

PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE CONTROL	Chapter No. 84
Effective Date: 04/01/2018 Revised: 6/1/2022	Reference: Evidence Room Securities Procedures Evidence Packaging Manual

84.1.1 EVIDENCE/PROPERTY CONTROL SYSTEM

Business hours for the property/evidence unit are from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays.

It is the duty of all employees to care for, control, and correctly process all evidence or property which may come into their possession in the course of their official duties. Employees shall in every instance place all property obtained in the course of their official duties in the agency's property system before the end of their shift.

Under no circumstance will an employee store property in a personal locker or other unauthorized location.

Restricted Access

Permanent access to the evidence storage room is limited to:

- Chief of Police (accompanied by Support Operations Captain)
- Support Operations Captain (accompanied by Chief)
- Evidence Technician
- Records Lead Support Specialist (evidence back-up)

Access to the temporary evidence storage room is restricted to Pasco Police personnel only. See Evidence Room Securities Procedures.

Procedures for Found and Evidentiary Property

Procedures for receiving all found and evidentiary property by department employees are detailed in the **Evidence Procedure Manual**.

Any employee of the department taking property into custody completes a case report detailing why property was taken into custody.

After properly tagging and entering the property into TYLER prior to the end of the duty shift, the employee will place all property in a secure evidence storage locker located near the evidence room.

Packaging and Submitting Property for Secure Storage

Evidence and property shall be properly packaged and sealed prior to being submitted into the evidence system. Follow guidelines detailed in the Pasco Police Department Evidence Packaging Manual, the Evidence Manual and the **Washington State Patrol Forensic Services Guide**, for packaging and labeling property prior to submitting for secure storage.

Take additional security measures for property of high monetary value or of a serious or sensitive nature. Such items include coin/currency, weapons, jewelry, and controlled substances. These items will be locked in a secure area located inside the secure evidence storage area.

84.1.2 STORAGE AND SECURITY

Access to the evidence facilities is restricted to police personnel only. This also includes the secure vehicle storage and other storage containers.

Only the Chief of Police, Support Operations Captain, Evidence Technician and the assigned Lead Support Specialist (evidence back-up) have access to the secure evidence storage areas.

The secure evidence storage area is inside the Pasco Police Department. It is for the storage of found, recovered, and evidentiary property. Access to the main work area is limited to the Evidence Technician and Lead Support Specialist (evidence back-up). A log is maintained noting the name, date, reason for visit, and time in and out of any person entering the secure evidence storage area.

The area is covered by an audible alarm system that is monitored by the Dispatch Center. The evidence room shall be alarmed during the time outside of business hours. If a security breach were to occur, Dispatch shall contact the Support Operations Captain. The Evidence Technician will respond and inspect the evidence room and reset the alarm. If the security breach is valid, the Evidence Technician shall inform the Support Operations Captain.

A safe is located within the vault area and used to secure all money, precious metals, and jewelry. The vault is a secure storage room and is used to keep all firearms and drugs separate from other property. Access to the safe or secure room is limited to the Evidence Technician, Chief of Police and Support Operations Captain only.

The evidence office maintains all evidence records and related documents in the evidence office. The evidence office is sometimes used for temporary evidence storage during the check-in process.

There is refrigeration equipment in the secure temporary evidence storage area for the preservation of perishable evidence. A refrigerator is also in the temporary evidence storage room at police headquarters. Maintain a constant temperature between 30° and 38°F (-1° and 3°C) for all refrigeration equipment.

84.1.3 TEMPORARY SECURITY

All evidence and found property are initially secured in storage lockers located in the temporary evidence storage room located at the police department. The room is accessible 24-hours a day to Pasco Police Department employees.

84.1.4 SECURITY OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, WEAPONS FOR TRAINING

Controlled Substances

All controlled substances used for either training or investigations will be items that have been entered into Property/Evidence. When items are requested for use as training aids or for investigations, approval for its use will be approved by the Chief or his designee. Once approved, items will be checked out to an officer by the Evidence Technician and recorded in the Property/Evidence

recordkeeping system. Any officer in possession of drugs released to their custody will maintain its security and chain of custody. Drugs associated with an active/open case will not be used for either training or investigations. Audits will be conducted twice a year for any narcotics that are used as K9 training aids.

Weapons

All non-issued weapons will be maintained within the armory. Access to the armory and weapons is limited to firearms training personnel and maintained by the Training Sergeant and Support Operations Captain. These weapons will be inventoried on an annual basis.

Any weapons being held in Property/Evidence will not be used for either training or investigations unless converted for use by the department once final disposition has been determined.

Explosives

The Pasco Police Department has an explosive-rated storage cabinet in its secured compound to temporarily storage fireworks. The Richland Police Department Bomb Squad takes custody of fireworks from temporary storage and Pasco Police Department.

84.1.5 EVIDENCE RECORDS

The evidence unit maintains the records that reflect the location of property stored in secure evidence storage. The records include:

- Date and time the property was received or released.
- General description.
- Chain of custody through final disposition.
- Dates and results of all inspections, inventories, and audits.

84.1.6 INSPECTIONS AND AUDITS

Inspections

The Support Operations Captain or their designee will conduct a semi-annual inspection to determine adherence to practices used for the control of property.

Quarterly Audits

The Support Services Sergeant, accompanied by the Evidence Technician, conducts internal quarterly audits. Records will generate a report of the current quarter. The Support Services Sergeant will choose approximately 10 random evidence items to be identified and inspected. The inspection includes evidence accountability, proper record keeping, storage, cleanliness, and verification that disposal methods are being followed. The Support Services Sergeant will document any problems found during these inspections and correct them as appropriate.

The Support Services Sergeant will forward written documentation of the inspection and a list of all noted deficiencies to the Support Operations Captain within 10 days of the quarterly audit.

Property Inventories

Whenever evidence personnel are reassigned or terminated, a property inventory will be conducted. Incoming evidence personnel and a designee appointed by the Chief of Police should jointly complete this inventory. They individually account for all weapons, monies, and narcotics and spot-check all other evidence and records for accountability.

If possible, give the new personnel two weeks of training with the current or outgoing person. Do this before the inventory of property to maintain the integrity of the system.

Integrity Audit

The Chief or Support Services Captain may request an integrity audit at any time that one may be needed. Integrity audits shall be conducted if the security of the evidence room has been breached or otherwise compromised.

Annual Audits

There is an annual audit of the property held by the Pasco Police Department.

- The Chief of Police selects the person to conduct the inventory. Under no circumstances will supervisory personnel having the property function under their control appoint the inspector.
- The audit consists of a random comparison of records with physical property to ensure the integrity of the system. At least 100 high-risk items and a minimum of 20 regular items will be audited during this audit.
- Evidence personnel accompany the inspector.
- Forward a complete report of the audit findings to the Chief of Police.

Unannounced Inspections

The Police Chief or Support Operations Captain, or designee, will conduct an annual unannounced inspection of the evidence facilities. The inspection will consist of entering the property and evidence areas and inspecting for cleanliness, orderliness, and the random comparison of records with physical property to ensure the accuracy of the records.

The person conducting the inspection sends a report listing all noted deficiencies to the Police Chief within ten days of the inspection.

State Audit

The Washington State Auditor's Office may conduct audits at any time. Department members will fully cooperate with the audit process.

84.1.7 FINAL DISPOSITION

Final disposition of unclaimed and evidentiary property:

- After six months, schedule for disposal of evidentiary property and/or property that is part of a closed case. Only when notified by the case detective, investigating officer, or prosecuting attorney is property held for a longer period of time. Requests for extensions are limited to six months per request and must be submitted to the evidence office in writing. At the end of any

extension period, evidentiary property will be disposed of automatically unless an additional extension is requested.

- Hold evidentiary property that is part of an "active" case until the investigating officer or detective changes the case status to "closed."
- Dispose of firearms as directed by State Law, [RCW 9.41.098](#).
- Dispose of all property and evidence as directed by state law, to include [RCW 63.32](#), [RCW 69.50](#), and the Washington State Retention Schedule.

84.1.8 PROPERTY ACQUIRED THROUGH CIVIL PROCESS

The Pasco Police Department allows the seizure of personal property pursuant to the authority granted in the below listed laws. All seized property shall be submitted to the Evidence/Property Room (except vehicles). All police officers shall adhere to the practices provided in this standard when initiating the seizure process.

RCW 7.94.090	Firearms-Surrender
RCW 9.41.098	Firearms Forfeiture
RCW 69.50.505	Uniform Controlled Substances Act Seizures
RCW 10.105.010	Property Involved in Felony

84.1.9 RETURN OF FIREARMS

Prior to the return of a privately owned firearm, the Evidence Technician shall ensure confirmation of the following ([RCW 9.41.345](#)):

- The individual to whom the firearm is to be returned is the individual from whom the firearm was obtained, an authorized representative of the individual, or other person identified by a court order.
- The individual is eligible to possess a firearm pursuant to [RCW 9.41.040](#).
- The firearm is not required to be held in custody or is prohibited from release.
- Twenty-four hours has elapsed from the time the firearm was obtained by law enforcement.
- Notification is made to those family or household members who have requested notification pursuant to established Department protocol ([RCW 9.41.340](#)).

*Firearms shall be held in custody for 72 hours from the time notification is provided.

Upon confirmation that the individual is eligible to possess a firearm and any applicable notifications are complete, the firearm shall be released to the individual or authorized representative upon request without unnecessary delay.

If a firearm cannot be returned because it is required to be held in custody or is otherwise prohibited from release, written notice shall be provided to the individual within five business days of the date the individual requested return of the firearm. The written notice shall include the reason the firearm must remain in custody.