



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure			
	APD.SOP.6030 – Property and Evidence Control Effective Date: April 22nd, 2026		
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed: 4/22/2026	Expires:2030

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

This policy, APD.SOP.6030 – Property & Evidence Control, has undergone a complete overhaul revision, including the consolidation of two previously separate directives related to Drug Testing and Destruction (6160) and Vehicle storage for investigative purposes (3068) . Outdated practices have been removed, and procedures have been reorganized to improve clarity, accountability, and operational efficiency.

Officers are required to review this policy in its entirety. Significant procedural changes include, but are not limited to:

- Elimination of the Property Receipt (Form 0600B)
- Updated procedures for the submission and handling of firearms and currency
- Revised protocols governing property classification and processing under asset forfeiture

Failure to adhere to these updated procedures may result in improper handling of evidence and potential legal or administrative consequences.

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit



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1. PURPOSE

This directive establishes policies and guidelines for receiving, storing, releasing, and disposing of property seized as evidence and property held for safekeeping and for issuing supplies to Atlanta Police Department (APD) employees.

2. POLICY

The Department will securely store all evidence, contraband, and other property coming into its custody; maintain the chain of evidence, and promptly dispose of items in accordance with Federal, State law and City ordinances. Department employees, particularly those in Property Control Unit (PCU), will actively assist the public in recovering their rightful property and make every effort to maintain it in the same or similar condition in which it was received by the Department.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Division, section, and unit commanders are responsible for the implementation of this directive within their commands.

3.2 The Chief Administrative Officer and the Administrative Services Commander will monitor the implementation of this directive. They will issue such command memoranda as necessary to guide the property control function, including the responsibilities of Department employees turning in property and evidence, requesting supplies, and maintaining the inventory.

3.3 Department employees are responsible for the safekeeping of evidence, property, and contraband until it is entered on the Record Management System (RMS) software, bar-coded, and turned in to the Property Control Unit. The employee is also responsible for maintaining the chain of custody, for notifying the Property Control Unit when evidence is no longer needed for prosecution, and for making a concerted effort to identify and notify the owner or custodian of property.

3.4 Supervisors will monitor their subordinates' compliance with this directive.

3.5 Property Control Unit

3.5.1 The PCU is responsible for securely storing all contraband, evidence, and property turned in by Department employees. PCU employees are responsible for keeping the property in the same or similar condition in which it was received and for maintaining the chain of evidence. Property Control Unit employees will also be responsible for releasing or otherwise disposing of property in accordance with the procedures set forth in this directive. PCU is not responsible for fingerprint and photographic evidence kept by the Identification Unit.

3.5.2 The PCU commander is the custodian and responsible for the effective implementation of this standard operating procedure within the unit and for property held in custody, and for found, recovered, and evidentiary property. The PCU commander is accountable for the control of all property accepted by or stored in the Property Control Unit. Under the provisions of this directive, the PCU commander is authorized to release impounded vehicles, items from evidence, property to owners or custodians, and for the distribution or auction of property according to Georgia State laws and City ordinances provided reasonable efforts have been made to return property to the rightful owners. The PCU commander is responsible for ensuring that all Property and Evidence received must be accounted for and maintained in the same or similar condition as it was received. The PCU commander will designate two employees as Narcotics Evidence Custodians.



- 3.5.3 The custodial duties for narcotics evidence will be to provide and maintain a system of storage for all of the Department's drug evidence, while documenting and preserving the chain of custody of that drug evidence.
- 3.6 The Fleet Management Unit commander is responsible for the acquisition, inventory, maintenance, and disposal of Department-owned motor vehicles; the inspection of impound lots; and the collection of fees from wrecker companies.
- 3.7 The Identification Unit is responsible for the storage and release of photographic evidence. They are also responsible for the collection and packaging of evidence that will be submitted to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Crime Lab.
- 3.8 The SWAT Unit is responsible for storage and destruction of explosive and incendiary material encountered in their operation. The Unit may transfer such evidence to the appropriate investigating agency.
- 3.9 The Asset Forfeiture Unit is responsible for coordinating the RICO seizure process for the Department in conjunction with Fleet Management and the PCU. The Asset Forfeiture Unit will act as the liaison between the courts and the Department.
- 3.10 Transfer of Custody: Any employee of this Department who assumes custody of evidence or property from the Property Control Unit will bear full responsibility for ensuring its security, proper storage, and maintenance, and for the ready retrieval of such item upon demand by the PCU commander.

4. ACTION

4.1 PROPERTY CONTROL UNIT OPERATIONS

- 4.1.1 The PCU administrative office is staffed and operational Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, for releasing property. The property area which receives in-custody or evidentiary property will be staffed and operational 24 hours every day. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.3)
- 4.1.2 Security in Property Control
 - 1. The PCU commander controls the building space assigned to the Property Control Unit. All in-custody and evidentiary property is stored within designated, secure areas with access limited to authorized personnel. PCU employees, when reporting for or leaving from duty must do so at entry or exit points established by the Property Control Unit commander. Only PCU employees and persons identified and posted in writing may enter restricted areas unattended. Doors and windows allowing entry into these areas will be locked or guarded at all times. The drug vault, valuables vault, and weapons room will be locked at all times, except when occupied by authorized personnel. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 84.1.2)
 - 2. The PCU commander will ensure that a supervisor is always on duty or will notify the section commander when one is not available.
 - 3. All non-PCU employees desiring to enter secured work areas, such as the receiving area, release area, and the supervisor's office, must have permission from an on-duty PCU supervisor. Any person granted authorization will be escorted by a PCU employee to their destination within the work area. The person granted access must sign the respective entry log once they enter an otherwise restricted area.
 - 4. Detainees are **NOT** allowed in the receiving area, release area, or the supervisor's office.



5. Access to storage areas for in-custody or evidentiary items will be limited to authorized personnel only. All non-PCU employees, unless authorized by written posted authorization from the Property Control Unit commander, will sign the entry log posted at the access point to the restricted area and will fill in all spaces. The on-duty PCU supervisor(s) will check that the log is filled out completely and all persons entering on their shift have signed in and out. When all available spaces on the log form have been utilized, the log form will be forwarded to the PCU commander for filing. A PCU supervisor or his or her designated employee must escort all non-Property Control Unit employees entering a restricted area (such as secured evidence or property storage area). An additional log must be completed when entering the disposal storage area, weapons storage area, or drug storage area. The supervisor assigned to these areas will monitor the log and forward completed pages to the Property Control Unit commander as outlined above.
6. The PCU commander will establish a system of access control to account for access to all areas of the Property Control Unit with emphasis placed on secured areas. The PCU commander will monitor access to drug and valuables vaults by recorded video cameras, and through the Alarm Board in Communications.
7. The Narcotics Evidence Custodian(s) will each be provided with a key to the drug storage vaults, as well as a code for the drug storage vault Trigger and Call Security (TACS) alarm and magnetic keypad. The Department's drug evidence will be stored in the storage vaults located in the PCU.

4.2 SUBMITTING PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

- 4.2.1 All property/evidence collected by APD must:
 1. Be entered and accounted for using the property page in the Axon reporting system.
 2. Include the incident/arrest number, owner's name, address, phone number, and a brief description of the property/evidence and reason for it being turned in (i.e., safe keeping, found property, evidence) in the file.
 3. Be issued its own barcode.
 4. With the exception of the items listed in 4.2.2, evidence and property is to be turned into a property-controlled unit (such as a locker) at the annex or at the precinct, as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the Officers shift. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.1 c.)
- 4.2.2 Firearms, narcotics, money, and items of high value such as electronics and jewelry must be turned in at the Annex or designated property storage locker while the call is active and the officer's body camera remains turned on. If exceptional circumstances exist which prevent these items from being turned in as directed, a supervisor must be notified and the exceptional circumstance be written in the report. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.1 a & b).
- 4.2.3 When submitting evidence at the Annex or to a designated storage locker, the item must be placed in an envelope and signed/initialed by the seizing officer. If the evidence is too large that an envelope cannot be used, a larger or more appropriate bag or container may be used provided it is sealed and properly identified with a tag as follows: (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.1 d)
 1. Red Evidence Tags: are to be used for evidence firearms and all items that can be considered evidence that are too large or bulky for a property envelope. Attach barcode label to tag.
 2. White Property Tags: are to be used for non-evidence firearms and all other non-evidence property too large or bulky for property envelopes. Attach barcode label to tag.



3. Property Envelopes: are to be used for evidence and non-evidence property except firearms. Evidence and non-evidence property must not be mixed in the same property envelope. Money (U.S. currency) will be packaged separately from other evidence and non-evidence in a currency envelope.
- 4.2.4 Checks, credit cards, money orders, cashier's checks, jewelry, and other exceptional, valuable, or sensitive items, whether evidence or non-evidence will not be mixed in the same envelope with other evidence and non-evidence. In addition, jewelry will be stored in the extra secure vaults, such as the currency vault, due to its potential value. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.1 e)
- 4.2.5 No evidence or property will be stored in desks, offices, personal lockers, case files or other unauthorized places, unless authorized by the section commander.
- 4.2.6 FIREARMS
 1. When turning in a firearm it must be unloaded and clear before entering the PCU facility. If you are unable, or unsure how to unload or clear the firearm, notify your supervisor for assistance before bringing it to Property.
 2. GBI requests that all firearms be placed in a clear evidence gun box. They will no longer accept or provide gun boxes that are not clear evidence boxes. These boxes are located at the Annex building on the 2nd floor in the CID office.
- 4.2.7 MONEY
 1. Follow these procedures when turning in U. S. currency totaling \$10,000.00 or less:
 - a. Separate, count, and total, the money by denomination.
 - b. Unless actual currency is needed for evidentiary purposes or is contaminated, insert bills into the cash validating machine per posted instructions. When finished, write the incident number on the printed receipt.
 - c. Enter the information for this receipt into RMS, filling in the "currency total" field and
 - i. adding to the description that it is a cash receipt.
 - d. Fill out a currency envelope and prior to sealing it, have the receipt amount verified by a Property Management Technician (PMT) who must initial the envelope. If the machine fails to print a receipt, notify a PCU supervisor.
 - e. Place all coins and the bills that were not accepted by the cash validating machine separate currency envelope and create an additional RMS record for this item. Before sealing the envelope, the cash amount must be verified by a Property Management Technician if the amount is \$500.00 or under, or by a PCU supervisor if the amount is over \$500.00. The PMT or supervisor must initial the envelope.
 - f. If the actual money must be held for evidentiary purposes or is contaminated, notate this on the currency envelope.
 - g. For suspected counterfeit currency or foreign currency, create a separate RMS record. Place the suspected counterfeit or foreign currency in a plane envelope. Write suspected counterfeit money or foreign currency on the outside of this envelope. Do not mix suspected counterfeit or foreign currency together in the same envelope.
 2. Follow these procedures when turning in U. S. currency over \$10,000.00:



- a. Separate, count, and total the money the money by denomination. If the amount is over \$250,000.00, notify a PCU supervisor for guidance.
- b. Create an RMS record for the item. Place all currency in the cash validating machine. Complete the currency envelope. Place the currency receipt in the currency envelope. Prior to sealing the envelope, the amount must be verified by a PCU supervisor, and the supervisor will initial the envelope.
- c. If the actual money must be held for evidentiary purpose or is contaminated, notate this on the currency envelope and ensure the PCU supervisor is notified.

3. Contaminated Currency

- a. Money submitted as Property or evidence that is considered contaminated (currency that has been damaged by or exposed to contaminants, poses a health hazard or safety risk, and cannot be processed under normal operating procedures) will be submitted in a currency envelope. Contaminated money will not be placed in the cash validating machine.
- b. The PCU value vault custodian will maintain a contaminated currency bin and ensure that all contaminated money be held in this vault until processed for release or other designation. Damaged currency will be exchanged at the Federal Reserve

4.2.8 Narcotics & Drug paraphernalia

1. The seizing officer is responsible for maintaining the chain-of-custody of drug evidence until it is deposited in the narcotics evidence locker at the Annex. The seizing officer will be responsible for packaging and labeling all drug evidence that is being submitted for analysis in accordance with the State's Division of Forensic Science (DOFS) and the Atlanta Police Department guidelines.
2. Drug evidence must be recorded in the Axon reporting system and submitted in separate evidence bags, as follows:
 - a. Loose drug material, such as powders, tablets, capsules, crack cocaine, and marijuana, must be sealed in a small clear plastic bag (e.g., sandwich bag) and placed in a designated clear outer plastic evidence bag.
 - b. If the material is already packaged, for example: if marijuana is in small envelopes or crack cocaine is in smaller glassine bags, the substance can be placed as packaged into the designated clear outer plastic evidence bag.
 - c. Liquid drug evidence will be submitted in a leak-proof screw-capped bottle with evidence tape secured around top. Once secure it must be placed into a designated outer plastic evidence bag.
 - d. Any wet plant material such as marijuana plants, leaves, and mushrooms will be packaged in paper bags. Trapped moisture will cause the evidence to rot and become unsuitable for analytical testing.
 - e. Large bales of marijuana, kilos of cocaine, large plants, etc. may be submitted in large bags or packaged as seized. In these cases, use a red evidence tag with the barcode attached to affix it securely to the evidence. If the suspected drug material is seized from any area of possible contamination, it should be marked with a BIOHAZARD sticker.



- f. LSD is light sensitive and must be placed in a paper sack or small manila envelope to avoid light exposure and then be placed in a designated clear plastic evidence bag.
3. All Narcotics must be entered into the drug logbook located inside the Property cage and filled out completely for the instructions provided by the PCU.
4. The GBI will not accept razor blades, syringes, or wet water pipes for analysis. If a razor blade is needed as evidence, it will be packaged separately and turned into Property Control as non-drug evidence.
5. Syringes brought to Property Control will be deposited in the PCU provided container on site for syringes and not in the drug evidence box. The officer must write the following information legibly on the syringe container.
 - a. The number of syringes.
 - b. The incident number of the report.
 - c. The suspect's full name.
 - d. The location where the syringe was found.
6. If the officer wants the contents of the syringe to be analyzed, he or she must empty the liquid into a "screw-capped bottle" (supplied by Property Control), place evidence seal around top of bottle seal, and label the evidence as a "BIOHAZARD." The screw-capped bottle and its contents are submitted.

4.3 SAFE KEEPING

- 4.3.1 Safe keeping refers to the temporary custody of property by the Department when the owner or responsible party is unable to secure or maintain possession of the item at the time of police contact, and the property is not related to a criminal investigation nor being held as evidence.
- 4.3.2 Officers are to conduct a thorough inspection of every unattended vehicle prior to it being removed from a scene by tow truck, regardless of whether the vehicle is impounded or removed by a private tow. The purpose of this inspection is to identify and secure items of significant value or items that could pose a safety concern if left inside the vehicle.
- 4.3.3 Firearms, money, jewelry, electronic devices, and/or personal items that may reasonably be considered high in value, found or taken in for safekeeping, are to be properly documented and submitted into the Property Unit as instructed in section 4.2.
- 4.3.4 Under no circumstances are vehicles to be used as secure storage for weapons, money, electronics, jewelry, or other items of significant value once the vehicle is released for towing.

4.4 INTAKE & PROCESSING EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY

4.4.1 Receiving Evidence and Property

1. The PCU employees assigned to the Intake Area will review all packaging turned in for accuracy. If the packaging method does not meet the property room standards, the clerk will refuse to accept the package and notify their immediate supervisor. This principle is known as the "RIGHT OF REFUSAL." If an item is not acceptable, the Property supervisor will explain to the officer what must be done before the item will be accepted. If the officer cannot resolve the issue, he or she will contact his or her supervisor to rectify the problem so that the article will



be acceptable to turn into the Property Control Unit Intake Area. This will be documented in writing and forwarded to the Property Control Unit commander by the end of the watch.

2. The PCU will accept all evidence, contraband, and other non-perishable property coming into the custody of Atlanta Police Department employees with the exception of property that is soiled, contaminated, or presents a health or safety risk, and have no identifiable owner. These items will not be accepted into custody and will be disposed of in an appropriate/designated waste bin by the officer.
 - a. All property that is disposed of due to being soiled, contaminated, or present a health/safety risk must still be included in the report, with an explanation of why the items were destroyed.
 - b. Perishable items of evidence needed for prosecution and safekeeping, such as alcoholic beverages, must be in the original sealed containers and unopened.
3. For safety and security, no item will be accepted by the PCU unless the contents have been checked and verified by the officer turning in the item. The PCU employee will accept sealed packaging (except currency) that meets the standards of the Property Control Unit. The responsibility for the contents of a sealed package accepted by the Property Control Unit rest solely with the employee who sealed the packaging, not the Property Control Unit.
4. The receiving technician will scan the barcode of the item, and then take custody of the item. The Property Control Unit technician will stamp all sealed packages “Received Sealed” when accepting a properly sealed package.
5. Crime Scene Technicians or investigators who collect evidence that is being submitted to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation’s Division of Forensic Sciences (DOFS) for testing, will bring the packaged items to the PCU in order to ensure the items are on the RMS database. The PCU employee will then scan the item out to the GBI, have the Crime Scene Technician or investigator sign for the item, and then release the item for delivery. In addition to the main label, a GBI label and or required form(s) will be printed and attached to the outside of the evidence package. In accordance with the submission requirements of GBIFS, the sealed evidence packaging will not be opened by Property Control Unit employees.

4.4.2 Remote Locker Property and Evidence Pickup

1. Officers, investigators, and Property Management Technicians responsibilities:
 - a. Officers, investigators, and will enter eligible items of property/evidence in their custody into the RMS system at the Zone precincts, the Special Operations Section (SOS) precinct, the Airport precinct, and the Public Safety Headquarters.
 - b. Once items are entered and tagged correctly, the property/evidence will be placed and secured into a designated available locker.
 - c. Officers and investigators will complete the logbook in its entirety, including what locker the property/evidence is stored in.
 - d. Day watch administrative supervisor shall make contact with officers within the zones to make corrections to any property that is not picked up by the PCU.
 - e. The property logbook shall be turned into the PCU immediately for storage when it is completely filled up.
2. The Property Control Unit Employee Responsibilities:



- a. The PCU will dispatch the property/evidence transport vehicle from the Public Safety Annex.
- b. The transport vehicle will always be operated by a minimum of two (2) PCU employees.
- c. The property/evidence transport vehicle will go to each Zone precinct, SOS, the Airport precinct and the Public Safety Headquarters to pick up any eligible items of property/evidence stored by officers/investigators.
- d. The PCU employee will check the contents of the locker against the logbook filled out by the officers/investigators. The PCU employee will place their initials in the logbook next to each item picked up indicating they have taken possession of the item.
- e. Any discrepancies between the logbook and items in the locker will be immediately brought to the attention of an on-duty supervisor in the location in which the discrepancy occurs. The item(s) will be highlighted yellow by the PCU employee in the logbook. The PCU employee will complete a Property or Evidence Non-Complete form (Form APD 517) and have an onsite supervisor sign.
- f. The PCU employee will also fill out a Property/Evidence Non-Compliance form (Form APD 517) and turn it into their PCU supervisor immediately when they return to the Property Control Unit. The notified supervisor will sign this form.
- g. Afterwards, it will be the responsibility of the notified supervisor to investigate the discrepancy or notify the appropriate supervisor for investigation.
- h. A PCU supervisor will contact the notified supervisor within 72 hours in an attempt to ascertain a resolution to the discrepancy.
- i. Each item picked up will be scanned to the custody of the PCU when taken out of the locker.
- j. Any item(s) not properly labeled, ineligible for transport, or mishandled, will not be transported.
- k. In the event that an onsite supervisor is not available, the PCU employee will place a check in the onsite supervisor not available, the PCU employee will sign the Non-Compliance form in the supervisor space. The PCU employee will leave a copy of the completed Non-Compliance form in the appropriate unit or watch box. Any item(s) not being transported will be placed in the designated locker. The Zone supervisors will check their designated lockers daily for items left by the PCU employees. After discrepancies (highlighted yellow) are corrected, upon the second pick-up the PCU employee will place the date, time and their initials next to the corrected property or evidence items for transport.
- l. The PCU employee will then load the eligible item (s) of property/evidence into the transport vehicle. Items ineligible for transport and remote locker storage must be transported to the PCU by the officer/investigator who took custody of the items.
- m. Items that are ineligible for transport or remote locker storage are listed below:
 - Narcotics;
 - Currency;



- Firearms
- Hazardous Materials (Blood, body fluids, rape kits, etc.);
- Oversized Items that will not fit in locker; and
- Items needing to be kept refrigerated.

n. Once the PCU transport vehicle is loaded with any property/evidence, the vehicle will not be left unattended for any reason.

4.4.3 MONEY (INTAKE AND PROCESSING)

1. Safekeeping Money

a. PCU's Money Vault Custodian will coordinate with the Fiscal Unit to conduct regular in-person money counts of cash not accepted by the Cash Validating Machine to be deposited for safekeeping. The money will be prepared for deposit into PCU's Custodial Account and transported by armored carrier or as approved by command staff.

2. Counterfeit Money

a. When counterfeit currency is found during the count or deposit at the bank, the Disposal supervisor will write and submit an RMS supplement report utilizing the original complaint number. PCU supervisor will forward copies of the supplemental report to the Property Control Unit commander. The report will include the Department employee that turned the currency in, and the employee's section commander.

b. Any counterfeit currency found during the count will be placed in a new property envelope along with the original property envelope and held for the U. S. Secret Service. The Disposal supervisor will enter the change in the amount on the evidence database utilizing the original report number. The comment field will contain all parties present on the counting team and the date found. A copy of the printout will be forwarded to the Property Control Unit commander.

c. Any counterfeit currency found during the deposit at the bank will be kept by the bank and held for the U. S. Secret Service. A copy of the bank form showing the funds were kept will be obtained from the bank by the Disposal supervisor. The Disposal supervisor will enter the change in the amount on the evidence database utilizing the original report number. The comment field will contain all parties present at the bank and the bank representative finding the counterfeit funds and the date found if not included in the bank report. A copy of the printout and the original bank report will be forwarded to the PCU commander.

3. PCU's Senior Financial Analyst will reconcile the PCU Custodial Account (checking) monthly on receipt of the bank statements. Reconciliations are to be forwarded to both general accounting and APD's Fiscal unit for review.

4.4.4 WEAPONS

1. The PCU employee receiving a firearm will scan the firearm container box barcode, scan the APD Location REC Intake Barcode, scan a Temporary Firearm Locker barcode, then secure the firearm inside the temporary firearms locker. The PCU employee will write the locker number in the logbook. The Armorer will assign a long-term storage location.

2. The Property Armorer will check all firearms to ensure they are unloaded for safety and to prevent any accidental discharge when removing them from the Firearms Locker. If any firearms are loaded, the Property Armorer will contact SWAT or the APD Crime Lab Firearms



Examiner for assistance if needed. The Property Armorer will complete a GCIC check on each firearm. Upon completion of the GCIC check, the firearms will be stored on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) cart.

3. The Property Armorer, or the responsible supervisor, will give representatives from ATF workspace and access to the cart so that ATF eTrace data can be submitted for each firearm. If representatives from ATF are unavailable, the Property Armorer will be responsible for submitting the eTrace data to ATF. After completing this process, the Property Armorer, or responsible supervisor, will place long guns in their permanent storage locations.
4. The APD Crime Lab will test fire each evidence weapon and recover the bullets and cartridge cases for entry into NIBIN. Once test fired, all firearms-related evidence received for analysis is returned to PCU after the release of an official crime laboratory report.

4.4.5 PROCESSING NEW NARCOTICS EVIDENCE (APD.SOP.6160 – DRUG TESTING AND DESTRUCTION)

1. The department's drug evidence will be stored in the drug storage vaults located in the Property Control Unit. Leafy substances may also be stored in the drug storage vaults at the department's Crime Lab (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 84.1.2).
2. Each evidence envelope will be signed and dated by a Drug Evidence Custodian(s) (DEC) and another Property employee, as it is removed from the lockbox.
3. Each evidence envelope will be reconciled and signed for in the Property Control Unit drug logbook.
4. All evidence will be taken to the DEC work area and will be scanned into the DEC custody utilizing the RMS evidence tracking software. This procedure will be completed by the designated DEC.
5. On a regularly scheduled basis (preferably on a daily basis excluding off days and holidays), the DEC will inventory the contents of the drug evidence lockers. Two PCU employees will inventory the contents of the drug evidence lockers; one of which must be an appointed Drug Evidence Custodian.
6. Each evidence envelope should be reconciled with the logbook. The DEC should initial the logbook, indicating that the logbook entry is consistent with the evidence envelope that has been removed from the locker. The DEC and the second PCU employee will examine the tamperproof seal to determine if it is intact. If discrepancies are observed, the DEC should notify the PCU commander. The drug evidence is then classified into two categories: scheduled drug evidence, and leafy material evidence, and will be handled as follows:
 - a. The evidence will be transported on a regularly scheduled basis preferably once each week. The Drug Evidence being transported will be logged into the GBI database and accompanied by the GBI Submission Form from the database that identifies the APD case number, suspect and type of drug evidence being transported.
 - b. The leafy material evidence that is over 30 grams in weight will be transported to the GBI following the same protocol in 4.5.10 (6) (a). If the leafy material is under 30g the evidence will be stored in the drug vault until requested for analysis. Once a leafy material exhibit is requested for analysis, it will be deposited in the APD Crime Lab locker. Movement of this evidence will be documented to preserve the chain of custody.



7. On occasion, officers will submit drug evidence that has no suspect affiliated with it. In this instance, the envelope will be documented by the DEC, on the submission form reserved for evidence destruction.
8. The Drug Evidence Custodians (DEC) is responsible for inventorying and transporting drug evidence to and from the State Crime Lab as necessary, however, no less than once per week. All drug evidence will be submitted with an inventory sheet/submission form for each piece of evidence.
9. After testing has been completed, the Drug Evidence Custodians (DEC) will transport the drug evidence back to the department for reconciliation and storage in the drug storage vault. The DEC must receive an inventory receipt from the State Crime Lab that lists the contents of the container by the crime lab case number. The receipt will be kept on file to preserve the chain-of-custody.
10. Any discrepancies between the state inventory receipt and the department inventory will be brought to the attention of the Administrative Operations Commander and the state crime lab supervisor for resolution. Discrepancies will be documented in a memorandum to the Administrative Operations Commander, with a copy of the memorandum kept with the state crime lab receipt.
11. When delivering drug evidence to the GBI Crime Lab, the DEC's will deposit the scheduled drug evidence along with the time-stamped submission forms in the evidence intake locker designated by the GBI Crime Lab.
12. The DEC's will transport analyzed drug evidence back to the Department drug storage vaults where it will be inventoried and stored in the vault. A receipt will be obtained from the GBI DOF listing all drug evidence released back into the custody of the DEC. The analyzed drug evidence will be stored in the narcotics storage vaults in a manner that will make it readily accessible for future judicial proceedings.
13. The DEC will maintain the drug evidence logbook, to be located on the counter in the PCU intake area. Drug evidence logbooks will be stored in a secure location once they have been completed.
14. Internal control of drug evidence to and from the drug storage vault must be documented to preserve the chain-of-custody (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 84.1.1 H).
15. Drug evidence can only be transported from the Property Control Unit by sworn employees.

4.4.6 Narcotics Evidence to Crime Lab

1. The DEC will then deliver the reconciled drug evidence to the State Crime Lab. The reconciled drug evidence will be placed in the State Crime Lab lockbox with a date and time-stamped. Leafy material evidence is stored in the drug evidence vault until a request for analysis has been made by the Atlanta Police Department's Crime Lab.
2. The DEC will contact the GBI crime lab supervisor on a weekly basis to determine if analyzed drug evidence is ready for pick up. The DEC along with an officer or investigator will go to the crime lab to pick up analyzed drug evidence.
3. Crime lab personnel will provide the DEC with an inventory receipt, which lists the contents of the container by the crime lab case number. Both the DEC and the accompanying officer or investigator will sign the receipt. The receipt will be kept on file in the PCU to preserve the chain of custody. The drug evidence will be transported back to the PCU where the DEC,



along with the officer or investigator, will reconcile the exhibits with the State Crime Lab inventory receipt.

4. Any discrepancies (missing evidence, evidence not documented on the receipt, improperly sealed evidence) between the receipt and the drug evidence should be brought to the attention of a state crime lab supervisor. Additionally, the discrepancy should be documented in the form of a memorandum to the PCU commander, and a copy of the memorandum kept with the state crime lab receipt.
5. The drug evidence will then be taken to the drug storage vault where it will be stored pending the disposition of any judicial proceedings. The DEC will establish storage method(s) that will provide for the retrieval of evidence in a timely manner.

4.4.7 Movement of drug evidence to and from the drug storage vault will be documented by the Drug Evidence Custodians so as to maintain chain of custody documentation.

4.5 RELEASE OF PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

4.5.1 Unless held for evidence, Officers in possession of stolen, lost, misplaced or abandoned property should contact the rightful owner/claimant for retrieval. In the event the owner cannot be determined, located, or contacted and the property cannot be returned, the property will be released to the Property Control Unit for security and disposition. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.1f)

4.5.2 The PCU will work in conjunction with all judicial court systems, to obtain, and enter into tracking software, the dispositions of the property/evidence in order to release evidence that is no longer needed for court. All evidence no longer needed for evidentiary purposes in felony cases (with the exception of contraband) will be returned to its lawful owner unless other disposition orders it to be retained, sold, or discarded. (OCGA 17-5-54(e))

In cases with multiple defendants, the evidence will not be converted to property until all defendants have a disposition on record.

4.5.3 When court of competent jurisdiction authorizes the release of evidence or property by court order the individual receiving the order must bring the original court order to Property Control. When a court order is received for any property with a hold for the Asset Forfeiture Unit, the court order must be sent to the Asset Forfeiture Unit.

4.5.4 Within two (2) weeks of receiving personal property or of evidence being converted to property, the PCU will notify owners via U.S mail that their property is available to be picked up and that it will only be held for 90 days after the notification date. (CALEA 84.1.1 G)

4.5.5 To obtain the release of property, a person must show proof of identity such as a current driver's license or other acceptable identification with photograph (approved by supervisor). The person must also provide proof they have a right to have the property and verified by utilizing the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

4.5.6 When someone other than the owner seeks the release of property, he or she must present an original notarized letter of authorization from the owner authorizing the bearer to take custody and listing the property to be released. This individual must also provide proof of identity such as current driver's license or other acceptable identification with a photograph approved by the supervisor.

4.5.7 FIREARMS

1. Before releasing a firearm to an owner, the Property Armorer or responsible supervisor will perform a criminal history check of the owner through the Atlanta Criminal Information Center



(ACIC) to check for any felony or domestic violence convictions or pending charges; and for any other restrictions which would result in the person being prohibited from possessing a firearm. If an evidence firearm is sold at auction or returned to any member of the public, the Property Armorer must notify the APD Crime Lab so that the case status can be updated in the NIBIN system.

- a. Firearms will be released to owners no less than three times a week, on days designated by the Armorer and the Armorer's Supervisor. The eligible hours for release will be from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM. Appointments for firearms are required.

4.5.8 MONEY (RELEASING)

1. When an officer turns in money derived from narcotics or gambling, the receiving property technician will mark it as narcotics/gambling money in the evidence database.
2. Only AFS can authorize the release of money that is placed in "hold" status. After the Asset Forfeiture Unit has released its hold, the money will continue to be held as evidence.
3. When writing checks to return money to arrestees, these procedures will be followed: (1) When a check is greater than \$1,000.00, two supervisors must sign the check, and (2) checks greater than \$5,000.00, the Unit commander must be one of the two signing supervisors.

4.5.9 ALCOHOL

1. Illegal alcoholic beverages not classified as evidence will be destroyed immediately.
2. If they are not claimed after 90 days, the Property Control Unit will destroy alcoholic beverages that are open or have broken seals. The Property Control Unit will notify the Georgia Department of Revenue that legal alcoholic beverages with intact seals are available for disposal. If the Department of Revenue picks up the alcohol, then obtain a signed receipt and file the receipt. If the Revenue Department directs the City to destroy the alcoholic beverages, do so.
3. The destruction of alcoholic beverages will be witnessed by two (2) PCU employees and will be documented in the evidence database.
4. The supervisor assigned to the Disposal component of the PCU will make a report to the PCU commander when alcoholic beverages are destroyed or transported to the Department of Revenue. The report will state the amount, and date that the alcoholic beverages were transported or destroyed. Additionally, the report will list the two (2) Property Control Units employees (witnesses) names and four (4) digit unique identification numbers.

4.5.10 Whenever property or evidence is either permanently or temporarily removed or released, the Property Control commander will ensure that all records, documents, property or evidence control records and files reflect the release or removal status. (CALEA 84.1.5)

4.6 DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

- 4.6.1 The PCU will make reasonable efforts to notify the rightful owner of property prior to its disposal.
- 4.6.2 Any property or evidence condemned through either Federal or State asset forfeiture procedures will be disposed of in accordance with Federal instructions or State court order.



- 4.6.3 The final disposition of found, recovered, and evidentiary property will be accomplished within six months after legal requirements have been met. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.7)
- 4.6.4 The PCU will retain all evidence associated with City ordinance violations and misdemeanor crimes until it is no longer needed for prosecution or until a reasonable period of time has elapsed and then proceed with disposal through the following guidelines:
1. If evidence is found to be more than two years old and associated with a City ordinance violation, the property or evidence will be pulled for disposal.
 2. If evidence is found to be more than four years old and associated with a state misdemeanor, the property or evidence will be pulled for disposition.
 3. If an item of evidence is entered into the RMS system where the owner and victim fields are listed as “Unknown,” the Property Control Unit will hold this evidence for a period of one (1) year. At the conclusion of one year, if the owner and victim fields remain “Unknown,” the Property Control Unit commander has the authority to change the status of the items from evidence to property and pull the items for disposition.
 4. If evidence is found to be from a non-violent felony, and is more than four years old, the evidence will be pulled for disposition.
 5. The PCU commander will notify the City of Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb and Clayton County’s Solicitor’s Office in writing each time that evidence from a case is to be pulled. The Property Control Unit will request notification if the solicitor’s offices feel that the disposal of property or evidence will jeopardize any case.
 6. The PCU will obtain a court order for the disposal of any evidence associated with the violation of City ordinances or misdemeanor or crimes.
- 4.6.5 WEAPONS (Disposal/Destroy)
1. Firearms will be disposed of in accordance with O.C.G.A 17-5-52.1.
 2. The PCU will destroy “knives, metal knuckles and similar weapons” that have not been claimed by their owners pursuant to City Code Section 98-49 (c),
 3. Pursuant to City Code Section 98-49 (b), and O.C.G.A 17-5-51 (Forfeiture of weapons used in commission of crime) the Property Control Unit (as designated by the Chief) will destroy “any dangerous or deadly weapon used in the commission of a crime,” (except firearms), after a year has passed since the conviction or the exhaustion of any appeals in the case.
 - a. During the year waiting period, the weapon can be released only by a court order. Court orders will be filed in the released-property-and-evidence file.
 - b. The technician will record the weapons, showing owner’s name, serial number, incident number, date acquired, and a brief description of the weapon. If the weapon is to be destroyed pursuant to City Code 98-49 (b), the technician will also list the incident number.
 - c. A PCU employee will obtain a court order authorizing the destruction of the weapons.
 - d. Two PCU employees will maintain custody of the weapons until they are destroyed and will witness the destruction. They will document the destruction and file the documentation within the unit.



4.6.6 PURGING OLD NARCOTICS EVIDENCE

1. The DEC will contact the GBI crime lab supervisor and arrange a time for the use of the incinerator. The DEC will prepare an inventory sheet listing the drug evidence to be destroyed by the DOFS lab number or the APD incident number. The DEC and an officer or investigator will then transport the drug evidence to the crime lab where it will be loaded into the incinerator. The DEC will maintain the inventory sheet. An incident report will be generated to document the destruction of the evidence.
2. The PCU commander can destroy any contraband that is not associated with a criminal or civil complaint.
3. The Drug Evidence Custodians (DEC) in coordination with the Administrative Operations commander will destroy all drug evidence that is no longer needed for judicial proceedings.
4. Prior to destruction, the Crime Lab commander or assigned personnel will notify each prosecuting agency with an interest in the drug evidence to be destroyed that the Department intends to destroy specific evidence after a period of at least sixty calendar days. All evidence to be destroyed will be listed in detail. Notification must be documented, i.e., a hand delivery receipt or certified mail with a return receipt.
5. Drug evidence that is of continuing interest to a prosecuting agency will remain in the storage vault until that prosecuting agency no longer has an interest in that evidence.
6. The Chief Administrative Officer, or their designee, will prepare an affidavit to destroy drug evidence and an inventory of the evidence to be destroyed. The affidavit must be signed by a Fulton County Superior Court Judge and filed with that court. Notarized copies of the affidavit will be kept on file in the drug storage vault for at least ten years.
7. Drug evidence will be transported to the incinerator and destroyed in full view of the transporting DEC. The transporting DEC's will scan the individual items indicating that the drug evidence has been destroyed. The inventory sheet will be kept on file in the Crime Lab for a minimum period of ten years.
8. Property Control Unit commander (PCU) or designee can destroy any contraband that is not associated with a criminal or civil complaint. The APD Crime Lab will be notified, and proper documentation will be maintained in the Property Control Unit. The inventory sheet will be kept on file in the Crime Lab for a minimum period of ten years.
9. Drug evidence that is not associated with a defendant or suspect, and not of interest to any neither prosecuting agency nor needed for judicial proceedings can be destroyed as deemed necessary by the Administrative Operations Commander.

4.6.7 Unclaimed Vehicles

Once the Wrecker company contacts the Department of the sale of a vehicle, the Wrecker Compliance employee within Fleet Management Unit, will collect the City's portion of the sales of vehicles, pursuant to Title 40, Chapter 11 of the Code of Georgia, and turn it into Asset Forfeiture.

4.6.8 UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

1. Unclaimed currency and the proceeds received from the sale of any personal or tangible property will be transferred to the City of Atlanta's General Fund. (O.C.G.A.17-5-54)



2. Pursuant to City Code and OCGA, property that is not classified as evidence, or has not been claimed within 90 days and does not require a disposition may be disposed of by destruction, conversion to Department inventory or sale through the PropertyRoom.com™ website.
3. The PCU commander will provide for the sorting of three-month-old property into four categories:
 - a. Needed by the Department or another City agency; to be converted to inventory. Divisions, sections, and units must notify the PCU commander in writing requesting with justification the items needed by their area. The PCU commander and Disposal supervisor have a responsibility to check with appropriate areas when items are listed in this category that are useful and could save the Department money;
 - b. Salable; to be sold at auction.
 - c. Property confiscated under RICO; and
 - d. Broken, not needed, or a health hazard; to be discarded.
4. Conversion to Inventory
 - a. Enter property that is needed by the Department on the inventory. The cost center will be "conf."
 - b. Notify Department and other City agencies by telephone that the property they need is available. The representative of the agency picking up the property must sign a receipt for it.
 - c. An item returned from inventory will be processed for sale or destruction.
5. Police Auction
 - a. By command memorandum, the Chief Administration Officer and the Administrative Operations Commander will establish the process for storing, selling, and documenting the items to be sold on the PropertyRoom.com™ website, or other auction service, as contracted with the City.
 - b. PropertyRoom.com™ Facilitated Auctions
 - PropertyRoom.com™ Internet site is a public meeting place where persons can sell and buy property. The PropertyRoom.com™ website is primarily a venue for law enforcement and other government agencies to conduct auctions and bidders to bid on auctions.
 - Unless otherwise expressly stated by PropertyRoom.com™, PropertyRoom.com™ is involved only as a facilitator and agent in the transaction between buyers and sellers. As a result, PropertyRoom.com™ has limited control over the ability of buyers to engage in any transaction over the Website.
 - PropertyRoom.com™ cannot and does not control whether buyers will complete the purchase or sale of items upon which they have bid. Because user authentication on the Internet is difficult, and many times impossible, PropertyRoom.com™ cannot and does not confirm that each user is who they claim to be.
 - c. All items sold must first be entered on the PCU database.



- d. Upon inquiry, to verify that an item was sold, a Property Control employee will have ready access to the following information and may release it:
 - The date the item was originally received by Property Control;
 - The date the item was placed in storage and removed from storage; and
 - The date sold and the amount it was sold for
- e. All money received from the police auction will be deposited to the City's General Fund except for the RICO/forfeited items sold. These funds will be accounted for in agency records and kept separate by the agency pursuant to legal authority and deposited into the appropriate APD Asset Forfeiture Trust fund. The separate check provided from PropertyRoom.com will be processed through PCU's Central Cashier after APD's Fiscal Unit prepares the appropriate revenue sheets. (CALEA 84.1.8)
- f. No employee, immediate family member, or representative of any employee of the Atlanta Police Department will participate in police auctions that dispose of seized property.

4.7 PROPERTY/EVIDENCE FOR COURT – OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES. RETURNING PROCEDURES.

4.7.1 Evidence to Court (Non- Drug Evidence)

1. Investigators requiring the release of evidence for Court purposes must submit a Property Release request to the Evidence Custodian no less than 24 hours in advance.
2. Evidence will be returned in original packages with tags attached. Should the court retain the evidence, investigators will return the computer-generated property release form signed by the appropriate prosecutor or court officer.

4.7.2 Investigators should release items from evidence to Property Control Unit within 24 hours after being notified of the disposition of the case in court if the evidence is no longer necessary to the prosecution of the case.

4.7.3 When evidence is returned, the receiving technician will document in the evidence database the date of return and who returned the evidence.

4.8 HOLDS AND FORFEITURES

4.8.1 Sworn employees will turn in all monies and personal property subject to seizure by the Asset Forfeiture Squad to the Property Control Unit. The PCU will ensure that a "hold" is placed on all items that the AFS requested to be placed on hold.

4.8.2 The PCU's Duties in Regard to Holding Currency and Personal Property are, but not limited to:

1. Utilizing APD's property and evidence RMS system to indicate for each currency case in which the Asset Forfeiture Unit advises that it will "Hold" or "Release". The RMS system will indicate/note AFU's "Hold" or "Release" decision. On AFU's request, PCU will provide copies of envelopes or records from APD's RMS system, to include but not limited by: any printout from the property or evidence database of the confiscated monies or property, copies of money envelopes remitted by officers, any copy of condemnation request PCU has received, or when applicable, a final order of forfeiture and or default judgement from a Superior Court.



2. PCU shall give AFS employees appropriate access to the RMS view and confirm all “Holds” and “Releases” have been noted in the database. Copies of condemnation requests and final orders of forfeiture received by PCU will be maintained in PCU’s files. If the PCU does not have the proper documentation from the Asset Forfeiture Unit to hold drug monies after 20 days for State seizures, and 60 days for Federal seizures, and gambling monies of \$500.00 or more after 10 days, the Property Control Unit is authorized to release the currency and property (provided all other conditions of release have been satisfied). The Asset Forfeiture Unit will be notified before any currency or property with a drug hold is released.
 3. Notify the Asset Forfeiture Unit within 24 hours after currency has been processed.
 4. Place a sixty (60) day "Hold" after being directed by the Asset Forfeiture Unit on seizures forwarded to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
 5. The receiving clerk will forward copies of the police reports and photograph(s) submitted by sworn personnel to the Property Control Unit’s Asset Forfeiture Coordinator.
 6. The PCU will update the Property Control Unit’s RMS system to indicate pending district attorney’s actions and file copies of forfeiture action documents.
- 4.8.3 The Criminal Investigations Division commander will ensure that all items seized meeting state and federal forfeiture guidelines are processed in a timely manner and those items seized that does not meet state or federal guidelines are released.
- 4.8.4 The Asset Forfeiture Squads supervisor is responsible or completing an evidence pull daily of the property / evidence submitted from the day prior. From this pull, Asset Forfeiture will check the cases, read reports, and select which cases fit the requirements for seizure.
- 4.8.5 Within 30 days from the date of drug money seizures, and 10 days of gambling money seizures, the AFS will send a memorandum to the Property Control Unit to “Hold” or “Release” currency over \$500, and include whether the seizure is a State or Federal seizure (cases forwarded for state or Federal seizures can be held up to 60 days from seizure).
- 4.8.6 Within three (3) days after receiving the court’s final disposition, the AFS will send a copy of the final order of forfeiture or default judgment from the "Courts of Jurisdiction" to PCU.
- 4.8.7 Release of Currency Holds
1. All monies being held pending court actions will not be released without a court order from the Court of Jurisdiction.
 2. Monies being held as evidence and being released by the Asset Forfeiture Unit will still be held by PCU as evidence.
 3. All monies being held pending ten (10), 20, or 60 days "Holds" will be subject to release if the forfeiture action was not filed within the time period required by law.
 4. The PCU Accountant, or their designee, will distribute funds in accordance with court orders. Copies of the final order of forfeiture of default judgement and records of disbursements will be maintained on file with PCU.
 5. A PCU supervisor will review all releases of seized funds and will ensure that releases follow guidelines within this policy.



4.9 VEHICLES HOLDS AND STORAGE FOR INVESTIGATIONS (APD.SOP.3068)

4.9.1 General Cage Rules

1. The PCU will maintain custody of the key for the Identification (ID) Unit vehicle storage cage and maintain documentation of all persons who utilized the key and/or gain access to the vehicle storage cage. The key will only be released to the ID Unit employees or the PCU supervisors.
2. Vehicles impounded for drugs or gambling devices can be held for thirty (30) days before filing for seizure. If the vehicle is not seized, it will be released back to the impound lot of the original wrecking company.
3. When the Department has filed for condemnation, only the Fleet Management commander, can release an impounded vehicle. Before the release can be granted, the Fleet Management commander must receive authorization from the District Attorney (DA). The Fleet Management commander will file the original release form approved by the District Attorney.
4. Supervisors approving holds on vehicles in the field will ensure that holds are proper and that the appropriate unit or squad has been properly indicated on the impound report and copies of appropriate paperwork are forwarded to the affected squad or unit.
5. The PCU Technicians receiving impound reports with vehicle holds will check the established guideline to ensure a “hold” is appropriate. If unsure about the hold, the Property Control Unit Technician will take the report to the on-duty Property supervisor for a decision. The request to “hold” a vehicle must be approved before placing it on the system. The Property supervisor will make contact with the impounding officer or supervisor approving the hold before placing the hold in the system.
6. The PCU supervisor/vehicle cage custodian will reconcile the vehicle cage daily to ensure all applicable SOP’s are followed regarding vehicle storage.

4.9.2 CAGE INTAKE PROCESS FOR HOLDS

1. Prior to placing the vehicle in a storage cage, the primary investigating officer or designee, will:
 - a. Complete, in its entirety, the APD Vehicle Record Impound Report (Form APD 005) at the scene of the incident.
 - b. Create a property page and print a barcode prior to the vehicle being placed in the vehicle storage cage. (The PCU supervisor will then complete the vehicle access journal and add the barcode into the logbook.)
 - c. Advise ACIC that the vehicle is placed on-hold/ impounded.
2. The officer completing the impound report must accompany, or follow, the contracted wrecker to the appropriate vehicle storage cage remain with the vehicle until it is properly secured in the appropriate vehicle storage cage or relieved by another officer to protect evidence.
3. Employees will not place a vehicle in a vehicle storage cage unless specifically directed to do so by the PCU Commander, or their designee.
4. Commercial vehicles that cannot fit in the vehicle storage cage and need to be secured for evidence or inspection can be placed in the parking area next to the PCU with prior permission from the PCU supervisor on duty, and have the same security measures taken, as if it were secured inside a storage cage.



5. The primary investigating officer or investigator is responsible for making arrangements with the ID Unit to have the vehicle processed for evidence as soon as practicable, if necessary.
6. If the vehicle is on hold for the Asset Forfeiture Squad, the supervisor of the responding officer will forward a copy of the incident report and impound sheet via email to the AFS by the end of the watch. FIU@atlantaga.gov
 - a. The AFS will determine if the vehicle meets the required criteria. If so, the AFS will prepare a vehicle move request and forward it to the Fleet Management Unit. The AFS will execute the move request and contact the contract wrecker lot to arrange an inspection of the vehicle prior to moving it to the Asset Forfeiture Investigations vehicle storage cage.

4.9.3 ACCESS FOR PROCESSING AND INVESTIGATIVE PURPOSES.

1. Vehicles will only be placed in the designated ID vehicle storage cage when it is necessary for evidence processing or other investigative purposes, and only after authorization from an ID Unit employee. The on-scene supervisor will contact the Identification Unit to determine if the vehicle can be processed at the scene or needs to be placed in the vehicle storage cage.
2. An ID Unit employee will meet the officer at the vehicle storage cage to secure the vehicle. If an Identification Unit employee is unable to meet the officer within a reasonable period of time, the officer will notify a PCU supervisor who will meet the officer at the vehicle storage cage to secure the vehicle. The PCU acts as custodian of the key for the ID Unit's vehicle storage cage; entry into the ID Unit's vehicle storage cage will only be allowed with permission of an Identification Unit employee.
3. The ID Unit will make arrangements with the primary investigating officer to have the vehicle processed for evidence as soon as practicable.
4. Upon completion of CSI processing, the PCU supervisor, or their designee, will add the case number to the upper passenger side of the windshield with a yellow grease pencil. If preservation of evidence would be compromised a red evidentiary tag with the case number can be affixed to the windshield wiper versus utilizing the grease pencil.

4.9.4 HOLD RELEASE FROM THE CAGE

1. A hold placed on an impounded vehicle by another police agency may be cleared with authorization from the other agency. If the agency designates to whom the vehicle should be released, that person must have appropriate identification.
2. Other holds placed on impounded vehicles must be released by the agency or unit placing the hold before the PCU releases the vehicle.
3. The primary investigating officer or investigator is responsible for removing any hold that was placed on the vehicle when applicable.
4. After the vehicle is processed for evidence and can be released, the contract wrecker service that originally towed the vehicle will be notified to meet the officer at the vehicle storage cage and transport the vehicle to a City-contracted wrecker impound yard.
5. The impounding officer or assigned case investigator must notify the PCU Commander and the vehicle owner upon completion of the case or if the vehicle will not be subject to an asset forfeiture seizure. The owner must be notified the vehicle is released for pickup. The officer/investigator will



coordinate the return to owner (RTO) directly from the Annex or transfer the vehicle to the appropriate contract wrecker service for retrieval.

4.10 CLAIMS (LOCATING MISSING PROPERTY OR EVIDENCE)

4.10.1 When property and/or evidence cannot be located, the following process will be initiated by the PCU commander:

1. The PCU commander will initiate and direct an immediate search for missing property and/or evidence. The search will include, but is not limited to, creating a file for the item and reviewing the records in the PCU database and manual files. Copies of all paperwork and actions taken will be made a part of the file and kept by the PCU commander.
2. If the item is located, the PCU commander will close the file indicating where the item was located, and any actions taken for the item not being in its proper location. If the item is not located and all methods used have been exhausted and documented in the file, then the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) will be contacted by the PCU commander and they may conduct an investigation and recommend actions based on the investigation.
3. When property is requested by a citizen and it is not located and all means to locate the item have been exhausted, the PCU commander will give the citizen a “Clerk of Council” Claim Form (City of Atlanta Law Department form), and the number to the City Attorney’s office (404-330-6400) in addition to calling OPS. A Supplementary incident report on RMS should be completed using the original case number on the lost or missing item(s).
4. The PCU commander will explain to the citizen to attach a brief letter describing the item that could not be located, an estimated value, and any proof of the value such as a sales receipt or quote. This procedure can also be obtained by going to the main City of Atlanta website (<http://www.Atlantaga.gov>), click on “Departments”, then “Law”, and select “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).” It is the first question asked and answered.
5. The PCU commander will be the liaison on behalf of the Atlanta Police Department, and the Department of Law until the claim is settled. The PCU commander shall familiarize him or herself with the appropriate city attorney assigned by the Department of Law to handle claims of this nature, initiate the call to report the citizen’s claim, and send any requested documents to the Department of Law representative in a timely manner.
6. For items of evidence that are not located, the PCU commander or designee will appear in the appropriate court and testify when requested to attest to the actions taken to locate the item(s) of evidence and the procedures of the PCU.
7. All files created for items not located become a part of the chain of custody and therefore must be maintained indefinitely.
8. The search for items that are not located will be ongoing and documented in the file(s). If an item of Property is located after a claim is settled with a citizen, the item is considered city property and will be handled in accordance with O.C.G.A. 17-7-50 et al. If the item is Evidence, the appropriate officer, investigator, or the District Attorney’s office shall be contacted immediately and notified of such.

4.11 WEAPON STORAGE AREA

4.11.1 In addition to the weapons kept by each line unit, the Property Control Unit keeps a reserve of weapons, ammunition, and related equipment in secure storage.



- 4.11.2 The Property Control Unit Armory officer will keep this equipment clean, in good repair and ready for swift issue in an emergency. A tag will be attached to each item of equipment, with all of the information needed for a record of emergency issue and a place for the officer's signature.
- 4.11.3 The PCU commander, or the supervisor in charge, will issue equipment from the gun vault and other secure storage only in an emergency.
1. A deputy chief or higher authority must verify the emergency by telephone or through Communications. A deputy chief or higher authority must specify what equipment is to be issued to what units.
 2. A PCU supervisor will issue the specified equipment to supervisors of the authorized units, require the recipients to sign the receipt for weapons, and note the other equipment issued.
- 4.11.4 A PCU supervisor will monitor the return of emergency equipment.
1. The unit to which emergency equipment was issued must return it or explain its loss in a report. Damage to equipment and the use of expendable items such as ammunition must also be explained in a report. Equipment must be cleaned prior to its return to PCU
 2. A PCU employee will give a receipt for the equipment returned and will record the date and the equipment returned.
 3. The PCU Armory officer will examine all equipment and store it.

4.12 RECORDS, AUDITS, AND INSPECTION

- 4.12.1 The Property Control Room will maintain a records system through the barcode system, that reflects the location of the property, date and time when the property was received and releases, character, type and amount of property on hand, and chain of custody from the time the property was stored until it's destruction and/or final disposition. (CALEA 84.1.5)
- 4.12.2 At least semi-annually, the PCU commander, or a designee, will conduct an inspection to determine adherence to procedures governing the control of property and evidence. The inspection is conducted to determine that the storage areas are being maintained in a clean and orderly fashion, that the integrity of the property is being maintained, that provisions of Department, division, and section directives concerning the Property Control Unit are being followed, that property is being protected from damage or deterioration, that proper accountability procedures are being maintained, and that property having no further evidentiary value is being disposed of promptly. The semi-annual inspection reports should be completed and submitted by January 15th and July 15th of each calendar year for the preceding six months of activity. The PCU commander will forward a copy of the inspection report to the SIU and PRAU commanders and will keep copies on file for five years (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6 a).
- 4.12.3 When a new commander is assigned to the PCU, the new commander and a representative from the Staff Inspections Unit, who is designated by the Chief of Police, will conduct an audit of the property and evidence within 30 days of the new commander being assigned to the PCU. The purpose of the audit is to ensure the continuity of custody, and not to require the accounting of every single item of property. The audit should be a sampling of the total amount of general property or evidence and high risk (e.g., money, precious metals, jewelry, firearms, and drugs) property records under Atlanta Police's custody. The High Risk Items Sample Table (see Appendix) referenced by CALEA should be used to determine the appropriate sample size for the



high risk items. An error rate that exceeds four (4) percent will require a full inventory of high-risk items. A sufficient amount of general property or evidence will also be represented in the change of custodian audit. The newly appointed commander should ensure that all records are current and properly annotated and should record all discrepancies prior to the assumption of property accountability. The PCU commander will complete the report and will forward a copy of it to the CAO, and PRAU commanders and will keep a copy on file until a new Property Control commander is appointed or for five years, whichever is longer.
(CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6b)

4.12.4 Annually, the Staff Inspections Unit will conduct an audit of the property and evidence held by the Department. The purpose of the audit is to ensure the integrity of the property control system, not to account for every item of property, and shall be a significant representative sampling of property, including high risk items. The Staff Inspections Unit will give copies of the audit to the CAO PRAU, and PCU commanders and will keep copies of these audits for five years. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6c)

4.12.5 As directed by the Chief of Police, the Staff Inspections Unit will conduct an unannounced inspection of property storage areas at least once per year. The inspection will focus on property accountability procedures, security cleanliness, orderliness, and will include a comparison of randomly selected records. The unannounced inspection will target various areas under the control of the Property Control Unit and the required procedures; to include, the Money Vault (precious metals, jewelry, checks, credit cards, and currency), Armory (Weapons Storage Area), Drug Vault, Temporary Cage, Property Cage, Evidence Cage, Disposal Room, Cooler or Freezer, and Remote Property Lockers in support of the other inspections, inventories, and audits. The Staff Inspections Unit will give copies of the inspection reports to the PRAU and PCU commanders and will keep copies of these reports for five years.
(CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6d)

5. DEFINITIONS

- Jewelry is considered articles of gold, silver, precious stones, etc, for personal adornment. In addition, any ornaments for personal adornment which include necklaces, cufflinks, tie pins, bracelets, rings (e.g., made of precious metals set with gems or imitation gems), and watches, including those of base metals, glass, plastic or the like. This will not include obvious costume jewelry or toy jewelry.
- Accessories: Items such as baking soda, latex gloves, and disposable trash containers require by the Property Control Unit to maintain in stocks for field drug testing.
- Audit: A documented accounting of high-risk items (e.g., cash, precious metals, jewelry, firearms, and drugs) and other evidence and non-agency property to establish that all property is accounted for and records can reasonably be assumed correct. For high-risk items this requires a two-tailed random sampling method be applied to achieve a 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of +or- 3 percent. If the sampling method reveals discrepancies in the records of the evidence or property that exceeds a 4% error rate, a 100% inventory must be conducted on all high-risk items and additional sampling of items in general storage to the satisfaction of the CEO, to re-establish the accuracy of all records. A significant, representative sampling of property including high-risk items. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6)
- Cost Center: The basic component of the Department for the purpose of budgeting and cost accounting. The Department's cost centers are the zones, the sections, the Executive Protection Unit and the administrative offices of the Department and the divisions. An additional cost center is used for major equipment purchases
- Court of Jurisdiction: The court having jurisdiction in the county where the seizure was made.



- Immediate Family: The spouse, domestic partner registered under section 94-133 of the City of Atlanta Municipal Code, and dependents, natural or adopted children of an official or employee for the City.
- Inventory: A detailed itemized list of agency owned or controlled property in possession of the agency, which includes a definition (or value) of what is to be itemized, and a written certification by the person conducting the listing. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6)
- Inspection: A careful and critical examination; a formal review of all components of a particular requirement and an examination of their application. (CALEA 6th ed., Standard 84.1.6)
- Hold: The physical securing of a vehicle until it has been processed for evidence or the investigation surrounding the vehicle has been adjudicated.
- Personal Equipment: The uniform and related items that are issued to be worn or carried by one employee.
- Special purchase items: Items for which the Department has no regular vendor.
- Supplies: Those items and materials that are owned by the City and assigned to the Department that are expendable, such as pens, forms, batteries and gloves; personal equipment is not included in "supplies."

6. CANCELLATION

- APD.SOP.6030 – Property and Evidence Control - 3/2/2021
- Issuing Firearms 4.7 -- Placed it into Weapons 3040 – Chapter 4.12
- Lost or Stolen City issued Service Weapons 4.8 – Placed into Weapons 3040- Chapter 4.13
- Damaged or Malfunctioning City Issued (4.8.1)– Placed into Weapons 3040 – Chapter 4.14
- City issued Second Weapon (4.8.2) – Placed into Weapons APD.SOP.3040 – Chapter 4
- K9 Narcotics and Training – Placed into K9 APD.SOP.5141
- Central Cashier (Section 4..1.2) removed and placed into Revenue Reporting APD.SOP.6161
- ARCHIVED – APD.SOP.6160 – Drug Testing and Destruction Effective 9/11/2020 - relevant procedure merged into this policy and Archived
- ARCHIVED – APD.SOP.3068 - Vehicle storage for investigative purposes (merged into this policy and archived)
- ARCHIVED – Form APD 0600B – Property Receipt is no longer required.

7. REFERENCE

NA