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| <b>CLINTON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>                                       |                     |  |
| <b>POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>                                                  |                     |                                                                                     |
| SUBJECT: EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY CONTROL                                          |                     |                                                                                     |
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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this written directive is to provide a standardized procedure regarding the documenting and handling of evidence and property that comes into the possession of the Clinton Township Police Department. The procedures set forth are to ensure that the integrity of evidence and property are accurately maintained.

**POLICY:** The utilization of proper and accepted methods for the collection, packaging, storage and preservation of all evidence and seized property is of paramount importance in the successful investigation and prosecution of criminal cases. The lawful and appropriate disposition of such property on regular intervals is necessary for the efficient management of the property and evidence function.

## PROCEDURE:

### I. COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

#### A. Administration

1. The Clinton Township Police Department has access to qualified personnel capable of processing a crime scene and/or traffic crash scene on a 24-hour basis. Personnel from the Clinton Township Police Department may process minor scenes. Any Clinton Township police officer may collect evidence when necessary. However, certain officers are designated as having primary responsibility for the collection of evidence in relation to specified incidents:
  - a. Detectives are primarily responsible for the processing of secure crime/serious crash scenes and the collection of evidence therein. Detectives shall be summoned in all situations where the Shift Supervisor determines the need for scene processing.
  - b. While it is recognized that officers not specifically assigned to the collection of evidence may discover and collect evidence in the course of their duties, officers operating at a secure crime scene who are not assigned to the collection of evidence shall not search for or otherwise handle any evidence unless so ordered by the officer in charge of the scene.
  - c. If the scene is deemed a "major crime" scene, the Shift Supervisor shall notify the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office and the Clinton Township Police Department's Investigative Division Commander. (See the Clinton Township Police Department's 'Major Incident Notification' general order, Volume 6, Chapter 1, for more information).

#### B. Operations

1. Physical evidence may encompass any particular thing, object, or substance that can establish that a crime has been committed or can provide a link between a crime, the victim(s), and the actor(s). All personnel will make arrangements for the proper identifying, collecting, processing, and preserving of physical evidence in the field, inclusive of the documented transfer of custody while in the field.
  - a. When assisted by another agency, the officer/detective in charge will coordinate the proper identifying, collecting, processing, and preserving of evidence to include the documented transfer of custody while in the field. All transfer of evidence in the field shall be documented on the Evidence Log.
  - b. Personnel shall adhere to the New Jersey State Police Evidence Field Manual for the identification, collection, processing and preserving of physical evidence.

- 1) When identifying, collecting, processing, and preserving physical evidence in the field all personnel shall adhere to the following procedures:
  - a) Secure and isolate the scene;
  - b) Photograph and/or video record the evidence prior to collection. This process provides the courts with a visual depiction of the scene;
    - i. Whenever possible, crime scene evidence should be photographed with some type of measuring device next to it prior to collection.
  - c) Sketch the scene, as needed;
  - d) Identify, process, collect and preserve evidence.
2. Conduct a systematic search for evidence while keeping within the boundaries of constitutional requirements and current criminal procedures.
  - a. Evidence shall be handled with extreme care to prevent contamination of the evidence as well as to ensure officer safety.
  - b. Perishable evidence shall be given priority and collected first.
  - c. The collecting officer shall work through the scene in a logical sequence to prevent the disruption and/or contamination of other items of evidence.
3. Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Evidence
  - a. Consensual Collection of DNA Evidence
    - 1) The Clinton Township Police Department Investigative Division is in possession of swabs that are specifically designed for the collection and packaging of DNA evidence.
    - 2) When a suspect or potential suspect consents to the collection of DNA evidence from their person, the collecting officer shall simply rub the swab on the inside of the person's cheek.
    - 3) The swab shall then be packaged in the DNA swab packaging container and secured into evidence as with any other piece of evidence.
4. Non-Voluntary Collection of DNA Evidence
  - a. All non-voluntary collection of DNA evidence shall be conducted by the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office, with assistance from the Clinton Township Police Department Investigative Division, if necessary.

5. Each item of evidence/property must be marked and packaged with one or more features to facilitate identification in court regardless of whether the case results in a judicial process. Some items may require tagging or placement in some type of container, in which case, marking shall be made on the tag or container. Depending on the type and size of the item(s), consider using the case number, date, and officer's initials and/or identification number.
6. Drugs should be placed in clear plastic bags, with the officer's/detective's markings visible through the packaging. The officer/detective will then be able to identify their markings without opening the package. This is particularly important in the event that the package must be re-submitted to a laboratory for analysis. This precludes the package from needing to be opened prior to trial.
7. Fingerprints, biological, non-biological, and trace evidence will be processed, developed, lifted, labeled, collected, and memorialized in accordance with the New Jersey State Police Evidence Field Manual. When applicable and whenever available, when collecting evidence for subsequent submission to a laboratory for forensic or comparative analysis, control samples must also be collected to provide the laboratory with a basis for comparison. This is especially useful when examining hairs, fibers, fabrics, paint, glass, wood, soil, and tool marks.
8. Collect and package physical evidence so that each item is placed in a separate bag, envelope, box or other appropriate container(s), avoiding cross contamination and label properly.
9. The size, type, and condition of the evidence/property will dictate how the item(s) should be packaged. The packaging should be able to prevent or retard contamination or decomposition, provide security, facilitate storage, subsequent retrieval, and eventual disposition/disposal.
  - a. All oversized items shall have an evidence tag/label attached. The container should be sealed. If evidence is not dry when collected, it must be air dried prior to packaging.
10. If an arrestee's clothing is needed for evidence they shall be provided with a disposable jumpsuit or other temporary garment(s).
11. The officer/detective who has overall responsibility for the investigation of the case shall include in his or her Investigation Report the complete chain-of-custody of any physical evidence seized by that officer/detective, including but not limited to transfers in the field.
  - a. All personnel conducting or directly involved with the processing of a crime scene will properly submit a supplemental report indicating their full actions.

**C. Submitting Evidence to Laboratory for Analysis**

1. The evidence/property custodian(s) or designee shall be responsible for the submission of evidence to the laboratory for analysis, whenever possible. When the evidence/property custodian is not available to transport the

evidence to the laboratory, personnel conducting the transport shall sign for the evidence to ensure proper chain of custody. The transfer of evidence to the laboratory shall take place as soon as practicable.

2. The method for packaging and transferring of evidence to the New Jersey State Police Forensic Laboratory shall be consistent with the New Jersey State Police Evidence Field Manual.
3. The method for packaging and transferring of evidence to the Federal Bureau of Investigations' Laboratory shall be consistent with the U.S. Department of Justice's Handbook of Forensic Science.
4. The methods for packaging and transferring of evidence to any other laboratory used by the Clinton Township Police Department shall be in accordance with that laboratory's requirements.
5. When submitting evidence to the laboratory, the officer/detective responsible for the delivery of evidence to the laboratory shall ensure that the proper documentation such as the evidence examination/submission receipt/request accompanies the evidence when transmitted to the laboratory. The person delivering the evidence will individually or electronically sign the evidence examination/submission receipt/request.

a. **New Jersey State Police Forensic Laboratory**

- 1) When submitting evidence to the New Jersey State Police Laboratory, the evidence/property custodian shall complete an entry in the New Jersey State Police Forensic Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).
- 2) The evidence/property custodian shall be responsible for updating the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports to reflect the details and status of the evidence so as to preserve the chain of custody at all times.

b. **Federal Bureau of Investigations Laboratory**

- 1) When evidence is being submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigations Laboratory, the appropriate documentation required by the laboratory shall accompany the evidence. Personnel shall be guided by the U.S. Department of Justice's Handbook of Forensic Science.

c. **New Jersey Department of Health Laboratory**

- 1) The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is responsible for analyzing materials (evidence) that may be associated with a biological threat and/or bioterrorism. The NJDOH Bio-Threat Response Laboratory (BTRL) recently revised the forms required for submitting samples for analysis to the NJDOH laboratory; these forms are not used for submission of samples/evidence to other laboratories. In many cases, the FBI and/or New Jersey State Police would be involved with these situations, and would likely submit

the samples. However, in the event that another law enforcement agency in New Jersey needs to submit biological threat/bioterrorism samples, the following forms are to be used (both are required for submission to the BTRL):

- a) The **HIP-5** form is a sample pre-screening worksheet that needs to be submitted with any sample coming from the field (i.e., an environmental sample).
  - b) The **LAB-5** form is the actual test request form and chain of custody form; it needs to be submitted in addition to the HIP-5 form for all samples.
- 2) During a response, prior to sample submission, the NJDOH Emergency Duty Officer will assist in coordinating sample submission and can be reached at 866-341-9788 or [hccdutyofficer@njlincs.net](mailto:hccdutyofficer@njlincs.net).
- d. Evidence submitted to any other laboratory shall be accompanied with an evidence examination/submission receipt/request.
6. Upon delivery of the evidence to a laboratory, an original stamped submission receipt shall be obtained and made part of the file. The files shall be kept in a secure filing system.
- a. When evidence is transported to the laboratory, the evidence/property custodian or designee will be responsible for updating the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports to reflect the details and status of the evidence so as to preserve the chain of custody at all times.
7. Upon completion of analysis at the laboratory, the evidence/property custodian or designee shall be responsible for the arrangement of transporting, safeguarding, and the return of all evidence to the evidence/property function.
- a. When evidence is returned from the laboratory, the evidence/property custodian will be responsible for updating the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports to reflect the details and status of the evidence so as to preserve the chain of custody at all times.
8. All laboratory results shall be submitted in writing. Once laboratory results are received at the Clinton Township Police Department, the original will be obtained and made part of the file. The files shall be kept in a secure filing system.

## **II. PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE CONTROL**

### **A. Evidence/Property Custodians Responsibilities**

1. Evidence/property custodians shall be designated as primary and alternate as determined by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. This designation shall be alternated as operational needs dictate.
2. The evidence/property custodians shall maintain records, which reflect the chain of possession of evidence during the time the evidence is in custody of the Clinton Township Police Department.
3. The evidence/property custodians shall check the temporary evidence/property lockers for evidence/property at the beginning of his or her shift.
4. The evidence/property custodians shall check evidence/property to ensure that it has been properly submitted.
5. The evidence/property custodians shall record evidence into the computerized Evidence Manager database.
  - a. The evidence/property custodians shall maintain the Evidence Manager database, which reflects the chain-of-custody of the evidence during the time the evidence is under his or her control. The database is backed up on a weekly basis.
  - b. An electronic ledger shall be maintained and is available to all evidence/property custodians as a backup. The manual ledger shall be archived in the evidence/property room.
6. The evidence/property custodians shall maintain property in a place and under conditions, which eliminate as much as possible any risk of loss or tampering.
7. The evidence/property custodians shall maintain physical control of property until it is properly disposed.
8. Destruction of evidence and property will be the responsibility of the evidence/property custodians in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office and the State of New Jersey.

### **B. Administration and Operations**

1. All personnel receiving evidence and property into the custody and control of the Clinton Township Police Department shall ensure that:
  - a. All evidence/property is recorded into the agency's reporting system and placed under the control of the evidence/property function by the recovering officers prior to the end of their shift, unless the recovering officer is incapacitated or otherwise incapable of accomplishing this before their shift ends. If applicable, the duty supervisor shall designate another officer to complete this action.

Full documentation of the transfer of custody of the evidence and the reason for such transfer must be noted in the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports to reflect the details and status of the evidence so as to preserve the chain of custody at all times.

- 1) Evidence may be submitted to the evidence/property custodian(s) directly when he/she is on duty. If not on duty, officers will utilize the temporary evidence/property lockers or designated secure area.
- 2) No vehicle, desk, personal locker or other unauthorized location shall be used for the storage of evidence/property. This does not include the temporary storage prior to placing under the control of the evidence/property function prior to the shift conclusion. The Chief of Police shall designate authorized temporary evidence/property storage locations in a special order.
- 3) The temporary storage of evidence shall be accomplished in a manner consistent with the provision established in this written directive.

#### C. Reports Required

1. An entry in the RMS, department evidence log, and other appropriate report describing each item of evidence/property obtained and the circumstances by which the property came into the department's possession shall be completed by the submitting officer.
  - a. Evidence - The original evidence log shall be placed with the evidence in the temporary locker or evidence refrigerator. A copy shall be included in the case file. Under no circumstances shall any evidence be accepted into the evidence/property room without a completed, original evidence log.
  - b. Property - A copy of the completed department property report shall be placed in the appropriate property bin/locker with the property. The property may also be "tagged" with all appropriate information, if necessary due to the property's size, shape, etc. Each person's property is to be kept physically separated from another person's property (by bag, envelope, heat-seal, etc.).
    - 1) In addition, officers logging property shall indicate in the **property logbook**, which shall remain atop the property bin regardless of which bin or locker the property is secured in.

#### D. Packaging and Labeling Prior to Storage

1. Evidence that consists of several objects should be packaged in separate containers or wrapped individually. Each package should be clearly marked with an appropriate label, tag or marking. An evidence label or marking shall be placed directly on the object (when permissible) or on a tag attached



directly to the object. When this is not practical, the evidence label or marking is to be placed onto the sealed container housing the object.

2. Potentially bio-hazardous materials such as hypodermic syringes, blood-stained materials and evidence relating to sexual assaults require special care and handling. All appropriate blood-borne pathogen precautions should be adhered to including, but not limited to, the use of sterile gloves, sharps containers for syringes and the placement of biohazard stickers on a prominent location on the exterior of the evidence container.
3. Blood and urine samples will be submitted in sealed containers and then sealed in unmarked plastic bags. The samples will have biohazard labels attached. Blood should be refrigerated, and urine may be frozen.
4. If evidence may be contaminated with pathogens or other contagious viruses or bacteria, it should be labeled on the bags or containers.
5. Evidence in need of laboratory analysis shall be secured in packaging separate from other evidence associated with the case.
6. Whole blood tubes shall be submitted in leak-proof containers, such as a heat-sealed or ziplock plastic bag and labeled with a bio-hazard label.
7. Body organs, body parts, and other items such as stomach linings should be placed in leak-proof containers and labeled with bio-hazard labels.
8. All clothing and other evidence containing dried blood should be placed in separate paper bags and labeled with biohazard labels. Specimens containing wet stains of blood or other biological fluids should be placed in separate leak proof containers, such as plastic bags, at the scene and labeled with a biohazard label. The specimens should then be transported to a safe place as soon as possible where they can be removed from the plastic bags and air-dried over paper sheets. This should be done in an area with low humidity, out of direct sunlight, and away from direct heat sources. The biohazard specimens should also be kept away from food and general work areas. Once the specimens have been completely dried, they should be placed in separate paper bags and labeled with biohazard labels. The paper bags and paper should be retained and submitted with the evidence.
9. Pertinent original audio/video recordings, disks or other medium, such as defendant/victim statements, MVR/BWC recordings, shall be treated as evidence. The medium shall be evidence grade and marked as any item for evidence and retained in the evidence/property room. A working copy should be made of the medium, and the original medium shall be reserved for court proceedings. The working copies shall be utilized for transcription, etc. purposes and provided to Records for discovery purposes.
10. All photographic evidence, including digital medium shall be submitted to evidence. Copies of the photographic evidence or contact sheets shall be submitted to Records for discovery purposes. Photographic evidence shall be electronically stored in the Evidence Manager database.

E. **Extra Precautionary/Verification Measures for Exceptional, Valuable, or Sensitive Items**

1. Exceptional, valuable, or sensitive items requiring extra precautionary/verification measures shall be defined as: all money, drugs, firearms, blood/other bodily fluid and precious metals, jewelry, gemstones with a value greater than \$500.00. All appropriate precautionary measures shall be adhered to when handling evidence such as the use of sterile gloves to protect against contamination of evidence and/or officer safety with bio-hazardous evidence.
  - a. **CURRENCY:** Currency shall be packaged separately from any other evidence seized during the precipitating event. Totals should be verified by at least one additional officer. Currency shall be placed in tamper-proof packaging to safeguard against tampering. If the money is pending forfeiture, the proper forfeiture reports must be completed. Currency shall be provided enhanced security or storage measures, which may include, but not limited to locking safe, cage, cabinets, and lockers, within the long-term evidence/property storage room(s).
  - b. **DRUG:** Drugs must be packaged separately from any other evidence seized during the precipitating event and should be marked and packaged in accordance with the New Jersey State Police Evidence Field Manual. Drugs shall be placed in tamper-proof packaging to safeguard against substitution. Drugs shall be provided enhanced security or storage measures, which may include, but not limited to locking safe, cage, cabinets, and lockers, within the long-term evidence/property storage room(s). The following precautionary safety measures will be taken when handling suspected heroin:
    - 1) At a minimum, wear nitrile gloves when handling packaged suspected heroin. **Do not use latex gloves when handling suspected heroin.**
    - 2) Minimize physical contact with the suspected heroin. For individual bags of heroin that are bundled together, approximate the number of bags and seal them in the evidence bags. Do not break apart the bundled package to individually count the bags. Mark on the evidence bag that the total number is an approximate and document same in your report.
    - 3) All suspected heroin will be placed into plastic evidence bags and the bag opening will be sealed completely. This is to contain the suspected heroin inside the evidence bag in case, the suspected heroin packaging breaks.
    - 4) If the presence of Fentanyl is known, take all available safety precautions and appropriately document this in your report, and on the evidence bag.

- 5) Narcan/Naloxone kits will be available.
- 6) If suspected heroin is found unpackaged, all precautionary measures should be taken. This should include wearing respirator mask and other PPE gear.
- 7) If you feel you may have been exposed or believe another officer was exposed, seek medical attention and contact your immediate supervisor.
- 8) A safe common-sense approach when handling suspected heroin or unknown substance should be taken.

c. **FIREARMS:** Firearms shall be rendered safe prior to packaging and storage. When submitting a firearm that was involved in a crime or discharged the following shall be followed: the magazine is to be removed, round removed from the chamber, and items are to be stored separately. At no time shall rounds be removed from the magazine to protect for latent prints. Firearms shall be provided with enhanced security or storage measures, which may include, but not limited to locking safe, cage, cabinets, and lockers, within the long-term evidence/property storage room(s).

- 1) The submission and analysis of information relating to firearms and ballistics evidence shall be in accordance with current New Jersey Attorney General Directive(s) No. 2008-1, and any future directives to include Hunterdon County Prosecutorial Directives.

d. **BLOOD, URINE, DNA, AND OTHER PERISHABLE EVIDENCE:** Blood, Urine, DNA and other perishable evidence shall be promptly secured in the temporary evidence refrigerator units. Generally, blood, urine, DNA and other perishable evidence shall be delivered within three business days to the proper laboratory facility for analysis, when applicable. If additional blood, urine, DNA and other perishable evidence needs to be secured and the evidence refrigerator units are locked, an evidence/property custodian shall be notified to obtain the transfer and secure the evidence.

e. **PRECIOUS METALS, JEWELRY AND GEMSTONES,** (value greater than \$500.00): Precious metals, jewelry and gemstones shall be marked, packaged and stored in temporary evidence storage. These items shall be placed in tamper-proof packaging to safeguard against substitution. Precious metals, jewelry and gemstones shall be provided enhanced security or storage measures, which may include, but not limited to locking safe, cage, cabinets, and lockers, within the long-term evidence/property storage room(s).

2. Special care shall be taken in the following:

a. **HAZARDOUS / COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS:** Hazardous/combustible material evidence such as toluenes or gasoline, paint thinner, etc., shall normally be disposed of in accordance with the appropriate

handling of hazardous/combustible material evidence. However, if there is a specific reason to retain such evidence, hazardous/combustible material evidence shall be packaged in air tight containers, such as fresh paint cans, and marked as to the contents.

- 1) Officers who discover evidence that is contaminated with hazardous/combustible material evidence shall determine whether they can handle and secure it at police headquarters safely.
  - 2) If such evidence can safely be removed and stored at headquarters (i.e., a can of gasoline in an arson case), the officer may secure the evidence in the evidence locker located in the shed at the rear of police headquarters.
    - a) In such case, the officer shall notify the evidence/property custodian by email or other message.
  - 3) If the officer determines that such evidence cannot be safely removed and secured at police headquarters, the officer shall contact the Hunterdon County Hazardous Materials team and request removal. When doing so, the officer shall also contact the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office and advise the on-call Detective of this action.
  - 4) When in doubt, officers shall consult their immediate supervisor, the evidence/property custodian, the Hunterdon County Hazardous Materials team, and/or the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office, as needed.
- b. **EXPLOSIVE DEVICES:** Under no circumstances will explosive devices, such as dynamite, hand grenades, blasting caps, etc., be brought into the police headquarters unless they have first been properly inspected by the appropriate authorities and rendered harmless.
- c. **AMMUNITION:** The Clinton Township Police Department will not store evidence ammunition for long periods as it becomes unstable. Therefore, the evidence/property custodian(s) will review annually the status of stored ammunition.
- d. **ENGINE DRIVEN MACHINES OTHER THAN VEHICLES (LAWN MOWERS, ETC.):** Engine driven devices are those items that have internal combustion engines such as lawnmowers, trimmers, and similar landscaping equipment.
- e. **BICYCLES:** Bicycles shall be secured in the bulk evidence/property storage shed.
- f. **MOTOR VEHICLES:** Vehicles in need of evidence processing shall be processed. Once evidence collection has been completed the vehicle shall be transferred to a secured tow yard.

- 1) Vehicles that have been seized pending a search warrant shall be secured at the impound yard to protect the integrity of the vehicle and its contents until the search has been completed.

- g. **COMPUTER EQUIPMENT:** When seizing computer equipment and related media, photograph the scene and equipment to include the back of the computer, network connections, components, layout, etc. Sketch the wire configuration and do not use the system. Contact the appropriate computer forensic personnel for data recovery and evidence collection.

**F. Effort to Identify and Notify the Owner/Custodian of Recovered Property in the Department's Custody**

1. The evidence/property custodian(s) are responsible for all found/recovered property and evidence received by this department and facilitating an investigation to identify the rightful owner/custodian of the property, and notification to the owner/custodian concerning the status of the property, including the procedure for return of the property to the owner. The recovering officer will attempt immediate contact/notification to the property owner on found property not associated with a criminal matter.
2. Recovered property shall be handled in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-157.

**G. Temporary and Final Disposition of Property and Evidence**

1. General
  - a. When evidence/property is released from the evidence/property room/storage for court, laboratory analysis, review or final disposition, including destruction or return, the evidence/property custodian will ensure that the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports reflect the details and status of the evidence at all times so as to preserve the chain of custody up to and including the release.
    - 1) The requesting officer or agency shall make a formal, written request to remove evidence from the evidence/property room.
    - 2) If removal is approved and evidence is removed, the evidence/property custodian releasing the evidence shall make written documentation of the removal as provided herein, including but not limited to obtaining the signature of the official representative who took custody of the evidence.
  - b. When evidence is returned to the evidence/property room, the evidence/property custodian shall thoroughly inspect it in order to establish its integrity and to determine that it corresponds to the amount, number, etc. of evidence that was removed.

- 1) The evidence/property custodian shall then sign for it and shall also ensure that the RMS, Evidence Manager database and related reports reflect the details and status of the evidence at all times so as to preserve the chain of custody.
2. Timeframes for Evidence Destruction
  - a. The retention of evidence shall be in accordance with current New Jersey Attorney General Directive(s) No. 2011-1, and any future directives on retention to include Hunterdon County Prosecutorial Directives.
3. Evidence/Property Destruction
  - a. The destruction of evidence shall be in accordance with current New Jersey Attorney General Directive(s) No. 2011-1, No. 2023-01 and any future directives on destruction to include Hunterdon County Prosecutorial Directives.
4. Forfeiture of Evidence
  - a. Forfeiture of evidence shall be in accordance with the Attorney Generals Forfeiture Program Administration, Standard Operating Procedures and Hunterdon County Prosecutorial Directives.

### **III. EVIDENCE/PROPERTY ROOM/AREA MANAGEMENT**

- A. All in-custody and evidentiary property shall be stored in designated, secure areas with access to stored evidence/property restricted to authorized personnel. Authorized personnel for access to the long-term evidence/property room(s), locks, areas and enhanced security or storage measures shall only be the evidence/property custodian(s).
- B. The Clinton Township Police Department shall establish enhanced security or storage measures for exceptional, sensitive, or valuable evidence/property. Enhanced security or storage measures, which may include, but not limited to locking safe, cage, cabinets, and lockers, within the long-term evidence/property storage room(s).
- C. The Clinton Township Police Department shall provide secure storage lockers/refrigerator lock boxes/areas/cabinets/facilities for the temporary storage of evidence/property when the evidence/property room is closed or otherwise unavailable.
  1. Once evidence/property has been placed into the temporary storage and secured/locked, access shall only be available to the evidence/property custodians.
    - a. The evidence/property custodian shall immediately bring any errors or discrepancies to the attention of the submitting officer or, in the submitting officer's absence, to the attention of the Shift Supervisor or Operations Division Commander.

2. If temporary storage lockers/areas/cabinets/facilities are at capacity or if the size or composition of the evidence/property makes it impossible to adequately secure the evidence/property, an evidence/property custodian shall be notified to respond and take custody of the evidence/property.
- D. Any evidentiary item or in-custody property used by the Clinton Township Police Department for investigative or training purposes shall require written permission from the Chief of Police.
1. The evidence/property custodian will research the case to assure that:
    - a. Any item of evidence is from a final adjudicated case with any exceptions noted;
    - b. Any item of in-custody property has exceeded the required retention period and owner notification requirement with any exceptions noted.
  2. The Clinton Township Police Department will obtain written permission of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office when using contraband items.
- E. Inspections/audits/records
1. In order to maintain a high degree of evidentiary integrity over department-controlled evidence/property, the following documented events shall be completed:
    - a. **Semi-Annual Inspection**
      - 1) An inspection to determine adherence to procedures used for the control of evidence/property by the person responsible for the evidence/property control function or his/her designee. A report will be submitted to the Chief of Police on the findings.
      - 2) The inspection is conducted to determine if the evidence/property storage areas are being maintained in a neat and organized manner that protects the integrity of the evidence/property and in accordance with the agency written directive. The inspection does not require an audit of property and/or evidence.
    - b. **Audit**
      - 1) An audit of evidence/property shall occur:
        - a) Whenever there is a change of the evidence/property custodian, evidence/property function supervisor, or chief law enforcement officer or;
        - b) Whenever there is any indication or suspicion of a breach of the evidence/property repository.
      - 2) An audit should begin with a complete inventory of all evidence/property held by the department. The inventory of

the evidence/property room should then be used to verify the accuracy of the evidence/property records. An audit of completed transactions should be conducted by examining the case files to verify that required notifications and release authorizations have been properly submitted. In addition, a legitimate basis for the release decision should be clearly apparent in the file. This audit must account for all money, drugs, firearms, blood/other bodily fluid, and precious metals, jewelry, gemstones with a value greater than \$500.00.

- 3) A representative sampling of all other evidence/property is sufficient.
- 4) A report will be submitted to the Chief of Police and the Warren County Prosecutor on the findings noting any discrepancies.

c. **Annual Representative Audit**

- 1) An annual representative audit of evidence/property held by the agency is conducted by a supervisor outside of the chain of command for the evidence/property control function or an officer, employee, or outside vendor designated by the Chief of Police, who is outside of the chain of command for the evidence/property control function. A report will be submitted to the Chief of Police or designee on the findings noting any discrepancies.
- 2) The annual representative audit shall be meaningful, but not a specific amount or percentage of the total number of items in storage. The representative sampling may include evidence/property from different years, different types of cases, different shelves/cabinets, or different rooms, areas, etc.

d. **Unannounced Inspection**

- 1) An unannounced inspection of evidence/property storage areas is conducted as directed by the Chief of Police at least once every three years. A report will be submitted to the Chief of Police on the findings. The purpose of the unannounced inspection is similar to an inspection as noted above.