

**Prince George's County, Maryland
Office of Audits and Investigations**

Police Department

**Property Warehouse Unit
Recovered/Confiscated Property Audit**

October 2011



**David H. Van Dyke
County Auditor**

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THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Audits and Investigations

October 2011

The County Council and County Executive
of Prince George's County, Maryland

We have conducted a performance audit of the

POLICE DEPARTMENT'S

PROPERTY WAREHOUSE UNIT

in accordance with the requirements of Article III, Section 313, of the Charter for Prince
George's County, Maryland. Our report is submitted herewith.

We have discussed the contents of this report with appropriate personnel of the Police
Department, and wish to express our sincere gratitude to them for the cooperation and assistance
extended to us during the course of this engagement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. H. Van Dyke".

David H. Van Dyke, CPA
County Auditor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anya Makarova".

Anya Makarova
Auditor-in-Charge

Results In Brief

During the normal course of the Police Department's mission, thousands of items are recovered and/or confiscated by Prince George's police officers on a monthly basis. Police officers have to submit the recovered property along with completed documentation to their supervisor and the property is then transferred to the Property Warehouse Unit to be secured. The Property Warehouse Unit is charged with receiving, storing, releasing, and disposing of this property in accordance with established procedures. The Police Department's procedures, which provide guidance on the Property Warehouse Unit's operations, are specified in the Department's General Order Manual (GOM), Volume II, Chapter 41 "Property & Evidence" updated in November 2007, as well as in the Property Section's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)¹.

The following major findings are addressed in this report:

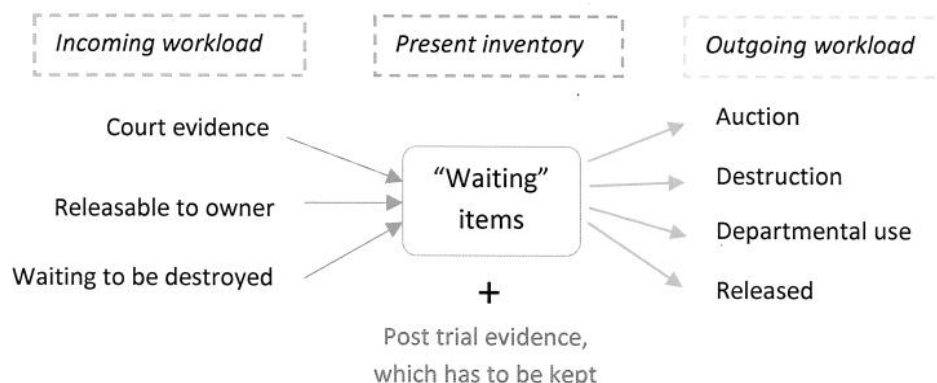
- Complete documentation (both the Property Record Form and Tracking System data) was not available for 19% of general property entries and 14% of firearms sampled.
- There were inconsistencies with property status information in 4% of general property and 3.8% of firearms entries between the Property Record Form and the Tracking System record.
- Eight (8) general property items, which should have been located at the Property Warehouse Unit, were not found and were classified as "missing".
- Documentation of the items, which are no longer stored at the Property Warehouse Unit, is frequently incomplete and not thorough.
- When a serial number was available, it was not entered into the Tracking System record in 24% of general property cases and 0.5% of firearms cases.
- In 15.3% of the general property and 0.5% of firearms entries, multiple unrelated² items were assigned a single Tracking System ID, which makes it impossible to track their individual disposition through the Tracking System.

¹ Date of the Standard Operating Procedures is not known.

² Unrelated items refer to items, which are associated with the same case number, but are of different nature such as a cell phone and a CD player, a care tag and a sweater, etc.

Background

The incoming workload of the Property Warehouse Unit is primarily composed of items to be held as court evidence, items releasable to the owner, and items waiting to be destroyed.



"Waiting" items refers to items, which are awaiting their disposition: to be auctioned off, to be destroyed, to be assigned, or to be released.

A vast majority of incoming workload will eventually be disposed primarily through destruction, release to the owner, auction or assignment for Departmental use. Only certain post-trial evidence has to be kept for a prolonged amount of time as mandated by law.

As can be seen from the accompanying table reflected on page 3, which captures incoming and outgoing workload entered into the Warehouse's Automated Property Computer Tracking System (APCTS), over 100,000 items have to be processed on an annual basis (excluding intermediate status updates, etc.) by Property Warehouse Unit personnel. Based on the Tracking System data available from January 2008 through October 2010, (34 month period), the number of monthly Tracking System entries varied significantly from 2,644 to 23,186 items processed³. It is not clear what drives such significant workload fluctuations and to what extent it may be a result of the Property Warehouse Unit's ability to actually input data into the Tracking System on a continuous basis. In addition, monthly overviews of disposed items did not reveal any patterns for disposition. While a certain amount of items are disposed on a monthly basis, purges do not appear to be scheduled regularly.

³ Processed refers to both incoming workload and disposed items.

The distribution of the Property Warehouse Unit inventory, by status of the items, is provided in the accompanying table. Quantity shows the actual number of items processed. A single case may be associated with numerous items. Note that quantities have been adjusted for currency; for example, 17 bills will not be counted as 17 pieces of property, but as one.

Calendar Year	2008		2009		2010 to date (Jan - Oct)	
	Quantity	Cases	Quantity	Cases	Quantity	Cases
<i>Disposed Items Entered into the Tracking System</i>						
Sent to Auction	2,997	1,196	1,972	788	2,719	1,101
Destroyed	36,717	16,902	42,607	14,997	30,734	8,465
Investigative Analysis	0	0	5	3	1	1
Officer's Request	0	0	6,045	86	1,170	186
Departmental Use (Assigned)	1,034	163	4,499	568	2,584	64
Released, Destroyed	177	67	196	64	5,103	167
Released to Owner	18,218	2,735	14,078	2,660	1,504	805
<i>TOTAL DISPOSED</i>	59,143	21,063	69,402	19,166	43,815	10,789
<i>Incoming Items Entered into the Tracking System</i>						
Court Evidence	46,020	12,114	58,514	11,255	43,749	9,153
Releasable to Owner	2,540	1,066	3,952	1,200	6,595	1,901
Unknown Status	1	1	0	0	1	1
Waiting to be Destroyed	1,583	233	2,390	298	2,040	357
<i>TOTAL RECEIVED</i>	50,144	13,414	64,856	12,753	52,385	11,412
<i>Other</i>						
County Treasury (Deposit)	4	2	302	302	490	442
Request Court/State	0	0	0	0	11	2
Forfeiture Proceeds (Deposit)	654	513	1,298	977	642	516
<i>TOTAL OTHER</i>	658	515	1,600	1,279	1,143	960
<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>109,945</u>	<u>34,992</u>	<u>135,858</u>	<u>33,198</u>	<u>97,343</u>	<u>23,161</u>

Data source: Prince George's County Police Department Property Totals by Status monthly reports (Report LW710)

The General Order Manual and Standard Operating Procedures with regard to releasable items, items held as court evidence, items waiting to be destroyed, and items selected to be auctioned off are summarized in the following table:

	<i>General Property</i>	<i>Firearms</i>	<i>Cash</i>	<i>Jewelry</i>
Releasable items (Includes items that were found and kept for safeguarding)	Recovered property for which owner is known must be claimed within 90 days of the recovery (GOM).	If not claimed by the owner within 90 days of notification, or if the owner is unknown, then the firearm is assigned or destroyed (SOP). Firearms seized in violation of Article 27, Section 36B require a Handgun Hearing prior to authorization for release (SOP).	Recovered property for which owner is known must be claimed within 90 days of the recovery (GOM).	Recovered property for which owner is known must be claimed within 90 days of the recovery (GOM).
Items held as court evidence	Only a seizing officer may authorize disposal of property held as court evidence (SOP).			
Items waiting to be destroyed	No policy found	Destroyed if was listed as "releasable" and was not claimed (SOP).	Not applicable	No policy found
Items selected to be auctioned off	If property is not claimed by its owner it will be submitted to the County purchasing agent for disposal (GOM).	Not applicable	Not applicable	If property is not claimed by its owner it will be submitted to the County purchasing agent for disposal (GOM).

Please see the General Order Manual for specific situations such as when currency is seized for forfeiture.

The Property Warehouse Unit has both sworn and civilian personnel. Staffing levels appear to fluctuate, and a significant number of sworn employees are assigned to the Property Warehouse Unit on temporary basis.

Scope & Methodology

The goal of this review was to ensure that confiscated and recovered property stored at the Property Warehouse Unit is being properly handled and safeguarded, and to evaluate if appropriate disposal procedures were followed for items which are no longer at the Property Warehouse Unit.

Three sources of data were used to complete this review. The first source was the log books maintained at the district stations. They were primarily used to

select the property sample for the review. The second source was the Property Record Form (PRF), which is initially completed by a confiscating/recovering officer and updated by the Property Warehouse Unit personnel to reflect the property's location, status, etc (Attachment A). The third source of information was the Tracking System printout (TSP), which is generated by the Property Warehouse's Automated Property Computer Tracking System (Attachment B).

The general methodology used to conduct the review was as follows:

- Items for review were selected from the log books maintained at the police district stations.
- For each selected item a Property Record Form (PRF) and a Tracking System Printout, or TSP, were obtained.
- Based on the property status identified on the TSP, items with "releasable", and "court evidence" status were located at the Property Warehouse Unit.
- Selected information from the district stations' log books, PRFs and TSPs was input into an Excel spreadsheet in order to determine whether appropriate documentation for "released", "disposed", and "assigned" items took place, and to conduct additional analyses.

Key methodology/sample limitations:

- Current review included only "general property" items and "firearms". Money, narcotics, and jewelry have not been included in this overview. Note that narcotics are held and disposed at the Drug Laboratory facility.
- Items submitted to the Property Warehouse Unit by police officers directly, or property that came from centralized divisions (Firearms Examination Unit, Narcotic Enforcement Division, Criminal Investigations Division, etc.) were not included in the sample.

General Property

For general property items, 339 log book entries with valid case numbers were selected as a sample for the review.

I. Availability of Documentation

Each item selected for analysis is expected to have a corresponding PRF as well as TSP. The first step focused on examining how many items out of the 339 selected for review had complete documentation. The analysis showed that 64

items or 19% of our sample did not have complete documentation as summarized in the table below.

<i>Incomplete Documentation</i>	
PRF and TSP are missing	1
PRF is missing	26
PRF for the right item is missing	33
TSP is not available	4
Total	64

PRF – Property Record Form

TSP – Tracking System Printout

Without the availability of appropriate documentation for every single confiscated or recovered item it is impossible to have complete accountability and control over confiscated or recovered property. Ultimately, without the appropriate documentation there is no “orderly accounting of all property”, as required by the SOP, which comes into possession and control by the Property Warehouse Unit, and accountability may be severely impaired.

Two hundred and seventy five entries with complete documentation (275) were sampled for further analyses.

II. Accuracy of Documentation

The status of each item/items is reflected on both the PRF and TSP. Status information shows which items should be present at the Property Warehouse Unit (those listed as “releasable”, “court”, “waiting to be destroyed”) and which ones are no longer at the Property Warehouse Unit (“released to owner”, “destroyed”, “auctioned”, “assigned”). When comparing each item’s status provided in the PRF to the one reflected in the TSP, it became apparent that the two documents do not always match. In 11 instances, or 4% of the sample for general property, there were discrepancies, which are summarized in the table below.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>
Documentation inconsistency: TSP or PRF not updated	5	1.8%
Documentation inconsistency due to multiple items	2	0.7%
Inconsistency due to incomplete/unclear completion of PRF	4	1.5%
Total	11	4.0%

Any inconsistencies in the status information obstruct the appropriate level of accountability and transparency, and reveal documentation shortcomings. The particular reasons for the discrepancies are important in understanding what needs to be done to correct the problem, which will be discussed in the recommendations section of this report.

Inconsistencies due to one of the forms not being updated, one form not being completed, or being completed in an unclear manner are self explanatory. Inconsistency “due to multiple items” may require an additional explanation. Several distinct items can be captured on a single PRF because the back of the PRF can accommodate up to five different item dispositions. If several unrelated items were entered under a single Tracking System ID, then their individual dispositions cannot be followed. In such cases, one Tracking System entry should be made for each item to ensure accountability. In such cases, the PRF will reflect the correct disposition, while the Tracking System information will apply one disposition to all items, which creates documentation inconsistency and jeopardizes transparency.

It is also necessary to note another frequent status inconsistency indicated in 14 (5.1%) of the selected sample, which is not reflected in the accompanying table. With regards to items, which were returned to the owner either at the Property Warehouse Unit or at the police station (RTO – returned to the owner or RATS – returned to the owner at the station), the documentation format of the PRF and the Tracking System does not provide for distinction between these two categories. To improve transparency the Property Warehouse Unit personnel typically handwrite “RTO” or “RATS” on front of the PRF and specify in the Tracking System’s comment field when an item was released at a station. However such additional documentation is driven by employees’ discretion and not by the format of the available documentation tools. That is why there is a lack of consistency in using “RTO” and “RATS” classification.

III. Status Distribution of the Selected Sample and Item Verification

Based on the TSP information, the status of items in the selected sample is summarized in the accompanying table.

<i>TSP Status</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage distribution by TSP status</i>
Auction	30	10.9%
Court	123	44.7%
Destroyed	46	16.7%
Releasable	17	6.2%
RTO	32	11.6%
SRTO	26	9.5%
TBD	1	0.4%
Total	275	100.0%

We identified 140 items (51.3%), which should have been located at the Property Warehouse Unit (“court evidence”, “releasable”, and “waiting to be destroyed” items were not included). One hundred and twenty seven (127) out of 140 items were successfully located (90.7%) and eight (8) items (5.7%) could not be

located and were classified as “missing”. The results of the item location verification are summarized in the accompanying table.

<i>TSP Status</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Verified</i>					<i>Verification percentage distribution</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Partially missing</i>	<i>Not applicable*</i>	<i>Successfully verified</i>	<i>Missing</i>
Court	123	115	2	5	1	0	93.5%	4.1%
Releasable	17	12	1	3	0	1	70.6%	17.6%
Total	140	127	3	8	1	1	90.7%	5.7%

* One item was listed as "releasable" in TSP and as destroyed in PRF and therefore was not verified

Implications related to the inability to locate property are significant. If an item is needed for a court proceeding then a case may be in jeopardy due to the failure to provide the necessary evidence. If an item is claimed by its owner and it cannot be located then the rightful owner will not be able to regain possession of his/her belongings and the Department may be liable for failure to safeguard the belongings. Inability to locate property, which according to the existing documentation, should be at the Property Warehouse Unit shows a failure to “provide an orderly accounting of all property coming into its possession” and failure to store property consistent with the existing policies.

It must also be noted that there is a lack of consistency in providing location codes on the TSP. Sometimes a code will look like “2D3B”, which means Police District II, box number 3, however this format is not always followed and makes it difficult to locate items in an efficient manner. No written instructions for entering location codes were identified.

IV. Documentation of Disposed Property Items

We identified 134 items (48.7%), which were no longer at the Property Warehouse Unit (“auction”, “destroyed”, “released to the owner”, and “released to the owner at the station”). We attempted to ensure that proper release/disposition documentation existed for all of these items. Release and disposition information is captured at the back of the PRF, and includes the following fields of information: items, released to (signature), officer/clerk, date, disposition type, and recipient’s name and address.

The instructions for completion of the Property Record Form provide detailed and specific guidance to completing the form. However our methodology in considering compliance was less rigid. Findings and observations from this analysis with a description of the PRF and A&I methodology is as follows:

<i>Property Record Form instructions</i>	<i>A&I methodology (if differs from Property Record Form instructions)</i>	<i>Observations and implications</i>
Items - Indicate item number being released.		Observations: Item number was definitely not present in 45 (33.6%) of the reviewed PRFs. Failure to provide the item number prohibits accountability for each item documented in PRF, especially if several items are captured on a single PRF.
Release to (signature) - Have the recipient place his signature in this block, followed by last name printed in parenthesis. When a recipient refuses to sign, the releasing employee shall record <i>Refused</i> on the left side of the block, and have another employee place his signature and ID on the right side.	A&I methodology: Any information (signature or printed name) were counted as information being present.	Observations: Two (2) out of 58 entries (3.4%) with properties, which were returned to owners, had no owner signature or printed name on the back. In addition, it was observed that in practice rarely both a signature and a last name were provided in this information field, typically it was one or the other. Failure to include this information violates the Department's instructions for completing the PRF and diminishes transparency, accountability and credibility of such releases.
Officer/Clerk - The releasing employee shall sign his last name and ID number in this block.	A&I methodology: Any information (signature, printed name, or ID) were counted as information being present.	Observations: Officer ID or name was provided in 94% of the reviewed PRFs. In 6% of the cases, no officer information was provided at all. In addition, it was noted that in practice rarely both last name and ID were provided. Failure to include both name and ID violates the Department's instructions for completing the PRF and diminishes accountability.
Date - Use MM/DD/Yr format.		Observations: Date was provided in 92.5% of the reviewed forms, and was not provided for the remaining 7.5% of the cases. Failure to provide the date violates the Department's instructions for completing the PRF and diminishes accountability.
Disposition - "Destroyed", "Auctioned" and "Assigned" boxes are available on the form.	A&I methodology: If a disposition box was checked the information was considered to be present.	Observations: Disposition checkbox is available on the back of the PRF for "destroyed", "auctioned" and "assigned" items. Out of 76 cases with such dispositions, disposition was checked for 70 cases, or 92.1%. To ensure accuracy, disposition box should always be checked off for appropriate disposition. Failure to identify the disposition type violates the Department's instructions for completing the PRF and diminishes transparency. In addition, there is no checkbox for items "returned to the owner" and items "returned to the owner at the station".

Recipient's name/address - Print recipients last name, first name and full mailing address.	A&I methodology: If either name or address was provided, information was considered as partially provided.	Observations: Out of 58 cases in which an item was returned to its owner, in 62.0% of cases (36 instances) both name and address of a recipient were provided. In 34.5% of cases (20 instances) either name or address was provided. Note that the accuracy of the recipient's information was not verified. Failure to provide the recipients' name and address violates the Department's instructions for completing the PRF and diminishes transparency, accountability and credibility of such releases.
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Documentation of Disposed General Property Items Summary Table

TSP Status	Total	Item Number			Signature			Officer/ Clerk		Date		Disposition		Name and Address				
		Present	Not present	Unclear	Present	Not present	N/A	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	N/A	Partially	Not clear
Auction	30	21	9		1		29	28	2	27	3	28	2			30		
Destroyed	46	30	16		2		44	43	3	44	2	42	4			45	1	
RTO	32	18	14		31	1		31	1	30	2	31	1	26	1		5	
SRTO	26	18	6	2	25	1		24	2	23	3	21	5	10			14	2
TOTAL	134	87	45	2	59	2	73	126	8	124	10	122	12	36	1	75	20	2
		64.9%	33.6%	1.5%	44.0%	1.5%	54.5%	94.0%	6.0%	92.5%	7.5%	91.0%	9.0%	26.9%	0.7%	56.0%	14.9%	1.5%

Pink highlights problem areas

This analysis shows a frequent failure to document key information, which is supposed to be captured in the PRF, when disposing an item.

V. *Additional Analyses: Serial Number and Multiple Items Documentation*

Serial numbers can be used to establish ownership of a particular item. According to the instructions for completing the Property Record Form, "whenever an identifying number is available on any item, its entry is mandatory". However, in 66 (24%) of the entries, in which a serial number was specified in the PRF, it was not subsequently entered into the Tracking System. Failure to enter a serial number can limit the ability to establish ownership of an item and weaken control over tracking and accounting for items.

While PRFs allow tracking for up to five items with distinct dispositions, the Tracking System is designed to provide a single disposition for each tracking number. If multiple distinct items are assigned a single tracking ID number, it is impossible to track their individual disposition through the Tracking System. In 42 (15.3%) of the entries reviewed, multiple items of a different nature were reflected under a single Tracking System entry and tracking number. This creates a significant accountability issue because if one item is released, another is destroyed and another is auctioned off, a single Tracking Form is not sufficient to account for the different dispositions of these items. This can easily be

avoided by inputting each unique item separately into the Tracking System, although more labor intensive and time consuming.

	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>	
Serial Number specified on the PRF but not in the Tracking System	66	24.0%	209	76.0%
Multiple items of distinct nature reflected as a single Tracking System entry	42	15.3%	233	84.7%

Firearms

The Firearms portion of the review included a sample of 243 items.

I. Availability of Documentation

The Firearms sample contained 34, or 14%, items with incomplete documentation as can be seen from the table below. Remaining 209 items with complete documentation were used for further analyses.

<i>Incomplete Documentation</i>	
PRF and TSP are missing	7
PRF is missing	17
PRF for the right item is missing	8
TSP is not available	2
Total	34

PRF – Property Record Form

TSP – Tracking System printout

II. Accuracy of Documentation

Of the 209 completely documented items, a total of eight (8), or 3.8%, of the firearms sample had discrepancies between the status information provided in the PRF and the TSP, which are summarized in the table below.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>
Documentation inconsistency: TSP or PRF not updated	6	2.9%
Research driven inconsistencies (documents were pulled at different times)	1	0.5%
Inconsistency due to incomplete/unclear completion of PRF	1	0.5%
Total	8	3.8%

III. Status Distribution of the Selected Sample and Item Verification

Based on the TSP information, the status of items in the selected firearms sample is summarized in the accompanying table.

<i>TSP Status</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage distribution by TSP status</i>
Waiting To Be Destroyed	9	4.3%
Court	140	67.0%
Destroyed	16	7.7%
Releasable	24	11.5%
Released To Owner	20	9.6%
Total	209	100.0%

Of the 209 firearms with complete documentation, 173 items (82.8%) should have been at the Property Warehouse Unit (“waiting to be destroyed”, “court”, and “releasable”). Out of 173 items, 171, or 98.8% of items were successfully located at the Property Warehouse Unit. The results of the item verification analysis are summarized in the table below.

<i>TSP Status</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Verified</i>				<i>Verification Percentage Distribution</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Partially missing</i>	<i>Successfully verified</i>	<i>Missing</i>
WTBD	9	9	0	0	0	100.0%	0.0%
Court	140	139	1*	0	0	99.3%	0.0%
Releasable	24	23	1	0	0	95.8%	0.0%
Total	173	171	2*	0	0	98.8%	0.0%

* One item was listed as “court evidence” in TSP and as “released to the owner” in PRF and therefore was not verified; another item was released but PRF and TSP were not appropriately updated.

IV. Documentation of Disposed Property Items

Thirty six (36) items, which are no longer at the Property Warehouse Unit that are “destroyed”, “released to the owner”, and “released to the owner at the station”, represent 17.2% of the firearms sampled. Our analysis focused on making sure that proper release/disposition documentation existed for all of these items. Release and disposition information is captured on the back of the PRF, and includes the following fields of information: items, released to (signature), officer/clerk, date, disposition type, and recipient’s name and address.

The specific instructions for completing each field of the PRF (as specified in the SOP instructions for completing the form) as well as the criteria A&I used are as follows:

<i>Property Record Form instructions</i>	<i>A&I methodology (if differs from Property Record Form instructions)</i>	<i>Observations and implications</i>
Items - Indicate item number being released.		Observations: Item number was not specified in 21 out of 36 PRFs (16 destroyed items and 5 returned to owner), representing 58.3% non-compliance.
Release to (signature) - Have the recipient place his signature in this block, followed by last name printed in parenthesis. When a recipient refuses to sign, the releasing employee shall record <i>Refused</i> on the left side of the block, and have another employee place his signature and ID on the right side.	<i>A&I methodology:</i> Any information (signature or printed name) were counted as information being present.	Observations: No issues identified. Full compliance.
Officer/Clerk - The releasing employee shall sign his last name and ID number in this block.	<i>A&I methodology:</i> Any information (signature, printed name, or ID) were counted as information being present.	Observations: In one (1) out of 36 instances, or 2.8%, the Officer/Clerk's last name and/or ID were not present.
Date - Use MM/DD/Yr format.		Observations: In one (1) out of 36 instances, or 2.8%, the date was not present.
Disposition - "Destroyed", "Auctioned" and "Assigned" boxes are available on the form.	<i>A&I methodology:</i> If a disposition box was checked the information was considered to be present.	Observations: Disposition checkbox is available on the back of the PRF for destroyed, auctioned and assigned items and if the item was RTO, an indication was typically made on the front of the PRF. Out of 16 Destroyed items, the "destroyed" checkbox was checked in 14 instances. Out of the 20 RTO items, there was an "RTO" indication on the front of the PRF in all instances. In total, two (2) out of 36 cases, or 5.6%, lacked disposition information.
Recipient's name/address - Print recipients last name, first name and full mailing address.	<i>A&I methodology:</i> If either name or address was provided, information was considered as partially provided.	Observations: Of the 20 RTO items, the recipient's name and address were not present in 6 instances, representing 30% non-compliance. However, an Application for Return which has the recipient's information was present in every instance.

Documentation of Disposed Firearms Summary Table

TSP Status	Total	Item Number		Signature			Officer/ Clerk		Date		Disposition Specified		Name and Address				
		Present	Not present	Present	Not present	N/A	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	Present	Not present	N/A	Partially	Not clear
Destroyed	16		16	16			15	1	15	1	14	2	16				
RTO	20	15	5	20			20		20		20		14	6			
TOTAL	36	15	21	20	0	16	35	1	35	1	34	2	14	6	16	0	0
		41.7%	58.3%	55.6%	0.0%	44.4%	97.2%	2.8%	97.2%	2.8%	94.4%	5.6%	38.9%	16.7%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Pink highlights problem areas

V. Additional Analysis: Serial Number and Multiple Items Documentation

Ninety-nine point five percent (99.5%) of the firearms items had a serial number specified on both the PRF and the TSP unless the serial number was physically destroyed or non-existent, which was then noted on the front of the PRF. In addition, 99.5% of the firearms items were listed in a single manner on their respective TSP.

Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Findings: General Property

- Complete documentation (both the Property Record Form and Tracking System data) was not available for 19% of entries in the selected sample (64 out of 339).
- There were inconsistencies with property status information in 4% of entries between the Property Record Form and the Tracking System record.
- Eight (8) items, or 5.7%, which should have been located at the Property Warehouse Unit were not found and were classified as "missing".
- Documentation of the items, which are no longer stored at the Property Warehouse Unit, is frequently incomplete and not thorough.
 - Item number was missing in 16 cases (33.6%).
 - Released to signature was missing in two (2) cases (3.5%) for items which were reported as returned to owner.
 - Officer/clerk information was not present in eight (8) cases (6%), and was not complete (both name and ID number) in a vast majority of cases.

- d. Date was not specified in 10 cases (7.5%).
 - e. Disposition box was not marked in six (6) cases (7.9%).
 - f. Recipient's name and address information was not present in one (1) case (0.7%) and partial information (either name or address) was provided in 19 cases (32.8%).
- 5. When a serial number was available, it was not entered into the Tracking System in 66 cases (24%).
 - 6. In 42 entries (15.3%), multiple unrelated items were assigned a single Tracking System ID, which makes it impossible to track their individual disposition through the Tracking System.

Summary of Findings: Firearms

- 1. Complete documentation (both the Property Record Form and Tracking System Printout) was not available for 14% of the entries in the selected sample (34 out of 243 cases).
- 2. There were inconsistencies with property status information in eight (8) entries (3.8%) between the Property Record Form and the Tracking System Printout.
- 3. All items, which should be located at the Property Warehouse Unit, were successfully located.
- 4. Documentation of the RTO items (20) which are no longer kept at the Property Warehouse Unit is as follows:
 - a. Item number was missing in five (5) cases (25%).
 - b. Released to signature, Officer/clerk, Date, and Disposition information was present in 100% of 20 sampled cases.
 - c. Recipient's name and address information was not present in the designated area on the reverse of the Property Record Form in six (6) cases (30%), but an Application for Return which has the recipient's information was attached in each case.
- 5. Documentation of the Destroyed items (16) which are no longer kept at the Property Warehouse Unit is as follows:
 - a. Item number was missing in 100% of cases.
 - b. Officer/clerk information was not present in one (1) case (6.3%).
 - c. Date was not specified in one (1) case (6.3%).

- d. Disposition box was not marked in two (2) cases (12.5%).
- 6. When a serial number was available, it was not entered into the Tracking System in one (1) case.
- 7. In one (1) entry, multiple unrelated items were assigned a single Tracking System ID, which makes it impossible to track their individual disposition through the Tracking System.

Summary of Findings: Other Observations

- 1. There is some inconsistency and ambiguity on how to complete the Property Record Form and how to enter Tracking System information when one case involves multiple property items.
 - a. Sometimes one case may have over half a dozen or more items, which are all captured on a single PRF. If items have different dispositions, this creates a problem since the back of the PRF allows tracking dispositions of only five (5) items.
 - b. Sometimes a case, which has numerous items, has a separate PRF completed for each item (according to the GOM, this is permitted when it is suspected that items belong to different individuals).
 - c. Similar issues occur when data is entered in the Tracking System as previously discussed. There is a need for a clear written directive on how to enter information into the Tracking System. To ensure accountability, a policy should stipulate that distinct unrelated items should be entered separately and assigned an individual Tracking ID number.
- 2. The rules for completing a PRF and entering data into the Tracking System are not clear, and are not being consistently followed (cases vs. entries issue).
- 3. The fact that documentation is missing and incomplete is not always apparent to the Property Warehouse Unit personnel. There is no summary document, which shows how many PRFs were submitted for a particular case, and no summary total for all the individual items.
- 4. When the PRF is completed, the assignment of an item number is not consistent (1, 2... a, b... a-1, aa, ec-1, etc.). Because of the inconsistent assignment of item numbers it may be difficult to determine from the PRFs how many items there are in total.
- 5. Location codes are not entered into the Tracking System in a consistent manner. Some location codes, instead of helping to locate property, make it difficult to

identify where the property is located. As a result, it takes a lot longer to locate an item, or it may not be located at all.

6. Whether an item was returned to the owner at the Property Warehouse Unit (RTO) or at the station (RATS) it is not always identified since such a distinction is not embedded in the format of the currently available documents (i.e. PRF and the Tracking System). A consistent treatment of this issue is needed (preferably keeping the distinction between RTO and RATS and incorporating this distinction into the format of the PRF and the Tracking System).
7. Information about the property owner/recipient provided on the back of the PRF is not sufficient (especially when no ID is provided). For greater accountability, driver's license information, or a copy/scan of the recipient's driver's license should be made, current address should be recorded and justification for releasing item to a particular individual should be made.
8. The existing GOM policy is ambiguous regarding whether a copy of an individual's ID should be made for each released item. Because of possible liability considerations, a copy or scan of a government issued ID should be made when any property is being released.
9. In some cases property was released to a person who was not identified as the owner on the front of the PRF. No justification was provided for such releases. Additional documentation with justification of release to the recipient and a policy, which addresses such instances, would strengthen controls.
10. Potentially valuable property is sometimes destroyed. There is no policy, which identifies the criteria for determining whether property should be destroyed or sent to an auction. In addition, there is no written policy, which identifies the appropriate person to make such determinations.
11. Property with identified owners is sometimes destroyed or auctioned. While it is possible that the owners were contacted and failed to claim their property within the designated timeframe, without a written notification letter (which is not currently required) there is no way to verify that the owner was notified. For liability purposes it may be beneficial to send a written notice to each owner whose property can be released.
12. The procedure for completing/updating the PRF and the Tracking System is not clear (after/ during the actual property disposition). The SOP does not provide step by step instructions and time limits within which property data should be updated and who should be responsible for keeping the information current.
13. Storage of the older PRFs is not adequate (stored in cardboard boxes on the floor in a hallway at the Central Records Division; newer files are kept at the Property

Warehouse Unit but there are no file cabinets for continued storage of these items).

14. Handwriting on the PRFs is not always legible, which may cause errors when data is input into the Tracking System. This, in turn, may cause unnecessary delays when attempting to locate an item. To address this, a written policy should be considered to stipulate that ineligible PRFs will not be accepted by the Property Warehouse Unit, and officers will need to complete a form in a legible manner.
15. There is no written policy on BB gun disposal. It is not clear whether BB guns can be released or should be destroyed.

General Recommendations

Based on our findings we recommend the Police Chief instruct the appropriate personnel to:

1. Ensure that complete documentation is available for all property items.
2. Ensure that all documentation is being updated in a systematic and timely manner.
3. Ensure that all property is safeguarded and disposition of property is always accompanied by a timely update of all the necessary documentation.
4. Ensure that the disposition information is complete, legible, and accurate.
5. Ensure that a serial number is always entered into the Tracking System.
6. Ensure that each distinct item has a separate Tracking System ID, so that disposition of each item can be tracked.

While the focus of this particular review was narrow, the documentation issues we have encountered have shed light on issues, which are beyond the immediate scope of this review but are instrumental to addressing the documentation issue and improving operations of the Property Warehouse Unit. Due to the limited scope of this current work, we were not in the position to determine the exact causes of the documentation issues we have observed. Nevertheless, we believe that it would be most beneficial for the Property Warehouse Unit to determine the causes of poor documentation. The International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Professional Standards, which were published in March of 2010, can be used to determine the causes of the Property Warehouse Unit's documentation issues as well as to evaluate the Property Warehouse Unit's performance. Based on a brief evaluation of the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Professional Standards we recommend the following:

7. The Police Chief ensure that the Property Warehouse Unit has qualified and properly trained staff;
8. The Police Chief ensure that the Property Warehouse Unit has an adequate number of personnel and frequent rotation of personnel is avoided;
9. The Police Chief ensure that revisions to the General Order Manual and the Standard Operating Procedures are made to meet known best practices;
10. The Police Chief ensure that the Property Warehouse Unit develops a Procedures Manual, which provides step by step instructions and guidance on completing each task the Warehouse personnel have to undertake;
11. The Police Chief ensure that the Property Warehouse Unit reviews the Property Record Form to ensure that it provides a sufficient level of accountability and transparency when properly completed;
12. The Police Chief ensure that an updated destruction policy is reviewed/created; and
13. The Police Chief ensure that a documentation storage policy is created which specifies where and for how long documentation should be stored and ensures adequate storage of records.

[illegible]

LW112

PROPERTY TRACKING SYSTEM
PROPERTY UPDATE07/21/10
10:46:43

NEXT TRANS: _____

PROPERTY ID: 0803900023

CCN: 08 - ~~021~~ - ~~001~~

CID: 08173

DATE RCV: 01/20/08 TIME RCV: 10:46 RECOVER OFCR ID: ~~001~~

INC TYPE: WEA WEAPONS VIOLATIONS

PROP TYPE: F ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
STATUS: AUC SENT TO AUCTION

BIN#	ITEM#	QUANTITY	VALUE
5B1R	A	1	_____

COLOR	MAKE	MODEL	SERIAL
_____	_____	80GB	8K7056WDV9R

DESCRIPTION: IPOD

COMMENTS: _____

MESSAGE:

PF1=HELP 2=RTN 3=REFR 4=UPD

12=EXIT



**INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
POLICE DEPARTMENT**



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: October 6, 2011

To: David H. Van Dyke
County Auditor

From: Mark A. Magaw *MM*
Chief of Police

Re: Audit Report – Police Department
Property Warehouse Unit – Recovered/Confiscated Property

As a result of the County Audit, the Property Warehouse Unit is currently undergoing a reorganization effort which consists of three phases. The first phase is an assessment of the operational aspects of the facility, its day to day operations and staffing issues. The Standard Operating Procedures manual has been updated to reflect current procedures within the Unit and personnel issues have been addressed through recent transfers.

Phase Two of the reorganization effort consisted of administrative and personnel reorganization. New policies have been implemented which allow several long standing problems to be streamlined with better accountability. There was also a 2,000 item audit which was successfully completed due to the transfer of the Property Custodian duties from one sergeant to another.

Phase Three is an ongoing process which will include the implementation of the Smart Tracking of Evidence and Property (STEP) program by the end of the year and the training of personnel on the STEP program. Our Warehouse personnel have also begun the process of reorganizing the property stored within the Warehouse and are also working to purge property from the Warehouse which is no longer necessary to be held for court purposes.

During the audit, it was discovered that several items of evidence were missing and or misplaced. All of the missing items of evidence have since been located and all paperwork and databases have been updated.

Attached is a memo from Major Robert J. Nealon, Commander, Property Management Division, detailing the efforts of the Property Warehouse Unit. These efforts are to ensure that all departmental and CALEA rules and regulations are being adhered to.



**INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
POLICE DEPARTMENT**



M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 14, 2011
TO: Deputy Chief, H.P. Stawinski, Office of the Chief
FROM: Captain Robert Nealon
Commander, Property Management Division
SUBJECT: Audit Report – Property Warehouse Unit

As a result of the audit conducted by the Office of Audits and Investigations and the audit conducted by the Prince George's County Police Department's Internal Affairs Division we have attempted to change the way we do business. Part of this reorganization effort consists of a three phase assessment. This reorganization has taken place to date and the Warehouse is well on its way to recovery and becoming a "best practices facility".

The Prince George's County Police Department's Property Warehouse Unit stores approximately one million items that have been recovered and/or confiscated by Prince George's County Police Officers. Police officers submit recovered property along with completed documentation to their supervisor; the property is then transferred to the Property Warehouse Unit to be secured. The Property Warehouse Unit is responsible for receiving, storing, releasing and disposing of this property in accordance with established rules and procedures. The Police Department's procedures which provide operating guidelines for the Property Warehouse Unit are specified in the Department's General Order Manual, the Property Section's Standard Operating Procedures, CALEA Standards as well as the International Association of Property and Evidence best practices advice. The following entities provide operating guidelines for the Unit; General Order Manual, property Warehouse SOP, CALEA and Internal Affairs of property and evidence best practices.

The Property Warehouse Unit has gone through major changes with the transfer of a new command staff to the Property Management Division in late 2010. Additionally, the Office of Audits and Investigations conducted an audit of the Warehouse in the fall of 2009. The majority of the current personnel assigned to the Property Warehouse Unit were not assigned to the unit during the 2009 audit. Since this time a reorganization has occurred. As part of this reorganization effort, a three phase assessment has been implemented and the Warehouse is well on its way to becoming a "best practices facility".

The following items were identified as "alleged missing property" on the summary sheet of the audit:

CCN# 09-005-2037: This is the item that had caused concern among the Audit Team. This item is identified as a "missing handgun." This handgun was originally listed on the initial audit as missing and has since been removed and corrected. The item was not missing, it was returned to the owner. The problem was with the paperwork surrounding the firearm. There were actually two property records which were paper clipped together. When the property was released, it was signed by the owner, but only on the second page of the property record. This was an error committed by the previous Property Custodian, Sergeant Robert Daniels. There was documentation from the previous supervisor attempting to fix this error but it was only "fixed" by means of a post it note on the documents. The gun was released by Sergeant Daniels at a gun hearing on October 20, 2009. He released items A and B and inadvertently did not have the citizen sign both property records due to being clipped together. The property report and the main frame of the computer have been properly updated.

CCN #08-229-1996: Property is here in the Warehouse in the correct location.

CCN #09-112-0031: Property is here in the Warehouse in the correct location.

CCN# 07-177-0802: Property was destroyed on 08-31-10 and all paperwork is accounted for.

CCN# 09-224-0971: After reading all the notes and the routing slips attached to the property record it is our belief that this camera was returned by a supervisor here in Property on or about November 13, 2009. Per the routing slip dated November 11, 2009 there were notes from District IV that an electronic copy for release was forwarded on November 13, 2009.

CCN# 08-201-1764: The storage location box does not exist anymore due to the fact that it was in a recovery box and the item does not have a serial number. We believe it was destroyed. Unfortunately, it was left in the computer and the file was left in the active records.

CCN# 09-093-0990: This item was placed in an incorrect location. We believe it was taken out and placed in the "C" section of the Warehouse. In order to try and locate this item we will need extensive manpower and time to go through every box. The item is a crack pipe. There are approximately 200 full boxes in this section.

CCN# 08-361-1553: The storage location box does not exist anymore due to the fact that it was in a recovery box and the item we believe has been destroyed. Unfortunately, it was left in the computer and the file was left in the active records.

CCN# 09-218-0699: The registration plate was placed in an incorrect location. The item has been located. There are 115 full boxes in this section.

Phase one of the assessment was a "to the bones" look at not only the operational aspects of the facility and its day to day operations, but also of the staffing. It was clear in a short period of time, that there were several key issues that had to be addressed. The SOP for the facility was last written 14 years prior; all gun hearings had been stopped and the Warehouse personnel consisted of suspended officers who had no buy in to the job itself. (Reference bullet points)

Phase two of the assessment consisted of administrative and personnel reorganization. All SOP's for the Property Management Division were revised and submitted for approval. Upon acceptance, new policies were implemented within the Warehouse that allowed several long standing problems to be streamlined with better accountability. (Gun Hearings, etc.) Several personnel moves were made to insure that officers who did not care to be assigned at the Warehouse were moved. The Warehouse now has officers who are buying into the new operational plans that have been set into place. There has been a transfer of the Property Custodian duties to Sgt. Lott and the 2,000 item audit was successfully completed in record time for that transfer. (Reference bullet points)

Phase three of the assessment is ongoing and has three major priorities that are currently being handled. Implementation of the STEP program, training of personnel and the reorganizing and purging of property are the areas of concentration at this time. Although we are behind schedule with the STEP program, we fully expect that the system will be operational within the Police Department by year's end. The testing phase is set to begin in District III in the next few weeks and initial training has seen an overwhelming positive response to the system. To date we have 5 staff members (3 sworn, 2 civilian) that have been trained by IAPE (International Association of Property and Evidence) which is a national accredited company. Further training is being planned for staff members permanently assigned to the Warehouse. With training well in hand, the staff has begun a total revamp of the Warehouse. Purge projects are underway, items are being repackaged and stored more efficiently and staff members are preparing for the start of the STEP program. (Reference bullet points)

The following areas represent what we have accomplished or are in the process of completing:

1. Administrative:

- Updated all Standard Operational Procedures and manuals for the Property Management Division.
- Issued copies of all current Standard Operational Procedures and manuals to permanent Property Management Division employees and extensively reviewed them with all temporary employees.
- Updated, issued and reviewed job descriptions for all employees working in the Property Warehouse Unit.

2. Personnel:

- The personnel within the Property Warehouse Unit has been slightly revamped to include more full time enthusiastic employees eager to work in the Property Warehouse Unit as opposed to suspended employees who are reassigned for investigation or administrative purposes.
- Established and disseminated a Work Place Operational Flow Chart.
- A Daily Employee Status Board has been created.
- Assigned mail boxes for every employee.
- Established a Daily Line-up Form for the Section.
- Daily Roll Calls are now mandatory.
- Monthly Property staff meetings are conducted.

3. Security:

- ADT equipment has been reevaluated and updated.
- All locks have been changed.
- All keys have been changed and reissued to new supervisory personnel.
- All security codes have been changed.

4. Work Place Organization:

- All current forms that are utilized for the processing of any property within the Property Warehouse Unit have been replenished, labeled and stored in the front office, which is accessible to all personnel.
- The Warehouse has been reorganized and labeled.
- All filing systems are now labeled, to include active, inactive, and archived systems.
- The three property rooms that are utilized to store court evidence in Upper Marlboro, Maryland have been located and reorganized.
- The Court Evidence check out system has been revamped.
- An Auction Section has been established.
- All items of value (guns, jewelry, money) that are stored within the Warehouse Unit are currently in the process of being 100 percent inventoried and stored on the I-Drive in an excel spread sheet system (PASSWORD PROTECTED) for daily updates and review.
- Weekly divisional cleanups have been established and made mandatory and require supervisory inspection upon completion.

5. Work Load Assessment:

- An assignment board has been created, to include to-do lists, project assignments, ownership, and project status updates.
- Employees are assigned to work specific tasks.
- A formal truck schedule has been established.

6. Training:

- All Property Warehouse Unit personnel have been trained and now have access to all Division databases.
- All Property Warehouse Unit personnel have been currently trained in releasing any and all property from the Warehouse.
- Five (5) Property Warehouse Unit personnel have received IAPE (International Association of Property and Evidence) training.
- Additional IAPE training requests for five (5) personnel has been submitted to the Planning and Research Division.
- A PowerPoint presentation is currently in the process of being created to better train department personnel on property procedures.

7. Purge:

- All property rooms throughout the Police Department have been inspected and cleared of all items that have been stored for any extended period of time.
- A large scale purge project has been implemented to take place twice a year in January and July.
- Monthly dump runs to the local county landfill ("... to destroy large bulky generic items").
- Monthly Gun Hearings have been restored.

- Bimonthly Gun Burns are conducted in conjunction with SOD and IAD.
- Monthly incinerator runs to Wheelabrator in Baltimore, Maryland (“... to destroy items that contain personal information, items that are case sensitive, HAZMAT items, items of evidentiary value, and items that may be unsafe for community reacquisition that may be being pilfered from the county landfill.”)
- Asset Forfeiture Funds are now deposited twice a month.
- Cell phones to be purged are now going to be donated to the local women’s shelter to assist battered woman in conjunction with the PGSO (Prince George’s County Sheriff’s Office).
- All bicycles and bicycle parts are now being purged and reallocated to Bikes for the World and The Multi Cultural Youth Center in Hyattsville, Maryland for at risk youths.
- All recyclables purged are now recycled for monetary refunds and deposited into the general fund.
- A strong emphasis has been placed on the utilization of the IOP (Officer’s Request) function within the Property Warehouse Unit. This function allows the Department to reallocate properties recovered, abandoned or forfeited to be redistributed throughout the Police Department for departmental use.

8. Transportation:

- Two unmarked vehicles that are assigned to personnel, assigned to the Property Warehouse Unit, have had their windows tinted for officer safety. Those vehicles are used to transport items of value and conduct NED property pick-ups.
- A new property truck was issued to the Property Warehouse Unit.

The Auditor/Inspector observed the below listed issues and concerns while conducting the audit at the Police Department’s Property Warehouse Unit:

1. Several reports were misfiled.

Response:

- Most of the staff members who assisted with filing were suspended officers who had no ownership in the Property Warehouse Unit and were often mediocre employees and often had lackadaisical attitudes about their work.
- We now have several employees who want to be here and “buy in” to what we are trying to accomplish.
- We have almost an 80% change in our staff from when the audit was conducted.
- Filing duties are typically Clerk/Administrative Aides/Administrative Assistants duties and the task is completed more efficiently.
- Filing duties were also often completed by Interns/Summer Interns with little training and limited supervision thus accounting for a greater margin of error.
- We now have incredible data entry operators (civilian staff).
- We do not have an Administrative Aide assigned to PMD.

2. Data was improperly entered into the database.

Response:

- Please see number one above.

3. Several property and evidence tags were not attached properly.

Response:

- The property within the Property Warehouse Unit has been moved three times and handled most times by student officers/suspended officers/TDY officers so the handling of our items was not done with the care and concern that a professional office moving company would dedicate to the task. These moves can account for the numerous tags that have fallen off.
- Most of the tags are attached by tape which often cracks and peels over time especially in a Warehouse that is not properly climate controlled.
- Our new bar coding system will replace the tags and tape with adhesive labels.

4. There is no surveillance system in place to monitor the storage areas.

Response:

- Cost is the issue
- Budget cuts
- We will request this item once again in the 2012 budget
- We will also request this item as grants become available

5. There is a delay in entering weapons into the database.

Response:

- Staffing issues
- Turnover ratio
- Weapons coming in far exceed the weapons going out.
- The duties and responsibilities of the weapons custodian is too much for one person and they often lag behind.

6. The weapons destruction equipment went down in March of 2010. The tool company representative for the equipment advised that the cutting tool was the wrong equipment for the task. Weapons are now being destroyed in Baltimore.

Response:

- We are currently using Wheelabrator in Baltimore for bi-monthly burns, monthly when we can get enough weapons together.

7. Sharp items were not secured properly in either Biohazard sharp object disposal pouches or Biohazard tubes.

Response:

- This area has been addressed and improved.

8. Multiple property items placed into one bag and listed/labeled under one item number.

Response:

- We are in the process of completing a Power Point Presentation to address these issues.
- There is a strong need for more supervisor oversight from start to finish.
- We have addressed our staff in terms of what to accept and deny at pick up.
- Our supervisors often conduct roll call training with our current staff.

9. Items placed in whatever storage box has space in the Warehouse.

Response:

- Our purge effort has assisted with this.
- Our new bar coding system will eliminate this issue.

10. Cardboard storage boxes are not strong enough to hold multiple items and large items.

Response:

- Cost is the issue.
- Budget cuts.
- We will request better storage boxes in the 2012 budget.
- We will also request this item as grants become available.
- We will also be obtaining free Flexcon boxes from MPDC.

Overall, the submission, entry and accountability of property are consistent with departmental policies and procedure. However, the following recommendations should be considered and implemented as appropriate:

The following items were recommended by Sergeant Landers when he conducted his audit and we expanded on his recommendations:

1. Include a class on the proper submission of property during initial training and annual In-Service training for both civilian and sworn personnel.
2. Ensure that only authorized supervisors are accurately and legibly logging property into their respective property rooms that is being stored for pick up by the Property Warehouse Unit.
3. It should be strongly emphasized that Property Warehouse Unit personnel should never take into custody any property that is not properly filled out, packaged, or prepared for submission to the Property Warehouse Unit.
4. Ensure that the Property Custodian signs each and every one of the property records that are picked up from their respective District/Division.
5. Ensure that each item is entered into the Property Database by corresponding case number and item number.
6. Ensure that both the Warehouse Personnel and the District/Division Property Custodian properly fill out respective logbooks for any money, guns, or jewelry or general items before the items leave the District/Division.
7. Plastic storage containers should be utilized to store any and all property rather than the cardboard boxes that are currently being used.
8. Permanent Warehouse personnel of both civilian and sworn capacity that are in good standing with the Police Department should be assigned to the Property Warehouse Division.

9. More routine trips to the Wheelabrator Baltimore, L.P. in Baltimore City Maryland would permit a more consistent destruction of sensitive property.

10. Any and all employees both sworn and civilian who are permanently assigned to the Property Warehouse Unit should receive additional nationally acclaimed, board certified, accredited training through the International Association of Property and Evidence. Such training would allow for our Department to be on a much larger national systematic scale that would allow for better communication and universal understanding in the processing and preservation of evidence and recovered property.

11. The appropriate Chain of Command is an essential part of success and should include a person for each rank as well as an Administrative Assistant assigned to the Division.

In closing, the staff currently assigned under this command has done a tremendous job with what they have had to work with. Just trying to undo the past years of neglect is a job within itself. We anticipate better tracking and accountability with the STEP program and the continual addition of permanently assigned staff. We will however, continue to struggle with the issues of the past until we realize as a Department that we can no longer treat the Property Unit as a housing unit for troubled officers. Although strides have been made, we are always under the radar for evidentiary issues and will continue to be so. CALEA assessors recognized this and made recommendations to overcome these issues. (Reference bullet points)

Finally, by following the current policies of the Police Department and instituting the recommendations suggested and listed above, the Property Warehouse Unit will function more efficiently. This will result in increased accountability, and submitted items will be correctly stored and easily identifiable.