


<b>STRATFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>  	Type of Directive: <b>Policy and Procedure</b>	Updated: <b>11-14-2023</b>
	Title: <b>Evidence-Property Control and Storage</b>	No. <b>5.2</b>
	Issuing Authority: <b>Chief Joseph McNeil</b>	Issued: <b>10-15-2018</b>
	AS - 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 2.2.6, 2.2.7  History: 05-22-22	

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for property control and storage. This would include evidence, found property, abandoned property, and property held for safekeeping. In addition, it shall include any temporary storage facility under the control of this department.

### **POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of the Stratford Police Department to follow the procedures as set forth below.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Direct Control – means in continuous presence to include visual contact.

Property – means any item regardless of its evidentiary or non-evidentiary value.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Any property to be stored at police headquarters shall be governed by the provisions of this policy notwithstanding any other applicable policies of this manual.

Prior to the end of the shift all property, regardless of its purpose for storage, shall be associated with an incident number and written report detailing the property seizure before being placed in any temporary or permanent, holding location anywhere on department property. All property shall be handled appropriately by department members and protected from theft, damage, or loss. All efforts shall be made to maintain the integrity of the chain of custody for all property of evidentiary value (**1.2.1**).

All property shall be considered temporarily stored until such property is cataloged and recorded by the property room personnel. Long-term storage within all property storage areas shall be governed by the guidelines set forth by the State of Connecticut. Property storage management shall be the responsibility of the property room personnel under the supervision of the Records Division Commander.

All property storage locations shall remain locked at all times unless otherwise under the direct control of the authorized department member entering such storage area.

Any property to be stored outside the guidelines of this policy must be authorized by a supervisor holding the rank of lieutenant or higher. Such storage shall be documented in an incident supplement to the investigation surrounding such property by the ranking supervisor approving such storage.

### **Property Control Forms**

The property forms needed for all items seized, taken or received are to be completed with the incident related to the property. No Property will be held without the Town of Stratford Property Control Form and or appropriate State of Connecticut evidence form (1.2.1, 1.2.2).

### **Inspections and Audits**

It shall be the practice of the Stratford police department to perform regular inspections of the property room, associated records and logs. The inspections shall consist of inspections/audits of the physical storage areas, records and physical property stored within.

Upon being relieved or reassigned an inspection/audit will be conducted by the direct supervisor along with the incoming and out going property officer in attendance to ensure that the records and property are in proper order and accounted for.

### **Storage Locations**

Several secure property storage areas are located on the department property.

### **Holding Room**

The holding room is located on the basement level of headquarters. When size permits all department members should make all efforts to place all property to be stored in the holding room.

The holding room is equipped with materials for proper collection, packaging, documentation and storage of property seized, found or turned over to the Stratford Police Department.

General property and evidence can be placed on the open metal shelving in the holding room depending on size and value (1.2.4).

All property of inherent value (excluding currency) such as any jewelry, firearms, electronic communication and entertainment devices, and the like shall be secured in the metal lockers numbered 1 thru 6, size permitting.

Each locker is equipped with a padlock, which shall be locked by the department member placing property within the locker. The exceptions to securing items of value inside the proper cabinet shall be:

- Size does not permit the item is being kept for safekeeping only and the owner shall be returning to pick up such item prior to the end of the tour of duty of the department member responsible for such item's temporary storage
- The item is not of significant value holding room shall be monitored and recorded via a video recording device at all times and remain locked unless otherwise under the direct control of the authorized department member entering such storage area.

### **Drug Locker (mailbox)**

The drug locker is a metal mailbox marked "Evidence Holding Room Drug Locker" located in the Holding Room.

All drug substances to be stored, regardless of the reason for storage, shall be properly packaged in accordance with the evidence collection and handling policy of this manual and deposited in the drug locker. The yellow copy of the appropriate property form(s) shall be attached to the property before being deposited in the drug locker. Items too large for the drug locker shall be secured in lockers 1 thru 6.

**CAUTION:** Do not use staples to attach forms to plastic evidence bags. Use paper clips to attach the forms to the evidence bag. Puncturing the bags allows fumes and loose drugs to escape from the bags.

All currency seized as evidence shall be packaged in accordance with the evidence collection and handling policy of this manual and deposited in the drug locker. The yellow copy of the appropriate property form(s) shall be attached to the property before being deposited in the drug locker. This property shall remain in the drug locker until placed in the main evidence room safe by the Property Room Officer.

### **Property Refrigerator**

The following items of evidence shall be placed in the refrigerator located in the Evidence Receiving Room and stored in the refrigerator in the Main Evidence Room.

- DUI Urine Kit and DUI Blood Kit
- CT100A –Sex Assault Evidence Collection Kit
- CT400TOX-Sex Assault Toxicology Collection Kit

There are two property refrigerators located within headquarters. The temporary storage of perishable property, which requires such level of care, regardless of the reason for storage, shall be placed in the refrigerator in the holding room on the basement level of headquarters. At a minimum the yellow copy of a PCF-1 form shall be attached to such property.

The second property refrigerator is located in the main property room. All property to be placed in or removed from this refrigerator shall be conducted by the property room personnel only. All property placed in this refrigerator shall be recorded and cataloged in the same manner as all other property to be stored as evidence.

### **Property Room Office**

The Property Room Office is located in the basement behind the evidence holding room. The office shall remain locked unless under the direct control of the property room officer.

### **Main Property Room**

The main property room is located on the basement level of headquarters and is accessed through the Property Room Office. This area contains the majority of property items stored. Firearms, Drugs, Money and Bulky items will not be stored in this room. Any department personnel other than property room

personnel and the Records Division Commander shall not enter this secured area without being accompanied by property room personnel. Only property room personnel shall place any item for storage within this room.

All department members, other than property room personnel and the Records Division Commander shall sign the evidence room visitor's logbook. Each time a member enters and leaves such room the times shall be recorded in the logbook without exception.

### **Drug Property Room**

The Drug Evidence Room is located on the basement level of headquarters and is accessed through the property room office. This room contains all drug evidence and items associated with drug investigations. The property room money safe is also located in this room. The safe is used to store currency which is being retained in the property room. Prisoner property which is not accepted at court is stored in this room. This area shall remain secured at all times and shall not be entered by any department personnel other than property room personnel and the Records Division Commander. Only property room personnel shall place any item for storage within this room.

### **Firearms Property Room**

The firearms property room is located in the basement and is accessed through the property room office.

This room will contain all firearms and ammunition being stored as evidence or for safekeeping. This included firearms seized under a Search & Seizure Warrant-Firearms-Person Posing Danger to Self or Others, firearms surrendered due to Orders of Protection, found firearms and firearms seized during Domestic Violence incidents and firearms turned in for destruction. BB guns and bows will also be stored in this room.

This area shall remain secured at all times and shall not be entered by any department personnel other than property room personnel and the Records Division Commander. Only property room personnel shall place any item for storage within this room.

### **Garage Storage**

The police garage bays in the maintenance garage will be used as temporary storage area in addition to the holding room. This area is designed for securing large property items such as vehicles, vehicle parts, or any other large item that will not fit into the holding room, and require a heightened level of security.

In addition to the standard property control procedures and forms a communication, whether verbally, written or electronic in nature, must be forwarded to the Traffic Division Commander, a Detective Bureau Supervisor (if applicable), and the property room personnel. At a minimum this communication shall include the incident number; a brief description of the events surrounding the item's storage, and the estimated length of time such item may need to be stored.

If the item being stored is evidentiary in nature a placard shall be posted indicating same. Once secured and posted this area shall be treated as evidentiary and be given the same considerations as that of a crime scene by all department members and employees. If any forensic evidence collection or processing is needed a

communication, whether verbal, written or electronic in nature, must be forwarded to a Detective Bureau Supervisor once the gate is secured.

Any department member facilitating the removal of such item from this area shall immediately upon un-securing the fenced area forward a communication, whether verbal, written or electronic in nature, to the Traffic Division Commander, the Detective Bureau Commander (if applicable), and the property room personnel. At a minimum this communication shall include the incident number, a brief description of the events surrounding the item's removal from storage, and the item's status or location.

### **Bicycle Storage**

Bicycles which are found, abandoned, held as evidence or safekeeping will be placed in the HQ garage by the officer. A Property Control Form will be attached to each bicycle and a copy will be placed in the Evidence Holding Room. A JD-CR-18 (State property form) will be completed by the officer for any bicycle being held as evidence. The Evidence Room Officer will then store the bicycles in the Bulk Evidence Storage Container. Overflow will be stored in the Headquarters garage.

### **Fireworks and Ammunition Container**

The fireworks and ammunition container is an orange storage container located next to the canine kennel behind headquarters. Items of this nature to be stored, regardless of the reason for storage, shall be secured in this container.

The investigating department member shall be responsible for the storage of such property. Once properly packaged and labeled for storage the key for the container may be obtained from the sergeant's desk. Upon placing the items inside and securing the box the key shall be returned to the sergeant's desk. All the appropriate property control forms are to be completed for all property placed in this container. The yellow copies of all property control forms and a copy of the report narrative shall be placed on the open-shelf area of the holding room.

Property room personnel shall periodically check the box and arrange for disposal of such items in accordance with state guidelines.

### **Evidence Processing Room**

The evidence processing room is located on the main level of headquarters in the Detective Bureau. All evidence to be the subject of a forensic process shall be properly packaged in accordance with the evidence collection and handling policy of this manual. The yellow copies of all property control forms associated with this evidence shall accompany such property at all times.

If an item to be the subject of a forensic process is too large to be stored in the evidence processing room it shall be secured in the fenced wash bay in accordance with this policy's provisions for the fenced wash bay.

Regardless of which of the aforementioned storage locations are used, as soon as practicable upon securing such item(s) a communication, whether verbal, written or electronic in nature, must be forwarded to a Detective Bureau Supervisor, property room personnel, and the shift commander of the member investigating the incident surrounding the item(s). At a minimum this communication shall include the

incident number, a brief description of the events surrounding the item's storage, and the types of evidence to be sought from each item (i.e., fingerprints, hair, blood, semen, etc.)

The evidence processing room shall remain locked at all times unless under the direct control of the authorized department member entering such storage area. The contents of this room shall be given the same considerations as a crime scene.

### **Submission of Evidence to Forensic Laboratory**

Any evidence submitted to the State Forensic Lab or other facility for examination shall:

- Be transported by the Evidence Officer, or any member of the Detective Bureau designated by a Detective Bureau Supervisor. **(2.2.6 a)**
- All submitted evidence shall be packaged in accordance with the packaging guidelines set by the State Forensic Laboratory. **(2.2.6 b)**
- All submitted evidence shall be accompanied by a current version of the Laboratory Examination Request for Analysis form, a duly executed Search Warrant authorizing laboratory examination (Joyce Warrant), and/or written consent from the property owner (if applicable and allowable by statute), and a synopsis of the incident (on Examination Request form) or a copy of the incident report. **(2.2.6 c)**
- Transporting officer(s) shall obtain a receipt from the Laboratory or other facility documenting the chain of evidence. Immediately upon return to the Department, enter into the case file, the receipt documenting the chain of evidence from the transporting officer(s). **(2.2.6 d)**
- The transporting officer(s) shall obtain and enter into the case file, documentation from the State Forensic Laboratory or other facility stipulating the laboratory results submitted in writing to the Stratford Police Department. This stipulation may be on the receipt of evidence or a separate document. **(2.2.6 e)**

### **Property Acquired through Asset Forfeiture**

All property acquired through asset forfeiture proceedings is accounted for in Stratford Police Department records and is disposed of by the Stratford Police Department pursuant to legal authority. **(2.2.7)**

### **Hazardous Materials**

The handling and storage of hazardous materials requires special training and equipment. Any situation that requires handling or storage of hazardous materials, regardless of the reason for such handling or storage, the fire department or other qualified hazardous materials agency shall be contacted. A supervisor from the shift investigating such material shall coordinate with such qualified hazardous materials personnel as to the best means of transport and storage of such property. If evidentiary in nature requiring heightened security such shift supervisor shall make best efforts to secure such property. At a minimum a property control form shall be completed and submitted with the incident report. A clearly visible placard containing the incident number and date shall be displayed near the stored property.

In addition to standard property control procedures and forms, immediately upon securing such hazardous materials, a communication, whether verbal, written or electronic in nature, must be forwarded to the records division commander, administrative captain, and the property room personnel. At a minimum this communication shall include the incident number; a brief description of the events surrounding the item's storage, and the estimated length of time such item may need to be stored.

### **Bulk Evidence Storage Container**

The Bulk Evidence Storage Container is a 20-foot-long shipping container located at the rear of headquarters. This container will be used to store large items which should not be stored inside the police HQ building due to their size or other characteristics. Examples would be power equipment which uses combustible fuel, tires, beer kegs and other heavy or large items.