

# THE EVIDENCE LOG<sup>®</sup>

is the Official Publication of the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc.

## BUILDING ON OUR PAST WITH REVISED STANDARDS FOR THE PRESENT

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Vol. 2022 No. 3

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The objective of The Evidence Log<sup>®</sup> is to provide education and training related to all aspects of the handling, storage, maintenance and disposal of law enforcement held property and evidence. As with all information of a legal nature, please confer with your agency legal advisor on the applicability of any item in relationship to your specific situation.

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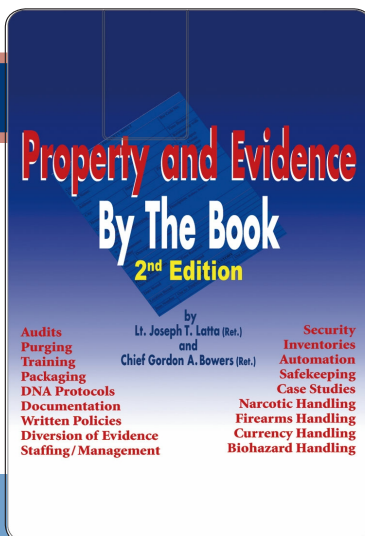
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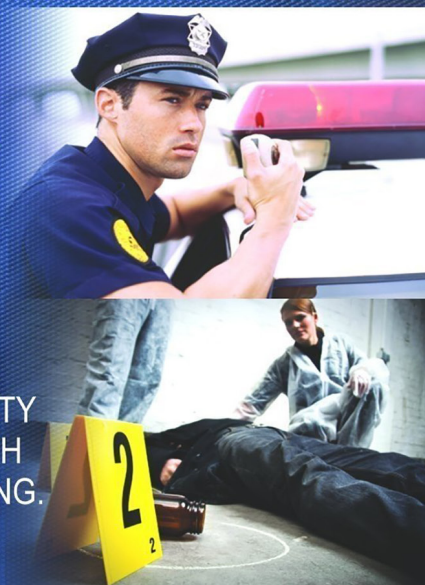
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# The Evidence Files

By: Joe Latta, Evidence Log Editor



## FEELING OPTIMISTIC AS IAPE PREMIERES LATEST STANDARDS

The end of the year is quickly approaching and I am happy to report that our live and video classes are back to normal, whatever “normal” currently is! At the time I was writing this column, we were on a train to New York City from Burlington, Vermont. The NYPD was booked for two classes, followed by a trip to Nashville, Tennessee for IAPE’s bi-annual Board Meeting. After that we were scheduled to provide training for the Boston, Massachusetts, Police Department and neighbors. I was really excited to be returning to the region as COVID had really hampered our travels there during the last two years. Over 100 property room professionals were going to be trained in the northeast over a two-week period.

If you have been putting off your IAPE coursework, we welcome you to visit our our updated training calendar, as we are planning on visiting British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Colorado, Texas, Michigan, Missouri, Louisiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida and Nebraska, to name a few. You are bound to find a class near your hometown, and now is a great time to book as we will be utilizing our latest version of professional standards as a teaching tool.

By the time you read this volume of the *Evidence Log* you may already have received your own personal copy of the newly formatted Professional Standards. In this issue we have elected to share a number of previously-published articles outlining the history of our standards that have become the bedrock of the property and evidence profession. If you have minimal written policies, the newly formatted standards can be an outstanding place to start the process of expanding those policies. Additionally, we have included a number of articles based around Standard 1: Staffing – a great place to start.

While visiting the NYPD we provided training for the Property Clerks Division as well as to over 50 of their Evidence Property Control Specialists, Supervisors, Captains, Sergeants, Detectives, and Police Officers. A special thanks goes out to Deputy Commissioner for Support Services Robert Martinez, who is an alumnus of the IAPE Property and Evidence training, and Director John Parente, who oversees their day-to-day operations. During the class there was a great deal of dialogue about the sheer volume of property and evidence handled by more than 120 precincts and 5 borough warehouses that are managed by over 150 sworn and civilian employees handling an estimated 10,000,000 items. It was brought to our attention by the Captain of the Auto Pound that he had just recently received over 500 bikes, scooters, and ATVs at his facility. To some extent, we have all had to deal with the issues we were talking about in New York. That said, I thought I’d share some news from August 2022, where the NYPD seized over 200 bikes on a single day. (See link below.)

All this leads me to conclude that despite all our best efforts to manage property and evidence we will always have these shared stories that everyone can empathize with. Hopefully, when you receive your copy of our newly updated standards, you will find some assistance in dealing with many of the common issues we all face.

Joe Latta  
Executive Director



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4yhAeQOqsANYPD> seizes hundreds of illegal dirt bikes, ATVs, August 2,2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2GsquRLKBQ>

# Small Agency Staffing Issues and Solutions

By: Hope Williams, IAPE Board

As we discuss in our two-day IAPE Evidence Management class, the difference in a small agency and a large agency is merely the zeros. A small agency may only have 2,000 pieces of evidence, but they can only commit to having someone in the property room for 15 hours a week. Whereas a large agency may have 200,000 pieces of evidence, but have 3 full-time employees. At the end of the day, both agencies are facing the exact same issues. They both need more staff hours to keep up with the evidence coming in and more hours to get the evidence out. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. As an evidence specialist, you have a laundry list of tasks you do each and every day to maintain a property room that meets professional standards.

Unfortunately, at a small agency, you are usually tasked with wearing multiple hats. You may be the records manager, administrative assistant, DCI TAC, and the evidence specialist. Or you could be the Detective Lieutenant, crime scene investigator, public information officer, and the evidence specialist. While you have to be knowledgeable in so many different areas, having to wear multiple hats can sometimes cause the property room to take a backseat.

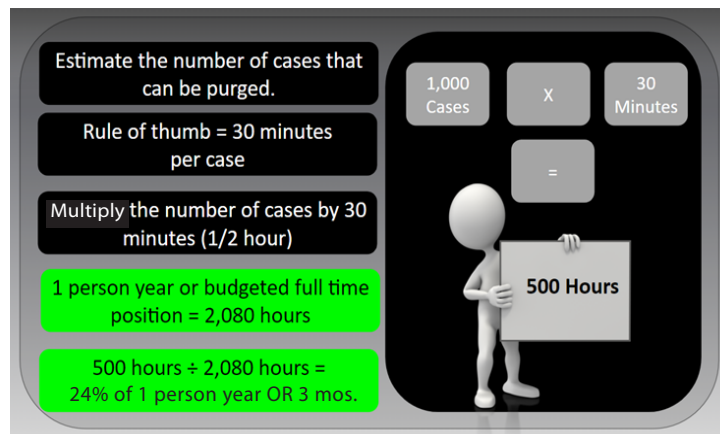
As we travel across the country, we are asked so often, "How can I get my command staff to understand I need help?" A great place to start is with the data. Show them the numbers! If you have a good working records management system, you should be able to pull the data of how much evidence was brought in versus how much evidence was purged. Pull the numbers for several years to be able to show what you are facing. Simply put, if we do not have enough man hours to dispose of as much evidence as we bring in, then we will eventually run out of space. Do we want to build more space because we have run out or do we want to give more staff hours to purge more evidence? You can pay now or you can pay later, but you will eventually have to pay!

IAPE estimates that it takes approximately 30 minutes to research, locate, and remove a piece of evidence from inventory. Take a look at your inventory and determine what percentage of evidence could likely be disposed of. Let's say you have 2,000 cases of evidence.

You determine that 50% of your evidence could be disposed of if the time was available to research the cases. Take those 1,000 cases and multiply them by 30 mins. That comes to 500 hours. A budgeted full-time position is 2,080 hours a year. Divide 500 hours by 2,080 hours. You get 24% of a person year. That's almost 3 months of doing nothing but research to cut that inventory in half. But as I mentioned before, that small agency may only have someone working in the evidence room 15 hours a week. Yet during those 15 hours, the evidence specialist still has to check evidence in from the lockers, check evidence out for investigation, check evidence out for court, return property to owners, transport evidence to and from the lab...and the list goes on and on.

At the end of the day, the solution to this problem will fall on your command staff. But here are some options that you could offer up as suggestions. Can some of your additional duties be shifted to other personnel in order to give more work hours to the property room? Is there a light-duty officer available that could temporarily be assigned to work on purging? Is there a retired officer that would like to still be involved? Is there a reserve officer that is required to get so many hours a month to keep their certification?

Showing your command staff the hard numbers will not only open their eyes to the needs of the property and evidence unit, but it will also serve as official documentation of the problems. Let the numbers work in your favor! Sometimes our voice is ignored, but it is much harder to ignore statistical facts.







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# IAPE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

*Authored by:*

Joseph T. Latta, IAPE Executive Director and  
Robert E. Giles, IAPE Board of Directors, Past President (decd.)

## IAPE STANDARDS SECTION 16 - DIGITAL EVIDENCE

**NOTE: Below is the last standard you will see printed in the current format - revised standards for 2022 are forthcoming imminently via email.**

### Standard 16.1: Digital Evidence

**Standard:** Digital evidence is a critical element of modern criminal investigation that should be maintained in strict adherence to the basic principles of evidence management from acquisition through disposition, chain of custody, preservation, storage, security, and limited access.

**Definition:** Digital evidence refers to digital information that has probative value in either tending to prove or disprove a material fact in a criminal or civil case.

Digital information is any type of electronic file containing text, data, signal, image, video, or voice recording stored on magnetic, optical, or flash media.

**Reasoning:** Digital evidence generally consists of digital information from many different sources. The range of what is considered digital evidence continues to expand at a rate that corresponds with the growth in technology. The following sources are commonly encountered:

#### Audio data may come from these sources:

- pocket digital voice recorders
- cellular phone voice recorders
- in-car audio recorders
- victim provided telephone communications
- 911 call data
- court approved wiretaps
- message centers
- interrogation audio
- internet feed
- baby monitor feed
- parabolic antenna surveillance feed

#### Still images may come from these sources:

- digital cameras
- cellular phones
- internet feed
- traffic cameras
- automated teller machines

#### Moving video images may come from these sources:

- digital cameras
- cellular phones
- surveillance video
- security cameras
- body worn video
- in-car cameras

- interrogation video
- internet feed
- traffic cameras
- nanny cams

#### Digital data may come from these sources:

- automobile computer data, aka "black box data"
- fleet management monitoring
- GPS tracking location and speed data
- email
- letters, memos, reports, or other text files

### Standard 16.2: Digital Evidence Preservation

**Standard:** Digital evidence should be preserved in a manner that retains the original content and format of the files, ensures the integrity of the digital information stored, and documents any changes to the files for the duration of its storage as evidence.

**Definition:** Digital evidence preservation refers to specific standardized procedures that are used to govern the acquisition, storage, backup, duplication, access, distribution, and final disposition of digital information with evidentiary value.

**Reasoning:** Appropriate handling and management of digital evidence ensures the integrity and availability of the digital information throughout the duration of its custody.

The original file should retain the authentic content and format of the source information. The digital information may require its translation or storage in a usable format and condition that is capable of retrieval for the duration of the required retention of the digital asset.

Digital information files preserved as evidence must retain the authentic content and format of the original file. That is not to say that only original assets may be preserved as evidence, nor should this be misconstrued to mean that assets transferred from a primary source (i.e. camera SD card) to permanent storage (i.e. optical media) are not authentic assets. Digital evidence assets must be verifiable as an authentic and true rendering of the originally submitted evidence.

**One method of verifying the authenticity of a digital asset is through the use of applications designed for authenticating files or assets. If needed, this should only be performed by a high-technology investigations expert.**

*Continued from Previous Page*

## IAPE Standards Section 16 - Digital Evidence - cont'd.

### Standard 16.2: Digital Evidence Preservation (cont'd.)

Another critical component of preservation is simply the ability to retain and retrieve a required asset using the agency's digital management system. If a digital asset cannot be retained, or is retained but cannot be retrieved, the evidentiary value of the digital asset is non-existent. Any preservation or storage method employed by an agency must provide authorized users with the ability to access the information contained.

Consumer-quality DVDs/CDs have not demonstrated that they are capable of reliably storing digital information for long-term under all storage conditions. Some DVDs/CDs may only preserve digital information for as little as five years if exposed to improper storage, such as heat, humidity, dust, or sunlight. It is critical to use media that is designed and intended for long-term storage.

### Standard 16.3: Digital Evidence Security

**Standard:** Digital evidence should be stored in a secure environment, with appropriate safeguards to ensure the security of individual digital assets, storage locations, and systems used to facilitate the management of digital evidence.

**Definition:** Digital evidence security is a systematic process designed to protect the digital file from unauthorized access, alteration, or removal. This type of security often involves a combination of traditional physical evidence security and computer processes and systems to accomplish the task of securely storing digital evidence and keeping a paper or computerized trail, with signatures, of who had access to the item and when.

**Reasoning:** Regardless of whether digital evidence is physically stored on electronic media inside the property room, or stored on network storage or a single computer workstation, digital evidence must be protected from unauthorized access, alteration, or removal.

Maintaining the security of digital evidence is of paramount importance. Security measures should begin at the time the first employee comes into the possession of the digital information. This first employee, "Employee Zero," must make a determination on how best to preserve the original data. Is it possible to upload the data to a server, or should the entire device on which the recording was made be seized? Department policy, not an individual officer's judgment, should guide when to seize the original recording equipment, and when copying the data to a duplicate original will suffice.

Once the original digital information data has been preserved, it should be uploaded to a dedicated digital information server or copied to media capable of preserving the information for the duration of its custody.

A decision should be made to place the server where it can be secure, and where uninterrupted power is available. Once the server is located and functioning, policy should direct staff on how and when to fill requests for duplicate originals. Ideally, the assigned investigating officer, or the detail supervisor, should approve all requests for digital information before it is copied. All completed data requests

should go back to the assigned investigating officer for delivery to the requesting party, as one point of contact.

Who should be responsible for the data? One option is to locate the server in IT, Records, or Evidence, depending on the size of the agency and the technical computer ability of the assigned staff. Assigning the digital information server to Evidence is preferable, unless the evidence custodian(s) have limited computer skills. Placing the server in IT or Records is not discouraged if staff is appropriately trained in chain-of-evidence policy, documentation of requests for copies made, and for orders filled.

#### Security of original digital evidence data is maintained by:

- limiting access to files to only authorized persons
- ensuring that original image files never leave the server or storage facility unless the item is formally released from custody or disposed following departmental policy
- running software that detects changes to content
- making automatic uploads of body-camera data without user input
- having in-car camera data uploaded by automatic activation, not selectively downloaded by operator input to eliminate claims of user tampering
- having the main server backed up to cloud storage, or other third party (off-site) storage, to guarantee access to the court and transparency on a daily basis
- ensuring that the original files are only accessed in a read-only format and duplicate originals preserved to guarantee access and transparency; no "lost" or "misplaced" files

### Standard 16.4: Digital Evidence Infrastructure

**Standard:** Agencies utilizing digital evidence should maintain the technological capacity to appropriately manage and store digital evidence, and adopt measures to accommodate future demands in digital evidence technology.

**Definition:** Digital evidence infrastructure refers to physical storage of digital evidence; as well as software, storage media, hardware and network or cloud storage used to acquire, manage, or store digital evidence.

**Reasoning:** Digital evidence management practices should be supported by the department's IT infrastructure to ensure compatibility between digital evidence storage of existing – and future – information technology systems. Planning and decision-making for digital evidence management systems should account for future technology needs.

Digital evidence practices should support requirements and processes for the forensic analysis of digital evidence.

Departments should ensure that digital evidence management systems provide a clearly defined set of procedures and utilize a user interface that makes the process convenient and understandable to the end user. For example, providing a link to "read-only" copies of all digital evidence in a case could simplify discovery and increase security. Numbered copies of photos could be provided under subpoena, and also identify where unauthorized copies, if any, may originate.

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## IAPE Standards Section 16 - Digital Evidence - cont'd.

### Standard 16.4: Digital Evidence Infrastructure (cont'd.)

#### Reasoning: cont'd.

Digital images come in a variety of formats: some are common and some are proprietary. There is a need to convert one master copy to a common user-friendly format in order to store and duplicate the images on the department's designated digital evidence server. The original data (tape, flash memory drive, or optical storage in user-unfriendly format) should be booked into evidence as an archive copy, if needed. Law enforcement agencies should be prepared to store images in different common formats, or convert a duplicate original to a user-friendly formatted master copy.

Proprietary formats used for un-coding surveillance cameras in stores or from ATMs can create a critical need. It is always useful to know what the forensic digital capabilities of the local, county, or state crime labs are before seeking commercial assistance.

Agencies should have equipment available to copy and upload digital information from many different sources when the need arises. Digital data comes from many sources and should be uploaded to the designated digital evidence server to properly manage its distribution.

### Standard 16.5: Disposal of Items Containing Digital Data

**Standard:** No memory devices containing contraband or personal information should ever be auctioned or diverted unless it has been "wiped clean."

**Definition:** "Wiped clean" is a term used to indicate it contains no data, or has been completely overwritten to prevent unauthorized access.

**Reasoning:** IAPE recommends destroying any used memory device due to the complexity and cost of completely wiping the device clean.

## 16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DIGITAL EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (DEMS)

Editorial by: Steve Paxton for Police1.com

*reprinted with permission*

### ***A Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) is the virtual command post for managing all the digital evidence a police department collects.***

Every year, police departments struggle to manage exponentially more digital evidence. Inexpensive digital CCTV systems are now commonplace in communities, while crime scene photos, recorded interviews and citizen-shared digital evidence are more frequently being handled by officers and detectives.

To add to this, many agencies have adopted in-car and body-worn camera (BWC) systems ensuring high-resolution video must be stored and managed for even minor police calls.

The CCTV market has hit an inflection point where surveillance video systems are now affordable, capture high-quality video, and are easy to install and set up. Cloud-based systems (such as Blink, Arlo and Ring) can be installed in just a few minutes by virtually anyone with a wireless internet connection. Almost no technical skills are needed. This has led to a surge in CCTV cameras being installed in neighborhoods around America.

Departments simply cannot ignore all of this digital evidence. Police administrators have a responsibility to provide officers with basic digital evidence

competency training, particularly in recovering and reviewing surveillance video. Agencies must also have a system in place to collect, store and manage digital evidence utilizing best practices and adhering to laws and regulations within their jurisdiction.

The stakes are high. Lost or mishandled digital evidence calls into question an agency's credibility while jeopardizing important cases. A Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) is the virtual command post for managing all the digital evidence a police department collects. A DEMS, along with training and department policy utilizing best practices, ensures agencies properly collect and maintain their case evidence.

### Look for these 16 features in a DEMS solution:

#### 1. SECURE AND COMPLIANT

There is a significant risk in storing just one copy of any file. If the storage system crashes or specific files become corrupt, backup copies may need to be utilized. Therefore, it is best practice to have at least two copies (three is preferred) stored in different geographic locations and storage systems. For example, digital evidence could be stored locally (on-premise) with backup copies in the cloud. Storage redundancy ensures backup copies of digital evidence always exist.

Continued from Previous Page

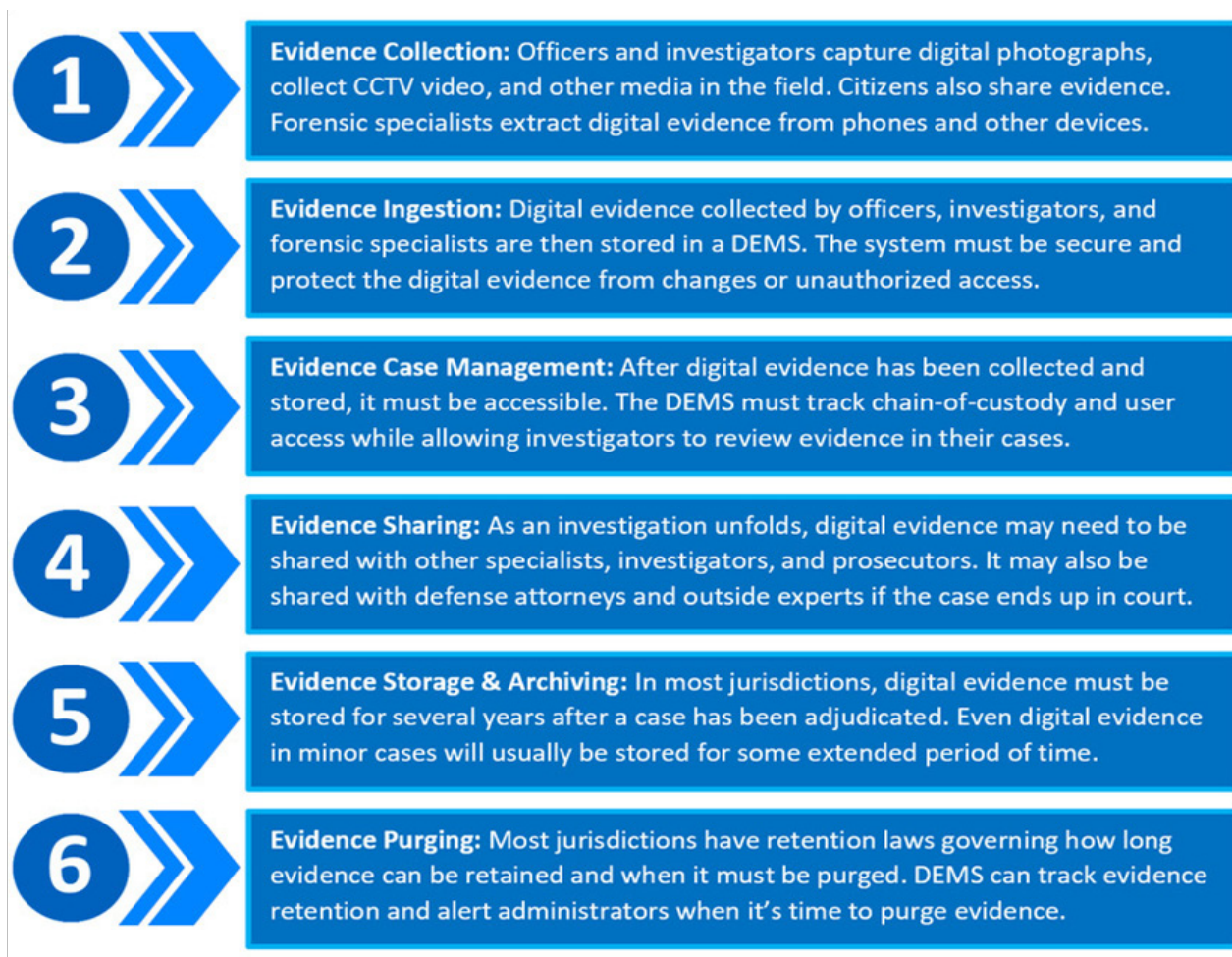
## 16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DEMS - Cont'd.

A DEMS can store digital evidence locally (on-premise), in the cloud, or both. Evidence storage must comply with FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security policy, and agencies must also follow local regulations.

Access to digital evidence is designated within the DEMS at individual and group levels. Personnel are granted or denied access to specific case types based on their role in the police department. For example, patrol officers

may be given general access to digital evidence in the system, but excluded from accessing special assault evidence; while detectives investigating special assault cases would be granted full access. Individual and group level access privileges are set up by the police department and can be updated or modified at any time.

### SEE CHART BELOW



## 2. STORAGE AGNOSTIC AND SCALABLE

The DEMS you choose should be flexible and integrate with a variety of storage types. For example, a small department may elect to store evidence internally on a Synology NAS while larger departments may opt to utilize more expensive hybrid on-premise/cloud solutions. The DEMS should also be scalable, allowing departments to increase storage capacity as necessary or daisy-chain multiple storage options together.

Be cautious of vendors who suggest locking into their proprietary storage solutions as the cost of maintaining the DEMS may get prohibitively more expensive each year. In addition, it can be challenging and costly to migrate digital evidence to another solution after being locked into a proprietary system.

Continued on Page 13



# DIGITAL EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT ONE CENTRALIZED SYSTEM TO CAPTURE IT ALL



*Continued from Page 11*

## **16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DEMS** - Cont'd.

### **3. INTEGRATES WITH BWC SYSTEMS**

A body-worn camera (BWC) system is not a DEMS solution. As police departments adopt BWC systems, it's becoming increasingly important for BWC and DEMS solutions to work together. Integration between these two systems allows investigators to bring together all the digital evidence associated with a case for review.

For example, in a homicide investigation, an agency may have 10 or more BWC videos from patrol officers who assisted or were on scene. There may also be digital photographs, surveillance video from multiple locations near the incident, audio and video recorded interviews, as well as other digital evidence. A flexible DEMS can handle all of this digital evidence in one place. It should also be device agnostic, meaning you're not required to use specific hardware. By using a centrally managed and non-proprietary DEMS, you should be able to ingest BWC video from any vendor should you decide to switch systems.

### **4. SUPPORT FOR SEAMLESS MIGRATION OF YOUR DIGITAL EVIDENCE**

Ongoing support is critical to successfully deploying a DEMS. Without a team of experienced installers and knowledgeable subject matter experts, you may be left managing your evidence alone or forced to pay high support fees to get help. The DEMS solution you choose should include a full-time team dedicated to setting up and migrating your existing digital evidence into the new system, as well as providing ongoing technical and professional support.

### **5. FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS**

Some DEMS solutions are installed as an on-site application, while others are web-based. A comprehensive DEMS solution offers both options. How the DEMS is implemented dictates how and where officers can upload and review evidence. Police administrators and detectives may use a desktop application (installed on their workstations), providing them with deeper access

to case evidence and functionality. At the same time, patrol officers may simply need to upload digital evidence via a web-based interface from time to time throughout their shift.

Police departments with more than just a few officers, or precincts and sub-stations spread out geographically, need a DEMS that can be accessed virtually anywhere within the organization's network. A DEMS that offers desktop applications and web-based options provides agencies unlimited flexibility. If the DEMS can be accessed via a web browser, virtually any authorized user on the network can upload and review digital evidence. In addition, since web-based access doesn't require special software to be installed and maintained on every workstation, this significantly reduces the amount of time an organization's technology department must spend supporting desktop systems having the DEMS application installed. Be on the lookout for a system that offers flexibility.

### **6. CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY EVIDENCE TRACKING**

As with physical evidence, digital evidence must be tracked in detail throughout its lifecycle. One of the most basic functions of a DEMS is to track digital evidence chain-of-custody.

A DEMS will catalog every person who has accessed individual files and itemize the date and time case evidence has been viewed, downloaded, printed, or shared. The system should also include comprehensive reporting tools allowing investigators to quickly print chain-of-custody reports detailing every interaction beginning when the digital evidence was first ingested into the system. Not only does this ensure the integrity of the digital evidence for court, but it also gives police administrators tools to discover how digital evidence may have been inappropriately viewed or even shared outside the department. For example, if a sensitive video from a case was posted on social media, administrators can produce a report detailing every person who interacted with the video and other digital evidence in the DEMS. This encourages department-wide transparency and accountability.

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## **16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DEMS** - Cont'd.

### **7. ORIGINAL DIGITAL EVIDENCE NEVER CHANGES**

While testifying in major cases, I have faced defense attorneys challenging the integrity of digital evidence being introduced by the prosecutor. It usually starts with a question along these lines: "Detective, how do we know this is the same surveillance video you recovered two years ago, and it hasn't been altered in some way?" A question like this can be an effective defense strategy for excluding critical evidence during a trial for a department without a DEMS.

How do you prove your digital evidence has never changed or been altered? There are several ways to go about this, but one approach is by file hashing.

Hashing traditionally occurs as digital evidence is uploaded or ingested into the system. Your DEMS should be able to quickly generate a hash report for all of the digital evidence in a case. This report can be provided to the court and help prove the integrity of any files in question.

### **8. ACCESSIBLE ON MOBILE DEVICES**

Some DEMS solutions provide access to digital evidence via a mobile app or browser-based interface. Simply put, officers can upload or view digital evidence using their department-issued smartphones while in the field. Imagine your officers uploading digital photos directly from the scene or being able to quickly review surveillance video collected by another officer while making contact with a high-risk suspect in a case. Empowering officers with mobile-friendly access to the department's DEMS saves time while potentially improving officer awareness and safety in the field.

### **9. SUPPORT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EVIDENCE SHARING**

Sharing digital evidence securely with prosecutors, outside agencies and other critical stakeholders is a challenge for many police departments. This struggle is compounded as digital evidence continues to grow in size. Surveillance video that once was just a few megabytes is now many gigabytes in size. Copying digital evidence onto discs or thumb

drives can be extremely time-consuming. Not only that, sharing evidence on loose media is insecure. Discs and thumb drives can be easily misplaced or mishandled and end up in the wrong hands.

Sharing critical digital evidence should be secure, uncomplicated and straightforward.

### **10. SUPPORT FOR CITIZEN EVIDENCE SHARING**

Patrol officers face an increasing amount of digital evidence being shared by citizens in their community. As a result, many DEMS solutions have built-in citizen sharing features making it much easier for officers to quickly obtain and save digital evidence shared with them.

The most commonly shared evidence by citizens are smartphone images and videos; however, officers also routinely encounter text messages, voicemails, chats, emails, social media screenshots and virtually any other media you can imagine receiving on a smartphone. Without a DEMS, officers are stuck requesting citizens share digital evidence with them as email attachments or they may attempt to save it themselves in some way. Imagine the frustration of working with a citizen who isn't very technical and attempting to walk them through sending you surveillance video (one-by-one) as email attachments. This scenario happens more often than you might think.

Sending digital evidence as email attachments is insecure and may be subject to public disclosure in some jurisdictions. There's also a good chance that videos or images sent by email or text message are reduced in size and quality by the mobile device.

Citizen sharing is a valuable feature to look for in a DEMS solution. With this, officers simply send a request via text message or email to the citizen with the digital evidence. Once the request is received, they upload evidence directly to the police department's evidence server from their smartphone. The DEMS seamlessly manages the entire transaction, freeing officers to move on to other tasks. This can save an enormous amount of time and frustration in cases involving many witnesses. It also provides a complete chain-of-custody record for the evidence.



*Continued from Previous Page*

## **16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DEMS** - Cont'd.

### **11. MANAGES ALL FILES TYPES**

Officers and detectives encounter a wide variety of proprietary and non-proprietary file formats including digital images, video, audio files, documents, text messages and emails. In some critical cases, detectives may generate proprietary crash data or unique computer and mobile forensic files stored in complex folder structures. Regardless of the file format or folder structure, all digital evidence generated in a case should be available to investigators and prosecutors in one place. A flexible DEMS solution can ingest and manage any file type while maintaining the original folder structure.

### **12. ADVANCED SEARCH AND ORGANIZATION**

As digital evidence is collected and uploaded in a case, investigators need search tools to quickly find and review the most important files. This is particularly crucial in serious, fast-moving cases.

Imagine a homicide investigation involving suspects fleeing in a vehicle through several busy city blocks. There are businesses and homes with CCTV systems along the entire escape route. Officers and detectives rapidly recover surveillance video from over 10 locations hoping to find a lead in the case; however, they know some of the video they recover will not be helpful. As they identify video clips of interest, they need to quickly separate and organize the most critical evidence in the case.

Most DEMS have comprehensive search and organizational functionality, allowing investigators to quickly find and separate important evidence into virtual folders. For example, detectives may create folders containing surveillance video from specific locations and other folders for still images of the suspects and getaway vehicles. Organizing digital evidence into virtual folders helps investigators, prosecutors, and other collaborators quickly locate the important assets as a case is investigated and reviewed for charging.

### **13. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW MODE FOR INVESTIGATORS**

After digital evidence has been uploaded, investigators need to be able to watch surveillance

video and review digital images directly within the DEMS. Support for video playback and image review are fundamental to Digital Evidence Management Systems. Most DEMS also allow investigators to review documents and other non-proprietary file types without having to download a copy to examine outside the system.

Review mode within a DEMS should be easy to use while providing important information about the files being viewed. The system should catalog the date, time and users who have viewed, downloaded, printed, or shared the digital evidence being accessed. This becomes an audit record for chain-of-custody reporting.

### **14. COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING TOOLS**

As technology advances, digital multimedia also continues to grow in size and quality. Most police departments discover they are collecting increasingly more digital evidence (images, videos and other files) while also utilizing increased storage space (as files are getting progressively larger in size). To predict how much digital evidence storage an agency needs in the future, it must know how much is currently being stored as well as been ingested in previous years.

Most DEMS have comprehensive reporting features that can quickly determine how much digital evidence an agency has. A DEMS should be able to break down how much digital multimedia evidence was collected by week, month, and year and itemize the number of videos, images, documents, and other file types being stored. Comprehensive reporting tools allow police administrators to predict how much storage they will need in the future.

### **15. SUPPORT FOR IMAGE & VIDEO ENHANCEMENT**

Investigators routinely encounter poor-quality surveillance video and images. Camera placement and environmental factors significantly impact the quality of CCTV video, particularly dark and grainy CCTV recorded at night, making it difficult to identify suspects.

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## 16 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A DEMS - Cont'd.

In situations like this, investigators may need to lighten a video, crop an area of interest, and save a series of still images of a suspect. This form of enhancement is common in many investigations.

A DEMS with built-in enhancement capabilities allows investigators to improve video and images within the system. The DEMS should permanently preserve original files when enhancements are performed by producing derivative copies. A DEMS is not a substitute for powerful forensic image and video enhancement software; however, performing basic enhancements can speed up the process of identifying suspects and producing attempt-to-locate bulletins.

### 16. SUPPORT FOR EVIDENCE PURGING

Digital evidence in cold or serious criminal cases is usually kept indefinitely, while evidence in many adjudicated cases will eventually be purged. Evidence retention is based on state and local guidelines and laws. Without a DEMS, agencies are left to comb through and purge digital evidence manually. Even for small agencies, this isn't practical. Purging by hand is also risky as it is relatively easy to inadvertently delete the wrong folders or files.

The DEMS should include evidence retention settings that can send reminders when digital evidence in a case is ready to be purged. Coordinate your DEMS retention settings with those of your physical evidence system, and your staff will always be alerted when it's time to purge evidence in a case. Once it has been determined evidence should be purged, the DEMS admin (or their designee) can initiate the purge and delete all the digital evidence associated with the closed case.

A DEMS can purge all the digital evidence in a case and the record of its existence or purge the digital evidence while retaining the record. Retaining the record allows records staff, evidence specialists, and investigators to search previously purged cases to see what digital evidence once existed while following local and state evidentiary retention guidelines.

### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FUTURE FOR DEMS

Digital Evidence Management Systems are quickly becoming more sophisticated by tapping into

cloud computing and deep learning technology. By utilizing cloud computing resources, a DEMS can automate redaction tasks (blurring faces, license plates, and RMS screens). There are also a variety of video analytic applications being pursued that help investigators analyze long segments of video by quickly identifying persons, vehicles, or objects of interest in a specific location or aid in tracking persons or objects through a series of video segments.

Proprietary CCTV video playback is also an ongoing challenge for police departments. With thousands of proprietary surveillance video file formats, DEMS vendors are also looking for ways to automatically convert tricky video files into a non-proprietary format so that they can be played directly within the DEMS. Comprehensive support for proprietary video playback directly within a DEMS can significantly shorten the time it takes investigators to locate suspects or vehicles of interest in a case.

### RESOURCES

*Finding a DEMS solution and adopting best practices for digital evidence handling can be overwhelming. It may be especially daunting if you manage a smaller agency and don't consider anyone in your organization very technical. That's OK! There are several resources available to get you pointed in the right direction.*

- *Scientific Working Group on Digital Evidence (SWDGE) regularly publishes best practices for handling and managing digital evidence. Review their published documents for general guidance.*
- *Law Enforcement Video Association (LEVA) offers a variety of training in video recovery, analysis, comparison, report writing and courtroom testimony. As video evidence (CCTV, BWC, smartphones, etc.) continues to grow, every police department should send at least one person to LEVA training.*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Paxton has been a police officer for 26 years. Most recently he worked as a detective assigned to the Forensic Investigations Unit at the Everett, Washington Police Dept. His responsibilities included recovering and analyzing surveillance video, examining mobile devices, critical incident photography, and managing the department's digital forensics lab. Steve can be reached on LinkedIn.

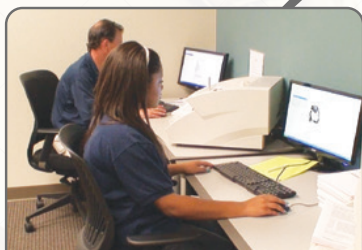
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# IAPE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: REVISITING THE PAST & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## IT ALL BEGAN 25 YEARS AGO...

*The origins of IAPE's Professional Standards go back to 1997, when the board recognized that our profession was in dire need of guidance regarding the fundamentals of operating a property room because there was very limited information available. The following article will give you a brief history about where the content was originally derived from, and then introduce you to the new standards that are currently being emailed to our members. Note: Beginning with this version, only members will have access the IAPE Professional Standards.*

### The Evidence Log

Vol. 1997 – No 1

First Quarter

## Property Standards

### Organization Placement, Staffing, and Hours

By: Gordon A. Bowers - March 1997

*This is the first in a series of articles that will examine at least 25 different areas of concern regarding the operation of a professional property unit. In each issue of the Evidence Log we will discuss an area (or areas) of property unit operation, using a common format, in order to make the articles more useful as references. In each article, we will (1) describe the area to be discussed, (2) quote standards for the area from various sources, and (3) provide a narrative discussion of the goals that the standards hope to accomplish.*

*Since there are so few organizations attempting to set standards for the operation of property units, most standards referred to in this series of articles will be from a very limited number of sources. Those quoted most frequently are likely to be the Standards Manual of the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), a policy paper from International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Property and Evidence Manuals from the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST, 1984), and the California Association for Property and Evidence (CAPE, 1995).*

*In this issue we will look at three relatively brief, but critically important, areas that are highly interrelated. In the next issue, we will focus on only one, but one which is rather expansive: Responsibilities of the Property Officer.*

### ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT

Organizational placement deals with the authority lines and reporting relationships affecting the property unit. It considers the fact that managers hold some elements of formal and informal control over the supervisors reporting to them. The supervisors, in turn, have the same influences over their employees. The property unit's organizational placement can greatly impact its independence and credibility.

### Standards:

The size of a law enforcement agency ordinarily influences the organizational placement of its property and evidence function. There are, however, compelling reasons – which apply to all departments – that the responsibility for safeguarding and processing property be assigned to a specific unit which functions primarily for that purpose. The unit usually is placed organizationally in the Support Services or Administrative Bureau. POST - Managing Property In Law Enforcement Agencies, 1984, Page 3.

Separation of duties is paramount in centralizing the control and storage of property. Centralizing the control and storage of property, and staffing the property unit with personnel, who are not involved in operational tasks, are precautions that will simplify control procedures and enhance the integrity of a property room. POST - Managing Property In Law Enforcement Agencies, 1984, Page 2.

When two or more persons or departments are involved in a transaction, the work of one serves as a check on the accuracy of the work of another. When two or more persons are involved in a transaction, possibilities of fraud and the incidence of undetected error diminish considerably. No one person should handle any transaction from beginning to end. For example, a person receiving cash from officers should not post ledgers accounting for the transaction (two-man rule). Obviously, segregation of duties becomes more difficult with a small staff. Exceptions may be necessary in small organizations due to staffing requirements. CAPE - Property Manual, Page 55, 1995.

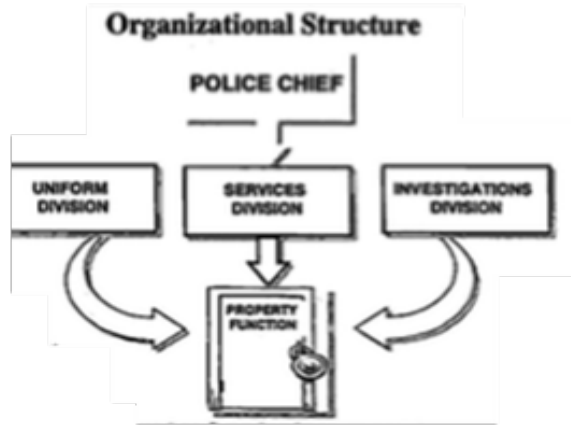
### Goals:

Organizational placement of the property unit can be part of the overall checks and balances of the agency in two ways.

## IAPE STANDARDS: REVISITING THE PAST - cont'd.

The Evidence Log Vol. 1997 – No 1

## Property Standards



First, the unit should be provided with limited authority. The unit is for property custody and documentation only. It should not be involved in decisions about what to seize, or in decisions related to property disposition. Second, the unit must be organizationally separate from the patrol and investigation functions. Patrol personnel seize and book almost all property, and detectives most often check out property and arrange for its final disposition. Using the property unit as a buffer between those two functions ensures accountability from them both. In some small departments, this may mean that the property unit is assigned to an administrative division, or even reports to the Chief's office.

Patrol personnel, who are involved in collecting evidence in the field and who subsequently may authorize release of these items, should not be given the responsibility to store or process evidence. Investigative personnel, who are in the position to oversee criminal investigations and who are responsible for making decisions regarding the collected evidence, should not be involved in the property and evidence function.

In addition, having the unit independent of patrol and investigations reduces the appearance of conflict of interest. It is not related to patrol, so has no motivation to cover discrepancies in property descriptions or packaging by patrol officers. It is not related to investigations, so it has no motivation to release or dispose of property without accurate documentation. Employees of the unit don't have any input in what is seized, so they can't "shop" for desirable property, and they have no input on the decisions regarding its disposition, so they can't funnel property to an acquaintance or associate.

### STAFFING

Staffing deals with the selection of employees to work in the property function of the agency. It includes such things as hiring standards, background investigations, assignments, and employee turnover.

### Standards:

Employees assigned to the Property / Evidence function should ordinarily be non-peace officers, because the position of property controller (custodian) frequently is closely allied to that of storekeeper and peace officer powers are not necessarily required. The same reasoning may apply to supervisors or managers of the function. POST - Managing Property In Law Enforcement Agencies 1984, Page 2. The position of Property Controller should be filled by individuals whose background includes experience in general warehousing. Candidates selected to fill these positions must have successfully passed both the qualifying exam and a thorough background check. Individuals filing for the Property Controller position must meet the requirements set forth by the agency. Rotating personnel through the property unit should be discouraged, as it makes quality control more difficult. CAPE-Property Manual, 1995, Page 1.

Planned and unannounced rotation of duties is an important principle of internal control, but rotating employees through the property unit can create significant accountability problems. If it is determined that rotation of personnel is necessary, a complete inventory is absolutely necessary to protect all employees involved in the rotation. Rotation of personnel, besides being an effective internal control check, can also be a valuable aid in an overall training program (i.e., employees can be taught to handle other job responsibilities in the organization). CAPE - Property Manual, 1995, Page 55.

### Goals:

It is important that the agency's selection criteria produce qualified employees, and a significant part of that is a thorough background investigation. Whether the employee is sworn or civilian is less important than that he or she is a qualified, committed, long-term employee. Duties within the property unit may be rotated for quality control, or even for variety, but employees should not rotate through the property detail from other parts of the agency unless it is for an extended period (several years). Accountability can be pinpointed more easily when as few as possible employees are directly involved in the property function. At no time should any classification of employee ever be routinely rotated through the property room. High turnover for any reason is unacceptable, as it requires too frequent inventory, rekeying, and other accommodations. Staffing levels must consider there is much "behind the scenes" work other than accepting and releasing property for officers and the public.

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## IAPE STANDARDS: REVISITING THE PAST - cont'd.

**The Evidence Log** Vol. 1997 – No 1

**Property Standards**

### HOURS

Hours of operation deals not only with the days and hours that the property unit employees work, but the days and hours during which the public and police counters are open for business. Counter duties frequently keep property employees from doing many of their necessary tasks, so some allowance must be made for “non-public” work hours.

### Standards:

Only large agencies can usually justify around-the-clock property control staffing. Most property storage facilities are open only weekdays during normal business hours; circumstances or occasions should be rare when it is necessary to enter the property room at any other time. POST - Managing Property In Law Enforcement Agencies 1984, Page 2.

### Goals:

Having sufficient property employees available to sign out evidence to officers for court appearances, and check it back in afterwards, are primary scheduling factors, as is having some “after hours” time for property release to the public. Allowance must be made for the distance of the property room to court in some jurisdictions, or for return of property from detectives in courts with late hours. Property lockers with “one way doors” frequently satisfy this need. To avoid temptation, or the appearance thereof, employees should work with at least one partner during times when the property counter is closed. Note that audits, inventories, and purging are best accomplished when the counter is closed, as those functions require more concentration than an open counter allows. The unit schedule should attempt to minimize times in which “after hours” entry is needed. For rare situations, there should be a call-in of property personnel, or a carefully written and strictly enforced exception policy.

**... THEN CONTINUED 5 YEARS LATER  
WITH OUR FORMALIZED STANDARDS...**

**The Evidence Log**

Vol. 2002 – No 1

First Quarter

### Excerpted from the E-Log of 20 years ago:

*“In March of 2002 the IAPE board of directors decided that your professional association should take the lead in formalizing property standards and in making them more widely available. To that end, the board had worked in pulling together the most current information available to produce a set of property standards that could be approved by the entire board. With extensive collaboration, such a set of standards has been produced, and will be presented as feature articles in The Evidence Log beginning in this issue. We hope it is useful and we encourage your feedback to allow us to make any future revisions even more applicable to your professional efforts.”*

**... AND FINALLY BRINGING US INTO  
THE PRESENT, WITH OUR REVISED  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR 2022.**

*Continued from Previous Page*

## IAPE STANDARDS: *LOOKING TO THE FUTURE* - cont'd.

### The Evidence Log

Vol. 2022 – No 3

Third Quarter

## International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Professional Standards *(Revised 2022)*

### Reauthored by:

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*Ellen Spain*, Forensic Evidence Manager for the Virginia Department of Forensic Science, VA

### Acknowledgements

*In Memory of Robert E. Giles, IAPE Board of Directors, Past President (Deceased)*

The International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. acknowledges the work of all IAPE board members past and present, who continue to review and improve these professional standards since 2010.

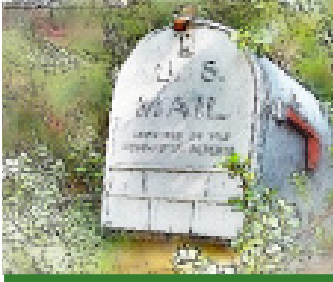
*Joe Moralli*, President, International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc.

*Joseph T. Latta*, IAPE Executive Director

There are five parts to this product: The table of contents, professional standards, reasoning document, glossary, and works cited pages. Click on any line in the table of contents and you will be taken directly to that topic in the document. At the beginning of each professional standard (1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.), a hyperlink is available to direct you to the corresponding section in the reasoning document. The reasoning document provides additional information for each professional standard. One may also scroll through the document or use the search feature within the document software. These professional standards will be the principal resource utilized for IAPE accreditation assessments. These professional standards are provided only to members and member agencies to develop their policies and procedures to efficiently operate their evidence units.

These professional standards may not be duplicated or shared without the express written permission of the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Board of Directors.

***A link to the new standards is currently being emailed to all dues-paying as this issue is being published.***



## WE GET MAIL...

*Editor's Note: We try to respond to as many letters as we can, with information that may be relevant to the broadest audience possible. We thank you for your continued participation in this process.*

---

### Maintaining Chain of Custody

I would like to know what your protocol or suggestion would be for allowing the Public Defender's Office to analyze evidence items. Investigators from our local Public Defenders Office would like to perform a data extraction on three cell phones that we have taken as evidence on a sexual assault case. One is the victim's and the other two are the suspects'. Normally I would, per court order, release the items to them so they could perform the analysis, and then they would bring them back when they are finished. But they want to utilize our office as to "not compromise chain of custody" by not having the evidence leave the police department.

Is it normal for another agency to come in and work for several days in a property & evidence unit that is not theirs? If you have literature on this topic it would greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Cassy Cook  
Senior Evidence Technician  
Tulare Police Dept., California

*Cassy,*

*The Chico Police Department would require the approval from the District Attorney handling the case. For similar requests, we have always included the D.A., investigations, and the booking officer. For something like this, the D.A. would likely want to attend, as well as the investigator. Obviously, you should have a presence there at all times.*

*No matter what, I would scan the item out as "Defense Viewing/Processing" to document their time with the item, as this is still part of the chain of custody.*

*Hope this helps -  
Joe M.*

---

### Retaining Paper Reports

Hey Joe,

I'm not sure we covered it in class, but how long do you keep paper copies of reports? We stopped keeping paper copies when we went digital in 2017 but I have all these old boxes full of paper in my evidence room. I was thinking about just scanning them in and shredding them until they're gone. Do you see a problem with this?

Korben Leegaard  
Canton, South Dakota

*Every state is different. This usually falls under a record retention policy administered by the city and sometimes the city clerk may have knowledge of the related laws. If the city clerk doesn't know, I would seek an opinion from your city's legal counsel.*

*Regards,  
Joe L.*



# PROPERTY ROOM STAFFING GUIDELINES

## Hiring & Background Investigations

By: Joe Latta, Executive Director, IAPE

Given the nature of the work within a property room and the potential for myriad integrity issues, it is important that the department's hiring or transfer criteria produce the most qualified employees. Placing an employee in the property room because of a pending internal affairs investigation, or for disciplinary reasons, to keep them off the street, should be avoided at all costs. It places a stigma on the assignment and puts the credibility of the entire department in a high-risk gamble. The nature of the risk is so great that it is wiser to be understaffed in the property room than to add personnel from such sources!

### Headline News

Officer files whistle-blower complaint, accuses bureau of punishing him for speaking out

*Officer TB, 41, is the first rank-and-file officer who has been assigned to work at the property evidence warehouse. TB contends he was transferred there in retaliation for publicly criticizing command staff. "I feel my concerns were ignored," he said.*

*Five days later, the department transferred TB to the property evidence warehouse – an assignment no other uniformed officer had ever held – and suspended him from the police department's honor guard. "If a police officer who speaks up is being treated like dirt, how does that reflect on the general public?" said TB. "You've got this fine line here. Do you keep your mouth shut and pretend there's not a problem? At some point, you have to do what's right."*

*Reported by: Oregonlive.com*

Also, the work environment, and the department-wide integrity breach that is at risk, should mandate a thorough pre-employment background investigation to mitigate those risks.

### Headline News

In Braintree Massachusetts evidence scandal, unheeded warnings

*For months, police in this suburban police department had complained about SZ, a veteran officer who was in charge of the evidence room. She wasn't doing her job and sometimes appeared hung over and "out of it." Officers couldn't get the evidence they needed for court hearings.*

*They repeatedly warned their supervisors that SZ was not fit to oversee an inventory of seized money and drugs, according to two people with close knowledge of her tenure in the department. "Something was wrong with Sue," one former Braintree officer said.*

*Reported by: Boston Globe September 24, 2016*

Shortly after the story was published SZ took her own life due to the ongoing investigation. Soon thereafter both the chief and deputy chief retired as some of the problems had been ignored on their watch.

---

## Components of Background Investigations

Both hiring background procedures and transfer consideration procedures (mini-backgrounds) need to be developed to ensure the most rigid standards are maintained. Such standards for property room personnel (full and part-time positions) should include:

### Financial Disclosure

A financial screening should be included in the background investigation of a person who is being considered for hire as a property officer. Clearly, the employment of an individual who is in a fiscal crisis such as bankruptcy, over-extended in credit to multiple creditors, or months behind in mortgage payments, etc., in a position in which he or she has access to drugs, currency, weapons, and other evidence and property of value, would not be a sound management decision.

*Continued on Next Page*

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## PROPERTY ROOM Background Investigations - cont'd.

### Components - cont'd.

#### Financial Disclosure - cont'd.

Also, any agency member being considered for assignment to the property room, whether sworn or civilian, should undergo an updated financial/credit screening prior to transfer. There is a plethora of property room scandals related to employees dealing with financial pressures, some of which ultimately involved arrests and even on-duty suicides related to those issues.

#### Polygraph/CVSA

Unless prohibited by a state statute, municipal code, or collective bargaining agreements, anyone who is being screened for hiring and/or assignment to a property room position (sworn and civilian, supervisor or line personnel) should be administered a polygraph or Computerized Voice Stress Analysis (CVSA) examination.

#### Drug Screening

Unless prohibited by a state statute, municipal code, or collective bargaining agreements, anyone who is being screened for hiring or assignment to the property room, both civilian and sworn personnel, should undergo a drug-screening test prior to their assignment. Additionally, the department should have the authorization to administer random drug-screenings for the staff of the property room.

The recommendation above addresses initial and random testing, and not "drug testing for cause" that is based upon a departmental internal investigation. In the past, many law enforcement agencies throughout the U.S. have had employees, both sworn and civilian, who became addicted to illegal substances after being employed. The potential damage to criminal prosecutions, as well as the erosion of the public's perception of integrity and confidence in the agency, can be especially substantial if an employee within the property room becomes dependent on drugs.

### Employee Background Update Prior to Transfer

It needs to be emphasized that if a current member of the department, sworn or civilian, is being considered

for assignment to the property room, they too should be subject to these background inquiries. Just because a person has been an employee of the department for 15 years doesn't mean that he or she does not have any of these financial, substance abuse, or integrity issues that would make them a very high-risk candidate for a property room assignment.

The best way to look at the transfer issue is to ask whether you know of anyone that you work with that has a substance abuse problem, gambling addiction, financial problems, a spouse on probation, or children that have had numerous contacts with law enforcement. If those folks were to be assigned to the property room, could there be any potential for future issues with their employment in that unit?

In general we find that law enforcement infrequently conducts background checks for transfers. However, federal law enforcement property officers must be retested every five years.

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### Headline News

Evidence from 15 criminal cases stolen

*Thousands of dollars and dozens of prescription drugs have been stolen out of an evidence room, and investigators believe it was taken by a former Pueblo County, Colorado Sheriff's Office employee.*

*Investigators believe that a 36-year-old evidence custodian has been stealing from the sheriff's evidence room for more than a year. She was arrested on warrants claiming she was stealing money, prescription medicine, altering computer records and tampering with evidence.*

*At that time, T.A. was placed on administrative leave because she had a track record of using a county-issued purchasing card for personal use.*

*Court papers say T.A. was struggling from financial troubles. She told investigators that she and her husband separated, and their house fell into foreclosure. She filed for bankruptcy, and still owes money to complete that filing. In the last couple of months, she says her car was repossessed. And court documents show a judge ordered her to pay her \$500 worth of parking tickets.*

*Reported by: KKTV/AP Pueblo Colorado*

*Continued from Previous Page*

## PROPERTY ROOM Background Investigations - cont'd.

### INTRODUCING IAPE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - V4 2022

#### 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.

### Reasoning Document

#### 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.*



## EVIDENCE LOG SEEKS SUBMISSIONS

We are always looking for suggestions re: articles to publish in future issues of the Evidence Log.

*If you have information to share on a topic related to the property and evidence function, or have anything of interest that you would like us to consider for publication,*

*please send your submission to:*

**E-Log Editor, Joe Latta: [jlatta@iape.org](mailto:jlatta@iape.org)**

# On the Audit Trail

By: Bill Kiley, President Emeritus, IAPE

*Many of the readers of the Evidence Log don't know me as I left the IAPE Board years ago. My involvement with the association was due to meeting Joe Latta when both of us were attending the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. In 1986, Joe was a sergeant with the Burbank (California) Police Department and I was a sergeant with the Suffolk County (New York) Police Department. From the friendship that we forged 36 years ago, I became affiliated with IAPE and the wonderful folks on the Board of Directors. Over the years of my connection to the IAPE, I traveled with Joe to conduct classes across the U.S. and Canada. We have countless tales about the travels of Joe and Bill. From Southern California to Newfoundland, Canada and from the Province of Alberta to Miami, we traversed the continent. In addition to co-teaching classes, I worked with Joe on many audits of law enforcement property rooms, and I'd like to share some of those experiences with you. This article isn't about the dos and don'ts that are often found in the Evidence Log, but just some stories from the few memory cells that remain in this septuagenarian brain.*

## **BOMBING IN TEXAS**

It was a blistering hot, August day of about 100 degrees and 100 percent humidity when we arrived at the warehouse of a department in Texas. The only air conditioning in the multi-story old building was in the small administrative office. As the manager of the facility gave us an overview tour of the facility's operations, the sweat was dripping from my face. I recall that on one floor I saw more bicycles than you would see in the Tour d'France bike race. We got through our first day and I couldn't wait to get to the hotel room and get into the shower. As I let the cool water run down my body, I felt very itchy around

the top of my ankles and noticed a sort of red ring around them. Meeting Joe for dinner, I mentioned the ring above my sock-line, and he said that he too had itchy ankles. The following morning, we went to police headquarters to meet with the senior brass. As we were leaving our meeting, one of the deputy chiefs said to the property and evidence manager, "They are going to bomb the warehouse tomorrow night." I looked at Joe who had a grin on his face. Once out of sight of the others we agreed that based upon what we'd see the day before that bombing the warehouse might be the best thing that could happen to that department. It turned out that the "bombing" was going to attempt to rid the warehouse of an infestation of fleas. Yup, we had our answer to the rings around our ankles. And those poor property room employees worked in those conditions every day that they came in! We did our best to identify the health and safety issues that needed immediate attention in our report.

## **DOWN IN THE DUNGEON**

In a Midwest department, the property and evidence supervisor was escorting Joe and I as we went to each of the dozens of storage areas, some in distant buildings, to see where and how they maintained their inventory. This agency even had multiple places for storing their old, cold homicide evidence. One of these was a dungeon-like room at the far end of a parking area. Upon entering the room, the odor was pungent and sickening. After a few minutes we had to leave the room. In our audit report, we noted the conditions within that room. Subsequently, we learned that the city's safety officer mandated that no one enter the room without adequate breathing apparatus as it was unsafe, and the evidence had to be relocated to storage with an adequate ventilation and filtration system. Although it would have been very rare for someone to need entry into that Cold Case Homicide storage area, their safety would nonetheless have been put at risk.

*Continued from Previous Page*

## On the Audit Trail - cont'd.

### THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKIN'

On another audit we had pulled several records and were doing a comprehensive check of the evidence from intake through disposition. This agency had an

area designated for items awaiting disposal. We pulled the records for a few of those and one of them

was a pair of men's work boots. Looking for the boots in the "pending disposal" area we couldn't locate them. The young, relatively new property clerk looked at us very sheepishly as we inquired about the boots. Finally, she said, "All I can say is that I know that they were there yesterday," and she wouldn't look us in the eye.

Joe and I knew where this was going. A short time later a police officer, who had been assigned to the property unit for a long time, was finishing for the day and was about to leave for vacation. Looking down, we saw him wearing a brand-new pair of work boots, like the description of the missing pair. After further auditing, it turned out, the boots were not the only thing missing from this property room.

### OH, CANADA!

In a northern province of Canada, we arrived to conduct our audit and in keeping with our normal routine the property and exhibits manager took us to meet the chief of police. The next morning when we arrived at our work site, the manager advised us that we'd have to go to city hall with her for us to take our

oath. "Oath?" we inquired. "Oh yes," she responded, "You must take an Oath of Secrecy before you can begin your work." We'd never heard of anything like it before. Well, the city legal advisor informed us that we had to be sworn not to divulge anything that we saw or learned during our audit... UNDER CRIMINAL PENALTY." Stop the music. After all, this was an audit and we'd be providing a written audit report. It took a bit to iron out the parameters of the oath. And, if you are asking, my lips are still sealed.



Pictured from Left to Right:  
*Joe Latta and Bill Kiley, two of IAPE's original trailblazers.*

### TAKING A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

Conducting audits of law enforcement property rooms was both fascinating and simultaneously scary. Just when we thought we'd seen it all, we would go to another department where Joe and I would look at each other with the "You can't make this ---- up" look on our faces. It was always fun traveling and meeting so many interesting people in departments small and large – from departments with storage closets to the multistory, multiple warehouses of the New York City Police Department, and the vaults of the U.S. Secret Service, it was always fascinating.

*Continued from Page 22*

## WE GET MAIL...



### Temperature Monitoring Systems for Freezers

Hello,

I am writing to you to see if you know of any companies that offer cellular monitoring of temperatures for freezers. Please let me know at your earliest convenience.



Thank you.  
Nichole Irizarry Kennedy  
Certified Evidence Technician  
Administrative Associate  
Forensic Analytical Crime Lab  
Hayward, California

*Hi Nichole -*

*Well, there are several out there. If you have a building access control system, that company probably has that service as well.*

*I use Johnson Controls. I am not sure how many are needed, but if it's several then I would use someone like Johnson or Siemens Controls.*

*If there's only one or two I would consider less expensive options that are out there. Below are just a few.*

*As long as you can connect to Wi-Fi, you're golden.*

*Good luck!  
Ellen Spain  
IAPE Board*



<https://www.controlbyweb.com/applications/freezer-monitoring.html>

<https://www.vaisala.com/en/industries-applications/life-science/refrigerator-and-freezer-temperature-monitoring>

*Continued from Previous Page*

## WE GET MAIL...



### Returning Out-of-Area Property

Hi Joe,

I was wondering if you had an opinion on returning property to people outside of your city or state? I usually tell everyone come get your stuff but a few times I have mailed small things (like a veteran's ID card) or to a deceased victim's family.

Seems like I'm getting more people's stuff from all over the place. What are other agencies doing? Are they saying no, the agency pays up to a certain amount, sends me a prepaid USPS box or cash on delivery?

Thank you for any ideas.  
Cara E. Bishop  
Property Specialist Supervisor  
Owasso Police Department, Oklahoma

*Hi Cara -*

*I say: Just mail it!*

*The post office has a priority mail envelope for \$7 or \$8 that you can mail and you can track online.*

*Joe L.*

### Incinerating Drugs

I have a question regarding drug destruction.

I work in a small, landlocked department with limited resources. Currently, we have the Drug Terminator incinerator that is used for all our destructions. With the rise in fentanyl cases, I'm wondering what would be a safer method for the disposal of drugs.

Can you help?

Thank you,  
Erika Ahrens  
Evidence & Property Specialist  
Juneau Police Department, Alaska

*Erika,*

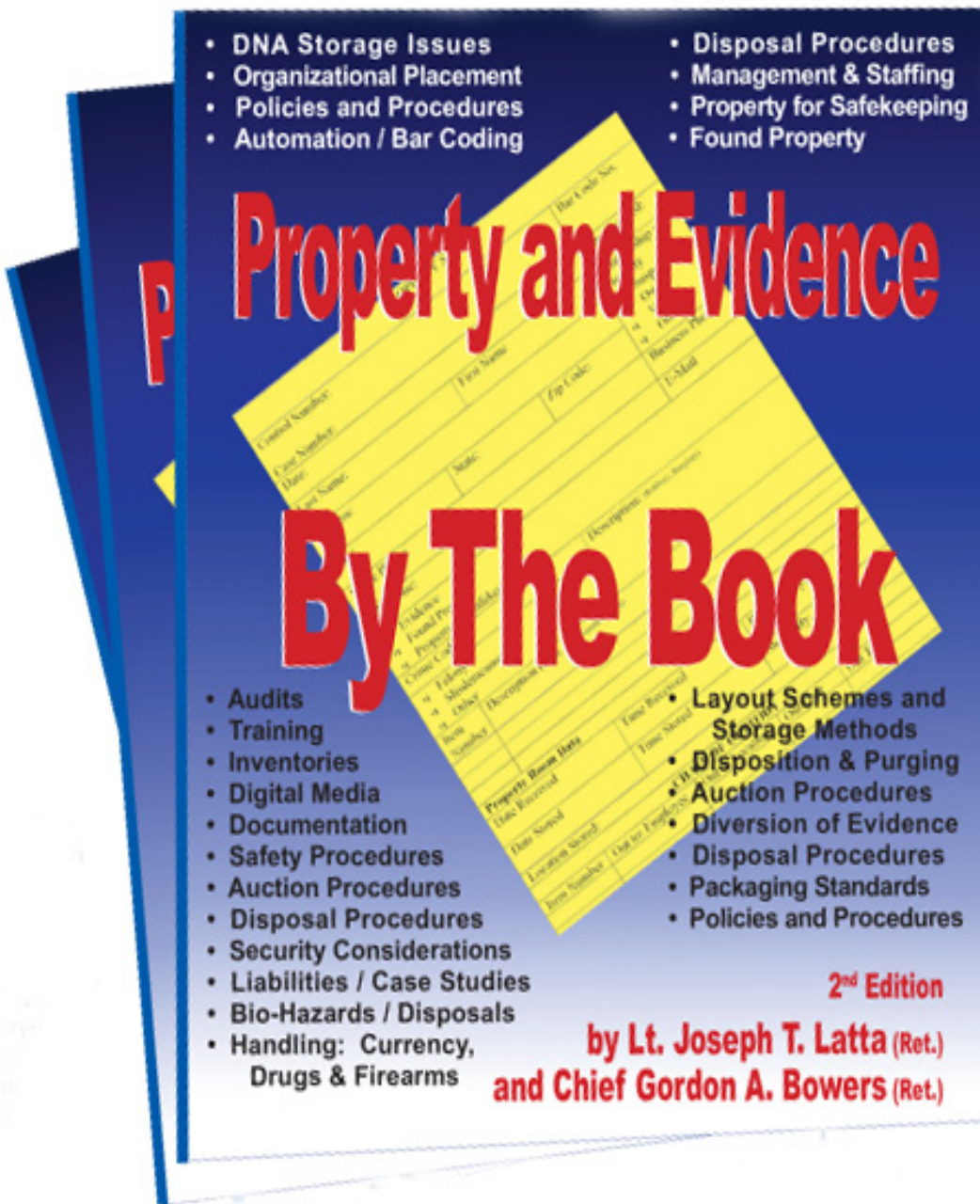
*I have reached out to a number of departments and the Drug Terminator still seems to be the norm for use in incinerating all drugs.*

*Have not been able to find any scientific answers.*

*Joe L.*

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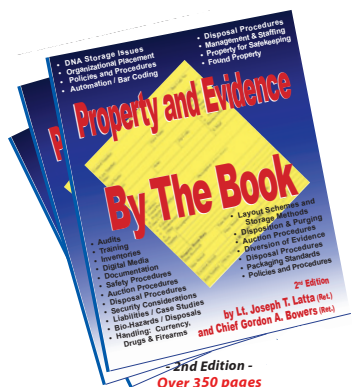
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<https://home.iape.org/evidence-resources/books.html>



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# Why Is It So Difficult to Calculate How Many Property Officers We Need?

By: Joe Latta, Executive Director, IAPE

*This is a big question, isn't it? Unfortunately, that answer can't be produced quantitatively based solely upon inventory and current activity, even if the statistics were available to accurately determine those.*

*You must first understand there are property rooms that are over 100,000 square feet and some of you are working in closets. Thus, comparisons are difficult. The following efficiency factors need to be considered when deciding how many property officers might be needed.*

## Size of Storage Area

### QUESTIONS

1. Does the property officer have to traverse a warehouse that is over 150 feet long 20 times a day?
2. When storing/retrieving property and evidence, does the property officer have to use an elevator or stairs to accomplish the task?
3. Does the property officer have to use equipment such as a fork lift or pallet jack to access evidence?

### COMMENTARY

In large property rooms, often by simply adjusting the layout of the facility, hundreds of hours spent on storage and retrieval could easily be saved.



Storing short-term items such as Found Property and Property for Safekeeping in the front of the evidence room, where it is easily accessible, and storing Homicide and Sexual

Assault evidence on top shelves or in the back of the warehouse could save time by reducing trips. The latter evidence typically must be kept long-term, and doesn't need to be accessed often after adjudication.

## Inventory Levels

### QUESTION

1. Does the size of the inventory hamper the property officer from quickly retrieving evidence?

### COMMENTARY

Inventory levels alone do not prevent a property officer from quickly retrieving evidence. Even property officers with a large inventory can quickly retrieve evidence if it is properly packaged and stored in a logical manner.



## Off-Site or Satellite Storage

### QUESTIONS

1. What is the distance to the off-site location?
2. When it is necessary to store or retrieve at the secondary location, are two people required to go?

### COMMENTARY

Off-site storage locations can significantly increase the time it takes for property room personnel to retrieve items. This should be a consideration when assessing staffing needs.



## Calculating Staff Levels - cont'd.

### Multiple Floors

#### QUESTIONS

1. How many floors is evidence stored on? How are they accessed – only by stairs, by freight elevator, or some other mechanical means?
2. When it is necessary to store or retrieve from an upper level, another floor, or mezzanine, are two people required to go?

#### COMMENTARY



When storing evidence in a three or four story facility, or with mezzanine shelving, the mere vertical movement can make the tasks of storage and retrieval take twice

as long. Consider storing items that are handled less frequently (refer to previous comment on Homicide and Sexual Assault evidence) higher up to minimize the time required to access these.

### Storage and Retrieval of Evidence

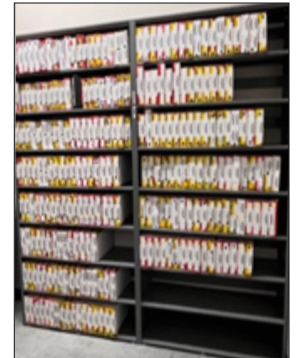
#### QUESTIONS

1. Is property and evidence stored randomly based on wherever it best fits?
2. When retrieving evidence is it necessary for the property officer to spend inordinate amounts of time locating items?
3. Is property and evidence stored in a manner that is intuitive for the user and easy to locate?
4. Is property and evidence stored in a manner that by merely knowing what an item is, it is logical to know where it is stored?

#### COMMENTARY

Frequently, a number of evidence items in some property rooms are stored wherever they fit the best.

Departments that store property and evidence in like containers (envelopes, bags, boxes, etc.) have the ability to increase their efficiency with storage and retrieval ten-fold. Additionally, how and where these like containers are stored can help streamline the handling processes within an evidence room.



### Crime Lab

#### QUESTIONS

1. Does the property officer have to physically transport evidence to the crime lab?
2. What is the distance to the crime lab? How long does it take to get there?
3. Are two people required to take the evidence to the lab?

#### COMMENTARY

Every agency's processes are different. They may mail in evidence via the USPS or another carrier, or have it transported by department personnel, and in some cases it is retrieved by the crime lab during a scheduled run.



Agencies where the crime lab provides a pickup service may save hundreds of hours per year just on this one task.

In many cases, the agency may be at the mercy of their crime lab's requirements for evidence submission. Therefore, those requirements and the time they consume become important points to consider when assessing your staffing needs.

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# Calculating Staff Levels - cont'd.

## Releasing Property and Evidence Back to the Public

### QUESTIONS

1. Must the property and evidence be moved to another part of the facility in order to release it?
2. Can the evidence be released from the property room via a counter?
3. Are the releases on the same level of the building?

### COMMENTARY

Many of the comparisons outlined here are all related to volume of work. If the property room is in the basement, at the back of the building, or in another structure, then employee property officers must traverse the building multiple times a day, taking this amount of time away from their other duties.



## Temporary Lockers

### QUESTIONS

1. When retrieving evidence from the temporary lockers, can the property officer remove items from the back side of the lockers?
2. To retrieve property and evidence, must the property officer unlock multiple locks?
3. Must the property officer go to another section of the building where the lockers are located to retrieve items?

### COMMENTARY

The ideal scenario is for an officer to submit evidence into pass-through lockers mounted into a common wall with the property room, where evidence is removed the following day from the back side by the property officer.



A properly designed locker system would be secured with slam locks (no external locks). Once the locker is closed there is no re-entry via the front of the lockers. Lockers with external locks have to be unlocked and locked every day, wasting the time we don't have.

## Court

### QUESTION

1. Does the property officer have to take evidence to court and remain with it until it is released?



### COMMENTARY

In parts of the country, the property officer must take evidence to court and wait for the case to be called. This means that the property officer is away from their core duties, potentially necessitating additional staff to be utilized in their place to ensure that property room operations can continue without interruption.

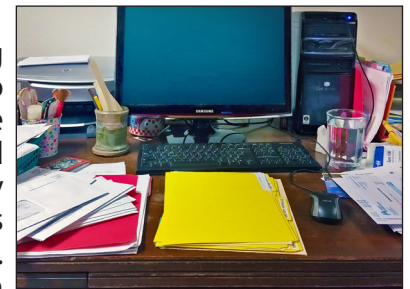
## Submission of Evidence: Manual or Paper System

### QUESTION

1. Is all property and evidence submitted to the property room documented through a paper or manual system?

### COMMENTARY

Whenever submitting employees have to complete multiple labels, tags, and property records by hand, this becomes very time consuming. Additionally, even more time is spent when the property officer must also retype this data into the computer. All of these hours must be considered when staffing needs are being assessed.



*Cont'd. from Previous Page*

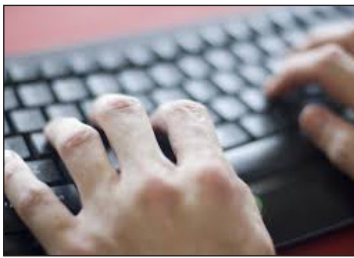
## Calculating Staff Levels - cont'd.

### Submission of Evidence: Automated System

#### QUESTIONS

1. Does the submitting officer fill out tags/labels and a property report that describes the evidence which is later typed into the computer by the property officer?
2. Does the submitting officer do the data entry, affix the barcode label, and submit?

#### COMMENTARY



Anytime a submitting employee has to fill out multiple labels, tags, and property records by hand and then retype the data into the computer, this doubles the time spent on submission.

### Purging Evidence (Review Process)

#### QUESTIONS

1. Does the assigned detective, prosecutor, and/or court routinely send the property room updates about the case with authorization to dispose?
2. Does the computer system send notices to the detective automatically that request the authority to dispose of a case?
3. Is the purging system based on the property officer requesting approval via phone or email to destroy or release?
4. When purge notices are sent to the case officer, are they returned without reminders or in some cases even ignored?

#### COMMENTARY

Some agencies routinely receive purging data from the court, prosecutors, and any other stakeholders that information about the status of a case is available. This is referred to as a PUSH system. Information is pushed to the property room.

The opposite of the PUSH system is the PULL system which requires property room staff to search every case, one by one, through emails, searching court records, making phone calls, etc. This process may consume two, three, or four times the time it takes using a PUSH system.

Support from higher up the chain of command requiring case officers to return the purge notices is essential to ensure that property officers can effectively and efficiently control the inventory in their property rooms.

### Packaging Compliance

#### QUESTIONS

1. When officers package and submit evidence to the property room, are items routinely returned for correction?
2. Does the department have a "right of refusal" that ensures the items are sent back to the officer for correction?

#### COMMENTARY

A right of refusal ensures that officers comply with the packaging guidelines set forth in the packaging manual. Proper packaging ensures the most efficient use of space within the property room and also saves time during the submission process.



### Drug Destruction Process

#### QUESTION

1. When drugs are being prepared for destruction, is the destruction list handwritten, entered in a spreadsheet, or computer-generated?

#### COMMENTARY

A drug destruction list that is generated by a computer system is much faster than a handwritten list or one that is entered into a spreadsheet by hand. A computer-generated drug destruction list also has the added benefit of less chance of human error.

## Calculating Staff Levels - cont'd.

### Gun Destruction Process

#### QUESTION

1. When guns are being prepared for destruction, is the destruction list handwritten, entered in a spreadsheet, or computer-generated?

#### COMMENTARY

A gun destruction list that is generated by a computer system is much faster than a handwritten list or one that is entered into a spreadsheet by hand. A computer-generated gun destruction list also has the added benefit of less chance of human error, particularly with respect to make, model, caliber, and serial number. Errors in transposing serial numbers are high.

### Destruction Documentation

#### QUESTION

1. After item(s) have been properly disposed of, must the property officer search for each record individually and document it as having been destroyed?
2. After the items have been properly disposed of, can the property officer do a global change and document everything all at one time as destroyed?



#### COMMENTARY

Create efficiency by using a computer system that allows for a global change to document everything as destroyed all at one time. This will significantly reduce the amount of time that it takes staff to complete the purging process and associated paperwork.

*Several years ago, I was a presenter at a chiefs conference. During a break, I was speaking with a half dozen chiefs who were asking questions about property and evidence. One of them was downplaying the importance of our profession and asked "Do you know what they do in the property room?" and then he responded, "they put Sh... on the shelf!" With that comment I authored the following list for chiefs.*

*As an example of the workload that may be created, consider the course of a "typical" piece of evidence booked into the property room. The following illustrates the many transactions that could result and are not at all unusual.*

1. Property is removed from temporary lockers and moved to a processing counter.
2. Property is compared to the Property Record for accuracy and logged into the property room.
3. Property is temporarily stored in a secure location for correction (repackage, verify money, check gun serial numbers, weigh drugs, identify owners, etc.).
4. Property requiring lab analysis is pulled from storage, signed out and transported to crime lab.
5. Property requiring analysis is returned, resubmitted and signed back in to the property room.
6. Documentation of final storage location is made on the Property Record form or in the computer.
7. All property is physically placed in the proper storage location.
8. Property is retrieved from the storage location, and documentation is completed when signing it out to a detective for investigative purposes.
9. Property is received back from the detective, and documentation completed to sign it back in.
10. Property is returned to its proper storage location.
11. Property is retrieved from the storage location and signed out for court.
12. Property is signed back in from court, and then returned to its proper storage location, or it is maintained in court and final disposition needs to be verified and documented.
13. Property officers research the case status in property rooms where they are required for disposition.\*
14. Property review forms are generated and sent to investigating officers for purging.
15. Property review forms are returned and filed.
16. Notification call or letter goes out to property owner.
17. Ownership is verified and release forms completed.
18. Property is retrieved from storage and released, or placed in an auction/destruction hold area.
19. Property is retrieved from hold area for auction or destruction.

\* Some agencies have adopted the philosophy that it is the responsibility of the property room to research a case for disposition, while others leave the process up to the investigating or arresting officer. NOTE: Departments that require the property room to do this may also need twice the number of employees, as the research process is the most time-consuming task of the entire property room mission.

**Please see the following page for how our latest professional standards address these staffing issues.**

Cont'd. from Previous Page

## Calculating Staff Levels - cont'd.

### IAPE Professional Standards 2022 V4

#### 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.

*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.*

#### Reasoning Document

Standard 1.3. Number of Personnel

Reasoning: *One of the most difficult challenges in a property room is to control the agency's inventory.*

*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.*

## EVIDENCE CONTROL SYSTEMS, INC.

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Evidence Control Systems, Inc. has been providing property and evidence management consulting services **since 1984** in both the United States and Canada. The staff members of ECS have over 120 years of law enforcement experience combined.

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# Property Room Staffing Versus Other Civilian Assignments: Dispatch Analogy

By: Joe Latta, Executive Director, IAPE

An analogy needs to be made related to staffing a property room that is not always considered. Consider a police department with a staff of three dispatchers on every shift.

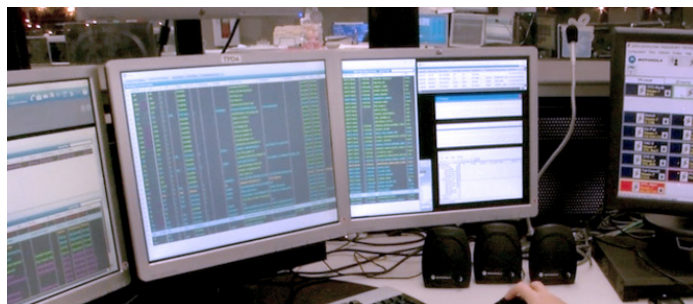
During the shift the workload is based upon “calls for service.” When the dispatcher is ready to go home at the end of the shift, it doesn’t matter what the workload is, since another dispatcher on the oncoming shift replaces each one. When the dispatcher goes home, his or her jobs tasks are complete for the day. If someone calls in sick or is on vacation, we typically backfill so that the position doesn’t go vacant. The following day they start all over, but only on the current workload at that time.

The scenario, however, is quite different with a property room. If a significant amount of evidence (hundreds or items) is seized in a murder case it could take days to catalog and store, along with the normal flow of received evidence.

During this same time, if the assigned personnel aren’t staying on top of purging, destructions, auctions, etc., then the incoming property just stacks up. It might be noted with a case such as this that dozens of employees could be called in on overtime to investigate the crime and book in the hundreds of items.

However, generally there isn’t any help brought in, the property intake doesn’t go away, and it will all still be there tomorrow. Not only will it all greet the property officer the next day, it will have been compounded by additional property brought in overnight. If the property officer falls behind in the property room, it is virtually impossible to get caught up without additional hours and/or more personnel, and this typically doesn’t happen. The scenario is referred to in our training classes as falling “behinder and behinder!”

Continuing the analogy of a dispatch center, it has to be staffed to some sort of a minimum standard. It may be that 911 calls must be answered within three rings. Sometimes the staffing level based



on emergencies may result in slack times for dispatchers, but it must be done to provide an adequate emergency response. Unfortunately, an abundance of property that completely overwhelms a property officer is not considered an “emergency,” so typically there is no additional staffing, and no chance of staying current in the “turnover” of property room storage space.

Shifting to the analogy of a police department handling a homicide, it is not unusual to end up with hundreds of items of evidence being submitted to the property room, sometimes continuously over a period of 24 to 48 hours or more, as the crime scene is processed, and additional investigation continues. It is extremely unlikely that the submitted items will be processed by the end of the property officer’s shift.

The collectors and the submitters of the evidence may work tirelessly to collect and submit the items, often involving significant overtime. The property officers most likely go home at the end of a shift, leaving the overload to be packed into temporary storage lockers, which becomes an overwhelming backlog when the property officer returns for his or her next shift. Adding insult to injury, this is all in addition to the normal workload, which comes in day by day whether or not there has been a homicide!

This author isn’t specifically advocating overtime, but this situation described herein clearly illustrates how major events can put the property room staff significantly behind in their workload – often without leaving them any way of ever catching up.



# CONGRATULATIONS!



to all of our most recently designated  
Certified Property & Evidence Specialists

Olson, Heather	International Falls Police Dept.	Minnesota
Wallis, Karissa	Muskogee Police Dept.	Oklahoma
Mills, Taylor	Muskogee Police Dept.	Oklahoma
Flores, Monica	Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office	Florida
Westfall, Stephen	Umatilla Cty Sheriff's Office	Oregon
Vargas, Veronica	Brawley Police Dept.	California
Horning, Hope	Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office	Florida
Smith, Crystal	Lake Worth Police Dept.	Texas
Collingsworth, Hailey	Houston Forensic Science Center	Texas
Barrientos, Rhianna	Harris County Inst. of Forensic Sciences	Texas
Jarrett, Pamela	San Diego Police Dept.	California
Valdez, Maria	Univ of Texas Police Dept.	Texas
Weimer, Summer	U.S. Secret Service	Washington D.C.
Hill, Randel	Putnam County Sheriff's Office	New York
Hendricks, Troy	Nederland Marshal's Office	Colorado
Devine, Peggy	Nevada Dept. of Public Safety	Nevada
Cobbett, Harlee	Nevada Dept. of Public Safety	Nevada
White, April Jefferson	Parish Sheriff's Office	Louisiana
Skoglund, Kayla	Blaine Police Dept.	Minnesota
Christensen, Melissa	Blaine Police Dept.	Minnesota
Henley, Caitlyn	Missouri State Highway Patrol	Missouri
Junger, Erich	Laurel Park Police Dept.	North Carolina
Hudson, Kathryne	Virginia Dept of Forensic Science	Virginia
McCartney, Jessica	Laurel Police Dept.	Montana
Kinn, Jodi	Laurel Police Dept.	Montana
Dorsey, Chuck	Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office	Georgia
Person, Annatacher	Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office	Georgia
Nyhus, Tessa	City of Eau Claire Police Dept.	Wisconsin
Westlund, Fallon	City of Eau Claire Police Dept.	Wisconsin
Johnston, Shawn	Parsons Police Dept.	Kansas

# CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES

www.iape.org

## CPES - CERTIFIED PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE SPECIALIST

### Requirements

There are 5 requirements that must be met in order to become a Certified Property & Evidence Specialist (CPES):

1. Applicant must have attended and completed the IAPE two-day "Property & Evidence Management Class", or completed the online video class.
2. Applicant must have served in a Property and Evidence function for:
  - a. One year as a full-time assignment **OR**
  - b. A total of 2,080 hours (one year equivalent) as a part time assignment
3. Submit application and testing fee.
4. Achieve a satisfactory grade on the CPES online test.
5. Be a current dues paid member of IAPE and must remain a member during the period of certification.

### Procedures - Steps to apply:

1. Complete the CPES Application.
2. Submit Application and fee by either of these options:
  - a. Fill out and submit online application at [www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org) (certification tab). Follow prompts to pay online. **OR**
  - b. Fill out application and choose Pay by Check option at check out. Mailing address will be on the invoice.

### CPES Online Test

Once your application and testing fee have been received, and your related experience verified, you will be sent an email with login information and the time frame for your Online Certification Test. You will need a computer with access to the internet for 60 minutes. Once completed, you will receive notification of the outcome immediately. Should you be unsuccessful in your first attempt, you will have one more opportunity to take another version of the test, included in your initial fee. After successful completion of your test, your official IAPE Certified Property and Evidence Specialist certificate will arrive within 2 – 3 weeks via USPS mail.

## CCPES - CORPORATE CERTIFIED PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE SPECIALIST

### Requirements

There are 5 requirements that must be met in order to become a CORPORATE Certified Property & Evidence Specialist (CCPES):

1. Applicant must have attended and completed the IAPE two-day "Property & Evidence Management Class", or completed the on-line- video class.
2. Applicant must have served in a Property and Evidence function for:
  - a. One year as a full-time assignment **OR**
  - b. A total of 2,080 hours (one year equivalent) as a part time assignment
3. Submit application and testing fee.
4. Achieve a satisfactory grade on the CCPES online test.
5. Be a current dues paid member of IAPE and must remain a member during the period of certification.

### Procedures - Steps to apply:

1. Complete the CCPES Application.
2. Submit Application and fee by either of these options:
  - a. Fill out and submit online application at [www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org) (certification tab). Follow prompts to pay online. **OR**
  - b. Fill out application and choose Pay by Check option at check out. Mailing address will be on the invoice.

### CCPES Online Test

Once your application and testing fee have been received, and your related experience verified, you will be sent an email with login information and the time frame for your Online Certification Test. You will need a computer with access to the internet for 60 minutes. Once completed, you will receive notification of the outcome immediately. Should you be unsuccessful in your first attempt, you will have one more opportunity to take another version of the test, included in your initial fee. After successful completion of your test, your official IAPE Certified Property and Evidence Specialist certificate will arrive within 2 – 3 weeks via USPS mail.

## RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

### Recertification Requirements

These are the requirements that must be met to become RECERTIFIED (*applicable to CPES and CCPES*)

1. Renewal of IAPE annual membership dues for each of the five years of certification
2. Attendance at another IAPE two-day live or online video class during the five-year term of certification
3. Submission of a Recertification Application with payment of \$100 fee for the recertification by either of these options:
  - a. Fill out application and submit online at [www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org) (Certification Tab) and follow prompts to pay online.
  - b. Fill out application a choose pay by check at check-out. Mailing address will be on the invoice.

**Online Test - NOT REQUIRED** *NOTE: Recertification is for another 5-year period.*

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION for PROPERTY and EVIDENCE, Inc.  
**RECERTIFICATION APPLICATION**  
www.iape.org



**TYPE OF CERTIFICATION REQUESTED**

- Certified Property and Evidence Specialist (CPES) (for Law Enforcement)  
 Corporate Certified Property and Evidence Specialist (CCPES) (for Private Industry)

Applicant's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print legibly

Employer \_\_\_\_\_  Police  Sheriff  Other

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State / Zip

Business Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Required for Online Test

**Attendance at IAPE Property & Evidence Management Class (or On-Line Equivalent)  
within the last 5 years**

Attended Class \_\_\_\_\_  Completed Video Course \_\_\_\_\_  
Month / Year / City Month / Year

Current Dues Paid Member of IAPE  Yes  No If dues are not current, call 1-800-449-4273 to re-apply.

**Recertification Fee**

- CPES Fee: \$100 USD (Law Enforcement)  
 CCPES Fee: \$100 USD (Private Industry)

Enclosed is a check or Money Order made out to IAPE

Please charge to:  MasterCard  Visa  AmEx  Discover

\_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number Expires (Month / Year) Security Code

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail for Payment Receipt: \_\_\_\_\_ **NOTE: E-mail Address Required**

Mail completed application & payment to: 7474 Figueroa Street, Suite 125 • Los Angeles, California 90041  
QUESTIONS? Payment & Billing: 1-800-449-4273 Ext.3 / Re-Certification: 1-800-449-4273 Ext. 4

# CPES RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

CPES initial certification is valid for a period of 5 years. To maintain certification, CPES designees must complete continuing training during the five year period. The IAPE Board of Directors has established the following criteria for recertification:

- Continued dues paid membership in IAPE
- Completion of continuing education through 1 of 2 options:
  1. Attendance of another 2 day "Property & Evidence Management" course during the 5 year period (for a class schedule go to: <http://iape.org/classes/classRegistration.php>)
  2. Completion of On-Line Video Training (equivalent to class attendance) Found at: [http://iape.org/pdfFiles/20081129\\_CPES\\_Online\\_Class\\_Registration\\_Form.pdf](http://iape.org/pdfFiles/20081129_CPES_Online_Class_Registration_Form.pdf)
- Submission of a Recertification Application along with payment (\$100) and proof of completion of required training.

*NOTE: Recertification is for another 5 year period.*

(Recertification application can be found at: <http://www.iapevideo.com/learnmore.php>)

---

Questions: Billing or payment for recertification or classes,  
call IAPE at: 1-800-449-4273

For technical questions regarding the online classes, please contact:  
Kiley Associates at 1-631-628-2823 or e-mail: [bkiley@kileyassociates.com](mailto:bkiley@kileyassociates.com)

## IAPE AVAILABLE TO TALK ABOUT OUR TRAINING

We are always glad to hear from you and respond to whatever questions you may have about any of our training programs, including certification, accreditation, and even our new supervisor's training classes.

It is important to us that we address concerns and issues that affect the day-to-day operations of your property room, and to know that we are meeting your needs.

Feel free to contact us at any time:  
<http://home.iape.org/> • 1.800.449.4273



## Property & Evidence Management Course for Law Enforcement Agencies - 2022

This two-day course provides a unique training opportunity for Law Enforcement Personnel responsible for, or actively involved in, the operation, supervision or management of a Property and Evidence Unit.

*Special attention will be given to:*

---

- DNA Storage / Handling (NIJ / NIST)
  - Accreditation Standards
  - Management Concepts
  - Policies & Procedures
  - Packaging Standards
  - Chain of Custody (Documentation)
  - Automation / Bar Coding
  - Purging and Disposition
  - Auctions / Diversion
  - Destruction Processes
  - Audits / Inventories
  - Design and Layout Criteria
  - Environmental Concerns
  - Space Standards
  - Storage / Shelving
  - Firearm Storage / Handling
  - Narcotics Storage / Handling
  - Currency Protocols
  - Bio-Hazards
  - Case Studies / Liabilities
- 

### • Training Format

The class is an intensive 16 hour classroom-style course designed to maximize learning of sound property room concepts. Extensive PowerPoint and video collections illustrate properly designed facilities and systems.

### • Keeping Up and Staying Ahead

Training has been designed to help recognize and avoid the pitfalls that can lead to court challenges, lawsuits, poor press relations, disciplinary action, termination, and indictments.

### • Instructors

Instructors are recognized experts in the field, with both professional and academic credentials.

### • Certification of Attendance

Students will receive a Certificate of Attendance, in addition to the class materials and valuable knowledge received in the class.

### • Class Composition and Size

Limited-size classes of both sworn and civilian personnel involved in the operation, supervisors, managers, and administrators of the property function. Classes fill up quickly - Sign Up Early!

### • Tuition Fee

Course fee includes tuition, membership, student workbook, CD of forms, and property manuals. Discount tuitions are available to returning members and when additional students from the same agency attend the same class.

### • Transportation and Lodging

Training is usually held at hosting department's training facility or at the listed hotel. Transportation, food, and lodging are the responsibility of each participant.

### • Exchange Ideas

Network with property room professionals from agencies across the United States and Canada.

# IAPE is offering in-person AND online classes...

We are following all CDC protocols and regularly posting class up-to-dates online.

For latest class information, check: <https://home.iape.org/classes.html#all-classes>

If you are in need of immediate training, consider two-day online courses. Visit <https://www.iapevideo.com/cart/list2.php>



## BOLO

### BE ON THE LOOKOUT UPCOMING CLASSES PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

\*  
WAIT LIST

#### 2022

November 16 & 17 - Boston, MA \*  
December 6 & 7 - Burbank, CA  
December 14 & 15 - Meridian, ID

#### 2023

January 24 & 25 - Joplin, MO  
February 14 & 15 - Rustin, LA  
March 20 & 21 - Daytona Beach, FL  
April 11 & 12 - Marysville, WA  
April 18 & 19 - Salem, OR  
May 2 & 3 - Lincoln, NE  
May 15 & 16 - Commerce City, CO  
May 23 & 24 - Allegheny County, PA  
June 14 & 15 - Hurst, TX  
June 27 & 28 - Harris County, TX  
August 7 & 8 - South San Francisco, CA  
September 6 & 7 - High Point, NC  
September 11 & 12 - Massion, OH

## SUPERVISORS

#### 2023

April 13 - Marysville, WA  
May 4 - Lincoln, NE  
May 17 - Commerce City, CO  
September 4 - Massion, OH

Also in the planning stages for 2023 are classes in Las Vegas, NV, Burbank, CA, and Victoria, BC...

Stay tuned!

## ONLINE CLASSES

We also offer the full management course, plus four other modules online.

See Page 3 for details.

## Hotel Reservation Information

- When making reservations, ask the hotel for the *International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc.* participant's special discount rate.
- To be guaranteed a room at the discount rate, make reservations 30 days in advance.
- Training sessions from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily.
- Questions ??? Call (800) 449-IAPE (4273)

## Registration Information

Complete registration form online a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the training session, and pay electronically.

If not paying online, you will be invoiced; remit a check, money order, or purchase order, payable to IAPE Training, and send to the following address:

International Assn. for Property & Evidence, Inc.  
Attn: Training Division  
7474 Figueroa St., Suite 125 • Los Angeles, CA 90041

- Refunds will be made with 14 days notice.
- Substitutions may be made at any time.

## TUITION RATES FOR 2022-2023

\$ 395 Non-Member Rate \*  
\$ 370 Additional Attendee \*  
\$ 345 IAPE Current Member Rate (1st time attending)  
\$ 320 IAPE Current Member Rate (Previously attended)  
\$ 320 IAPE Current Member, Addtl. Attendee

\*(includes IAPE 1 year membership & Evidence Log)

\$65 Annual Membership  
for new members attending classes

Please click here for [IAPE Membership / Registration Form](#)



# MEMBER NEWS !

## Where to Start? Building Out A New P & E Facility

By: Jude Richard, CSI  
Tom Green County Sheriff's Office, Texas

February 2022 was the start of a new and exciting position with the Tom Green County Sheriff's Office. Being hired as the Crime Scene Technician (CSI) brought new challenges. My previous position working CSI for the local police department afforded me the opportunity with basic training to jump into my new position with both feet at the Sheriff's Office; also having a smidge of insight into the Property/Evidence Room workings gave me enough education and knowledge to be effective and to put into action plans the County Sheriff had for making an unused inmate female barracks into a new storage facility for evidence and property.

After my first week, my direct supervisor Lieutenant William Fiveash sat me down and set his vision for the building that was located across the street. The Forensics Specialist I work with (Jessica Stevens) and I decided to walk across the street and put our eyes on this building. Opening the main door to the building, I recall being amazed by all the square footage within the four walls that we had to work with. As the Lieutenant began showing us what and where his vision would look like for the building, I recall his words were driving my visualization of what he was describing.

I remember looking around at the square footage and dreaming about what could be and how my stamp on the footprint could affect the outcome. I then had to remind myself that I was not the person making decisions for the outcome of the building.

When I was told what the budget for completing the new property/evidence room would be, I thought to myself that it was a small budget; the building was a previous inmate facility, and I was limited on height, limited by the square footage, we had two large bays, an old laundry room to house the blood drying cabinet and the main lobby which was previously a guard station to work with. The next step was where to start. Well, where do I start?

The first thing I needed to do was determine what my resources were apart from the budget. Thinking of additional resources we had in the way of County Maintenance, IT, and primary labor sources such as trustees from the county jail – I did not want to think of them as free labor but there it was: free labor. Additionally, we were fortunate enough that a new

county jail was constructed within the past few years with all new equipment and bedding/cots. Most of the cots had been removed from the facility; however, about a third of the metal cots were still bolted into the concrete. All other cots were removed and stored in a county warehouse.

While planning the footprint for the new property room, Fiveash directed Jessica and me to take the IAPE course "Managing Property and Evidence"; this course would prove invaluable.

Creating the plan for shelving and determining what that shelving would look like proved to be an expensive idea. We would need to have the remaining cots removed from the building to give us a cleaner slate.

Then it struck me: we were trying to reduce the items stored and if we created greater storage then we would have more "stuff" to keep track of and account for. It hit me like a metal cot. Why not bring more of the cots back into the facility? The cots are solid metal, which would give us two ready steady shelves above the floor level and we could use plastic bins on the floor in case of flooding. Furthermore, the cots gave us enough stabilized shelving to accommodate cases with multiple items/boxes keeping evidence located together. We would also be able separate major felonies, homicides, and found property.

At the very back of each bay was a shower/toilet area that stuck out like a sore thumb. Lieutenant Fiveash also believed the toilets could be boxed in to create a different type of shelf area. An open doorway led between the two bays with a maintenance area between the two bays. The area was littered with expired pests i.e., crickets, roaches, and beetles.

We contacted Jeremy Hunt who was in charge of the trustees at the county jail and asked him for his support in retrieving additional bunks being stored at the county warehouse and to clean the facility. Jeremy showed up with a truck, trailer, inmates, and bunks; we then saw the trustees working hard to clean the building, new/old shelving taking shape in the bays, and had our blood cabinet moved into the new facility with their help. After the trustees were done with the cleaning, we were able to determine that the facility did not need to be re-painted.



# MEMBER NEWS !

## Building A New Facility - cont'd.

Next came the re-keying of the facility. In my previous life before my career transition to CSI work, I was negotiating contracts for the United States Government but that's a whole other story we don't have time for. What seems to take longer is the acquisition process to hire the only key shop in the area; the county's acquisition process still baffles me. The facility is now re-keyed with only three persons having controlled access.

Then came the plumbing issues with a facility that had been closed and shuttered for about five years. While trying to figure out the plumbing issues, IT began their plan to run new computer cables in a concrete facility to accommodate the computer system. Then came the problem with the outdated fire monitoring system.

The water pipes needed to be re-directed and some areas receiving water needed to have lines disconnected or capped; one day too much pressure, the next not enough. Valves were changed twice and then it was determined the regulator for the facility located in the parking lot was faulty and needed to be replaced.

The fire alarm company thought the original alarm panel that was going off every day was working properly and did not change the panel as initially requested. With the alarm going off daily, County Maintenance was receiving alarms and again had to go through the acquisition process to have the fire alarm panel changed, as it should have been as originally determined.

While we were working on solving some of the aforementioned issues, the Sheriff toured the new/old facility making a positive comment on the progress that had been made. Jessica and I were able to make more progress in three months on things that were not figured out by our predecessors over the previous year when the decision to use the shuttered facility was made.

The tools that are established on the IAPE website and the online course for Evidence and Property Room Management provided invaluable information, direction, and guidance in the establishment of the new facility. The "Resources" section on the website continues to give support to decisions being made in establishing the overall footprint of the property room. Also, in the resources section, additional documents

and professional standards are guiding us to ensure the lessons learned or mistakes of others have become warnings of caution. The online course cutting to lessons learned the hard way by other agencies sits on my mind in not wanting to make those types of mistakes.

The stainless steel toilets have now been removed and the plan is to use that area for disposition storage. It is out of the way and behind a pony wall. Once the order is given to dispose of items, they can be removed from the shelves to a staging/gathering area awaiting removal from the facility and records to be destroyed.

As we were walking back across the street, the Sheriff commented that he wanted to bring the District Attorney's Office to the facility.



*From Left to Right: Sheriff Nick Hanna, Lt. William Fiveash, Forensics Specialist Jessica Stevens, Forensics Specialist Jude Richard, Chief Deputy Roger Looka*

We are now about ready to start using the facility. I am starting to label and number the shelves and bins. I set out with the goal of how to figure out the answer to the question of "Where to start?" At the direction of Lieutenant Fiveash, we began with his vision, creative

thought and collaboration, and most importantly, the IAPE Managing Property course. More than likely, without the course we would have made many mistakes.

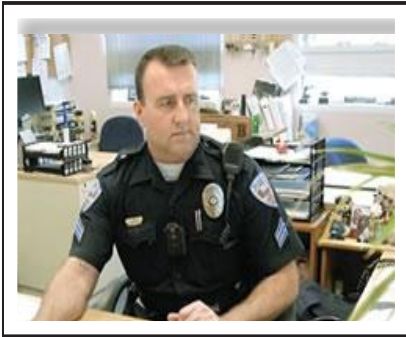
The IAPE course gave us insight into the workings of a property room, pitfalls to avoid, the need for policies and processes, and resources. We could have gone at it alone and that would have given way to some pigheadedness but with experts already in the field, the course saved us from ourselves.

I just want to say that I am happy and proud to work for the Tom Green County Sheriff's Office. Our Sheriff is a Retired Texas Ranger and the Chief Deputy Sheriff is a retired Texas Highway Patrol Lieutenant. My Lieutenant has worked for Tom Green County for 20 years or so. Combined experience, knowledge, and support from those people gave me the confidence and ability to accomplish what the Sheriff's Office is striving toward in establishing a new "Property/Evidence Room".

If you have an evidence room, do yourself and your agency a favor and at least take the online course. As leaders and future leaders, it will give a great insight into the responsibilities of property room staff and the necessity for control of the facility.



# Evidence Management for Supervisors



This one-day Property and Evidence Management training class is tailored specifically for supervisors and managers in the property and evidence room. However, the course was developed for anyone assuming the responsibility of the property and evidence room. The focus is to provide guidance and best practices in order for supervisors and managers to significantly improve and enhance their expertise and overall confidence in managing and maintaining both the evidence room personnel and the overall success of their property room units processes and procedures.

## 2022 - 2023 CLASS SCHEDULE Dates & Locations

**SUPERVISORS** and also  
**POTENTIAL SUPERVISORS!**

**November 18**  
Boston, MA

**April 13**  
Marysville, WA

**May 4**  
Lincoln, NE

**May 17**  
Commerce City, CO

**CHECK ONLINE**  
for all updates and  
additional classes!

**NOTE:** *There is no prerequisite required to attend these classes.*

## KEY BENEFITS & TOPICS (One-Day Class)

- **SUPERVISOR FOCUSED:** Find out how to a successful property room supervisor manages both people and evidence. Interact with classmates to solve problems, deal with a non-productive employees, and more.
- **CRISIS PREVENTION:** Prevent crises before they happen. Learn how to audit and evaluate your operations and systems for continued success.
- **CRISIS MANAGEMENT:** You will learn how to prevent crisis, as well as be given tools and skills to consider when you're in the middle of a crisis.
- **INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS:** Use proper investigative processes in dealing with missing guns, drugs and money (criminal vs administrative clearing of UTL).
- **STAFF MANAGEMENT AND ETHICS:** Learn about personality types, leadership traits, emotional intelligence, and how to deal with performance management issues to improve employee performance.
- **FREE Property & Evidence by the Book - 2nd Edition (electronic version).**

**COST: Members: \$215 / Non-Members: \$265**

## ONLINE REGISTRATION:

<http://home.iape.org/classes.html#supervisor-class>

# IAPE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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[www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org)



**I am applying for IAPE membership - Fee: \$65 USD**

For accounting purposes, our Federal ID # is 88-0296739

**OFFICE USE**

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Member # \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence Log 2022-3**

*Applications submitted January 1st through October 31st will be applied for the current year.  
Applications submitted in November and December will be applied to the following year.*

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Please print legibly**                      first                      middle                      last

Title / Rank \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State / Zip

Residence Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State / Zip

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ *Please send mail to:*

Name of Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  Business  Residence  
**Please print legibly**                      Active IAPE Member

I don't currently know an active IAPE Member. Please accept my application.

Have you previously been a member of IAPE?  No  Yes If "Yes", when? Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

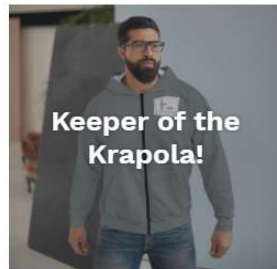
Active Members - (a) The following persons shall be eligible for active membership: (1) Property/evidence officers, technicians, specialists, clerks, or custodians directly assigned to the property/ evidence function, or supervisors having actual supervision of the property/ evidence function, and receiving salaries from any legally constituted national, state, provincial, county, municipal, or other duly constituted law enforcement agency/ jurisdiction including railroad police system, or public police or sheriffs department. Active members retain their active status upon retirement, provided there is no interruption in membership.

Associate Members - (a) Any person not eligible for active membership, but qualified by training and experience in law enforcement activity, or by professional attainments in police science or administration, shall be eligible for associate membership in the association. (b) Associate members shall have all the privileges of active

membership, except for holding office and voting. (c) The following classes of persons are eligible and qualify for associate membership: (1) Personnel employed by a public law enforcement agency. (2) Employees of city, county, state, provincial, and national agencies with technical responsibility for law enforcement related storage of property/evidence. (3) Prosecuting attorneys and their deputies of city, county, state, provincial, territorial, and national governments. (4) Employees of accredited colleges and universities engaged in teaching, research and other phases of criminal justice. (5) Staff or employees of crime institutes, governmental research bureaus, coordinating councils, law enforcement associations, and similar agencies engaged in research involving the property/ evidence storage function. (6) Persons who have made a significant contribution to the field of law enforcement property and evidence. (7) Any retired member of a law enforcement agency.

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If you have a custom design idea or want to see the Krapola logo on a specific item, please let us know.

*We can also include your name, your agency's name, shield, etc.!*

Please send photos, ideas, remarks, along with your name and agency to [amanda@iape.org](mailto:amanda@iape.org)

**Your local Evidence Room techs appreciate your support!**

# Rotation of Personnel

By: Joe Latta, Executive Director, IAPE

Many law enforcement agencies assign sworn personnel to the property room on a relatively short-term basis, such as 12 to 24 months, as a part of a rotation schedule.

Even in those departments where the property room is a full-time assignment staffed by a civilian employee, they often work under a non-specific job classification such as police clerk, public service officer, or community service officer and are subject to regular transfers or rotations.

Rotations can be extremely detrimental to the organization, in that the assignment frequently falls to untrained personnel. In many cases, the employees do not become proficient in the various tasks and duties, nor are they invested in addressing issues that the property room might be facing, producing a “kick the can” mentality. We have asked experienced property officers in our live training classes: “How long does it take to become proficient in all the tasks required for the job?” Overwhelmingly, the responses are three and four years, and frequently they state, “I’m still learning.”

Tasks such as drug and narcotics destruction, auctions, property diversions, and inventories may be done only once or twice a year. How does one

become proficient when someone has never done the task before, and may not do it again?

The same reasoning applies even more so when sworn or commissioned supervisors (sergeants/lieutenants) are responsible for the unit and routinely rotate in and out.

In one recent class, one of the students who has worked in property for over 30 years stated that in her tenure she had worked for no fewer than 25 sergeants. This lack of continuity only creates dysfunction and confusion amongst employees as every year the unit is working under another belief system, personality, and in most cases, the supervisor has little or no experience in property room management. Often, the property officer is training the supervisor!

All efforts should be taken to avoid rotating personnel through the property room as there is no ownership in the unit and therefore correcting past deficiencies may not occur. If rotation is an absolute necessity, it is paramount that inventories be conducted, and locks and keys be changed at the time these rotations occur. In those cases where rotation is practiced, it is advisable that the term be no less than three years.

## IAPE Professional Standards 2022 V4

### 1.4 ROTATION OF PERSONNEL

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

#### *Reasoning Document*

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 change of 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.

# Testifying in Court

By: Kelly O'Donnell, President MAPET  
Minnesota Association of Property & Evidence Technicians

Given enough time as a property and evidence technician, you will most likely be called to take the stand in court to testify about the evidence that you have been babysitting in your vault.

Testifying in court can be a nerve-wracking experience. However, the more prepared you are for when that day comes, the more professional and knowledgeable you will appear to the jury and judge.

Here are some tips to help you PREPARE to testify:

## Understand what is expected of you.

(Better prepared = More confident on the stand)

### • from the Courthouse

- Respond to subpoenas
- Can you meet with the subpoenaing attorney prior to court for a review?
- Go to courthouse and observe another trial
  - o Observe interactions with those testifying and also the attorneys
  - o Learn the layout of the courtroom
    - Where is the jury box?
    - Where will you sit?
    - Where will you walk in?

### • from the Jury

- Tell the Truth
- Be Prepared
- Be Impartial
- Speak Slowly and Clearly
- Make Eye Contact with the JURY
- Look Professional

## Refresh your memory (ahead of time)

- Specifically, **what was your role** in the case:
  - o Did you handle, collect, or package evidence?
  - o Did you enter the items into your evidence management system?
  - o Where do you fit in with the chain of custody? (Transfers, etc.)
  - o Did you write a report?
    - You can bring a report with you, but you must **ask for permission** from the judge before consulting your report/notes

- o What are YOUR credentials?
  - What is your professional experience in this field?
  - Take a peek at your resume or your CV (Curriculum Vitae) to remind yourself

## Know your workplace P & Ps

- Break out the manuals and study up
- Policy vs Procedure

## Appearance

- Dress professionally and respectfully
  - Nonverbal cues, from dress to behavior, play a significant part in how people perceive you
  - Discuss with the prosecuting attorney and your department whether a uniform is necessary
- Be well groomed and keep it simple
  - Treat this like a job interview
- Control your Anxiety. Concentrate on:
  - What makes YOU feel confident
  - Your breathing
  - Conveying your knowledge on the subject matter

## Tips on TESTIFYING in court:

- Swearing In
  - Prior to taking the stand, stand and face the judge:
    - o Raise your right hand, stand up straight
    - o Repeat the oath provided by the courtroom attendant/clerk
    - o Then you can be seated
- Speaking
  - Speak clearly, slowly, and loud enough so that all seated jurors can hear what you have to say
    - o Use the microphone!
  - Respond orally to all questions
    - o Nods and head shakes do not suffice for the record and your answers must be audible for the court reporter to document
  - Avoid any distractions while on the stand
    - o No chewing gum, messing with your face/hair, and no fidgeting.

Continued from Previous Page

## Testifying in Court - cont'd.

- Speaking (cont'd)
  - Remember to **address the jury**. Even though you may be having a conversation with the attorneys, your answers are for the jury to hear and understand.
    - Make EYE CONTACT with the Jury
  - TELL THE TRUTH
    - You are not there to help or hurt the case. The facts should be readily admitted and not exaggerated
  - Know your limits
    - Your testimony is meant to be a question and answer session - not a lecture
    - If you are going to use big words, make sure you can spell them for the reporter!
    - Exceeding your credentials or case knowledge can affect your credibility as a witness
    - This behavior can be perceived as a “know it all” to the jury and can be alienating
- Listening
  - Listen carefully to what is being asked
    - Answer only the questions that are asked
    - PAUSE and think before responding every time
    - If you don't remember something, say that! Don't guess
  - Be polite and courteous to BOTH sides' counsel
  - Keep your cool. It is the defense attorney's job to try to raise doubt - it's nothing personal
    - Remember, the prosecution gets to redirect to help clear up any confusion
- Objections can happen by either side of the courtroom
  - Stop speaking immediately if an “Objection” is made
    - The judge will then decide if you can continue or if counsel must rephrase their question to you
- Making Corrections
  - If asked a question and you give an incorrect answer, you can correct it prior to the next question being asked
  - If another question has already been asked when you recognize your error:
    - Answer the current question and then advise the attorney that you had answered the previous question incorrectly and would like to correct it.
    - If you aren't allowed to correct – it will be cleared up on re-direct or cross examination
- Aftermath
  - Do **NOT** Discuss the Case
    - Public areas are attended by the jury during breaks; keep court talk to yourself
    - If there is a mistrial – you may have to testify again
- Add to your CV
  - This is part of your knowledge and experience!
- Feedback from the prosecution
  - Provide a form for feedback to help you improve

**Resources:** “Courtroom Testimony Techniques Success Instead of Survival” Ron Smith, Ron Smith and Associates, Inc.

## IAPE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

As a member, your feedback, concerns, input and questions are invaluable because you are on the front lines, every day, making decisions and solving problems.

Please feel free to submit questions for our “mailbox” which we will consider for publication in future issues of the Evidence Log.

Send your comments to E-Log Editor, Joe Latta: [jlatta@iape.org](mailto:jlatta@iape.org)

# STAFFING LEVELS: GETTING CAUGHT UP

By: Joe Latta, Executive Director, IAPE

*Since this issue of the Evidence Log is about staffing and we know you believe you need more help, let's look at this another way. If you were not dealing with the 20, 30, and even 40-year old cases, and were to start out fresh tomorrow with a zero inventory, could you handle the workload? More often than not the response is "yes." It's the old stuff that is killing us in the property room. The research of these aged cases completely brings the process to a halt, as you may spend hours on research to purge just one case.*

*We all know that if you were able to purge a large quantity of old cases that are filling your property room,*

*your job would be somewhat less stressful and would get you closer to the one-to-one ratio everyone should be striving for. However, police administrators are more likely to go before the city or county council to request funding for more officers/deputies than for a civilian position. That's just a fact of life.*

*Herein we will attempt to illustrate to your boss that in order for you to control inventory and get it to a manageable level, it may take an influx of additional personnel for a specified time. This will then allow you to get into a position where the workload can be completed at current staffing levels.*

An obvious query is to find out how many additional employees' work hours (or work years) it would take to purge inventory down to that "break even" point.

***"Break even" means an equal amount of evidence is being purged to the amount being submitted.***

With that information, management can determine the time frame and staffing levels necessary to provide sufficient employee-hours to make it happen.

The first thing to do is to evaluate the department's inventory by determining, or estimating, the number of items within the property room. Remember, when purging you are researching cases, not items.

That is the starting point for the two mathematical formulas for determining the number of employee-hours needed to get to the break-even point which would allow effective management of the property room with existing staffing levels.

Formula 1 uses the total number of items in the inventory and a constant (the average number of items per case) to determine the number of cases.

Formula 2 uses the number of cases, an estimated constant (percentage eligible for purging), another estimated constant (amount of time in hours taken per purge), and a variable (number of working hours in an employee-year) to determine how many employee-years of work it would take to purge sufficient cases to reduce inventory to a manageable

level that would allow adequate employee time for sustainable purging.

We will be looking at Formula 1 by using an example of 50,000 items in the inventory to calculate how many employee-years it would take to "catch up" or control the inventory.

**Formula 1: Number of Items Per Case  $I / P = C$**

The total number of Items (I) in the inventory, divided by the Per (P) case average number of items, equals the total number of Cases (C). Based on the author's experience, 2.5 to 3 items per case is acceptable as an estimate for the average items per case, and we will use 2.75 in this example. Filling in the numbers, we get:

50,000 Items total = 18,000 total number of cases (rounded) at 2.75 Items per case.

The following tables provide an incremental example of departments with inventories of:

- 100,000 items = 36,000 cases
- 50,000 items = 18,000 cases
- 10,000 items = 3,600 cases

If you can calculate the number of cases you have, and then estimate the number that may be eligible for review and purging, by using the above formula you may be able to make a better argument that you need some temporary assistance in your property room.

**SEE FOLLOWING CHART**



# STAFFING LEVELS - Cont'd.

Department 100,000 Items					
Items	Cases 2.75 items per case	% Factor To Purge	% To Be Purged	Hours To Purge	Project Years
100,000	36,364	10%	3,636	1,818	0.9
100,000	36,364	20%	7,273	3,636	1.7
100,000	36,364	30%	10,909	5,455	2.6
100,000	36,364	40%	14,545	7,273	3.5
100,000	36,364	50%	18,182	9,091	4.4
100,000	36,364	60%	21,818	10,909	5.2
100,000	36,364	70%	25,455	12,727	6.1
100,000	36,364	80%	29,091	14,545	7.0
100,000	36,364	90%	32,727	16,364	7.9

Department 50,000 Items					
Items	Cases 2.75 items per case	% Factor To Purge	% To Be Purged	Hours To Purge	Project Years
50,000	18,182	10%	1,818	909	0.4
50,000	18,182	40%	7,273	3,636	1.7
50,000	18,182	50%	9,091	4,545	2.2
50,000	18,182	60%	10,909	5,455	2.6
50,000	18,182	70%	12,727	6,364	3.1
50,000	18,182	80%	14,545	7,273	3.5
50,000	18,182	90%	16,364	8,182	3.9

Department 10,000 Items					
Items	Cases 2.75 items per case	% Factor To Purge	% To Be Purged	Hours To Purge	Project Years
10,000	3,636	10%	364	182	0.1
10,000	3,636	20%	727	364	0.2
10,000	3,636	30%	1,091	545	0.3
10,000	3,636	40%	1,455	727	0.3
10,000	3,636	50%	1,818	909	0.4
10,000	3,636	60%	2,182	1,091	0.5
10,000	3,636	70%	2,545	1,273	0.6
10,000	3,636	80%	2,909	1,455	0.7

When armed with the number of employee-years needed to gain control of the property room, then inventory, time, and staffing can be seen as the opposite sides of the same coin.

Additional time can be obtained by a variety of means including: working existing staff on overtime, providing additional full-time or part-time staff (with appropriate background investigations), or by removing any ancillary duties from existing staff to reallocate additional time for purging.

Some agencies have taken advantage of retired employees as another option for additional temporary personnel. For smaller gains in time, you might also consider such things as limiting hours in which the public or officer counter of the property room is open, to allow more focused hours for purging when the property officer is not distracted with releases and other issues at the counter.

One final reminder for police administrators: when the calculation from the above tables illustrates that the property room needs 18 months of help to get caught up, it should be considered as being over and above the regularly scheduled time required using the current staff.

## IAPE Professional Standards 2022 V4 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.

*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.*

### Reasoning Document

Standard 1.3. Number of Personnel

Reasoning: *One of the most difficult challenges in a property room is to control the agency's inventory.*

*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.*



# SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE

## Charges Filed After Evidence Reportedly Found in Disgraced Police Chief's Home

By: WGEM Staff, wgem.com

October 26, 2022

The State of Missouri has filed new charges against the Louisiana, Missouri police chief who was arrested last week, according to court documents.

A probable cause statement shows William Jones, 53, has been charged with tampering with physical evidence in a felony investigation and stealing-controlled substance/meth manufacturing material.

The document states that during a search of Jones' home, the Pike County Sheriff's Office found an evidence bag with a Missouri State Highway Patrol seal containing what was believed to be meth. It also indicates that the Pike County Prosecutor's Office confirmed the bag contained evidence from an active felony court case from the Louisiana Police Department.

The document alleges Jones removed the bag from the evidence room at the Louisiana Police Department.

Jones and his girlfriend, Alexis J. Thone, 23, are facing felony drug charges after one of the woman's brothers was found dead and another of her brothers apparently overdosed on October 18.

Jones had already been charged with second-degree trafficking drugs, a class C felony; possession of a controlled

substance, a class D felony; and tampering with evidence, a class E felony. Thone had been charged with second-degree trafficking drugs, a class C felony; possession of a controlled substance, a class D felony.

Pike County Sheriff Stephen Korte reported October 19 that an off-duty Louisiana police officer called the nonemergency line of Pike County 911 and Central Dispatch about 9:53 p.m. the night before to report a death at a home in the 2300 block of Kentucky Street in Louisiana. The home was that of Jones and his girlfriend.

Responders at the scene reportedly found Gabriel Thone, 24, brother of Thone, dead. An unidentified 21-year-old brother was found to be in respiratory distress. Responders reportedly were able to revive the second brother with naloxone, and he was taken to Pike County Memorial Hospital.

Following an investigation by the Pike County Sheriff's Office, Jones and Alexis Thone were arrested on October 19 during a traffic stop in Louisiana.

[LINK TO STORY HERE](https://www.wgem.com/2022/10/26/charges-filed-after-more-evidence-reportedly-found-disgraced-police-chiefs-home/)

<https://www.wgem.com/2022/10/26/charges-filed-after-more-evidence-reportedly-found-disgraced-police-chiefs-home/>

## Oo-oo-oo dunnit?

### Murder trial in India is halted after monkey steals evidence

An Indian murder trial had to be halted under bizarre circumstances after a monkey stole several key pieces of evidence before the case reached court.

According to the Times of India, the monkey was able to snatch an evidence packet that contained 15 pieces of evidence - including a knife, the alleged murder weapon.

During a pre-trial hearing, Jaipur police had to admit to the court that since the murder in 2016, a monkey snatched the evidence while it was being transported.

- Local reports said a monkey snatched a packet containing 15 pieces of evidence
- The packet held a knife, the alleged murder weapon used in a 2016 killing
- What's more, the constable responsible for looking after the evidence has since retired and passed away, police said when they confessed to the error
- Their confession came after the court ordered them to produce the evidence
- Prosecutors have reacted angrily to the news, suggesting the excuse is unusual





## INVENTORY & PURGING

Dear Joe,

I'm having a problem and just don't know where to turn. It seems as if no one cares about Property and Evidence and I'm running out of steam and enthusiasm and have no help!

I'm the only Property Officer in our department and we have about 120 officers. In the last ten years our town's population has grown by about 20,000 with transplants from around the country. We've added approx. 20 new officers who book in more evidence all the time. With the population growth we are also seeing increases in our crime rate and the amount of evidence submitted. Lots more! Property crimes went up during COVID and in 2022 there is a big uptick in crime.

Any advice for me to get some help?

Thanks,  
Need Help

Dear Need Help,

First, don't think that you are alone with your situation. In fact, it is one of the most common questions that we've received during the last 30 years of our property and evidence classes. You may recall the following questions that I and the other instructors ask during our class:

- How many of you have sufficient personnel in your property room to maintain a one-to-one ratio, i.e., for every item in during the year, you are disposing of one item by the end of the year? Here is an example: If you take in 1,000 items a month and you dispose of 12,000 items by the end of the year, your inventory level would remain the same. (NOTE: Your ability to dispose of items may be controlled by statutory laws, major crimes requiring more evidence to be retained, etc. for longer times) Believe it or not, there are departments who are able to achieve the one-to-one ratio. How do they do it, you ask? The secret is having sufficient staffing; management support; a property and evidence management computer system that works; and barcode technology.
- Does your department have a written purging policy that defines everyone's responsibility in the overall purging process? We cannot over-emphasize the importance of having such a written policy. However, from the feedback in our classes, most departments do not have a well-defined purging policy. Instead, most people report that their system is based upon "that's the way we always have done it." Having a written policy that explains the role and responsibility of all department personnel in the purging of property and evidence is the first step. Then, you need management support from the very top, i.e., a clear message that compliance is required by all.

### Sufficient Staffing

You know that you need additional staffing in the Property and Evidence Room, but how do you get it? Well, one of the first things for you to understand is that 98% of all law enforcement managers, i.e., those who make staffing decisions, have never worked in the property room, and have no idea about what is required for inventory control. From my 31-year career in law enforcement, I can certainly attest to this lack of understanding by police managers. Our training prepared us to catch bad guys for a living. With rare exceptions, we weren't accountants or logistics experts. And it isn't often that you find a police supervisor or manager who had prior warehousing experience. Property and evidence rooms just aren't in the wheelhouse of police managers. So, merely complaining to the Sergeant or Lieutenant that you need additional staffing usually doesn't get any results. Let's look at an approach that may help you.



## INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

### Sufficient Staffing - cont'd.

Imagine that in your community the number of traffic accidents resulting in injury were up 25% over the previous year. Might your Chief or Sheriff assign more staffing to traffic enforcement? What if over the last six months the number of auto burglaries increased 40% in the downtown area? Would management not adjust resources to combat that increase? Suppose that gang violence in the north side of town soared by 35% this year. Wouldn't additional staffing be assigned to address this? So, what is common about each of these scenarios? Numbers!

### Your Boss Needs the Numbers

Funding for law enforcement agency budgets and staffing levels is driven by NUMBERS. Every Chief or Sheriff must propose a budget to your local or state governing body. The elected officials and their staffs look for the numbers that support the budget request. Quite simply, without sufficient data, budget requests are often rejected. However, many law enforcement agencies do not have any internal reporting systems that require important data from the property room. Let's use the inventory level as an example.

Frequently while conducting an audit of a property room, I find that the property officer provides her/his sergeant or first line supervisor with a monthly recap of activity. For example, we took in 500 items and purged 350 items. My next question is to the supervisor, "What do you do with that report?" The usual response is something like, "I file it with the previous reports." Most often there is no annual report on inventory in the property room. Without an annual report of numbers, does your senior administrator even consider whether there has been an increase in the inventory in your property room? Do you collect and report the intake numbers versus the disposition numbers on an annual basis?

### Year-to-Year vs. Longer View

You probably have seen your agency's annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR) in which statistical data is compared to the year before. You see things like: Homicide is up 20% over the previous year, or Rape is up 18% compared to the year before. Due to UCR reporting, law enforcement agencies are used to seeing year-to-year comparisons. However, when it comes to data related to the Property Room, these annual comparisons really don't provide your senior administrators with the data that is needed to make informed decisions and to advocate for you to get the additional assistance that you need. It is only when you can demonstrate the trends and cumulative data over a period of five to ten years does it become clear why you are running out of room, why intake increases are preventing you from having the time needed to purge, why you need additional staffing, why compliance with purging protocols is lacking, etc. The long view of five to ten years helps you to tell the story and enables decision makers to make informed budgetary requests and decisions.

### Presenting Useful Data for Decision Makers

A well-designed computerized Property and Evidence Management System will enable you to provide your Chief or Sheriff with the data that they need to fight to get you the budget that you need. And once you have that data, using a spreadsheet program that produces various types of charts and graphs, you can provide a graphic depiction of the data. On the following pages I provide some examples of how statistical information can be presented in both tables and graphs. The data that you will see is from an actual audit of a department's Property Room. Using the raw numbers for a ten-year period, the tables and charts were created. Here is what you'll see:

- Exhibit A – Table – Numerical data for 10-year period
- Exhibit A – Chart - Inventory Analysis
- Exhibit B – Table - Numerical data for 10-year period
- Exhibit B – Chart – Inventory Growth
- Exhibit C – Table - Numerical data for 10-year period
- Exhibit C – Chart – Purge Rate
- Exhibit D – Table – Numerical data - Firearms Inventory
- Exhibit D – Chart – Firearms Inventory Analysis

Continued from Previous Page



# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

Presenting Useful Data for Decision Makers - cont'd.

- Exhibit E – Table – Numerical data – Firearms Inventory
- Exhibit E – Chart – Firearms – Growth of Inventory
- Exhibit F – Table - Numerical data – Firearms Inventory
- Exhibit F – Chart – Firearms – Purge Rate
- Exhibit G – Table – Numerical data – Drug Inventory
- Exhibit G – Chart – Drugs – Inventory analysis
- Exhibit H – Table – Numerical data - Drug Inventory
- Exhibit H – Chart - Drugs – Inventory analysis
- Exhibit I – Table – Numerical data – Drug Inventory
- Exhibit I – Chart - Drugs – Purge Rate

After each of the charts I have provided some questions that decision makers might ask once you have provided them with the numerical data in tables as well as graphic charts reflecting that data.

Remember, just saying, “Hey boss I need more help” isn’t going to get you the additional assistance that you need. Numerical data that is presented in a meaningful and clear manner will help your Chief or Sheriff to go to the Town/ City/State budget officials and fight for what you need.

**NOTE: Our fictitious department was formed in 2011, and therefore no prior data exists.**

## EXHIBIT A – GENERAL INVENTORY ANALYSIS (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Inventory	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	5,698	6,124	6,621	6,987	7,410	7,459	7,387	8,410	8,887	8,007	8,917	81,907
Out	4,102	3,987	2,987	2,874	3,001	2,874	2,596	2,489	2,140	1,748	1,500	30,298
Difference	1,596	2,137	3,634	4,113	4,409	4,585	4,791	5,921	6,747	6,259	7,417	51,609
Retained	28%	35%	55%	59%	60%	61%	65%	70%	76%	78%	83%	63%
Purged	72%	65%	45%	41%	40%	39%	35%	30%	24%	22%	17%	37%

## EXHIBIT A – GENERAL INVENTORY ANALYSIS



### MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Why are we purging so few items?
2. Do we have sufficient personnel?
3. What other factors are creating the problems?
4. Why has intake gone up by 57%?
5. Why has purging dropped by 63%?

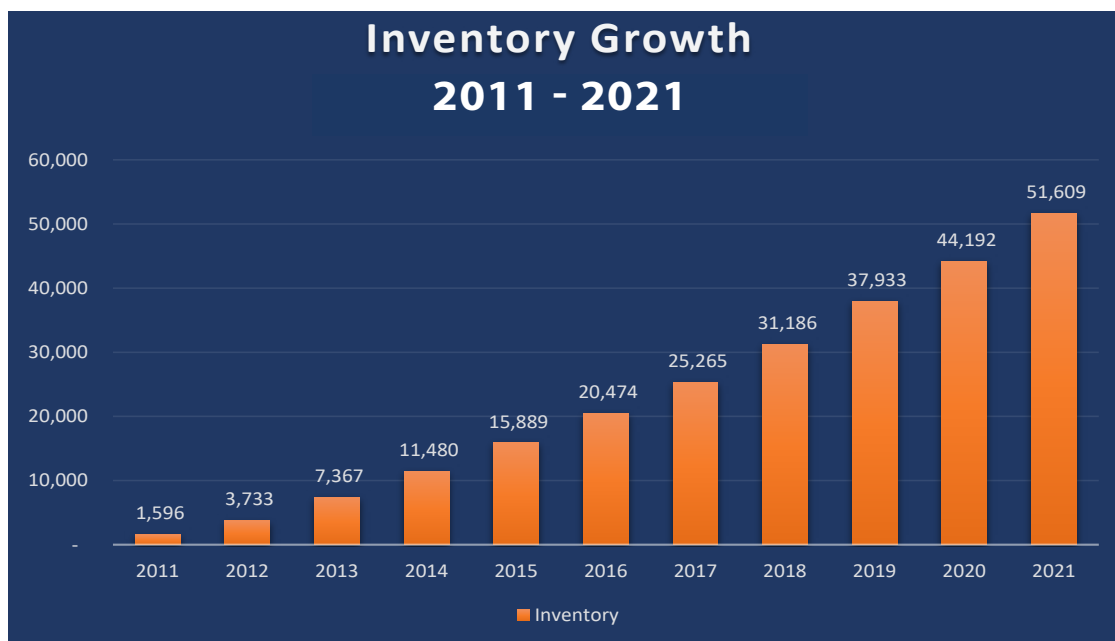


# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

## EXHIBIT B – INVENTORY GROWTH (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Inventory	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	5,698	6,124	6,621	6,987	7,410	7,459	7,387	8,410	8,887	8,007	8,917	81,907
Out	4,102	3,987	2,987	2,874	3,001	2,874	2,596	2,489	2,140	1,748	1,500	30,298
Difference	1,596	2,137	3,634	4,113	4,409	4,585	4,791	5,921	6,747	6,259	7,417	51,609
Retained	28%	35%	55%	59%	60%	61%	65%	70%	76%	78%	83%	63%
Purged	72%	65%	45%	41%	40%	39%	35%	30%	24%	22%	17%	37%

## EXHIBIT B – INVENTORY GROWTH



### MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Why has the inventory grown by 57% in just 10 years? and the growth rate remains the same, when will we be
2. If we don't make changes in our practices, staffing, etc. out of storage space in the Property Room?

## EXHIBIT C – PURGE RATE (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

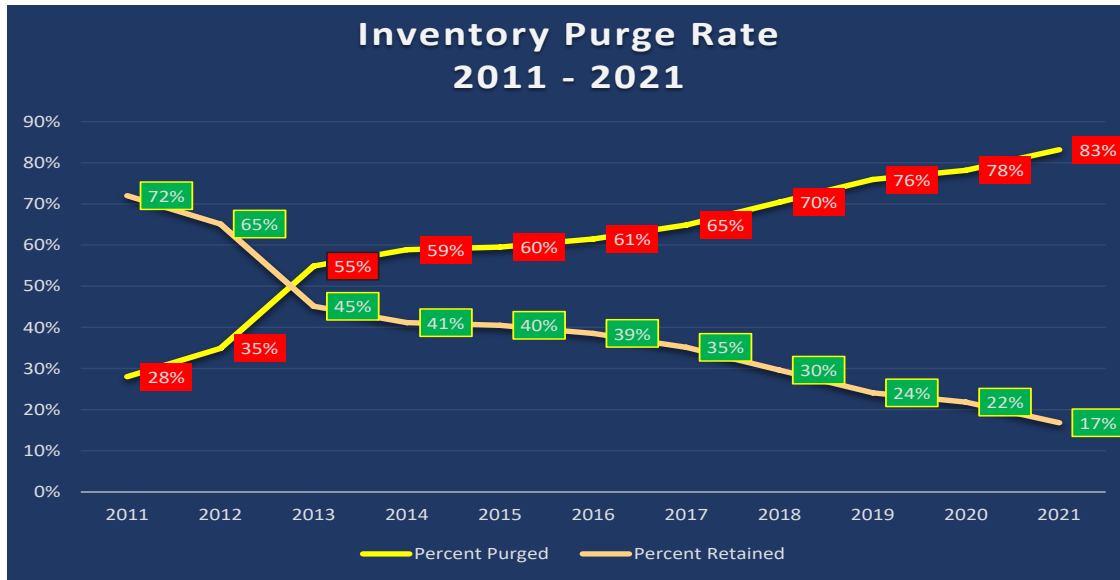
Inventory	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	5,698	6,124	6,621	6,987	7,410	7,459	7,387	8,410	8,887	8,007	8,917	81,907
Out	4,102	3,987	2,987	2,874	3,001	2,874	2,596	2,489	2,140	1,748	1,500	30,298
Difference	1,596	2,137	3,634	4,113	4,409	4,585	4,791	5,921	6,747	6,259	7,417	51,609
Retained	28%	35%	55%	59%	60%	61%	65%	70%	76%	78%	83%	63%
Purged	72%	65%	45%	41%	40%	39%	35%	30%	24%	22%	17%	37%

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# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

## EXHIBIT C – PURGE RATE



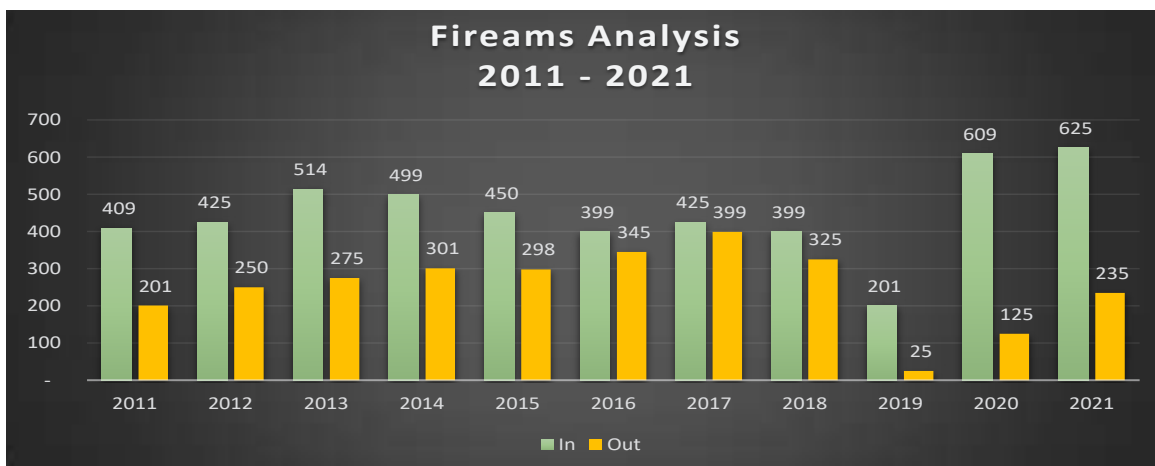
### MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Why has purging continued decreasing for 10 years?
2. Do we have written protocols for purging and specific responsibilities for all personnel involved?
3. Are detectives complying with our requests?

## EXHIBIT D – FIREARMS INVENTORY (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Firearms	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	4,955
Out	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	2,779
Difference	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	2,176
Retained	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	44%
Purged	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	56%

## EXHIBIT D – FIREARMS INVENTORY



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# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

## FIREARMS INVENTORY - cont'd.

### MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

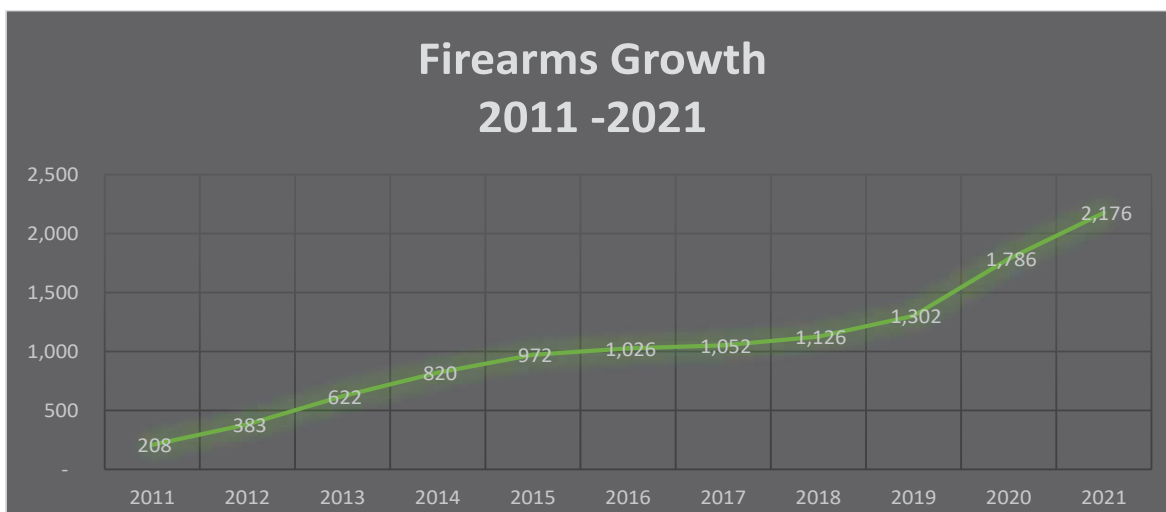
1. Why are the gun intake numbers so high in 2020 and 2021 (210% increase during 2021)?
2. Why were so few guns destroyed in 2019 and 2021

- (COVID, Investigator Staffing Reductions, Property Room staffing shortages, budget cuts?)
3. What happened in 2017 that the purging number were higher than all other years?

### EXHIBIT E – FIREARMS GROWTH (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Firearms	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	4,955
Out	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	2,779
Difference	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	2,176
Retained	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	44%
Purged	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	56%

### EXHIBIT E – FIREARMS GROWTH



### MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Why has the firearm inventory grown by 2,176 items in 10 years? (946%)
  - a. Inadequate purging policies
  - b. Detectives not assisting
  - c. Change in gun laws
  - d. More gun enforcement
  - e. Statutory changes
  - f. Task force seizures
2. What will the gun inventory be in 10 years without corrective measures?
3. Will the present gun room hold 4,200 more guns?



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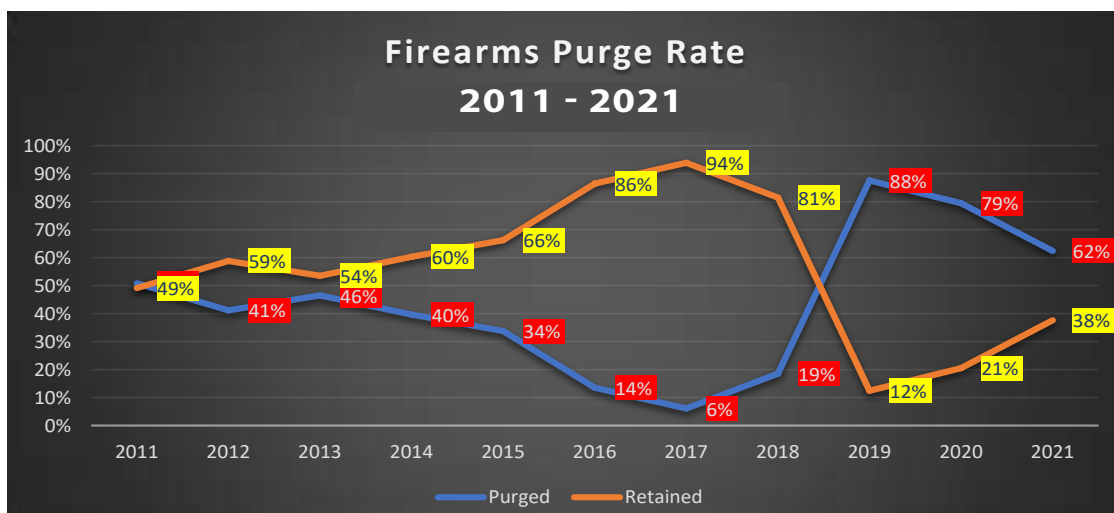


# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

## EXHIBIT F – FIREARMS PURGE RATE (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Firearms	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	4,955
Out	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	2,779
Difference	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	2,176
Retained	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	44%
Purged	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	56%

## EXHIBIT F – FIREARMS PURGE RATE



### MANAGEMENT QUESTION:

1. Why have the purge rates been so sporadic?  
(From 12% to 94%)

- a. Inadequate purging policies?
- b. Detectives not assisting?
- c. Property Room Staffing shortages to accomplish Firearms destruction protocols?

## EXHIBIT G – DRUGS ANALYSIS (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

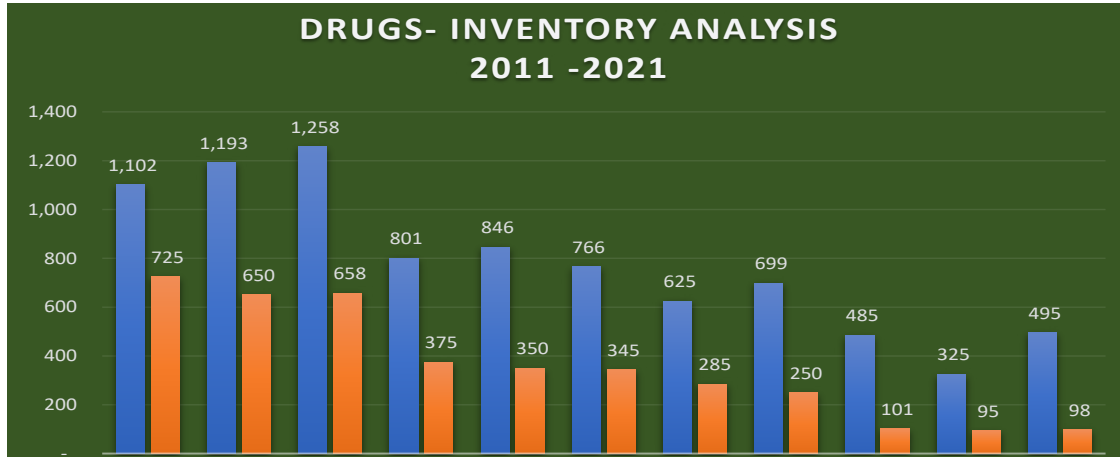
Drugs	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
In	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	4,955
Out	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	2,779
Difference	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	2,176
Retained	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	44%
Purged	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	56%

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# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

## EXHIBIT G – DRUGS ANALYSIS



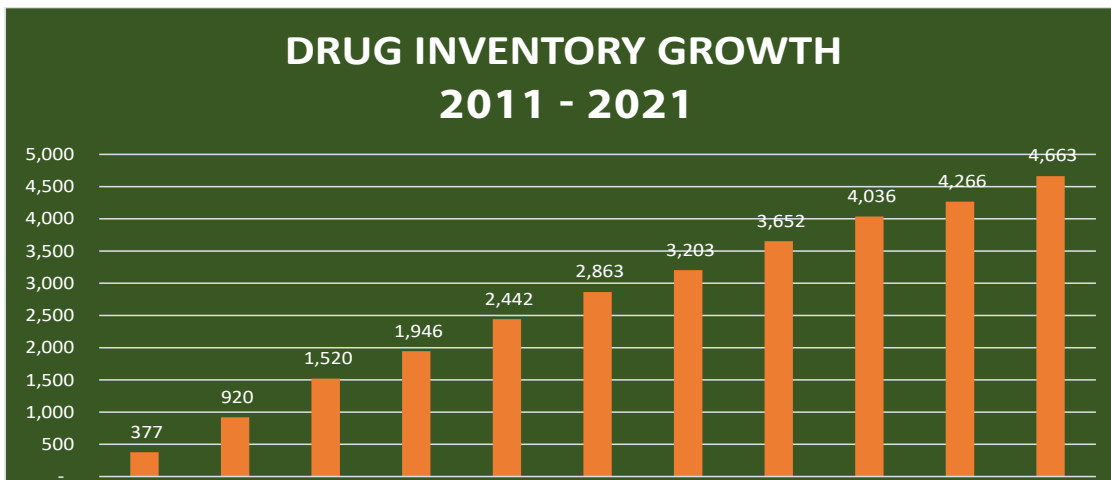
### MANAGEMENT QUESTION:

- Why have the intake numbers dropped so significantly from 2013 - 2020?
  - Change in laws / legalization of some drugs?
  - Fewer street contacts?
  - Officers not making field contact?

## EXHIBIT H – DRUG INVENTORY GROWTH (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)

Drugs	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
<b>In</b>	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	<b>4,955</b>
<b>Out</b>	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	<b>2,779</b>
<b>Difference</b>	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	<b>2,176</b>
<b>Retained</b>	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	<b>44%</b>
<b>Purged</b>	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	<b>56%</b>

## EXHIBIT H – DRUG INVENTORY GROWTH



### MANAGEMENT QUESTION:

- Why has the inventory grown by 4,663 items or 1100%?
  - Fewer staff to research and purge?
  - Cooperation with other department units in purging process?

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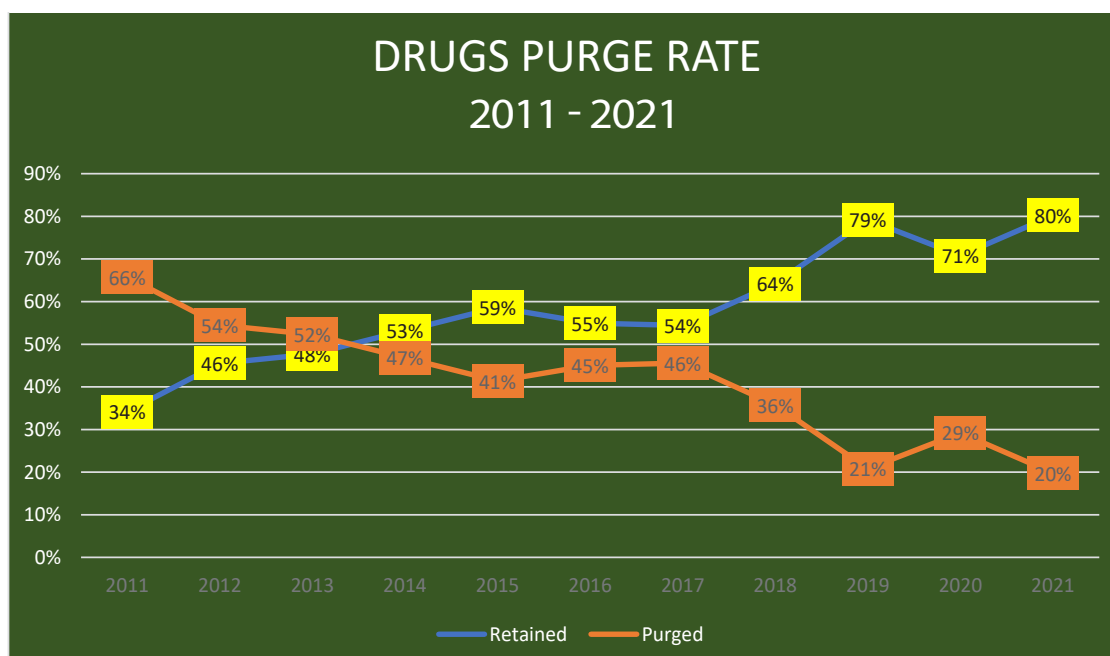


# INVENTORY & PURGING - Cont'd.

**EXHIBIT I – DRUG PURGE RATE (NUMERICAL DATA FOR A 10-YEAR PERIOD)**

Drugs	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Totals
<b>In</b>	409	425	514	499	450	399	425	399	201	609	625	<b>4,955</b>
<b>Out</b>	201	250	275	301	298	345	399	325	25	125	235	<b>2,779</b>
<b>Difference</b>	208	175	239	198	152	54	26	74	176	484	390	<b>2,176</b>
<b>Retained</b>	51%	41%	46%	40%	34%	14%	6%	19%	88%	79%	62%	<b>44%</b>
<b>Purged</b>	49%	59%	54%	60%	66%	86%	94%	81%	12%	21%	38%	<b>56%</b>

**EXHIBIT I – DRUG PURGE RATE**



**MANAGEMENT QUESTION:**

- 1. Why have the purge rates been so sporadic? (From 21% to 66%)
  - a. Inadequate purging policies?
  - b. Detectives not assisting?

## HAVE QUESTIONS? OR SOLUTIONS TO SHARE?!

Submit your inquiries or experiences as they pertain to Property and Evidence Management to:

<http://home.iape.org/pages/contact-us.html>

# IAPE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

## Version 4 - Revised 2022

### STANDARD 1 - STAFFING

To premiere our newly revised and updated standards for 2022, we are including Standard 1 below so you can become familiar with the new formatting.

*The entire document is being distributed to all members via email.*

#### 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.

#### 1.1. 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 agency or assignment 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 by 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 versus 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.

Continued from Previous Page

## 2022 PROFESSIONAL STANDARD 1.0 - STAFFING - cont'd.

### 1.7. PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 1.7.1. Promotional or career 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 1.0. – STAFFING

#### 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.*

#### 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.*

#### 1.3. NUMBER OF PERSONNEL

**REASONING:** *One of the most difficult challenges in a property room is to control the agency's inventory.*

*Continued from Previous Page*

## 2022 PROFESSIONAL STANDARD 1.0 - REASONING - cont'd.

### 1.3. NUMBER OF PERSONNEL - cont'd.

#### REASONING - cont'd.

*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 a 1:1 intake to purging ratio.*

### 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.*

### 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 performing specific tasks such as 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.*

### 1.6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROPERTY OFFICER

**REASONING:** *Personnel in charge of the property room should have a detailed list of responsibilities, tasks, and duties performed by a property officer. These duties may include:*

- *ensure 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*

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## 2022 PROFESSIONAL STANDARD 1.0 - REASONING - cont'd.

### 1.6. RESPONSIBILITIES / DUTIES - cont'd.

- provide for maintenance of the storage facility and equipment
- conduct an inventory of all property and evidence at least annually
- ensure a safe work environment for employees
- store property and evidence in designated storage areas
- ensure adequate security for property room
- limit property room access only to authorized individual(s) and maintain access logs

### 1.7. PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**REASONING:** Advancement for civilian employees within the agency is important to retain best qualified personnel and attract those 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. 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

### 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. 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 training prior to beginning an assignment as a property officer is preferred, personnel should attend the basic training previously described 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

### 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 organization and with training property room personnel, as well as provide valuable resources to assist with solutions as potential problems arise.

### 1.10. ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT

**REASONING:** The property room should be organizationally separate from patrol and investigative functions. Patrol personnel generally seize and submit most property and evidence, while case officers are generally responsible for 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.



# SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE

## Rape Kit Evidence Destroyed

### Police Accused Her of Making Up Her Rape, then Destroyed the Evidence

By Justin Jouvenal, WashingtonPost.com August 2, 2022

Gretchen Van Winkle of White River Junction, Vermont, was transfixed as the hit Netflix series “Unbelievable” played across her TV screen in 2019. The dramatized version of a true story of one woman’s rape and betrayal by police was so similar it could have been hers.

Just like the protagonist, Van Winkle was sexually assaulted in her apartment by a knife-wielding intruder, who bound and gagged her. Van Winkle remembered the same kinds of searing questions lobbed at her, as detectives accused the woman on screen of making up her assault.

“Unbelievable” ends with a measure of justice: A partial DNA match helps identify the victim’s rapist and proves she was telling the truth all along. That moment had eluded Van Winkle for more than two decades.

Van Winkle had already asked Virginia authorities to take a fresh look at her 1995 assault case, and now she pressed for new DNA testing. But any hope of an “Unbelievable”-style ending was soon dashed by a stunning series of calls and texts from a Fairfax County police cold-case detective.

Van Winkle’s rape kit had been destroyed, in what police officials later concluded was a violation of department policy. So had the knife, her bloody bedsheets and the clothes she wore when she was attacked. In fact, police said detectives scoured the property room and found that every bit of physical evidence in her case was gone.

Then the detective wrote in a text that she had discovered more missing evidence in another old case. Van Winkle responded in disbelief: “Wow. This has left me kind of speechless.”

“Me too,” the detective punched out.

The best chance for bringing Van Winkle’s attacker to justice was gone, but the detective’s words put her quest for answers on a new path. How could a department trash evidence in a sexual assault? How many other victims were in her shoes?

What Van Winkle worked to uncover was worse than she had imagined — an accounting by Fairfax County police found that the same detective who investigated her case had marked evidence for destruction in dozens of unsolved felony sexual assault cases. Victims remain unaware.

Why it happened, whether the evidence was improperly destroyed and what impact it had on the cases are still not fully known. Fairfax County police have begun a review of each one to see what evidence remains and what can be salvaged, but they have refused to release many details about the cases or what the reexamination has found so far.

Van Winkle’s case is part of a broader but little-known

problem: Hundreds of rape kits have been destroyed at police departments across the country in recent years.

A top police commander in Fairfax now says the department believes Van Winkle’s account of her sexual assault, and police have apologized to her, but it has brought her little comfort. She decided to speak publicly because she thinks the reckoning within the department is not yet complete.

“What the police did was worse than rape,” Van Winkle said.

### A stranger in the dark

Van Winkle collapsed into her bed after a night out in August 1995.

She had just moved to Vienna, Virginia, after a stint with the Peace Corps in Antigua. At 24, she had a new apartment and a new job, and she had enrolled at the Corcoran school of art in D.C. She said the fresh start was thrilling.

As Van Winkle drifted off to sleep, she heard a rustling. Suddenly, she said, a man was crawling up her bed. The intruder punched her in the face twice and started choking her. She recalls he gave her a gruff warning as he pressed a knife to her throat: “Don’t scream or I’ll kill you.”

The man bound Van Winkle’s hands with her nightgown and stuffed underwear in her mouth.

She said a harrowing sexual assault followed.

She can’t forget small details. Van Winkle can still see the man’s intense, wide-set eyes. She said the blue light that filtered through her bedroom window would be a recurring theme in her paintings for years.

When the man set the knife down, Van Winkle said, she knew she had to act. She said she wriggled her hands free, snatched the blade and cut him. He bolted from the bedroom, and Van Winkle said she followed, slashing at his back.

In the dining room, the man fell to his knees and Van Winkle thrust the blade at him one more time, she recalls. Instead of wounding him, the flimsy kitchen knife snapped on his back. Van Winkle screamed in terror and tried to run, but he tackled her onto her couch.

The man choked Van Winkle before, she said, she managed to push him off.

“I remember distinctly saying, ‘I don’t want to die,’ ” Van Winkle said. “Please don’t kill me. Just leave.”

The man made her promise to tell no one about the attack, before slipping out a sliding door into the night.

Van Winkle was in shock.

She remembers walking into the bathroom and pulling on a robe. She caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror. She recalls telling herself: “This really happened.”

Neighbors called police and the investigation unfolded in a blur.



*Continued from Previous Page*

## **SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE** - cont'd.

### **Rape Kit Evidence Destroyed**

Still in her robe, Van Winkle said, she was whisked to the hospital by officers for a sexual assault exam.

Hospital workers swabbed her for blood and semen. Police said DNA was recovered.

Van Winkle's boyfriend arrived and she was introduced to Fairfax County police detective Cynthia Lundberg. She would investigate the case with her partner, June Boyle.

Lundberg explained how officers had found a banana peel in Van Winkle's trash. Van Winkle said she was chilled and disgusted by the thought that her attacker had apparently snacked while waiting for her to come home.

Lundberg was sympathetic as Van Winkle described what happened, Van Winkle said, adding that she felt a sense of reassurance that two women would handle the investigation. They seemed to take her case seriously.

"I trusted her," Van Winkle said of Lundberg.

#### **'Attacked again'**

Van Winkle said she worked with an artist to develop a sketch of her attacker the next day. A brief about the sexual assault ran in the Washington Times with the drawing. DNA testing was done at some point. Lundberg gave Van Winkle periodic updates on the investigation, but detectives had no solid leads.

Roughly six months after the sexual assault, Van Winkle said, detectives asked her to meet with them one evening. Van Winkle was excited, assuming they had made a breakthrough.

This account of what transpired during the 1996 meeting is based on interviews with Van Winkle and notes that she said she made the day after it happened. Lundberg and Boyle, who have since retired from the department, declined to comment.

Fairfax County police officials said in an interview that Lundberg and Boyle's handling of the meeting was inappropriate, but declined to discuss specific allegations that Van Winkle made.

Van Winkle recalled that Boyle greeted her as the elevator doors opened at police headquarters.

Boyle led Van Winkle to a small, cluttered room to review a book of mug shots. Van Winkle remembers flipping through about a dozen pages, but the pictures were of Black men. Her attacker had olive skin, and she told detectives none of the photos appeared to be him.

Boyle reached over and shut the book, according to Van Winkle, and offered a rejoinder that made her freeze: You're making this up.

Van Winkle recalled blurting out that she wasn't.

A tense, hours-long interrogation followed that Van Winkle described as "being attacked again."

Lundberg and Boyle told Van Winkle the evidence they had found did not support her account of a rape, according to the notes that Van Winkle made. They said a metallurgist found no blood on the knife and doubted it could have broken the way Van Winkle said it did.

They told her the blood spatter on her sofa and floor were consistent with the scene being staged, according to the notes. Van Winkle said in an interview that they accused her and her boyfriend of getting the blood and semen found in the apartment from a hospital, where he was training to be a doctor.

The detectives told her they thought she fabricated the attack, possibly to get out of her lease, according to the notes.

They said that she was not "the first woman to do this" and that she "hadn't planned on it getting this complicated," the notes show. Van Winkle recalls that they asked her what would happen to someone who filed a false police report.

Finally, she said, the detectives asked her to take a polygraph test. Van Winkle agreed, telling them that "she had nothing to hide."

At the time, polygraph tests were sometimes used in the interrogation of sexual assault victims. It is no longer common.

Victims' advocates have long criticized the practice, saying the stress of recounting a rape can produce false signs of deception. The Fairfax County Police Department has discontinued the practice.

Van Winkle recalled being hooked up to the polygraph machine. The examiner asked her name, address and other basic questions, before going over the rape detail by detail. Three tests and roughly two hours later, Van Winkle was finally done.

The detectives told her she had failed.

Lundberg asked her to tell them what really happened, Van Winkle recalled. She went over the rape yet again, but the detectives told her it could not have happened the way she claimed.

"Go home, it's late," the notes show a detective told her.

Van Winkle had spent hours at the police station. Shaken, she rode the elevator down by herself and trudged across an empty parking lot to her car around 1:30 a.m., she said. She never heard from Lundberg or Boyle again.

#### **The worst part**

Van Winkle resolved to move on, but the experience was a raw wound. During the rape, she could fight back, she said, but there was little she could do after her statement was discounted by the police. These were the very people who were supposed to help — whom could she turn to?

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## **SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE** - cont'd. **Rape Kit Evidence Destroyed**

"She was just starting off life and it just derailed her," said Van Winkle's sister, Mieke Lozano. "It changed her in her core and her soul, and everything she did after that was affected by this."

Van Winkle said she developed post-traumatic stress disorder and woke up many nights screaming in terror. Others she spent at an all-night Kinko's copy shop to be around other people. To this day, she checks her closets for intruders when she returns home. Large dogs are her constant companions.

Van Winkle struggled forward, completing art school. She did silk-screens about polygraphs and paintings with shadowy, hovering figures. She married her boyfriend at the time of the attack, Kevin Curtis, and had two children who are now grown. She moved to New England. She got therapy.

By 2014, Van Winkle had earned a master's degree in social work and begun working with women who were victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. She began to revisit her own experience.

She did a raw dramatic reading about her experience titled "The Worst Part." "To not be believed," Van Winkle concluded as the lights on the stage dimmed, "that is the worst of all."

In the years that followed, she was buoyed by the #MeToo movement and began researching rapes that had occurred in the area near her Virginia apartment for leads on her attacker. In the summer of 2019, she was finally ready to call police about reopening the investigation.

### **A reckoning**

A pair of Fairfax County police detectives and a victim advocate visited Van Winkle in New England in September 2019 to begin a fresh look at her case and hear her account of what transpired during the investigation.

Van Winkle and Curtis, who have since divorced, met the detectives at a hotel. Curtis said Van Winkle answered questions for an hour and a half, before the detectives cracked open a binder of photos from the crime scene for both of them to see for the first time.

Curtis, who had only briefly been in the apartment after the attack, said he was struck by how much evidence there had been: Detectives flipped through images of the disheveled bedroom where the assault occurred, the knife, scattered blood and the broken frame of the apartment's sliding door, where the attacker appeared to have entered.

"It was exactly consistent with the story she related," Curtis said.

In the days that followed, Van Winkle watched "Unbelievable" and asked police to retest the DNA recovered in her case. Shortly after the attack, police had used an early, rudimentary version of a DNA test on the genetic material recovered from the scene, but it failed to provide a match,

they said. The newly assigned detectives searched the property room and discovered that genetic material had been destroyed, police said.

Angry, Van Winkle fired off a series of public-records requests.

Van Winkle wanted to know whether Lundberg had ordered evidence destroyed in other cases, so she asked police for the disposition of all the detective's investigations between 1994 and 1997, when Lundberg worked as a sex-crimes detective.

Van Winkle was floored when she got a spreadsheet that showed evidence was destroyed or missing in 47 unsolved cases — roughly half the investigations Lundberg undertook during the period.

Van Winkle then requested an internal affairs investigation of how her rape was handled. The investigation, which concluded earlier this year, found that the destruction of biological evidence in her case was "improper and in violation of department regulations," according to a letter to Van Winkle that summarized the findings.

Fairfax County police said that they attempted to contact Lundberg and Boyle during the internal investigation of Van Winkle's case, but that neither gave a statement.

Maj. Ed O'Carroll of the Fairfax force said that officials still don't know why the detectives accused Van Winkle of fabricating the assault, but that aggressive questioning was a tactic sometimes used at the time to try to ascertain if a victim was making up a story. He said nothing in the case file indicates why Lundberg and Boyle disbelieved Van Winkle.

In an interview, O'Carroll apologized for the way Lundberg and Boyle treated Van Winkle and said that "this case breaks my heart." Some top officials in the department met with Van Winkle. Others, working under a previous chief, sent her a letter saying, "We shared in your frustrations and anger with the handling of the investigation." Last year, the department put out a press release seeking new leads in Van Winkle's case.

O'Carroll said that the department has no reason to believe Van Winkle fabricated the assault and that there was substantial evidence corroborating her account. O'Carroll said Van Winkle "was truthful then and she's truthful today."

"The department let her down then and let her down a second time when her evidence was destroyed," O'Carroll said.

The evidence in Van Winkle's case was destroyed in 2005, shortly after a message went out to staff reminding them to dispose of evidence that was no longer needed, O'Carroll said. The department was running out of space in its property room.

Department policy was then — and is now — to retain evidence in cases that might still be prosecuted, O'Carroll said. In Virginia, there is no statute of limitations on felony sex crimes.

Continued from Previous Page

# SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE - cont'd.

## Rape Kit Evidence Destroyed

At the time, detectives had unilateral authority to dispose of evidence, O'Carroll said. In response to Van Winkle's case, he said, the department has instituted a secondary review of any request to destroy evidence to prevent similar errors.

Fairfax County police have not made public the evidence destruction in Lundberg's cases, and O'Carroll said victims had not been notified. He said the department would decide whether to do so on a case-by-case basis, based on the ongoing review. O'Carroll said the department would do the "right thing."

Department officials declined to release to The Post what the review has uncovered so far, other than to say a handful of cases need to be examined more closely. They said all of the evidence in some cases had been destroyed, while items remained in others. Police said the destruction of evidence in some cases may not have violated department policies.

Police said the majority of those in which evidence was destroyed are felony sex crimes. They denied a public-records request for additional information.

Van Winkle said that lack of transparency is unacceptable.

She wants to see the victims notified in cases in which evidence was destroyed. And she wants a comprehensive review of sex-crimes cases to see if evidence destruction extends beyond Lundberg.

The Post filed a public-records request seeking to find out if 10 other sex-crimes detectives active in the 1990s had destroyed evidence in cases that could still be prosecuted, but the department said it would cost thousands of dollars to fulfill the request because the records are not digitized and each case would have to be examined by hand. The department did agree to look at 33 randomly selected cases from 1995 and said evidence had been improperly destroyed in one unsolved rape case not handled by Lundberg.

### Improper evidence destruction in sex crimes is a wider issue

Maryland's attorney general found in 2020 that state police agencies had destroyed nearly 270 rape kits in the previous

two years, despite a new law requiring they be retained for 20 years. That year, a Minnesota TV station found that hundreds of rape kits had been destroyed in unsolved cases in the state.

A CNN survey in 2018 found that police at dozens of agencies nationwide had trashed 400 rape kits in cases that could have been prosecuted.

In 2015, Harold Medlock, then the police chief in Fayetteville, N.C., held a news conference to announce that his department had discovered it improperly destroyed 333 rape kits over a 13-year period to make space in its evidence room. The department notified each victim and apologized.

Experts say there has not been a comprehensive assessment on the pervasiveness of evidence destruction in sexual assault cases on a national level. The issue has gotten far less attention than the backlog of untested rape kits that has been publicized in recent years.

Medlock said it's likely that evidence destruction in sexual assaults remains hidden in some departments.

"I took a pretty good beating from a lot of my peers," Medlock said. "They chastised me a bit for admitting it publicly when it had not been public. ... There were other departments that had done the same thing and didn't feel the need to acknowledge it."

O'Carroll credited Van Winkle with bringing the issue to light in Fairfax County and potentially preventing it from happening again. Van Winkle was gratified that police were re-examining her case, but said the department needs to do more.

"I would like this police force to somehow be held accountable for messing up this case and other cases, too," Van Winkle said. "If I had the evidence, it would be a whole different story."



### LINK TO STORY HERE

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/08/02/rape-kit-evidence-destruction-police/>



## SUBMIT ARTICLES OF INTEREST

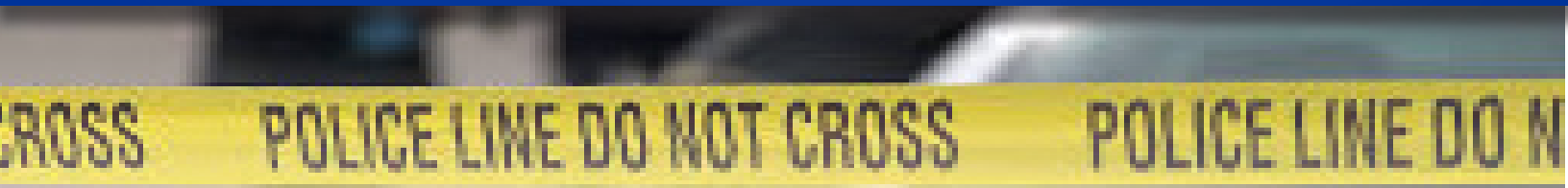
Have you recently come across a news story or an article of interest relating to the property and evidence function?

*We are always looking for relevant stories to share with members. To be considered for publication, submit to:*

**E-Log Editor, Joe Latta: [jlatta@iape.org](mailto:jlatta@iape.org)**

# HEADLINES FROM THE POLICE BLOTTER

All Recent and All Real



**September 30, 2022**

## **Former Minneapolis cop gets 3 years for stealing drugs during illegal searches**

A federal judge sentenced former Minneapolis, Minnesota police Officer Ty Jindra, 29, to more than three years in prison for stealing drugs including oxycodone and methamphetamine from citizens during illegal searches. Prosecutors said Jindra made up reasons to conduct searches so he could steal drugs including oxycodone and methamphetamine...

**September 24, 2022**

## **Former Oregon police technician cleared in case of missing evidence**

Former Ontario, Oregon Police Department Evidence Technician David Worth has been cleared in the investigation into missing evidence from the evidence room. That investigation began in August of 2021, and the investigation is now in the hands of the Oregon Department of Justice.....

**September 21, 2022**

## **Former trooper sentenced for stealing, using heroin on the job**

According to the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, former PSP Corporal Brian Rickard has been sentenced to six to 24 months on house arrest and three years probation for charges related to stealing drugs from the evidence room, ingesting them while on the job, and subsequently using office computers to cover up the theft...

**September 19, 2022**

## **Kentucky State Police detective testifies about missing PCSO money**

An evidentiary hearing in a burglary case became the backdrop for a Kentucky State Police (KSP) detective to publicly testify about the ongoing investigation of money missing from the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office's (PSCO) evidence room.

While on the surface the two cases aren't connected, defense attorneys were concerned that a PCSO investigator working their case might also be a person of interest in the KSP investigation...

**September 9, 2022**

## **Former Shelby County Criminal Court clerk staffer indicted for stolen evidence**

Steven Sharp, a former principal clerk of the Shelby County Criminal Court Clerk's Office was indicted last month for stealing at least \$61,890 in cash from the criminal court clerk's two properties and evidence storage locations...

*Continued from Previous Page*

## HEADLINES FROM THE POLICE BLOTTER - Cont'd.

### September 8, 2022

#### **California sheriff's deputy is accused of falsifying police report to steal firearms**

Contra Costa County authorities arrested California Sheriff's deputy Matthew Buckley, 41, on multiple felony firearms charges. He stole the weapons from a court evidence room.

Buckley is accused of falsifying police reports in order to steal weapons from his own agency. During a search, officers also found methamphetamine in his residence...

### August 11, 2022

#### **Charges against former Auburn detective dismissed**

The criminal case involving former Auburn, Indiana Police Department detective Stacy Sexton was dismissed.

In February 2020, Indiana State Police detectives were requested to investigate two long guns and money amounting to \$938 reported missing from the Auburn Police Department's evidence storage room. At the time of the alleged offenses, Sexton was employed as a detective with the Auburn Police Department. He has since retired from duty...

### July 31, 2022

#### **Houston police chief receives over 800 weapons in gun 'buyback'**

Houston, Texas Police Chief Troy Finner said the city's recent gun 'buyback' event at which residents could exchange their guns for gift cards was a success. Houston mayor Sylvester Turner said that 845 guns were collected at the event, adding that close to \$100,000 in gift cards were given.

Residents of Houston could go through the buyback process with no-questions-asked, although the Houston Police Department would determine if it was stolen or used in a crime, according to the report...

### July 18, 2022

#### **Former Tennessee sheriff's deputy attempted to sell a forfeited vehicle to himself**

Former Tipton County Sheriff's deputy Daniel Jacobs was indicted on three charges this week after he allegedly attempted to sell a vehicle to himself. Jacobs, an evidence custodian for the department, allegedly posted a 2010 Lincoln MKZ to a state auction site, and then arranged to have his friend, Jacob Gardner, purchase the vehicle 34 seconds after it was posted for \$500 using a "Buy Now" option. Jacobs admitted that he "intentionally posted the vehicle for sale so that Gardner could buy it for Jacobs for his personal use"...

**FOR COMPLETE BLOTTER STORIES, VISIT THIS PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE:**

<http://home.iape.org/features/headline-evidence-news/articles-evidence-news.html>

**Affiliate organizations are currently planning their training seminars.  
Please check [www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org) for scheduling updates.**



# **BITS and PIECES**

*This page is designed for members who would like to publicize upcoming property and evidence related events. Please contact us via the website if you have something to include for the future.*

## **PROPERTY ASSOCIATION WEBSITES**

***International Association  
for Property & Evidence***  
[www.iape.org](http://www.iape.org)

***Arizona Association for Property & Evidence***  
[www.azape.org](http://www.azape.org)

***California Association for Property & Evidence***  
[www.cape-inc.us](http://www.cape-inc.us)

***Colorado Association of  
Property and Evidence Technicians***  
[www.capet.wildapricot.org](http://www.capet.wildapricot.org)

***Property & Evidence Association of Florida***  
[www.peaf.net](http://www.peaf.net)

***Illinois Association of  
Property and Evidence Managers***  
[www.iapem.org](http://www.iapem.org)

***Minnesota Association for Property & Evidence***  
[www.mapet.online](http://www.mapet.online)

***Missouri Association of  
Property and Evidence Technicians***  
[www.mape.wildapricot.org](http://www.mape.wildapricot.org)

***North Carolina Association  
of Property and Evidence***  
[www.ncape.net](http://www.ncape.net)

***Texas Association of Property,  
Evidence & Identification Technicians***  
[www.tapeit.net](http://www.tapeit.net)

***Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police***  
[www.vachiefs.org/vapep](http://www.vachiefs.org/vapep)

## **IAPE welcomes**

**Minnesota Association of  
Property and Evidence Technicians**  
[www.mapet.online](http://www.mapet.online)

***and***

**Missouri Association for  
Property and Evidence**  
[www.mape.wildapricot.org](http://www.mape.wildapricot.org)

*as our latest affiliate organizations.*

*Listed events are ones that have been confirmed. To see others in the planning stages, please visit individual websites.*

### **California Association for Property & Evidence ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*When:* April 3 - 7, 2023

*Where:* Orange Coast Hyatt Regency  
Garden Grove, California

*For more info. & details, visit:* [www.cape-inc.us](http://www.cape-inc.us)

### **Property & Evidence Association of Florida**

#### **EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE**

*When:* May 22 -24, 2023

*Where:* The Shores Resort and Spa  
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida

*For more info. & details, visit:* [www.peaf.net](http://www.peaf.net)

**Link to all our affiliates via:**  
<https://home.iape.org/features/affiliates.html>

# IAPE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

*Updated for 2022 and exclusive to IAPE members only.*

## ARRIVING IN YOUR EMAIL IMMINENTLY!

As a member of IAPE you will be receiving our 2022 International Association for Property and Evidence Professional Standards V4 via email any day, if you haven't already!

Your name will be embedded on the document as a watermark – making it exclusively yours. These newly updated standards are now available only to paid IAPE members for use by them and their department, as a benefit of membership.

The latest standards are not to be shared with non-members – similar to how crime lab standards are generally purchased from an accrediting body.

Our goal was to write the revised Professional Standards in a manner that was more conducive to conducting the formal accreditation process. The new format will allow the Accreditation Team to assign by section an entire property room function with a pass, fail, or needs improvement evaluation.

*When you receive the Professional Standards, please read the instruction page closely to better understand the navigation and sharing of the document.*

We are very excited to be able to offer this exclusive perk to our members and look forward to hearing your responses to the content and new formatting.

## CONTACT US:

If you need to get in touch with IAPE or submit materials via the USPS, please the following address:  
**7474 Figueroa Street • Suite 125 • Los Angeles, California 90041**

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