

<b>MESA POLICE</b>  Department Policy Manual	<b>Impounding Evidence &amp; Property – Special Handling</b>	<b>DPM 3.2.50</b> Effective 02/20/2013 Revised 10/21/2024
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## 1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for impounding property and evidence requiring special handling. Refer to [EVI 1.7 MPD Evidence Section Packaging & Submission Guidelines](#) for examples of properly packaged items.

**\*\*\* PACKAGE THESE ITEMS SEPARATELY \*\*\***

## 2. MONEY/CURRENCY

### 2.1 General Guidelines

- A. Members shall follow the guidelines set forth in this policy when submitting money, regardless of its origin or authenticity.
- B. Submit to the Evidence Section as soon as possible.
- C. Legitimate US currency must be entered in RMS under a Securities tag.
- D. Members shall document the quantity of each denomination for legitimate US currency only using the denomination details box under the Securities tag.
- E. Counterfeit and foreign currency should reflect a value of \$0.
- F. Members and supervisors (sworn or professional staff) who sign packages containing money are responsible and accountable for the final documented amount listed on the packages and in RMS.

### 2.2 Submission Requirements

- A. Members shall package all money separately from other items.
- B. Amounts larger than **\$1000.00** must be submitted to the Evidence Warehouse lockers or transferred directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
- C. Members shall count all money in the presence of a Department member and/or a supervisor to verify the amount. A supervisor's signature on the package is required.
- D. Members may utilize the paper money counter and/or coin counter located in the packaging room at the Evidence Warehouse to assist with the counting of money. For large amounts of bills, contact Asset Forfeiture to use their currency counter.
  1. The money should be counted twice using the counting machines to ensure accuracy.

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2. If the paper money counter and/or coin counter were used, this should be documented in a departmental report (GO) or supplemental report.
  - a. Identify member who witnessed count.
  - b. The quantity of each denomination shall be documented (five \$20 bills, ten \$100 bills, etc.).
- E. In addition, the money will be counted in the presence of the affected person, when available, and documented in the GO or supplemental report.

### 2.3 Member Responsibilities

- A. Create an item in RMS.
  1. Choose the appropriate property report status. Counterfeit currency shall be submitted as destruction.
  2. Select the Securities type for legitimate currency, select Article type for counterfeit.
  3. Choose the appropriate IBR code (20 – Money, for legitimate currency).
  4. Choose the appropriate Security Type.
  5. Enter the total number of bills/coins for each item into the denomination details field. This will automatically calculate the denomination and value.
  6. For foreign currency, the value should remain zero.
  7. Enter in the Country/Issuer.
  8. Enter the description of the item (i.e., "\$100 US Dollars"; this field is mandatory).
  9. Print the barcodes and attach to the packaging.
- B. Place the packaged item into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.

### 2.4 Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. Count the money to verify the amount listed by the submitting member.
- B. Ensure the money is properly documented in RMS. Ensure that the dollar amount on the barcode matches the handwritten value on the package.
- C. Sign name and member ID# in the appropriate field on the clear heat sealable envelope.

### 2.5 Packaging

- A. Whenever possible, members shall package all money (regardless of its origin or authenticity) in 8" x 12" clear heat sealable envelopes. Package foreign money separately from US currency.
  1. Display small amounts of paper money in the envelope so the amount can be verified without opening the envelope.
    - a. **Do not use** any tape or staples to secure the paper money.

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- b. Larger amounts of paper money may be packaged in stacks inside the clear heat sealable envelopes.
2. Each clear heat sealable envelope shall have a separate Securities tag# created in RMS.

### 3. COUNTERFEIT/ALTERED CURRENCY

Refer to [DPM 3.1.105 Counterfeit Currency Incidents](#) for investigation and submission of counterfeit/altered currency.

### 4. JEWELRY & SMALL VALUABLES

#### 4.1 General Guidelines

- A. Submit to the Evidence Section as soon as possible.
- B. Package jewelry items separately from other items.
- C. Create a “Jewelry” tag through RMS.
  1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
  2. Use IBR code 17 for jewelry/precious metals.
  3. Enter in the Jewelry item code.
  4. Enter the description of the jewelry using generic terms such as “yellow metal,” “white stone,” etc.
- D. Print the barcode and attach to the packaging.
- C. Place the item into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.

#### 4.2 Packaging

- A. Package jewelry from different owners in separate packages and submit as separate items.
- B. Package and display all jewelry in clear heat sealable envelopes so that all items can be clearly seen without opening the envelope.

### 5. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

#### 5.1 General Guidelines

- A. Submit to the Evidence Section as soon as possible.
- B. **All controlled substances seized from individuals who are in custody shall be submitted at the Evidence Warehouse.**
- C. For Medical Marijuana and related paraphernalia, refer to **Section 5.2 Medical Marijuana & Related Paraphernalia** below.

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- D. Wear gloves whenever handling controlled substances and/or paraphernalia.
- E. All substances will be dry prior to being packaged and submitted to the Evidence Section.
- F. All controlled substances requiring laboratory analysis must be packaged separately from other items and paraphernalia. DO NOT package multiple property tag numbers/barcodes in one evidence bag/envelope. Each evidence bag/envelope should have only one barcode.
- G. Create an item in RMS:
  1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
    - a. Substances (whether identified as controlled or not) shall only be submitted with status of “Evidence” or “Destruction.”
    - b. Prescription drugs may be submitted for safekeeping only when the containers holding the drugs list the owner’s name (Medical & Recreational Marijuana excluded).
    - c. Loose pills shall not be submitted for safekeeping or found property (use status of “Evidence” or “Destruction”).
    - d. Perishable items used as paraphernalia (i.e., fruit and vegetables used as pipes) shall be photographed with the pictures submitted as evidence and the paraphernalia submitted for destruction.
      - Contact the Evidence Section Supervisor for exceptions or Forensic Services to assist in a swab.
    - e. Paraphernalia **without** residue may be submitted for safekeeping.
  2. Choose the appropriate type code that most accurately matches the substance/item being submitted (i.e., L for Meth, E for Marijuana, etc.).
  3. Choose the appropriate Form code.
  4. All drug items shall be weighed. Do not use “Dosage Unit”.
    - a. The entire sealed evidence bag with contents shall be weighed.
    - b. Weigh in grams, when possible.
  5. Enter “Yes” for field tested, enter “No” if not field tested.
  6. Enter the description of the item(s) in the description field.
    - a. Use generic terms such as “green leafy substance,” “white crystal substance,” “tan wax substance”, etc. Include a description of the container(s).
  7. If pills are counted, a second officer should verify the count. Only whole tablets will be counted; pill fragments will not be counted and should be listed in the RMS description as “tablet fragments.” Quantity can be documented in the “# of pieces” field and/or a supplement. Per the lab, the most accurate and preferred method of entry is to weigh the substance in the package (K-pac), using grams whenever possible.

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8. Weight discrepancies of greater than 10% noted by the laboratory will be reported through the chain of command.
9. Add any additional special notes or information in your narrative or a follow up.

## 5.2 Medical Marijuana & Related Paraphernalia

Per **Prop 203** (known as the Arizona Medical Marijuana Act) [ARS 36-2801](#), a person who is 18 years of age or older and possesses a valid medical marijuana card issued by the Arizona Department of Health Services may possess up to 2.5 ounces of medical marijuana.

- A. Create an item in RMS.
  1. Create a separate property report for Medical Marijuana and related paraphernalia.
  2. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
    - a. Medical Marijuana in excess of allowable amount as specified by State law shall be submitted with an evidence code status of “Evidence” or “Destruction,” depending on the circumstances of the seizure.
    - b. Medical Marijuana of allowable amounts as specified by State law may be submitted as “Safekeeping” if the Medical Marijuana is not needed as evidence.
    - c. Refer to [DPM 2.5.55 Marijuana Protocols](#) for applicable weight/amount.
  3. Use IBR code 10 – Drugs, Narcotics.
  4. The form code of Medical Marijuana shall be used when submitting Medical Marijuana for safekeeping.
  5. Include the words “Medical Marijuana” in the description to clearly identify the substance and/or item as a Medical Marijuana related item (i.e., “bag containing Medical Marijuana”, “glass pipe used for smoking Medical Marijuana”, etc.) and include the owner’s name.
  6. Weigh the package and document the weight in RMS.
  7. Record weight in grams when possible (empty K-pac weighs 10-12 oz.)
  8. Enter the name of the owner and the owner address in the appropriate fields (items submitted for safekeeping will be rejected if an owner’s name is not listed).
- B. Place the packaged items into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
- C. Medical Marijuana submitted for safekeeping may be released to owner following the procedures listed in [DPM 2.5.55 Marijuana Protocols](#).

## 5.3 Recreational Marijuana

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Per **Prop 207** [ARS 36-2852](#), a person who is at least 21 years of age can possess up to 1 oz. (28.35g) of recreational marijuana.

- A. Create an item in RMS.
  1. Create a separate property report for Recreational Marijuana and related items.
  2. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
    - a. Recreational Marijuana in excess of allowable amount as specified by State law shall be submitted with an evidence code status of “Evidence” or “Destruction”, depending on the circumstances of the seizure.
    - b. Recreational Marijuana of allowable amounts as specified by State law may be submitted as “Safekeeping” if the Recreational Marijuana is not needed as evidence.
  3. Use IBR code 10 – Drugs, Narcotics.
  4. The form code of “Leafy Substance” shall be used when submitting Recreational Marijuana for safekeeping.
  5. Include the words “Recreational Marijuana” in the description to clearly identify the substance and/or item as a Recreational Marijuana related item (“bag containing Recreational Marijuana,” “glass pipe used for smoking Recreational Marijuana”) and include the owner’s name.
  6. Weigh the package and document the weight in RMS. Record weight in grams when possible (empty K-pac weighs 10-12 oz.).
  7. If the owner possesses more than 1 oz., you will need to submit only 1 oz. as safekeeping.
  8. The remaining amount will need to be submitted for destruction.
  9. Enter the name of the owner and the owner address in the appropriate fields (items submitted for safekeeping will be rejected if an owner’s name is not listed).
- B. Place the packaged items into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.

#### 5.4 Packaging

- A. Package substances separately from their container(s) when fingerprint identification and substance analysis are required.
- B. Place contents of the container into a separate clear plastic baggie, seal it with tape, and place into a clear heat-sealed envelope (K-pac).
- C. When seizing live plants, carefully remove the plants (leaving roots intact) from the containers and submit the containers with the soil as separate items for destruction (take digital photographs of plants in containers before removing).

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- D. Package fresh plants (leaving roots intact) in paper bags or smaller paper packages and seal **ALL** taped openings with an integrity seal.
- E. Package paraphernalia separately from substances.
- F. Package sharp and fragile items (e.g., syringes, razor blades, small glass pipes, etc.) into plastic syringe tubes or in appropriately sized cardboard boxes.
  - 1. Place syringe tubes into clear heat sealable envelopes and seal with a properly completed integrity seal.
- G. **Package liquid prescription drugs and other liquids separate from solid drugs** and other items and enter as separate items in RMS .
- H. Package prescription medication in a clear heat-sealed envelope (K-pac) to ensure the Evidence staff can verify ownership.
- I. Package LSD in opaque packaging (aluminum foil, paper) prior to placing in the clear heat sealable evidence envelope.
- J. Refer to [EVI 1.7 MPD Evidence Section Packaging & Submission Guidelines](#) for visual examples of substances and paraphernalia packaging.
- K. Place packaged items into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.

## 6. FIREARMS

### 6.1 General Guidelines

- A. **Do not submit loaded firearms to the Evidence Section.**
- B. Members shall:
  - 1. Safely unload all firearms prior to packaging and submitting to the Evidence Section. Contact Range personnel or a supervisor if unsure or unable to unload firearm(s).
  - 2. Submit all firearms to the Evidence Section prior to end of shift. Any exceptions must be approved by a supervisor.
- C. Create a firearm item in RMS.
  - 1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
  - 2. Choose the appropriate type code.
- D. Enter a detailed description of the firearms in the description field.
- E. Enter the make and model of the firearms in the appropriate fields. If you do not have or know the model, type “unknown” or “UNK”.
- F. **Accurately** enter the serial number of the firearms in the Serial # field. If the serial number is unknown or defaced, the member shall write “unknown” or “defaced” in the serial number field.



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- G. Place the items into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
- H. Found firearms shall only be returned to owners or their representatives and shall not be authorized for release to the finder per [ARS 12-941](#).

## 6.2 Packaging

- A. Members shall package and submit firearms, ammunition, and accessories (i.e., holsters, etc.) separately from other items.
- B. All firearms are to be packaged in approved handgun and/or rifle boxes and sealed with an approved integrity seal. Refer to [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#) for sealing guidelines.
- C. Reconfirm the correct transcription of the serial number of the firearm prior to sealing the firearm box.
- D. Gloves should be worn when handling firearms to preserve fingerprint and DNA evidence.
- E. Secure firearms with the action open using plastic zip ties. **Do not place the zip ties through the barrel!** Whenever possible, please place the firearm in the package with the serial number facing up before securing with zip ties.
- F. **If a magazine is recovered with the firearm, package it in an envelope and place it in the box with the firearm.** List the firearm and magazine as one item in RMS (do not submit with the magazine in the firearm).
- G. Package ammunition in evidence envelopes separate from firearm/magazine. Wear gloves when removing ammunition from magazine if latent print processing is requested.
- H. Bulk ammunition will be kept in its original container when possible and packaged in a paper bag or box.
- I. **Do not package the envelope containing the ammunition in the box with the firearm.**
- J. **Do not submit firearms in plastic bags.**
- K. **Do not submit firearms for frozen or refrigerated storage.**

## 6.3 Research & Documentation

- A. Submitting member will check for stolen status of firearms through NCIC.
- B. Firearms verified as stolen will be documented as such in the narrative or a supplement.
  - 1. Firearms confirmed as stolen shall not be submitted for safekeeping and shall be submitted as evidence.
  - 2. A disposition will be completed to authorize the release of recovered stolen firearms to the reporting agency.



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- C. Submitting member will check the criminal history of the individual the firearm(s) was seized from to confirm/deny prohibited possessor status. (Refer to [ARS 13-3101](#) for prohibited possessor definition).
  - 1. Submitting member shall document individuals identified as prohibited possessors in the narrative or a supplement. Firearms seized from prohibited individuals shall not be submitted for safekeeping and shall be submitted as evidence.
- D. Firearms and ammunition seized pursuant to Orders of Protection (OOP) shall be submitted as evidence with a copy of the court order.
- E. Firearms and ammunition seized as a result of domestic violence situations shall be submitted as evidence in order to ensure proper processing by the Evidence Section and the District DV Detectives.

#### 6.4 Firearms as Found Property

- A. In all cases where firearms are turned in as found property, the Crime Incident type will be Property – Found Firearm.
- B. All cases involving firearms are automatically linked to the appropriate Division Investigations Sergeant for review and NIBIN screening as a result of the use of this crime incident coding.

### 7. COMPUTERS

- A. When seizing computers as evidence:
  - 1. Secure the area around computer (including any software, diskettes, and user manuals).
  - 2. **Do not turn computer on/off, attempt to open/close files, run directories, or access computer diskettes, CDs, DVDs, or any other storage device.**
  - 3. Contact the Digital Forensics Unit for further instructions.
  - 4. Create an item in RMS.
    - a. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
    - b. Choose the appropriate item type.
    - c. Enter the description of the items in the description field.
    - d. Enter the make and model of the computers in the appropriate fields.
    - e. **Accurately** enter the serial number of the computer in the Serial field.
  - 5. Place the items into an evidence submission locker/cage or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.

### 8. DNA EVIDENCE

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## 8.1 General Guidelines

- A. Biological/serological evidence should be thoroughly dried prior to packaging (excluding blood and urine samples).
- B. Crime Scene Specialists (CSS) will be called to collect, process, and package biological/serological evidence that must be dried.
- C. In some situations, members from the Biology Unit may be called to collect, process, and package biological evidence.
- D. Food and animal body parts will not be submitted to the Evidence Section unless approved by a supervisor.
  1. Contact the Forensic Services Biology Unit to request the items be analyzed as soon as possible to limit degradation.
- E. Human remains or body parts will not be submitted to the Evidence Section.
  1. The Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) will collect these at the scene.
  2. In rare cases where the OME advises they are unable to respond, a supervisor, at the direction of OME, may make other arrangements.
- F. Unless authorized by a member of the Forensic Services Biology Unit, dried biological/serological evidence will be submitted for air-conditioned storage (except sexual assault kits).
- G. Sexual assault kits will be packaged, labeled, and submitted for frozen storage.
- H. Consult the Forensic Services Biology Unit when questions arise regarding the packaging and storage of biological evidence.

## 8.2 Biological/Serological Evidence Packaging & Submission

- A. **Items such as clothing, sheets, towels, shoes, swabs, and other miscellaneous crime scene evidence that contains biological substances (i.e., blood, semen, saliva, etc.) must be completely dried.**
- B. If a member has evidence that needs to be dried, contact a member of the Forensic Services Crime Scene Unit.
- C. Packaging supplies are maintained in the adjacent packaging room. Access is limited to certain Forensic Services members.
- D. The drying area is located on the east side, lower level of the Forensic Services building.
- E. The area is equipped with eight drying rooms, containing shelves and rods for drying evidence, and ten drying cabinets for smaller evidence.
- F. Evidence is placed into a drying room or cabinet following Forensic Services standard operating procedures concerning the handling of biological evidence.
- G. Once dried, items should be individually packaged in paper packaging, sealed, and submitted for air-conditioned storage (except for sexual assault

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kits, which shall be submitted via a refrigerator or freezer). Refer to [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#) and [EVI 1.7 MPD Evidence Section Packaging & Submission Guidelines](#) for sealing, labeling, and submission guidelines.

- H. Attach [DPM 3.2.50F3 Biohazard Label](#) to paper packaging.
- I. Create an item in RMS.
  - 1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
  - 2. Choose the appropriate item type; use the search button to ensure accuracy on NIBRs codes.
- J. Place the items into a regular evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window (except for sexual assault kits, which shall be submitted via refrigerator or freezer).
- K. Evidence members will contact the Forensic Services Biology Unit when/if there may be an issue with storing the items in air-conditioned storage areas (i.e., odors, leaking, insects, etc.) to determine possible transfer to frozen evidence storage.

### 8.3 Non-DUI Liquid Blood & Other Evidence Requiring Refrigerated Storage

- A. **NOTE: Liquid blood should be refrigerated as soon as possible.**
- B. Collect liquid blood samples in purple top EDTA vacutainer tubes, when possible.
- C. Mark the tubes with the name of the blood donor, date the blood was drawn, GO and tag number, and any other pertinent information.
- D. Place each tube in a capped plastic tube prior to packaging.
- E. The samples shall then be packaged in evidence envelopes, sealed, and submitted for refrigerated storage. Refer to [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#).
- F. Create an item in RMS.
  - 1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
  - 2. Choose the appropriate item type; use the search button to ensure accuracy on NIBRs codes.
  - 3. Place the items into a refrigerated evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
  - 4. Refer to **Section 9** of this policy for DUI blood and urine kits.

### 8.4 Sexual Assault Kits

- A. Package sexual assault kits separately from all other items.
- B. Create an item in RMS.
  - 1. Create a separate property report for sexual assault kits.
  - 2. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.

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3. Choose the appropriate item code.
  - a. Use the sex kit code **ONLY** for sexual assault kits.
4. When entering sexual assault kits, members shall enter the description as “Sex kit.” No further description is necessary or required.
- C. Place the kit into a refrigerated evidence submission locker at the MFAC, submit via a freezer locker at the Evidence Warehouse, or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
  1. Sexual assault kits will be transferred to frozen storage once accepted by the Evidence Section.

## 9. DUI BLOOD & URINE COLLECTION KITS

- A. **NOTE: Liquid blood and urine should be refrigerated as soon as possible and have a biohazard tag affixed.**
- B. Refer to [DPM 2.7.65 DUI – Testing](#) for collection and testing guidelines for DUI Blood Collection kits and Urine Collection kits.
- C. Refer to [EVI 1.7 MPD Evidence Section Packaging & Submission Guidelines](#) for visual examples of DUI blood and urine kit packaging.
- D. Create an item in RMS.
  1. Choose the appropriate status on the property report.
  2. Choose the appropriate item code.
- E. Place the kit into an evidence submission refrigerator or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician at the Evidence window.
  1. Urine kits will be transferred to frozen storage once accepted by the Evidence Section.

## 10. FIREWORKS

See [DPM 2.6.10 Hazardous Devices](#) for guidelines on submitting fireworks, modified fireworks, smokeless powder, and/or black powder into Evidence.

## 11. ON-OFFICER BODY CAMERA VIDEOS

Refer to [DPM 3.4.35 On-Officer Body Camera Program](#).

## 12. LATENT PRINT CARDS

- A. Create an item in RMS.
  1. Choose the status of “Evidence” on the property report.

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2. Use property code LPT.
  3. Describe the items as “latent print card” or “latent print cards.”
  4. Enter the number of latent print cards in the “Qty” field.
- B. Place all latent print cards into [DPM 3.2.45F9 Latent Envelope](#) (white 8”x8” envelope) and seal and sign the envelope with initials, ID#, and sealing date.
- C. Place the envelope into an evidence submission locker or transfer directly to an Evidence Technician.

## REFERENCES

- [ARS 12-941](#)
- [ARS 13-3101](#)
- [ARS 36-2801](#)
- [ARS 36-2852](#)
- [DPM 2.5.55 Marijuana Protocols](#)
- [DPM 2.6.10 Hazardous Devices](#)
- [DPM 2.7.65 DUI - Testing](#)
- [DPM 3.1.105 Counterfeit Currency Incidents](#)
- [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#)
- [DPM 3.2.45F9 Latent Envelope](#)
- [DPM 3.2.50F3 Biohazard Label](#)
- [DPM 3.4.35 On-Officer Body Camera Program](#)
- [EVI 1.7 MPD Evidence Section Packaging & Submission Guidelines](#)