

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

Property Room Standards

22. INVENTORIES

A property room inventory can be defined as individually checking all or a specified portion of the property items against the agency's records. An integral part of the inventory process is to ensure that all items of property are accounted for. A complete inventory involves matching each piece of paperwork with its corresponding piece of property.

An inventory should be conducted annually or whenever key-holding personnel changes are made. The ideal situation is for the past and new Property Officers to conduct a joint inventory. Chiefs and Sheriffs should also consider an inventory when taking over as leader of the agency. The standard does not suggest that each package be opened, but only comparing the package with the associated paperwork or computer record.

In agencies where there are dozens of personnel in the property room, a complete inventory may not be physically possible. It is recommended in these cases to at least inventory guns, money, and narcotics.

As in audits, there are two traditional methods of inventories:

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| Shelf to Property Sheet: | List items on a specific shelf or location and compare with the Property Sheet. This method is recommended. |
| Property Sheet to Shelf: | Select Property Sheets and locate items on the shelf. The major disadvantage with this system is that doesn't document items on the shelf where the identifying numbers have been detached or are misfiled. |

While inventories provide system integrity to the process, a full inventory is always recommended. Large property rooms may decide to divide the room into areas to be inventoried each month. By the end of the year, the entire room should have been reconciled. It is recommended that an inventory be started in one easily described location, such as the top shelf of a particular bin, and that it proceed with a systematic pattern throughout the room. Each item on the shelf must be examined for case number and item number. As items are located in the file, mark them to confirm that it has been matched to an item on a shelf. When completed, the file should be reviewed for items

not checked off. These are missing items that immediately should be brought to management's attention.

In the event items are found on the shelf without documentation, the item should be researched to connect the item to a case. When an item cannot be identified, the item should be listed on a "found property" report, held for the statutory period, and then disposed of according to existing laws.