

PROPERTY ROOM CONSULTING, INC

"We rescue law enforcement property rooms"



Inspection and Inventory Audit Report

Red Bank Police Department NJ

Conducted July 22-25, 2019
Chief (Ret) Michael S. Miller
Lt. (Ret) Robert A Pettit, Jr.

Background: I was contacted by Red Bank in reference to conducting an inventory audit of the Police Department's Evidence Room. The agency is not accredited, but may seek accreditation. We discussed the needs of the Department and I subsequently provided a quote for services, which the Department accepted. We agreed on a start date of July 22, 2019 and an estimated completion date of July 25, 2019.

On Scene Evaluation: I, along with Lt. (Ret.) A. Robert Pettit, Jr. arrived at the Police Department on July 22, 2019 and met with Sgt Talerico, who is retiring, and Ofc. Travostino, who is replacing Sgt Talerico. We were given a tour of the facility and also had the opportunity to interview the custodian. A custodian was onsite at all times during our auditing. During the course of the onsite evaluation, I initially focused on learning about how a) the current function operates in terms of intake, packaging, temporary storage, transfer of property into long term storage, storage schemes, and final disposition.; as well as b) how the department utilizes their property management system to track and manage their inventory. Each of these functional areas is discussed in detail within the report. The onsite portion of the inspection and audit was completed on July 25, 2019.

Checklist:

The evidence/property room is being maintained in a neat and orderly fashion. **Not entirely, see suggestions in Long Term Storage section.**

The integrity of the stored evidence property is being maintained. **(Generally, see notes.**

The evidence/property is being protected from damage and deterioration. **Yes**

Proper accountability procedures are being maintained. **Generally, see notes.**

Evidence and/or property having no further evidentiary value has been identified and is ready for disposal. **No. Purge needs to be undertaken.**

Temporary storage areas are clean, intact and all locking mechanisms are functional. **Yes**

It appears that all department directives concerning the property management function are being followed. **Yes.**

Red Bank Inspection

Intake and Packaging of Evidence:

- Heat sealed tubing for packaging CDS, currency and jewelry, precious metals and gemstones valued at over \$500.00 is available. For CDS, drugs should be packaged separately by type/actor (if applicable); and paraphernalia packaged separately from CDS.
- Require double verification for currency, high value items and CDS prior to heat sealing. Have both officers sign across the seal(s).
- The logging and packaging areas contain an adequate supply of materials and they are organized.

Property Management System:

System is capable of creating an inventory list that is complete and can be broken down by type of evidence. Some of the entries in the property management system are inconsistent. For example, on some occasions there are times that buccal swabs are being logged as DNA, and sometimes not. The same applies for sexual assault kits.

Temporary Evidence Holding:

Temporary holding is of a key in only design, meaning that once the impounding officer has secured the items, the only person(s) who could access them are the property custodian keyholders. PE keyholders are called in for cases where large and/or unusual evidence/property needs storage. The current method of temporary evidence holding is sufficient in terms of security and storage space.

Physical Design of the Evidence Vault

The evidence room is located within a secure area of the Police Department, adjacent to the records room high risk area is behind a secondary door with an alarm panel. Room is clearly overburdened in terms of space. Storage locations are clearly marked and the agency does not use barcoding. There is an indication that the Department does store like items and like sized items. This is evidenced by the compact disc storage area. The main vault needs modifications to be in compliance with the NJ Attorney General Guideline and best practices. There are several areas of concern which are discussed below.

Security/Environmental:

- Security alarms and smoke detectors are present.
- Entry door is solid core and deadbolted. Key fob access.
- Room is neat and clean as possible, but the storage areas are overburdened with items.
- Put NARCAN in the vault in case of exposure.

Storage Scheme: Logistically the room should be laid out so that it is easily understood by a reasonable person.

- In some instances, identifiable storage areas, particularly for drug evidence, are too broad. For example, there were approximately 12 boxes in section middle. If the custodian was looking for one item within that section, he would potentially find the desired item in any one of the 12 boxes. This is an extremely inefficient storage scheme scenario.
- The process of storing lab returns should be modified so that all lab returns go back into their original envelope.
- Storage locations should be created for items moved from their primary location awaiting a process such as return, destruction, auction, etc. When an item is slated for its respective process, it should be moved to the awaiting process location, such as "destruction box A", but should remain in status "stored in location" until the item is actually destroyed or transferred to another agency for destruction.

Administration of the Evidence Vault

Special Handling Items:

- Cash on hand should be on deposit rather than in holding.
 - Deposit found money and non-essential evidence money into a law enforcement trust account within municipal finance, within 48 hr; or returned to owner, in accordance with 40A:5-15.
 - Deposit funds pending forfeiture with County Prosecutor, within 48 hr, in accordance with 2C:64-1
 - Only cash absolutely needed for prosecution such as dye pack cash, bloody cash, serial number recorded cash, should be kept as evidence.
- Cash is separated physically from general property in a safe.

CDS: CDS is segregated from general property and evidence in the high risk room. Many items were stored well in excess of what they needed to be after the case had been disposed.

Firearms: Firearms are segregated from general property within the high-risk room.

- Any loose firearms on hand should be repackaged into handgun boxes. Rifle boxes should be used for long guns.

DNA: An evidence refrigerator/freezer is present and utilized for DNA and bodily fluids as needed. Confirm it is on an emergency backup generator to maintain environment in case of a power outage.

Disposition: It is clear that disposition has not been accomplished in a regular manner and the room is overburdened with items that should have been disposed of years ago. This is true of CDS, firearms, cash and general property and evidence. To improve the general health of the evidence room as well as comply with State Statutes, AG Guidelines and directives and conform to contemporary best practices, **TIME** must be allocated to the evidence control officer to accomplish disposition, I estimate that roughly 40-50% of all items in holding could be purged from the room.

Disposition methods are discussed below.

- Destruction: Contraband as well as items of identification and financial instruments such as credit cards, financial documents, etc that cannot be returned should be destroyed by an appropriate method. The same applies to firearms that have been approved for destruction. Follow Bergen County policies relating to destruction, and if none exists, state policy.
- Auction: Property that becomes owned by the municipality such as that found by an officer, or unclaimed property not wanted by the finder or abandoned property should be auctioned, in accordance with 40A:14-157 This can be accomplished by conducting a live municipal auction or using a service such as govdeals.com or propertyroom.com.
- Donate: Municipal government can authorize donation of property such as bicycles or youth sporting equipment to a 503c entity.
- Return to Owner/Finder

Audit:

CDS N=1522

Items Not Located: 23

Items Not Located Rate: 1.51%

CDS Discrepancy Table

Tag Number	Description
RB-0041399	VEGETATION
RB-0040455	SUBOXONE
RB-0040170	CLEAR TUBE CONTAINING THC OIL
RB-0038975	18 WHITE ROUND PILLS
RB-0038945	VEGETATION
RB-0038549	VEGETATION
RB-0038493	7 BAGS SUSPECTED MARIJUANA
RB-0038492	81 ALPRAZOLAM
RB-0038491	498 BAGS SUSPECTED HEROIN
RB-0037572	3 BAGS SUSPECTED HEROIN
RB-0036896	RED/BLK CONT WITH VEG
RB-0032826	VEGETATION
RB-0031168	NO ADDERAL IN PACKAGE
RB-0031147	8 METHADONE PILLS
RB-0031146	28 GLASSINE MARKED ROCK AND ROLL
RB-0030434	SUSPECTED MARIJUANA
RB-0029929	VEGETATION IN A NEWPORT BOX
RB-0028168	4 WAX FOLDS
RB-0027446	2 FT TALL MARIJUANA PLANT
RB-0026803	2 PLASTIC BAGS, COCAINE
RB-0025211	SUSPECTED COCAINE
RB-0024892	VEGETATION U 50
RB-0004545	4 ROCKS OD CRACK NUMBERED AS 00004545

Firearms N= 170

Items Not Located: 3

Items Not Located Rate: 1.76%

Firearms Discrepancies

Tag Number	Description
RB-0035477	MARKMAN REPEATER
RB-0029011	SIG SPRING LOADED
RB-0029010	DELTA BB GUN

Currency; Jewelry, Precious Metals and Gems over \$500 N= 70

Items Not Located: 0

Items Not Located Rate: 0.00%

No Currency/High Value Discrepancies to Report.

DNA/Bodily Fluids (Perishable Special Handling) N=91

Items Not Located: 2

Items Not Located Rate: 2.20%

DNA Discrepancies:

Tag Number	Description
RB-0033320	DNA pack
RB-0024798	swabbings

General PE Sample=349

Items Not Located: 0

Items Not Located Rate: 0.00%

General Evidence

No Discrepancies to report

The items not located rate across the of high-risk items is generally very good with the exception of DNA, which is slightly higher than it should be, <2%. General evidence discrepancy rate is perfect.

S 

Michael S. Miller/Property Room Consulting Inc

Report Date October 20, 2019