



ATTLEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure

	Evidence Officer	
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Overview

Introduction

The evidence control function provides for the security and control of seized, recovered, and evidence, as well as abandoned, lost, or found property in the custody of the agency.

This is critically important in supporting investigations, in helping to guarantee successful prosecution at criminal trials, in facilitating the timely return of property to its rightful owners, and in establishing the Attleboro Police Department's reputation as an honest, reputable agency worthy of the public's confidence and trust.

Previous Directives

This Policy and Procedure supersedes all previous directives regarding the Evidence Officer.

Policy

It is the policy of the Attleboro Police Department to officially assign an Officer to be responsible for control and maintenance of all evidence and property accepted by or stored in the Department's evidence or property room.

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Definitions

Definitions For the purpose of this General Order, the following definitions apply.

Audit An inspection of the documentation and accountability of a random sampling of in-custody property sufficient to evaluate the integrity of the property and evidence function.

Cash Accountability Form The form used to verify the cash being seized as evidence or property.

Cash Transfer Form The form used to record the amount of cash and/or checks transferred from the department's custody to a financial institution.

Chain of Custody The continuity of custody of material and items collected as physical evidence. The connotation, under the law, is that the item or material introduced into evidence must be proven to be the same as that obtained initially and delivered to the laboratory for examination.

Confiscated Property Any item of property seized in compliance with law by an officer that does not meet the criteria for evidence or found property.

Evidence Tracking Form The form used as a receipt when evidence is temporally removed from the evidence room.

Evidence Any item seized or taken into police custody that may be connected to any criminal investigation.

Evidence Officer An Attleboro Police Officer designated by the Chief of Police to be accountable for the control and maintenance of all evidence/property accepted by or stored in the department's evidence and property room.

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Definitions, Continued

Evidence Room The secured designated repository used to store evidence.

Evidence Room Access Log The form used to record access to the evidence room.

Evidence Tag A red tag indicating its status as evidence in the custody of the Attleboro Police Department.

Firearm A pistol, revolver, rifle, shot gun, or other weapon of any description, loaded or unloaded, from which a shot or bullet can be discharged.

Found Property Any lawful item of property, the control of which is taken into custody for safekeeping for the purpose of returning the property to its rightful owner.

Inspection An examination of the agency's property storage areas to determine that they are being maintained in a clean and orderly fashion, that the agency directives concerning the property management system are being followed (handling, documentation, etc.), and that the property is being protected from damage and deterioration.

Inventory Control Form The form used by the submitting officer to document the submittal of evidence or property into the temporary evidence room.

Key Fob A small security hardware device with built-in authentication mechanisms used to control access to the property, evidence and temporary evidence rooms.

Member Any duly appointed police officer, dispatcher or civilian employee of the Attleboro Police Department.

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Definitions, Continued

Narcotics Evidence Log Book The log book which records all narcotics entered into the drug evidence storage box.

Property Room The secured designated repository used to store property.

Property Tag A yellow tag indicating its status as property in the custody of the Attleboro Police Department.

Temporary Evidence Room Access Log The form used to record access to the temporary evidence room.

Temporary Evidence Room A secure room utilized by the Attleboro Police Department to temporarily store evidence and property.

Evidence Officer Duties

Evidence Officer The Chief of Police shall designate a department member as the evidence and property officer, whom shall be responsible for the custody and tracking of all evidence and property.

Responsibility The Evidence Officer shall be responsible for:

- Receiving, storing, maintaining, releasing, and accounting for all evidence and property in compliance with established departmental policies and laws.
- Removing evidence and property from the temporary evidence room at the beginning of his tour of duty or within a reasonable period of time.
- Inspecting all items to ensure that the items are properly packaged and that no tampering has occurred. Immediately report any indication of evidence tampering, improper documentation or missing evidence to the Chief of Police.
- Inspecting the evidence and property tracking forms to ensure accuracy, completeness and proper chain-of-custody.
- Documenting within the QED tracking system all entries, transfers, releases and the status of all evidence or property.

Computerized Record Keeping System The Evidence Officer shall maintain a computerized record-keeping system for the secure and efficient storage, classification, retrieval, and disposition of property and evidence. All evidence and property received by the evidence officer shall be recorded in the computerized record-keeping system as soon as it is transferred or received. The status will be reflected as follows:

EVIDENCE OR PROPERTY STATUS: This reflects the status of the entire case, regardless of the number of defendants and/or number of pieces of evidence or property.

- **Active:** All cases shall be identified as ACTIVE; as long as any piece of evidence or property related to the case are still physically being maintained in the custody of the Attleboro Police Department.
 - **Inactive:** All cases shall be classified as INACTIVE; as soon as all pieces of evidence or property related to the case are no longer legally required to be maintained in the custody of the Attleboro Police Department.
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Evidence Officer Duties, Continued

**Computerized
Record
Keeping
System**
(continued)

All cases that have been classified as INACTIVE by the evidence officer shall be coded as either:

- **Auction:** Items that have been lawfully deemed available for auction. These items will be termed as Auction, and the date of the auction indicated.
 - **Awaiting Destruction:** Items that have been legally declared able to be destroyed (i.e. – narcotics, guns).
 - **Destroyed:** Items that have been legally destroyed.
 - **Returned to Owner:** Items that have been returned, such as found or recovered property, or evidence, that have been legally returned to an identifiable person or agency.
 - **Keep:** Items that are in custody and are being held for a designated length of time. These items will be identified as Keep, with the expiration date indicated.
 - **LTC/FID Suspended:** Weapons that are being temporally held because of a suspended LTC/FID.
 - **Transfer to Other Agency:** Items that have been lawfully transferred to another criminal justice agency.
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**Receiving or
Releasing
Narcotics**

All narcotics shall be weighed when they are received, transferred, or released. The narcotic shall be weighed in the package, and that weight shall be noted within the QED tracking system.

**Transporting
Narcotics**

The Evidence Officer shall never transport narcotics to and from the drug laboratory alone.

Key Audit

An annual key audit shall be conducted by the Operation Division Commander to account for all evidence and property room keys. At the conclusion of the audit a report shall be forward to the Chief of Police.

**Evidence
Room Audit**

An evidence room audit shall be conducted on an annual basis or whenever a new evidence officer is assigned to that position. At the conclusion of the audit a report shall be forward to the Chief of Police.
