

Professional Standards

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The IAPE Board of Directors is charged with the duties of advancing the scope of knowledge and enhancing professionalism within the field of property and evidence management. To help achieve this goal, the IAPE has adopted professional standards in a number of important property and evidence handling procedures.

Adhering to these standards should assure any agency that reasonable steps have been taken to obtain a secure and efficient property and evidence management system. Not adhering to these recommended standards will increase the likelihood of problems associated with the operation of the unit.

IAPE STANDARDS

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SECTION A: PROPERTY ROOM GLOSSARY

- **ADJACENCIES** are two or more work areas that are related to one another and can benefit from being physically close to each other, hence adjacent.
- **CHAIN OF CUSTODY** refers to the chronological documentation of the seizure, custody, control, transfer (temporary or permanent), and disposition of evidence, either physical or electronic.
- **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)** is the head of a law enforcement agency and includes, but is not limited to the Chief of Police, Sheriff, Director of Public Safety, Agent in Charge, and Commissioner.
- **CONTROL NUMBER** is the sequential, ordinal, consecutive, or chronological number that items of property or evidence are filed by in the property room. This may include case numbers, property record numbers, or barcode numbers.
- **CONTROLLED ROOM TEMPERATURE ENVIRONMENT** is a storage environment that limits temperature variation from 60° to 75° F and a relative humidity not to exceed 60%.
- **CONVENIENCE CONTAINER** is a uniform size box, bag, or envelope that contains several smaller size items from one case and groups them together for ease of storage and retrieval.
- **DIGITAL INFORMATION** Digital information is any type of electronic file containing text, data, signal, image, video, or voice recording stored on magnetic, optical, or flash media.
- **DIGITAL EVIDENCE** refers to digital information that has probative value in either tending to prove or disprove a material fact in a criminal or civil case.
- **DIVERTED PROPERTY or DIVERSION** is the process by which the ownership of abandoned, forfeited, or unclaimed property is legally transferred to a public agency for public use.
- **DROP DEAD DATE** is a time restriction that requires action to be taken prior to a specified date.
- **EVIDENCE** refers to material that has probative value in either tending to prove or disprove a material fact in a criminal or civil case.
- **FOUND PROPERTY** is non-evidentiary property, which, after coming into the custody of a law enforcement agency, has been determined to be lost or abandoned and is not known or suspected to be connected with any criminal offense
- **GENERAL ORDER** is a directive published by a commander that is binding upon all personnel under his command, the purpose of which is to enforce a policy or procedure unique to his unit's situation that is not otherwise addressed. A general order is issued to every employee, and not explicitly issued to any one person, as a direct order would be.
- **KEY-HOLDING PERSONNEL** refers to a person(s) who has a key or who has unescorted access into the property room storage area.

- **PROPERTY** refers to the generic term for personal property that does not have evidentiary value and comes into the possession of a law enforcement agency as found, safekeeping, or property for destruction.
- **PROPERTY ROOM** – the generic term for the location where property and evidence is stored, which also may include secondary storage and office areas.
- **PROPERTY OFFICER** is the generic term for the person who is assigned to the property room and is charged with the responsibility for documenting, storing, retrieving, and disposing of property and evidence.
- **PROPERTY FOR SAFEKEEPING** is non-evidentiary property that is placed in the custody of a law enforcement agency for temporary protection on behalf of the owner
- **PROPERTY REPORT** is the generic term for the form or computer printout that documents the case number, control number, item number, and item description.
- **PROPERTY UNIT** is a generic term for the intangible organizational unit within the law enforcement agency that is charged with maintaining property and evidence. This includes the chain of command consisting of the supervisor, manager, and the commander.
- **PURGE REVIEW** is a systematic process assuring that each item of property and evidence is evaluated for possible purging at least on a yearly basis.
- **RIGHT OF REFUSAL** is the authority given to the property officer to reject and notify the booking officer that property or evidence is improperly packaged or documented, and needs correction.
- **RULE OF TWO** is a principle where two persons are present anytime that a witness is necessary to provide testimony, if necessary.
- **SHARPS** is a term applied to hypodermic needles, disposable scalpels, and other sharp edged implements used in medical care subject to universal precautions
- **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)** is a set of instructions having the force of a directive, covering those features of operations that lend themselves to a definite or standardized procedure without loss of effectiveness.
- **STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)** is an order or procedure that it is in effect until further notice, at which time it may be amended or dissolved.
- **STATUTE OF LIMITATION** is the legally defined period of time in which a criminal or civil action may be initiated. Once the statute of limitation has expired, a case may no longer be filed.
- **THRESHOLD** is a predetermined quantity of items or elapsed time that triggers an action, such as a transfer of money, or destruction of firearms or drugs.
- **TICKLER FILES** are a method of reminding the user of where and when an item is placed in a temporary location, and can be structured to remind, or tickle, the user when a certain period of time has elapsed.