

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

Property Room Standards

10. PACKAGING, HANDLING AND STORAGE

Agencies should develop specific guidelines for the receipt, packaging, and storing of property and evidence that meet the needs of their department and the local crime lab. These guidelines should be disseminated in a manner that all persons who book property have access to the guidelines and are accountable for following them.

In order to provide personnel with direction, it is recommended that property/evidence room managers develop specific policies that outline the acceptable methods for packaging property and evidence within that agency. One recognized method would be to develop a photo-based manual that illustrates the proper method for that agency. Those items that should be defined/described may include:

- Ammunition
- Audio/video tapes
- Bicycles
- Bio-hazardous materials
- Body fluids
- Bulk property/evidence
- Computers
- Currency
- Documents
- Electronics (cellular phones, televisions, stereos, etc.)
- Explosives/Fireworks
- Fingerprints
- Firearms
- Flammables
- Hazardous materials
- Knives/swords
- Narcotics
- Photographs/film
- Sexual assault evidence
- Syringes/sharps
- Tools
- Valuables/jewelry
- Weapons

The policy should clearly state that any deviation in packaging methods that does not meet the property room standards will be refused and the booking officer shall be notified

through the chain of command to correct the problem. This principle is known as the **“Right of Refusal”**.

Regardless of the packaging method used, the package should have an identifier (e.g., case number, control number, item number, etc.), which corresponds to the item description noted on the property/evidence report (e.g., evidence tag, property sheet, property receipt, property invoice, etc.).

Serial numbers on all serialized property and evidence (including weapons) should be verified upon receipt. Close communication should be maintained between those responsible for the entry and update of all state automated systems and the property/evidence function

A specific area should be designated as a packaging area for employees to bag and tag property and evidence items. This station should have all property room policies immediately available for reference. Soap, water, and decontamination supplies should be immediately available readily available at the counter site. The counter of this area should be surfaced with metal, or a non-porous laminate to permit proper decontamination.

Biohazard labels should be available and used on all items suspected of being contaminated with body fluids. Evidence sealing tape should be placed on all packages where contamination or tampering may become an issue. Color-coded stick-on labels should be used to designate specific types of evidence, such as homicide related, or an Officer-Involved-Shooting. Color-coded labels can also designate what year the item was taken in.

Packaging items should be available in the field for hazardous or dangerous items, such as sharps. Field personnel should be encouraged to keep basic packaging items with them at all times for preserving items that may be destroyed and cannot wait for an evidence technician to collect.