

LEESBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS AND GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL		
General Order Number: 114	Section: ADMINISTRATION	Effective Date: AUGUST 2022
Title: PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE CONTROL		
Accreditation Standards: ADM.16.01, ADM.16.02, ADM.16.03, ADM.16.04, OPR.12.04		
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I. PROPERTY CONTROL

- A. It is the responsibility of all members of the Leesburg Police to handle and control all property directed to them in an efficient and safe manner, ensuring controlled and accurate storage and retrieval. All officers will receive training on property control and proper procedures for the packaging and labeling of property/evidence prior to storage. Guidelines will also be posted in the temporary property area.
- B. Officers Responsibilities.
Officers will be responsible for properly inventorying, packaging and labeling all items collected or recovered as property or evidence. By following these guidelines property and evidence will not be tampered with, contaminated or destroyed.
- C. Officers shall return to headquarters as soon as practical after taking custody of property or evidence. All evidence/property and the original property form are required to be placed under the control of the property and evidence control function before the officer ends his/her tour of duty. The recovering officer shall place the property or evidence in an appropriately sized envelope, bag or box. If the item is too large or impractical to package, a completed property tag shall be securely affixed to the item. If an envelope/bag is not practical, a property tag shall be completed and securely affixed to the item. The recovering officer shall document all property taken into custody on the property form. The original property form shall accompany property when it is stored in the temporary property area, and a copy of the property form shall be forwarded to the Records Section. When bicycles are entered, the original property form shall be forwarded to the property officer. A case report or case supplement detailing the circumstances by which the property came into the Agency's possession, shall be submitted for all property that is entered into the property room.
- D. All property or evidence shall be stored in the temporary property area except for bicycles, vehicles, and large quantities of hazardous materials. Bicycles will be stored in the secured parking lot behind police headquarters. Vehicles will be stored in the secured impound lot at the town shop when seized by police. Large quantities of hazardous materials will be stored at the discretion of the team supervisor in consultation with the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Services.
- E. Evidence which is collected and which requires special processing by the Department's evidence technician shall be forwarded to the property room in the same manner as other evidence collected. Officers requiring such processing shall contact the evidence technician directly and request that the evidence be processed.
- F. Recovering officers shall, when applicable, check all items taken into custody with NCIC/VCIN to determine if they are stolen.
- G. It is the responsibility of the submitting officer to notify the property officer when the disposition changes. Officers shall utilize a Supplemental Report to document these changes.
- H. For property that may be released to the owner, the **recovering officer** shall attempt to notify the owner and arrange for the return of the property. Efforts made to notify the owner and the actual release of property will be documented with a Supplemental Report. Any property that bears a serial or identifying number will be queried through VCIN/NCIC by the recovering officer prior to being released. If

property is released, it shall be signed for by the owner on the original property form and the form will be forwarded to the Records Section.

- I. The Chief of Police shall designate a property officer(s) who will be responsible for the property and evidence management function.
- J. Property Officer Responsibilities
 1. The property officer shall be accountable for control of all property and evidence stored by the Department. A daily review of newly entered property or evidence shall be conducted by the property officer to ensure that the property or evidence is properly documented and stored. All property received by the property officer will be recorded in the property room records by report number.
 2. The property officer shall maintain a clean, orderly and secure property room and bicycle storage area. The property officer shall take the necessary action to ensure that property and evidence taken into custody is protected from damage, deterioration or theft.
 3. Access to the property room is restricted to the Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee, the designated property officer, and the assistant property officer. Entry by other personnel without documented escort is prohibited.
 4. The property officer shall maintain separate secured lockers with added protection within the evidence room for the storage of exceptional, valuable or sensitive items of property i.e.; money, narcotics, jewelry, gemstones, and weapons.
 5. The property officer will provide for the storage of perishable items in the property room.
 6. The property officer will be responsible for the maintenance of records of items taken into custody by the Department. These records shall track the item from entry into the system through the final disposition.
 7. The property officer shall on a quarterly basis review the property files for items that have no evidentiary value or are unclaimed. These cases will be forwarded to the originating officer for a final disposition release.
 8. The property officer will ensure that final disposition of found, recovered and evidentiary property is accomplished within six months after all legal requirements have been satisfied. All exceptions to this will be called to the attention of the Chief of Police.
 9. The property officer will ensure compliance with the Code of Virginia as it pertains to the property and evidence function.
 10. The property officer and/or ID technician will maintain a sufficient supply of materials for sealing, packaging, tagging and logging all property and evidence taken into custody.
- K. When submitting money, valuable jewelry, precious metals and gemstones into property/evidence, all officers shall place the property/evidence in a locked locker in the temporary property area. A separate gun locker is located in the temporary property area for the temporary storage of weapons. The property officer shall store the preceding items in a separate secured area in the property room.
- L. The recovering officer shall package any suspected controlled substance in a tamper-proof sealed envelope/bag. The controlled substance shall be weighed or counted for quantity when appropriate. Items such as water pipes or bongs should have all holes closed with tape. Freshly cut or living plants shall not be placed in a plastic bag prior to being put into the sealed envelope/bag unless seized or found in such bag. If officers are not sure of packaging requirements, the property officer or ID technician should be contacted. The crime laboratory may also be contacted for advice from a drug chemist if needed.
- M. Only material which is to be introduced as evidence at trial shall be forwarded for laboratory analysis. Material which is not expected to be introduced as evidence at trial shall be stored in the property room until a destruction order is obtained.
- N. Material shall not be destroyed prior to any criminal proceeding. Material shall be transported to the crime laboratory in accordance with General Order 213 Collection and Preservation of Evidence.
- O. All officers shall inspect all tamper proof sealed envelopes that contain controlled substances for signs of tampering every time that the envelope is handled.

- P. Material that is not evidence shall be stored in a tamper-proof, sealed envelope/bag and the officer shall write "For Destruction" on the face of the envelope/bag and property form. The officer shall document the reason the material may be destroyed on the property form and the Incident Report or Supplemental Report.
- Q. The recovering officer shall submit a Request for Destruction Order (LPD Form #437) to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney after legal requirements have been satisfied, for all narcotics submitted into property. The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney will forward a Destruction Order to the property officer. The property officer will destroy the evidence appropriately and return the executed Destruction Order back to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney and Circuit Court. A departmental record will be kept in the Records Section of all property/evidence disposal. The disposal record will be signed by the property officer and at least one witness.
- R. Property and evidence may be temporarily released from the property room for purposes such as laboratory examination, discovery, and court appearances. Officers needing a temporary release of property or evidence shall submit a written request to the Property Officer or his/her designee.

II. PROPERTY SECURITY

All property taken into custody by the Department shall be stored in the property room, excluding vehicles and hazardous materials as addressed in this General Order and General Order 213 Collection and Preservation of Evidence, and bicycles as addressed below.

A. Property Room.

Only the Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee, property officer and assistant property officer will have access to the property room. Inspection or audit personnel may only enter the property room in the company of a property officer. Only the property officers will have access to the secured lockers located in the property room. The property officers will record on the property form all movement of property between the property rooms and the details pertaining to property received or relinquished. The door to the property room shall be closed and locked.

B. Impound Lot.

The Leesburg Police Impound Lot is located at the Town of Leesburg Maintenance Facility (Town Shop). The impound lot remains locked at all times. All property stored at the impound lot will be tagged and logged in by the recovering officer. All property released from the impound lot will be logged out by the releasing officer. The LPD impound logbook and property tags will be maintained in a secured box at the impound lot.

C. Bicycle Storage.

Bicycles taken into custody shall be secured in the rear parking lot behind police headquarters in accordance with this general order. A property form shall be turned in to the Property Officer.

D. Refrigerator.

The property officer will maintain a working refrigerator in the property room for the storage of perishable items such as urine specimens and blood samples. When no property officer is available or on duty, perishable items will be temporarily stored in the working refrigerators in the temporary property area. The property officer will move the perishable evidence to the large refrigerator within the property room as soon as possible.

III. TEMPORARY PROPERTY AREA

The temporary property area is accessible by any officer and shall be utilized to store property or evidence taken into custody when the property officer is not available. All property shall be stored in the locked lockers in the temporary property area. The property officer will transfer property from the temporary property area to the property room each workday.

IV. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT RECORDS

- A. The property officer will maintain a records system, which consists of files of original property forms. These files indicate the character, type, and amount of property on hand, the date and time that property

is received or released, the chain of custody of property through its final disposition, the dates and results of all inspections and inventories of property and audits of records, and the location of all property stored in the property room.

- B. When property has been returned or disposed of, the original property form shall be forwarded to the Records Section by the property officer. The original property form shall then be filed in the case file in the Records Section

V. PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

- A. Quarterly, the Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee will make a routine inspection of the property room. This inspection will ensure that proper record keeping, accountability of evidence, property storage, cleanliness, and property disposal methods are followed. Problems found during these inspections will be documented and corrected to ensure that the records are complete and properly annotated.
- B. When a new property officer or property key holder is appointed, an inventory of the property room will be conducted. This inventory will be performed jointly by the newly appointed property officer or property key holder and a designee appointed by the Chief of Police. All weapons, monies, and narcotics will be accounted for on an individual basis. All other evidence and records will be randomly checked for accountability.
- C. The Chief of Police shall designate a supervisor of equal or greater rank than the property officer, and not directly connected with property control to conduct an annual audit of the property room. The audit shall consist of a random check of items to ensure the integrity of the system.
- D. At least twice annually, the Chief of Police or designee not routinely or directly connected with property and control, will conduct unannounced inspections of the property rooms. A random comparison of records with physical property should be the focal point of the inspection. A variety of activities should receive attention during each successive inspection in an attempt to not examine the same activities repeatedly.

VI. AGENCY-OWNED PROPERTY

- A. Property Accountability.
The Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee is responsible for inventory control of the Department's property. These responsibilities shall include:
 - 1. Proper documentation of the accession of all capital or major items;
 - 2. Proper documentation of the deletion of all capital or major items;
 - 3. Proper issuance of employees' uniforms and equipment allotment and the maintenance of uniform and equipment records;
 - 4. Proper documentation and disposition of damaged, excess or surplus assets;
 - 5. Records maintenance for all departmental property, equipment and assets;
 - 6. Conducting an annual inventory in compliance with Town of Leesburg guidelines;
 - 7. Reporting discrepancies to the Chief of Police.
- B. Property Requisition.
 - 1. The Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee shall be responsible for the requisitioning of Departmental supplies, equipment, and services. All requests for supplies, equipment and services will be in accordance with the Town of Leesburg, Code of Ordinances, and the policies and procedures established by the Finance Department.
 - 2. The Administration and Support Services Division commander or designee is responsible for the accounting, acquisition, receipt, inspection, storage and issuance of departmental property and equipment.
 - 3. Receipt of Department uniforms and equipment shall be documented and signed for. The return or re-issuance of such equipment shall be recorded and signed for.
- C. Operational Readiness.
The Administration and Support Services Division commander shall ensure that stored property and equipment is maintained in a state of operational readiness and that a satisfactory complement of

expendable materials are maintained and available as needed. All personnel are responsible for maintaining their assigned equipment in a state of operational readiness.

D. Media/Technology Equipment – Sanitization and Destruction.

To protect sensitive and classified information, employees, and the Leesburg Police Department, all physical media containing sensitive information, to include equipment that processes, stores, and/or transmits Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) and classified and sensitive data, shall be sanitized, that is, overwritten at least three times, incinerated, or the digital media will be degaussed prior to disposal. Inoperable digital media shall be destroyed (cut up, shredded, incinerated, etc.). Documentation of the steps taken to sanitize or destroy electronic media shall be maintained by the Police Information Technology Systems Administrator. Sanitization or destruction shall be witnessed or carried out by authorized Department personnel.