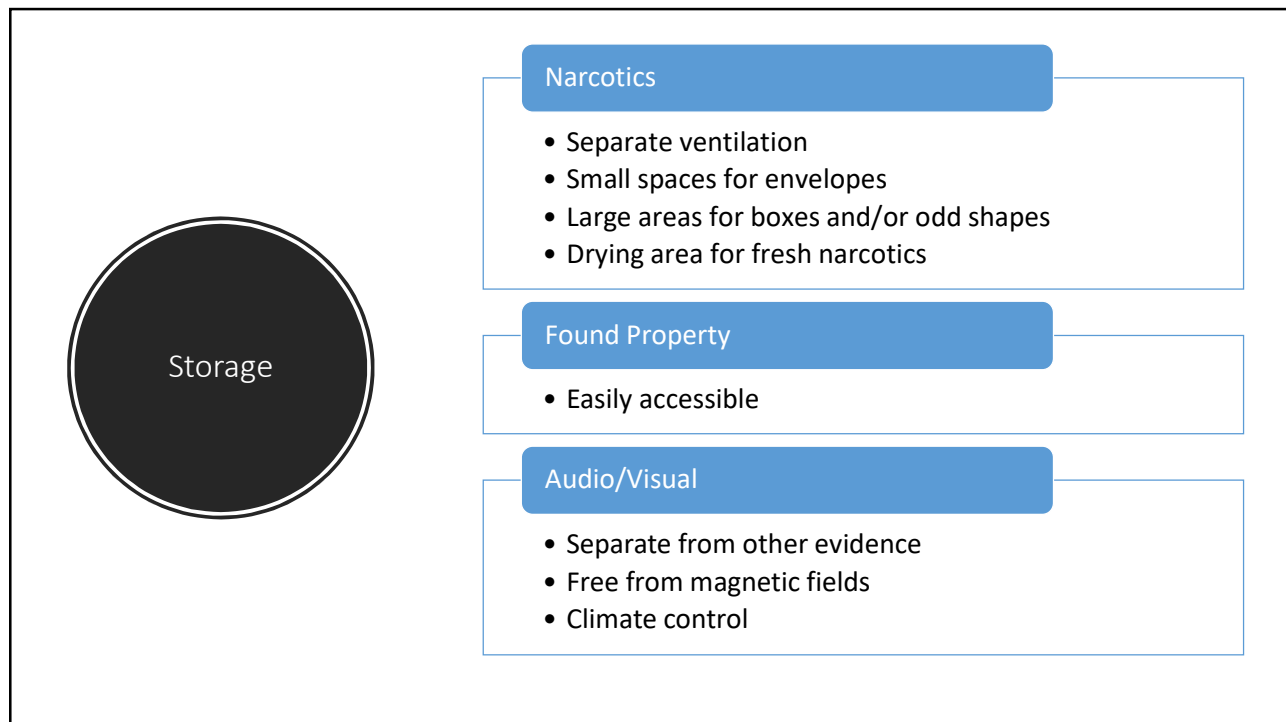
122



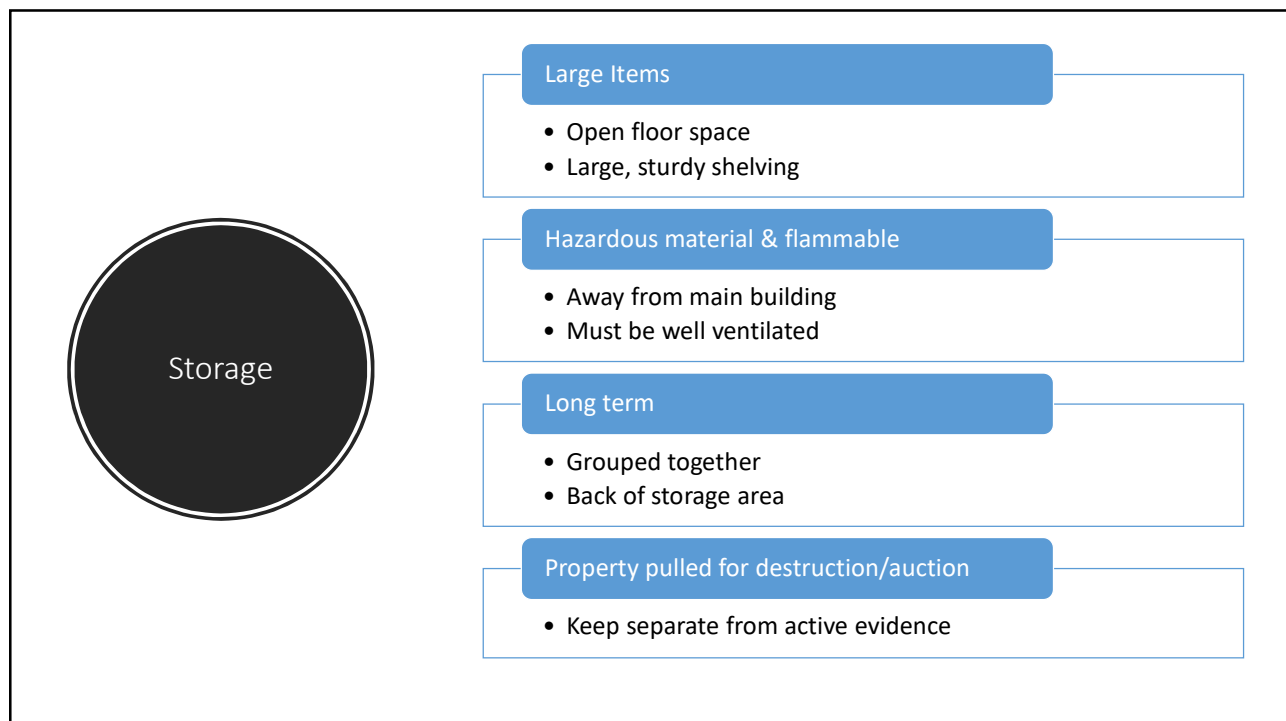
123



124



125



126



127



128

Personal Protection

There are many types of personal safety equipment that can be used. Most common among these are good latex or nitrile gloves.

Respirators are recommended for any item that tends to shed particulate matter.

Eye protection should be used when there is a likelihood of foreign items getting in your eyes.

129



The diagram shows a circular air purification unit. Inside the circle, a vertical black line represents a filter. To the left of the filter, several horizontal dotted lines represent incoming air. To the right of the filter, three curved arrows point to the right, representing the outgoing purified air. The entire unit is depicted with a blue and white splatter effect around its perimeter.

Air Purification

- Needs HEPA and Carbon filter
- Must clean the air

130

Security

Only authorized personnel

Keys

- Only property room personnel
- Division commander

Non-Business Hours

- Key sealed in envelope/access log/written record
- Written log of people entering the property room

131

Security

Only authorized personnel

Keys

- Only property room personnel
- Division commander

Non-Business Hours

- Key sealed in envelope/access log/written record
- Written log of people entering the property room



Security

- Locks
 - Interchangeable core locks
 - Change with personnel
 - Cardkeys with PIN that records

132

Security

- Alarms
 - Intrusion and duress alarms
 - Test alarms monthly
 - Additional on secondary or oversized
 - Monitored in a 24/7 facility

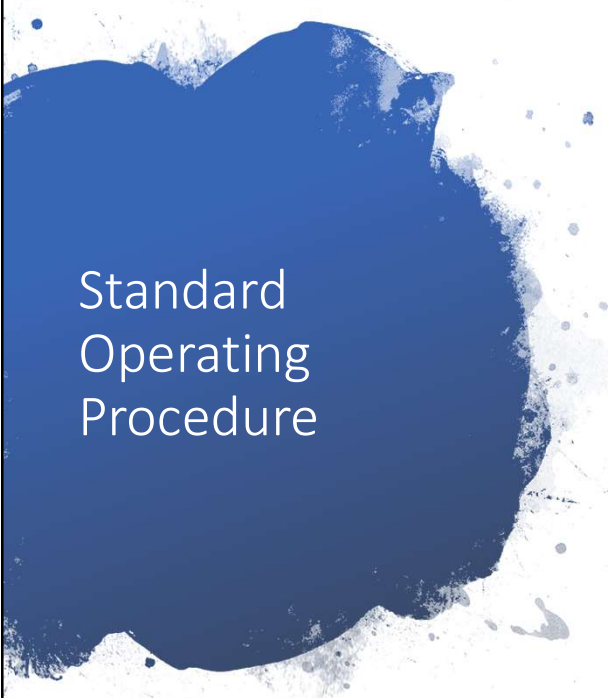


133

SOP!

Standard Operating Procedures

134

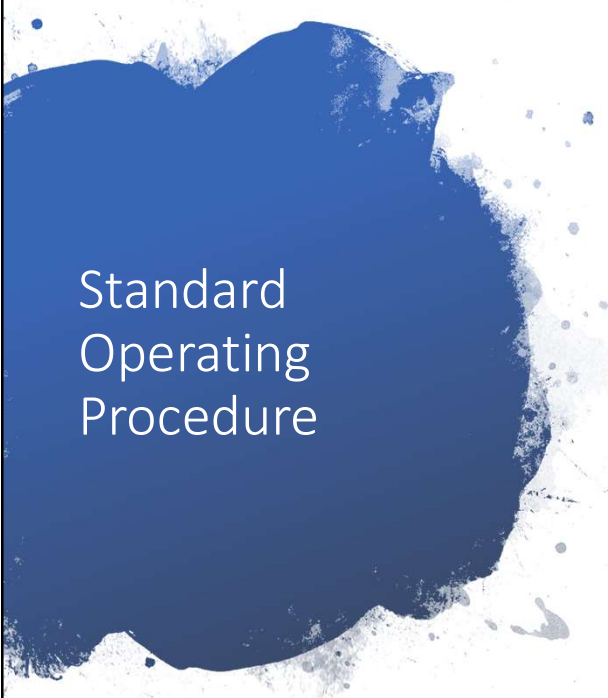


Standard
Operating
Procedure

A written directive
which specifies how
Agency activities are
carried out.

-Texas Police Chiefs Association,
Best Practices

135



Standard
Operating
Procedure

- **Who should write, update:**
 - Typically written by a unit member and based on unit experience and local conditions
 - Normally approved by the unit's commander
 - Should give the property person the "Right of Refusal"

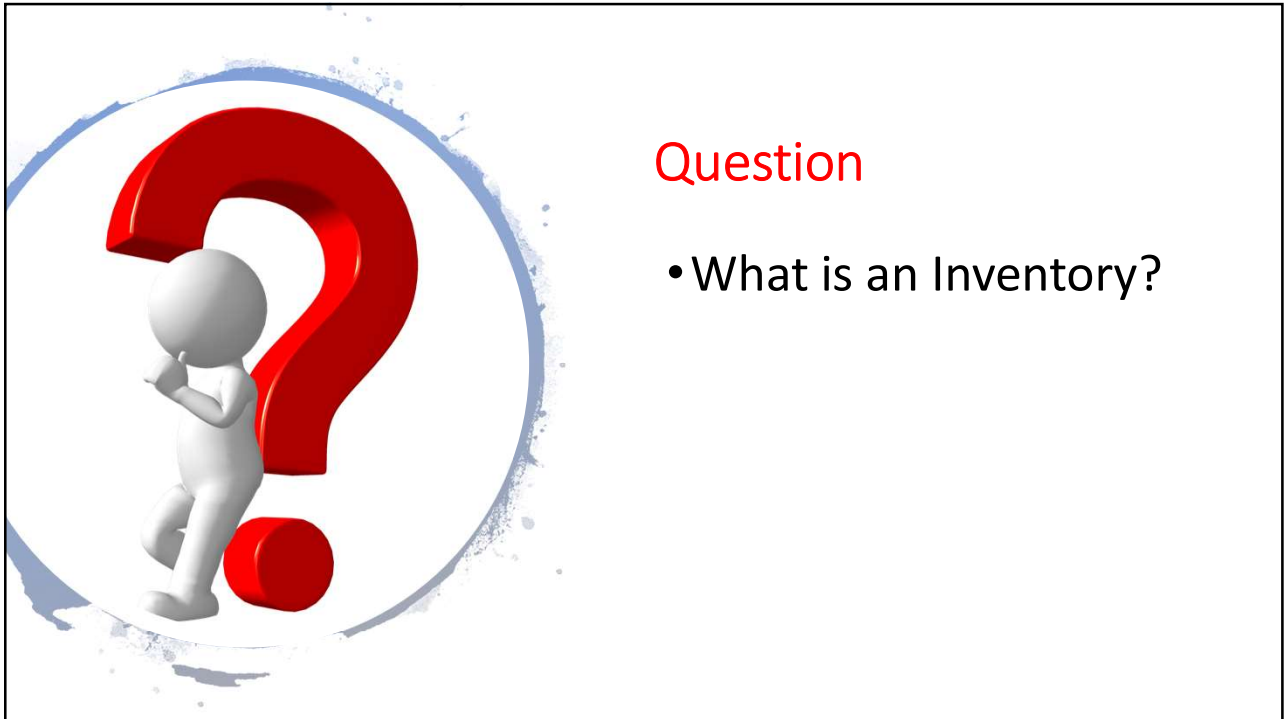
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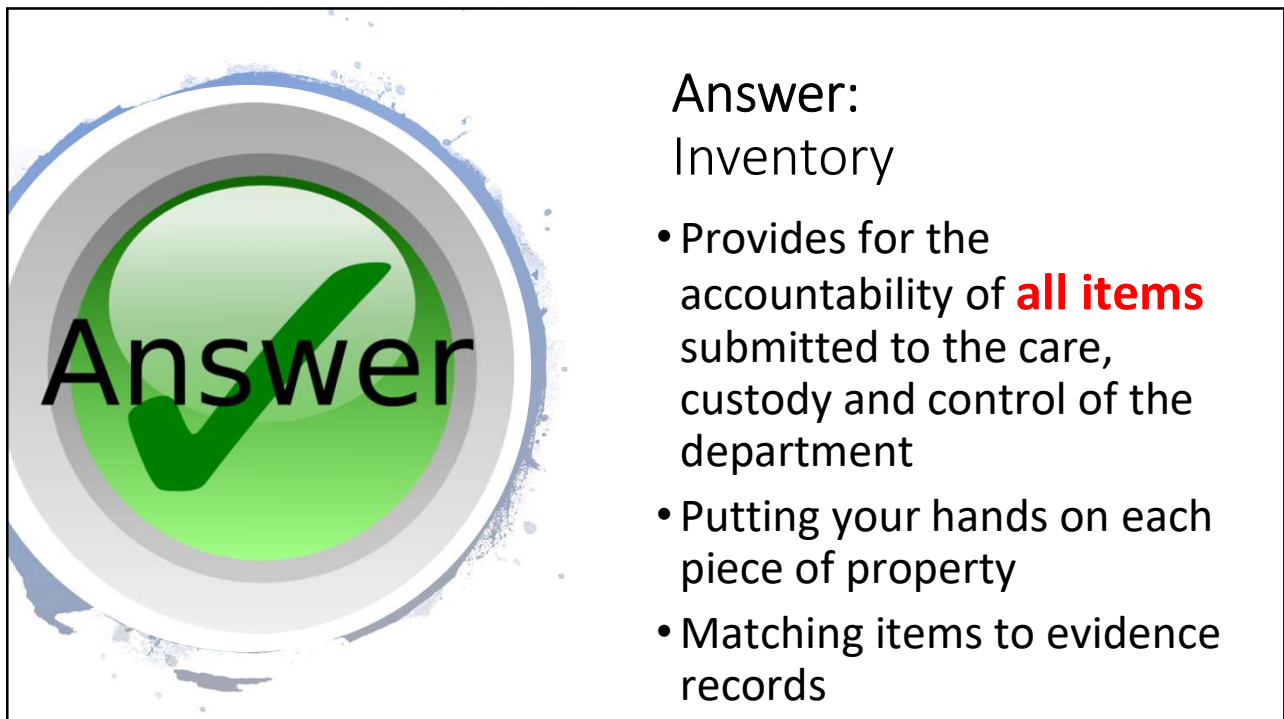
137



138



139



140



Answer:
Inventory

- Who should be involved in the inventory?
- Property Personnel
- Property Supervisor
- Impartial 3rd party

141



Answer:
Inventory

- When to conduct
 - Change of Chief/Sheriff
 - Property Personnel changes
 - Suspected issues
 - Annually

142



Question

- What is an Audit?

143



Answer

Audit

- Impartial review of the policies, procedures and actions of an operation to determine whether they meet the recognized standards and the agency's own policies.

144

Types of Audits



Basic

Legal requirements are being met



Procedural

Examines and evaluates the efficient and effective use of resources



Organizational

Examines and evaluates an agency's structure and encompasses plans, policies and systems

145



Question

- You have just taken over the property section and your department does not/will not do an inventory.
- What should you do?

146



Answers

- Written statement that an inventory has not been done, signed by you and the Chief/Sheriff placed in your personal file and keep a copy for you personally
- Photograph the room paying special attention to weapons, drugs, currency, jewelry
- Inventory weapons, currency, drugs and jewelry as soon as possible
- **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR**

147



Question

When was your last inventory?

How often do you complete an audit?

148

Stolen guns and missing drugs: Investigation finds thousands of potential thefts inside a North Texas police department

June 26th, 2024

DESOTO, Texas — Police are supposed to solve crimes, but the CBS News 11-Team found thefts may have been happening inside one department for years, without anyone noticing.

It began in January 2022, when a man was shot to death in Desoto home, located just south of Dallas. Police collected evidence, including marijuana that became evidence in a capital murder case. Four months later, the drugs could not be found.

According to internal records, Desoto police discovered the disappearance during an audit of the evidence room that began in April 2022.

Another Chief convicted of theft from the evidence room!

August 26th, 2024

DANVILLE — A former Tilton police chief has been sentenced to two years of probation for stealing handguns from the city police department in 2021.

David Cornett, 68, pleaded guilty on Friday to three counts of theft from a law enforcement agency. Vermilion County Judge Robert McIntire accepted the sentence negotiated between the State Appellate Prosecutor's Office and Cornett's defense attorney Aaron Weiner.

In exchange for his plea, the state dismissed three counts of official misconduct and one additional count of theft — all misdemeanors.

'Breach of trust' — former state trooper strikes plea deal in evidence room theft case

April 5th, 2024

Giancarlo DiGenova, who resigned his position last year, received a probationary sentence Friday after admitting to five criminal charges, including a felony grand larceny count for the theft of a \$14,000 gold Rolex watch.

BURLINGTON — A former Vermont State Police trooper received a probationary sentence Friday after pleading guilty to five criminal charges related to his stealing from an evidence room while still on the force.

Another New Jersey Scandal

Northeast, New Jersey - 422 Hits

NJ police lieutenant arrested for stealing cocaine, fentanyl from evidence room: 'Brazen disregard of the law'

December 19th, 2023

A New Jersey police lieutenant swiped cocaine and fentanyl from the county prosecutor's evidence room — then tried to return the drugs in "substantially different" condition after higher-ups began asking questions about what he was doing, state authorities alleged Tuesday.

Kevin T. Matthew, 47, of Cedar Grove, also allegedly made a "series of cash deposits" at several banks on different days to avoid the financial institutions' federal requirement to report transactions of more than \$10,000, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office said in a statement.

Two razor blades were found in his office at the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and later tested positive for cocaine, state prosecutors alleged.

149

Why...are there more?

Is this preventable?

How is this preventable?

150

Checks and Balances

Audits & Inventories are Necessary

Protect your Agency

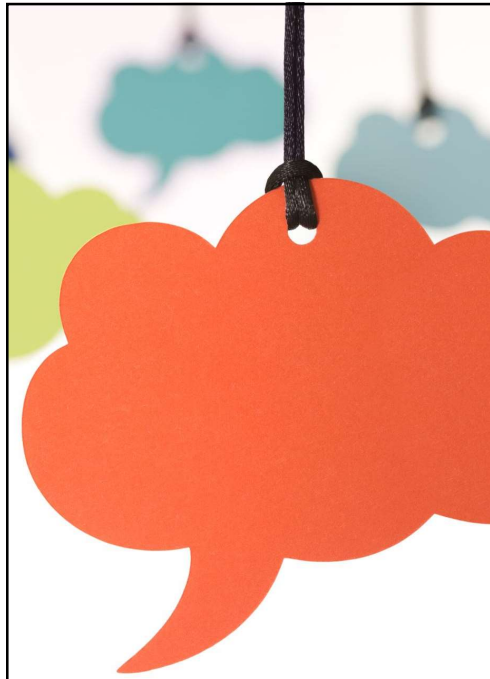
Protect the Employees

Protect Yourself

151



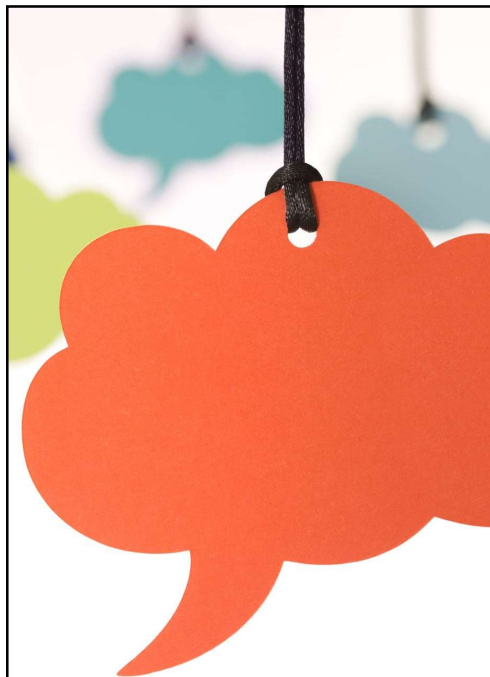
152



Ethics

Doing the _____ thing
when _____ is _____.

153



Ethics

Doing the right thing
when no one is looking.

154

Ethics

- Character Traits
 - Integrity - firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values
 - Conscience - moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good
 - Morals - of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior



155

TAPEIT'S Code of Ethics

"We, the members of TAPEIT, in carrying out our role of providing complete accountability of all evidence and property that comes into our possession, recognize the need to perform those functions in a professional, unbiased manner, and with the highest degree of integrity. The manner in which we perform those functions extends beyond the bounds of our own agency to other law enforcement agencies, the legal system and our respective publics."



156

As Members, We Shall...

- adhere to the professional standards as set forth by the Association;
- work towards advancing the Association's goals and objectives;
- conduct all assigned duties with the highest degree of integrity and morally sound actions in an open and direct manner;
- act with integrity in all dealings with the public, law enforcements agencies and all others with whom we may interact;



157

As Members, We Shall...

- conduct our duties in a safe manner in protecting ourselves, our colleagues and all others with whom we are engaged;
- work to cultivate confidence in our profession among our supervisors, chiefs, directors, attorneys and judges throughout the State of Texas; and,
- avoid any action which will bring discredit, disfavor or otherwise negative reflection upon ourselves, our agency and our Association.



158

“In all professional functions, we should zealously pursue the interests of those we serve within the bounds of the law. In doing so, we should be competent, prompt and diligent. We should demonstrate respect for the legal system and for those who serve it, including judges and public officials.”



159

Laws



160

Laws

- Code of Criminal Procedure
 - Chapter 12
 - Statute of Limitations
 - Chapter 18
 - Art. 18.17—Disposition of abandoned or unclaimed property
 - Art. 18.18—Disposition of gambling paraphernalia, prohibited weapon, criminal instruments and other contraband
 - Art. 18.181—Disposition of explosive weapons and chemical dispensing devices
 - Art. 18.183—Disposition of money pending disposition
 - Art. 18.19—Disposition of seized weapons
 - Art. 18.191- Disposition of firearms seized from persons with mental illness

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Laws

- Code of Criminal Procedure
 - Chapter 38
 - Art. 38.34—Photographic Evidence in Theft cases
 - Art. 38.43—Biological Evidence
 - Art. 38.50—Retention & Preservation of Toxicological Evidence of certain Intoxication Offenses
 - Chapter 47
 - Art. 47.06—Property sold
 - Art. 47.07—Owner may recover
 - Chapter 59
 - Art. 59.06—Disposition of Forfeited Property
 - Chapter 64
 - Motion for forensic DNA Testing

162

Laws

- Health and Safety Code
 - Chapter 481
 - 481.152—seizure and summary forfeiture and destruction of controlled substance plants
 - 481.153—seizure and summary forfeiture and destruction of controlled substance property
 - 481.154—Rules
 - 481.159—Disposition of controlled substance property or plant
 - 481.160—Destruction of excess quantities

163

Laws

- Alcoholic Beverage Code
 - Chapter 103
 - 103.03—seizure of illicit beverages
 - 103.04—arrest of person in possession
 - 103.05—report of seizure
 - 103.06—beverage delivered to commission

164



New Laws 2023

- Art. 56A.306 (a-1) CCP, which sets a retention time of five years on SANE kits turned over to LE where no police report was made.
- Sec. 420.0432 GC, which sets a five-business day victim notification for DNA hits related to SANE kits unless it interferes with prosecution or investigation

165



New Laws 2025

In Texas, House Bill 1261, which went into effect on September 1, 2025, changed the way law enforcement agencies notify the public about unclaimed and abandoned property. The law allows agencies to post notices online, including on their social media accounts, to help reunite owners with their property.

166

Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 18.17 (abandoned/unclaimed property)

Before: If the police had abandoned or unclaimed property (like lost items, evidence, or seized goods not picked up), the law required them to notify people by **certified mail** or by publishing a notice in a **newspaper**.



Now: Instead of sending letters or paying for newspaper ads, they can legally post the **same information** on the **city/county's official website** *and* on their **official social media page**.

167

Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 18.17 (abandoned/unclaimed property)

- Rules stay the same:
 - The **content** of the notice is the same as before.
 - The **timelines** (like how long someone has to claim the property) are the same.
 - It's just a **new, cheaper, digital alternative** to letters and newspapers.
- 👉 In short: Cities/counties in Texas can now handle unclaimed property notices online (website + social media) instead of through certified mail or newspapers.

168



Question

- How long do you need to keep found property with an unknown owner and what law gives you the right to get rid of it?
- What can you do with the property?

169



Answer

Law

- Art. 18.17—Disposition of abandoned or unclaimed property
- Auction it
- Destroy it
- Forfeit for department use

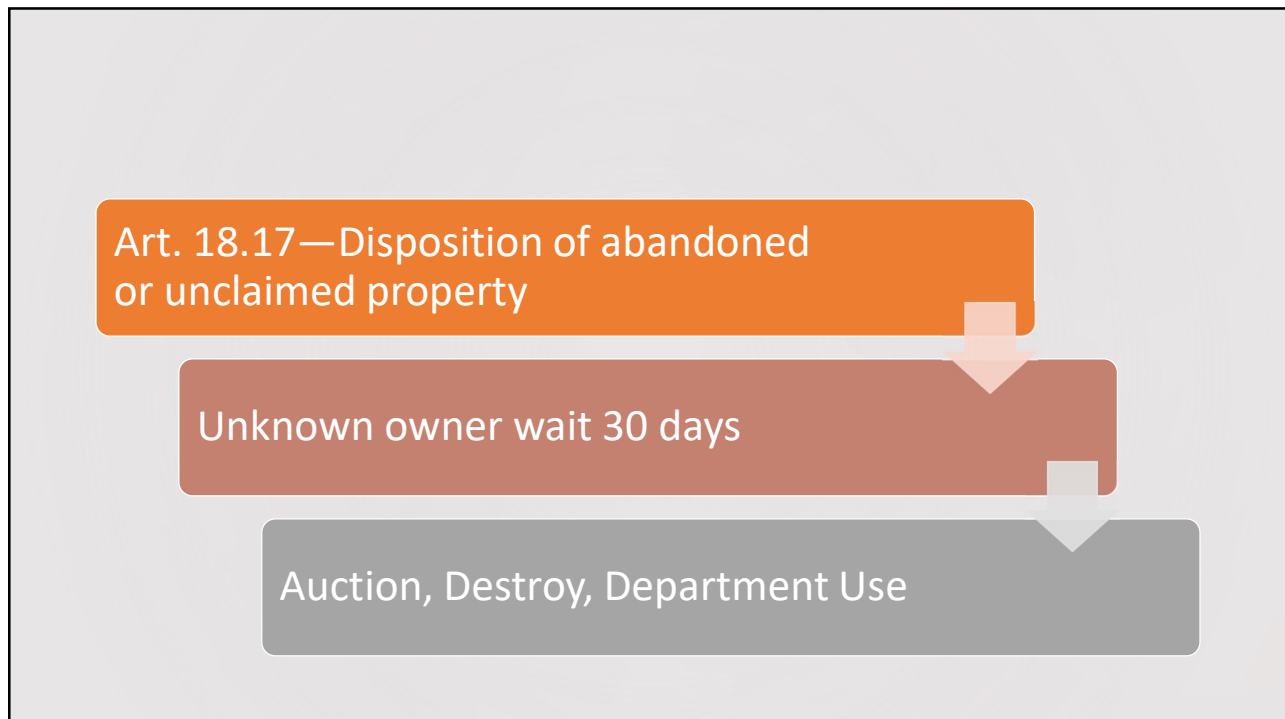
170



Departmental Use

- If property is awarded for departmental use, who is responsible for keeping up with it?
- Do you need a court order?

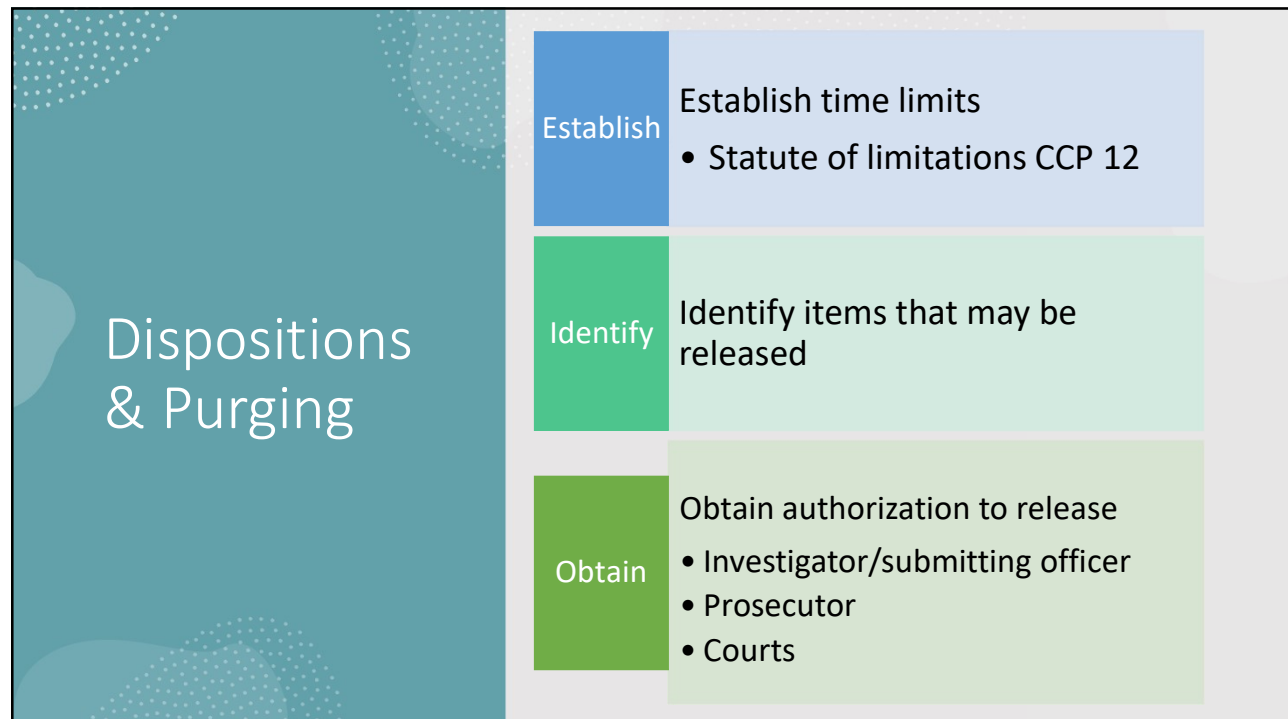
171



172

Dispositions and Destruction

173



174

Dispositions & Purging

- Follow up on requested authorizations
- Homicide cases
 - Usually considered permanent
- Court orders
 - When required by law
 - When required by department policy

175

Disposals

- Destroy
 - Melting, shredding, burning and hazmat disposal services
- Throw away
 - Dumpster, garbage can, etc.
- Return to owner
 - When appropriate

176

Disposals CCP 18.17

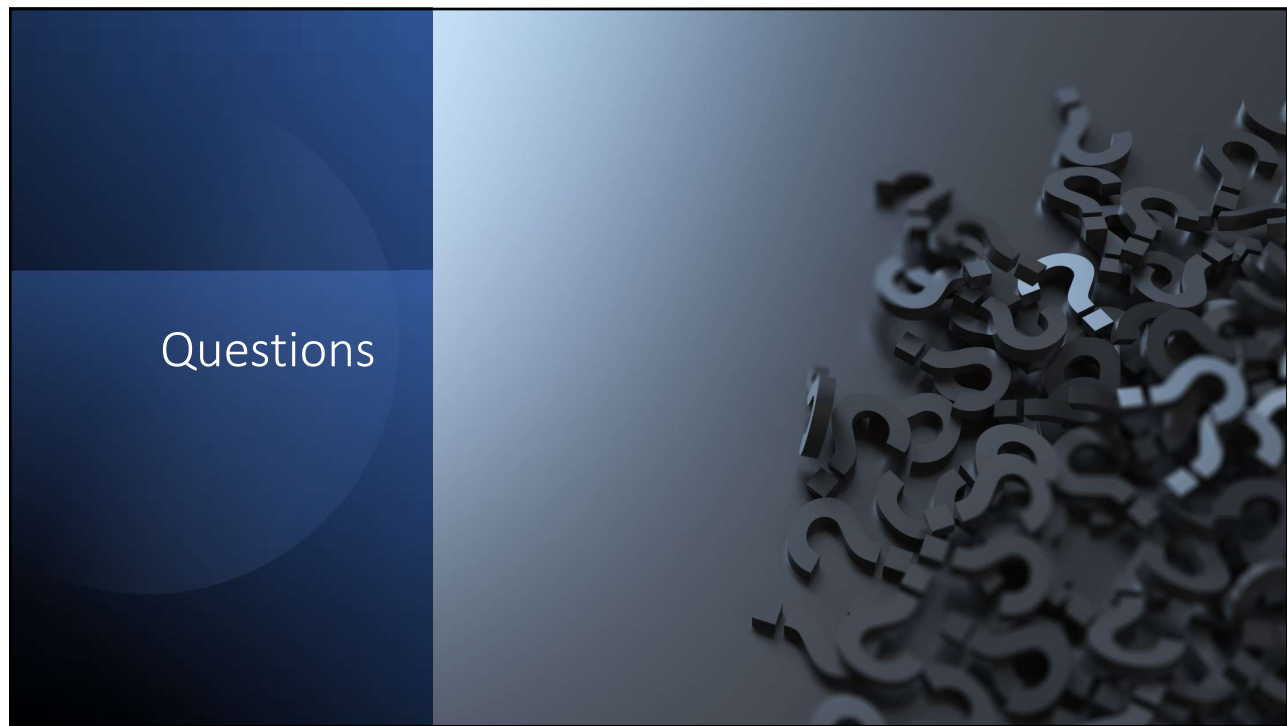
- Sold
 - Public auction
- Diversion
 - Converted to county/city use
- Donation
 - Local charity

177

Documentation

- Retain any paper that has an original signature
- Retain the original court order sent to your department
- Retain certified letters that have been returned
- Records Retention Schedule - 3 years
 - Texas State Library – 4175-09

178



179