



**Stockton Unified School District Department of
Public Safety
Procedure**

**Richard M. Barries, Interim Police Chief
Property & Evidence Manual
November 2020-1**

PURPOSE & SCOPE

This manual has been created to ensure that property and evidence is properly handled, documented and preserved, to prevent contamination or inadmissibility in court.

The impounding of property should not be taken lightly by any employee of this department. The process of seizing, recording, controlling, storing and disposing of property is labor intensive. The processing of evidence has a profound impact this agency and the criminal justice system as a whole.

DEFINITIONS

1. **EVIDENCE** is any property that comes into the custody of a department employee when such property may tend to prove or disprove the commission of a crime, or the identity of the suspect, pursuant to an official criminal investigation.
2. **PROPERTY for SAFEKEEPING** is any property of no evidentiary value surrendered to an employee of this department for temporary custody, with the understanding that the person surrendering the property has a legal right to do so, and that the property will be returned to the rightful owner at the end of a specified amount of time. A receipt **must** be provided to the owner of the property.
3. **FOUND PROPERTY** is any property of no evidentiary value, which comes into the custody of the department and whose rightful owner may or may not be known to the finder or to the department. Due diligence must be exercised with respect to determining the rightful owner. As this is the case, officers must make sure that they include **complete addresses** and **telephone numbers** in their incident reports. If the rightful owner is not located, the department shall dispose of the property in the manner prescribed by law.



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GENERAL GUIDELINES

PROPERTY RECEIPTS with owner or finder signatures will be turned in with property held for safekeeping.

WARNING STICKERS shall be applied to items requiring special handling or instructions.

EVIDENCE PACKAGING:

It is imperative that all items booked into evidence be packaged in a manner that will ensure that the item will be undamaged and easily stored. The evidence room contains the following packaging items:

- 9" x 12" manila envelopes
- 9" x 6" manila envelopes
- DOJ narcotics envelopes
- Pistol/Rifle/Knife boxes
- Currency envelopes
- Plastic sealable envelopes (various sizes)
- Evidence Tape
- Large/small brown paper bags
- Zip ties
- Vials
- Plastic Tubes
- Metal cans

Please attempt to place all items that will fit into a small or large manila envelope. Oddly shaped evidence packages are difficult to store and sometimes difficult to locate.

All items, other than the DOJ envelope should have an evidence tag attached. On envelopes, the tag should be attached to the center of the envelope, with the top of the tag facing the opening of the envelope. The tag should be filled out completely. DOJ envelopes are pre-printed. Officers must fill out the appropriate portions of said envelope.

Evidence tape must be attached to all envelopes and all sealed plastic envelopes. The tape should be signed and dated by the officer booking the property inside.



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Firearms must be placed in a gun box. Toy guns, pellet guns and replica firearms should not be placed in a gun box.

Knives used in misdemeanor crimes, that are small enough, should be placed in manila envelopes. Please make sure knives are safely packaged. A folding knife should be closed with tape wrapped around the handle, preventing the blade from opening. Unsheathed knives should have the blade covered with cardboard, or otherwise rendered safe.

The Evidence Sergeant will return any improperly packaged evidence items to the officer for corrections.

BOOKING IN PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

1. Items small enough, and not too fragile, should be placed in the mail slot.
2. Larger items should be placed in an evidence room locker.
3. Evidence too large to fit in a locker should be taken to the department basement and placed near the BIKE ROOM door. The Evidence Sergeant should be notified of the presence of this evidence. If the evidence item is of high monetary or evidentiary value, contact the Evidence Sergeant immediately.
4. Bicycles should also be placed in the basement near the BIKE ROOM door. The Evidence Sergeant shall be notified.
5. Blood evidence shall be dried before booking. Always separate bloody items that are from different sources. The booking officer shall book these items as soon as possible (usually, approximately 24 hours) after the items have dried. The booking officer is responsible for having this done if they are not on shift at the time the evidence has dried and should be booked.

All items must be booked into evidence before the end of the booking officer's shift.

BOOKING SPECIFIC ITEMS

ALCOHOL: For most felony and all misdemeanor crimes a photograph of the alcoholic beverage will suffice. If the alcoholic beverage is key in a Crimes Against Persons case, book



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the alcoholic beverage, paying special attention to ensure that the container will not break while being stored.

BICYCLES: Fill out an evidence tag, use a zip tie to attach the evidence to the handlebars. Leave the bicycle in the basement, near the BIKE ROOM door. Send an email to the Evidence Sergeant, advising that a bicycle needs to be placed inside the BIKE ROOM.

FRAGILE ITEMS: The department is responsible for evidence items. Officers must take care to carefully package fragile items. Bubble wrap, boxes, plastic bags and other items are available. If there are any questions regarding the packaging of a fragile item, contact your supervisor, or the Evidence Sergeant for assistance.

CLOTHING: Clothing should be packaged in a manner similar to other evidence. If the clothing in question contains blood or DA evidence, the item of clothing must be dry before being booked into evidence.

COLLECTABLES (COINS/CARDS): Collectable coins should be treated as property and not as currency. They can remain in folders or display cases. Collectable cards should be handled in a similar manner. The booking officer will clearly list these items on the evidence tag. In cases of high value, the booking officer will contact the Evidence Sergeant and inform them of the presence of valuable items.

COMPUTERS: Usually, a computer can be placed in an evidence locker, or given directly to evidence personnel. An evidence tag shall be placed on all portions of the computer (i.e. screen, keyboard, tower). A cell phone can be placed in an envelope. Bubble wrap is available to protect a phone. The booking officer will document any damage to a phone's screen before booking it into evidence.

CONSUMABLE GOODS: As a rule, no consumable items will be accepted. If the consumable item was used in the commission of a crime (poisoning), book in a sample of the item. If possible, place the item in plastic and then in a manila envelope. Advise the Evidence Sergeant that consumable items have been booked.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Any drugs involved in a case that will be charged shall be placed in a DOJ envelope. Any drug, other than marijuana, will be placed in a heat sealed plastic envelope, which will then be placed in the aforementioned DOJ envelope. The front of the DOJ envelope will be filled out by the booking officer, including the **chain of custody** section on the lower left corner. Only drugs and soft packaging should be placed in the DOJ envelopes. Pipes,



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jars, cans and other items must not be placed in this envelope and should be booked separately, if appropriate.

Drugs booked in for destruction may be placed in a 9" x 12" manila folder with a completed evidence tag attached and the words FOR DESTRUCTION written on the envelope.

CURRENCY: All currency will be placed in a currency envelope. The front of the envelope will be filled out and double signed. After the envelope is sealed and signed, it will be placed in the evidence room mail slot.

FIREARMS: Firearms shall be placed in a firearms, or gun box. Firearms and magazines are the only items that should be stored in a gun box. The firearm shall be placed out of battery and held in place with zip ties. If the firearm is unable to be placed out of battery, a warning, in red ink, will be written on the top of the box. An evidence tag shall be placed, lengthwise on the lid of the gun box. The tag will be filled out by the booking officer, including the make, model, serial number and caliber of the firearm. The firearm will be placed in an evidence locker. Long guns will be packaged identically, except that they will be stored in longer rifle boxes.

AMMUNITION: Ammunition will be placed in a manila envelope and booked like other evidence.

FLAMMABLE ITEMS: Booking officers must use judgement when booking flammable items. Lighters are not accepted unless they are evidence in a felony case (arson). Flammable items will be placed in a sealed plastic envelope, with an evidence tag attached, and booked into evidence.

JEWELRY: Jewelry will be packaged in the same manner as other evidence. The booking officer will package expensive jewelry separately from other evidence.

KNIVES: Small knives can be placed in manila envelopes as long as the blades have been rendered safe, usually by being secured in a closed position or by having the blade covered with cardboard. Larger knives, knives containing DNA, or knives involved in major felony cases should be placed in a knife box and secured with zip ties. An evidence tag shall be attached, lengthwise, to the top of the box and filled out completely. A sticker shall be placed on any knife containing DNA. The knife box shall be placed into an evidence locker.



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LICENSE PLATES: License plates will be placed in a clear plastic bag, in a manner that will allow clear sight of the license plate number. An evidence tag shall be filled out and placed on the bag in a position that will allow clear sight of the plate numbers.

SHARPS (SYRINGES/GLASS PIPES/RAZORS: Any sharps related to a minor offense should be photographed, if necessary, and disposed of in the sharps container, next to the evidence closet. Syringes and glass pipes, of evidentiary value, should be photographed and disposed of.

If the sharp item is key in a major crime, the item should be safely packaged, in a plastic, or cardboard tube, and placed in an evidence locker.

If a syringe contains a suspected drug, empty the syringe into a plastic vial. Book the vial and dispose of the syringe.

LARGE ITEMS: Officers may use their judgement when booking in large items. Items can be placed in paper bags, boxes or large heat sealed plastic envelopes. Other items may be booked after having an evidence tag zip tied to the item. Other items may be booked after affixing a self-sticking evidence envelope to them. In the case of an unusually large item, the booking officer may contact the Evidence Sergeant, or the supervising patrol sergeant for assistance.