

1.0. STAFFING

Purpose: To provide guidelines for the classification of personnel, conducting background investigations, staffing levels, rotation of assignments, promotional opportunities, and organizational placement. Specifically applied to personnel assigned to the Property Room.

[\(Link to Staffing Reasoning\)](#)

1.1. JOB CLASSIFICATION

1.1.1. Property Room personnel should have a job classification title that reflects the duties and responsibilities performed.

1.1.2. The Property Room may be staffed by civilian personnel

1.2. BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

1.2.1. Property Room personnel will undergo a thorough background investigation prior to being assigned to a position inside the Property Room.

1.2.1.1. Personnel being transferred into the Property Room from another assignment or agency will have an abbreviated background investigation, absent any statutory or contractual restrictions.

1.2.1.2. A background investigation should minimally include a criminal history check, drug testing, credit check or truth verification process or device if permitted by local laws and collective bargaining agreements.

1.3. NUMBER OF PERSONNEL

1.3.1. The number of personnel assigned to the Property Room should be at a level to complete the assigned duties and any additional duties within the hours scheduled to work.

1.3.1.1. Inventory data should be collected and analyzed over a five-year period to determine staffing needs.

1.3.1.2. Sufficient staffing levels and an efficient purging process should maintain a ratio of 1:1 intake vs purging.

1.4. ROTATION OF PERSONNEL

- 1.4.1.** Property Room personnel should not be rotated or routinely reassigned to other positions within the agency.

1.5. HOURS OF OPERATION

- 1.5.1.** The Property Room operational hours should be established based on public access, sworn interactions, workload, internal assignments and facility location.

1.6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROPERTY OFFICER

- 1.6.1.** Job responsibilities will be developed and defined for all Property Room leadership and personnel.

1.7. PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 1.7.1.** Promotional or advancement opportunities for civilian personnel should be developed.

1.8. TRAINING

- 1.8.1.** Training or continuing education will be provided to all personnel in the Property Room on an annual basis.

- 1.8.1.1.** Policy will define what training is required for any new Property Officer, supervisor or manager.

- 1.8.1.2.** All training will be documented and maintained in the personnel record.

1.9. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- 1.9.1.** Property Room personnel should make every attempt to familiarize themselves with and become involved in professional associations.

1.10. ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT

1.10.1. The property and evidence function should be placed organizationally in a neutral reporting line, such as a Support Services or Administrative Division.

1.10.1.1. Small agencies may rely on a traditional chain of command structure.

APPENDIX A - REASONING DOCUMENT

STANDARD 1 - STAFFING

Standard 1.1. Job Classification

Reasoning: Peace officer powers are generally not required to perform the Property Officer duties of receiving, storing, and disposing of property and evidence. The same applies to supervisors or managers of the Property Room. In smaller agencies the duties of the Property Officer are frequently an assignment or an additional job duty and may require fewer hours in a week to complete.

The primary job duties should include, but not be limited to:

- Receive all incoming property and evidence
- Document property and evidence
- Storage of property and evidence
- Release of property and evidence
- Disposal of property and evidence
- Maintain the official Chain of Custody

Staffing the Property Room with civilian personnel should be considered as powers of arrest are not part of the typical Property Room position.

Standard 1.2. Background Investigations

Reasoning: It is important that the agency's selection criteria produce qualified and trustworthy employees. To do this, an agency should have a standardized list of information collected on a potential employee of the Property Room.

Background checks should include a criminal history check, drug testing, credit check, a truth verification process or device (polygraph) if permitted by law, employment reference checks, and other background investigative queries.

Background investigations for any employee transferring from another assignment within the agency, or another department within the organization, even if they have

undergone a pre- employment background check years earlier should be considered.

Standard 1.3. Number of Personnel

Reasoning: One of the most difficult challenges in a Property Room is to control the agency's inventory. Without sufficient staffing and proper purging protocols, the inventory will increase and the need for additional space and resources will be needed.

There is no formula known to determine the ideal number of personnel needed in the Property Room. Considerations such as the size of the agency, the hours and days of operation, the operating procedures of the agency, the number of items received, etc. must be considered when determining required staffing levels.

To assess staffing needs, the Property Officer, supervisor or manager should maintain statistical data that can be used to evaluate workload, Property Room inventory levels, efficiency, etc. Dedicated property and evidence software can be utilized to gather the needed data.

The goal of staffing in the Property Room is to have enough personnel to maintain at 1:1 intake to purging ratio.

Standard 1.4. Rotation of Personnel

Reasoning: Rotating personnel through the Property Room should be discouraged, as it makes quality control more difficult when an employee leaves the assignment. It also increases the need for training of newly assigned personnel, increases the need for conducting inventories, and necessitates the of change security devices, such as alarms, keys, and access controls.

When an agency routinely transfers personnel through the Property Room assignment, it generates a "lack of ownership" in the operation. When "ownership" is present, it tends to create personal motivation and collective interest, professionalism, and pride. Learning all the duties and tasks performed can require multiple years to gain the experience to be proficient in the Property Room.

Standard 1.5. Hours of Operation

Reasoning: Accessibility by the public should be considered when determining scheduling. The Property Room should be open during regular business hours as defined by the agency. Accessibility by sworn staff must also be considered for the routine tasks of property and evidence such as signing items out to court, out to the crime lab, out for investigations and for submission corrections.

Consideration may also be given to the possibility of allocating time when the Property Room is not open to the public to be set aside for the performance of specific tasks such as the processing and disposing of evidence. An agency may consider opening one

evening a week or month so that citizens can conduct business after regular work hours. Some agencies may choose to release property and evidence by appointment only.

Standard 1.6. Responsibilities of the Property Officer

Reasoning: Personnel in charge of the Property Room should have a detailed list of responsibilities of tasks and duties performed by a Property Officer. These duties may include:

- ensure that incoming property and evidence is packaged in accordance with agency guidelines
- preserve all incoming property and evidence from contamination, degradation, theft, or loss
- maintain and update documentation with tracking information, commonly known as the “chain of custody”
- enter necessary data into the Property Room tracking system (automated or manual)
- ensure that all releases and dispositions of property and evidence are legal and accurately documented
- arrange and document temporary releases and returns of evidence for court, crime lab analysis, or investigative use
- operate property management software and information systems
- prepare and forward property-related forms to requesting units and agencies
- serve as the liaison for property and evidence matters between the agency and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies
- maintain current knowledge of federal, state, and local laws related to property and evidence management
- provide for maintenance of the storage facility and equipment
- conduct and inventory of all property and evidence at least annually
- ensure a safe work environment for all employees
- store property and evidence in designated storage areas
- ensure adequate security for the Property Room
- limit access to the Property Room only to authorized individual(s) and maintain access logs

Standard 1.7. Promotional Opportunities

Reasoning: Advancement for civilian employees within the agency is important to retain the best qualified personnel and attract those that are interested in property and evidence management as a career.

Career paths should be established in civilian positions by designating entry level assignments to supervisor or manager assignments in the law enforcement agency. The selection of the best- qualified person to become a Property Officer in an agency may be

at a disadvantage if it is viewed as a “career dead end” with no obvious promotional opportunities.

Suggested career opportunities for Property Room personnel may be:

- *Entry level personnel*
- *Advanced level personnel*
- *Supervisors*
- *Managers*

Standard 1.8. Training

Reasoning: *It is recommended that all Property Officers, supervisors, and managers be required to attend a Property and Evidence Management class. The two-day Property and Evidence Management classes provided by the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. (IAPE), gives personnel insight into different ways of accomplishing the required duties. The training should provide new staff and supervisors a detailed look at best practices, as well as issues and problems that will be encountered in the assignment.*

Training should be timely, continual, and well documented. While attending training prior to beginning an assignment as a Property Officer is preferred, personnel should attend the basic training previously described above within the first year of the assignment.

Basic safety training should include, but is not limited to:

- *External evidence management training within a prescribed time*
- *Firearms handling and safety*
- *Drug handling and safety*
- *Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*
- *Use of evidence management software*
- *Evidence handling and packaging*
- *Chain of Custody*
- *Work-assist vehicles and equipment (forklifts, pallet jacks, etc.)*
- *Agency packaging standards*

Agency storage standards hazardous materials, biohazards, blood-borne pathogens, and a basic firearm orientation on how to safely handle firearms. Training records should be

accurately maintained.

Training should always include familiarization and on-going product support and upgrades for the software package in use for the management of inventory. Training on the evidence function, packaging standards, etc. should also be provided for new hires.

Standard 1.9. Professional Associations

Reasoning: *Involvement in professional associations such as the International Association for Property and Evidence, IAPE, the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), state, regional, or local property and evidence associations for networking and training updates is strongly encouraged. These associations can assist law enforcement agencies with the organization and the training of Property Room personnel, as well as provide valuable resources to assist with solutions as potential problems arise.*

Standard 1.10. Organizational Placement

Reasoning: *The Property Room should be organizationally separate from the patrol and investigative functions. Patrol personnel generally seize and submit most property and evidence, while case officers are generally responsible for the authorization to release or dispose of property or evidence.*

Placing the property and evidence function in a neutral line of reporting between these two functions enhances accountability. The responsibility of the Property Room personnel is to maintain custody and documentation, not to be involved in the collection or outcome decision-making. The Property Room should be organizationally placed in an Administrative or Support Services Division. Very small agencies may rely on a traditional chain of command instead of an organizational chart.