

**Lower Providence Township Police Department
Eagleville, Pennsylvania**

General Order ☒
Special Order ☐
Personnel Order ☐

ORDER NUMBER

608

Subject

Evidence/Property Control

Date of Issue

January 16, 2020

Effective Date

January 16, 2020

Expiration Date

**Until Amended or
Rescinded**

Issued by

Michael Jackson, Chief of Police

Amends

Rescinds

All Previous Orders

Standard Number:

2.7.7 / 3.6.1 / 3.6.3

Distribution

- 1. General Order Manuals**
- 2. Records Manual**
- 3. Reading Verification to all Personnel**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish guidelines for maintaining the integrity of the chain of custody of evidence and/or recovered property.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Lower Providence Township Police Department to ensure that evidence and/or recovered property in its custody is properly secured, stored, and readily retrievable. Additionally, any changes in the custody of the evidence and/or recovered property are properly and fully documented.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Chain of Evidence: The continuity of the custody and control of evidence and/or recovered property, from the time of original collection to final disposition, which may be introduced in a judicial proceeding.
- B. Evidence: Any substance or material found or recovered in connection with a criminal investigation.
- C. Property: Items whose owner cannot be determined or other items of value that are held by the department until appropriate to return to its rightful owner.
- D. Impounding Officer: The member of this department who initially receives the evidence and initiates the chain of custody.
- E. Evidence Custodian: Department members accountable for controlling and maintaining all evidence and/or recovered property accepted by or stored in the department's evidence room.

- F. Evidence Room: Facilities used by this department to securely store evidence and/or recovered property.
- G. Temporary Evidence Room: Secure room with limited access used for the submission and processing of evidence and/or recovered property.
- H. Temporary Evidence Lockers: Secure lockers in the Temporary Evidence Room for the temporary storage of evidence and/or recovered property.
- I. Evidence Annex: Additional facility used by this department to store items too large or bulky or otherwise inappropriate for the Evidence Room and evidence from older cases requiring long-term storage.
- J. Bicycle Storage Room: Separate secured room for the storage of bicycles located in the annex garage on the Township building property.
- K. Property Record: Form on which evidence and/or recovered property is inventoried and chain of custody is documented.
- L. Property Management System: Computer program that keeps the location and status of all evidence / property.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Receipt of Evidence and/or Recovered Property
 - 1. Any member who seizes evidence or recovers property shall make an inventory of the evidence and/or recovered property at the location it was seized or recovered.
 - 2. All evidence and/or recovered property will be placed into temporary evidence storage as soon as possible, but in no case shall the member hold the evidence past their tour of duty.
 - 3. Members will complete the appropriate police reports in the department's report management system as soon as possible and include the circumstances by which seized evidence or recovered property came into the department's possession. Documentation will include the following identifiers:
 - a. The description, make, model, and identifying number (serial number or other unique number).
 - b. Incident Report number and date
 - c. Source (from whom and/or exact location obtained).
 - d. Reporting Officer: name of member primarily responsible for seizing or receiving the item(s).
 - e. Date and time of seizure.
 - f. If property is relinquished to another officer the name of member/person taking control of the evidence and/or property, along with the purpose, date and time relinquished.
 - g. If evidence and/or recovered property is seized pursuant to a search warrant or a consent search, identifiers a, b, c, d, e, and f will be included on a Pennsylvania Search Warrant Receipt/ Inventory of Seized Property Form and a copy left with the person from whom the property was seized or at the location from which it was seized.
 - 4. Any and all items containing blood, semen or other bodily fluids shall be air-dried out of direct sunlight before storage. These shall then be stored in paper bags (never plastic), which shall be sealed with evidence tape and staples, if appropriate.
 - 5. Evidence of a hazardous nature shall be appropriately packaged and stored to limit exposure and danger to all personnel. Such substances include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Items that may have been exposed to, or contaminated by, communicable diseases.
 - b. Hazardous chemicals or waste products.
 - c. Explosives or highly combustible products.
 - d. Where appropriate, the Evidence Custodian will make arrangements and assume responsibility for storage and control of such substances outside the Evidence Room. Also, if appropriate, the Evidence Custodian may document

such material and then may destroy all but a representative portion.

B. Evidence Storage

1. All evidence and/or recovered property must be accompanied by a Property Record.
2. Evidence and/or recovered property shall be submitted as follows:
 - a. The tagged and/or bagged and marked item may be directly submitted to an Evidence Custodian. Items will be separated according to type and the appropriate Property Record must be completed and submitted.
 - 1) Currency: All currency will be packaged separately from other evidence and/or recovered property.
 - (a) Denominations will be separately accounted for and totaled on the submitted report.
 - (b) The impounding officer shall place the currency in an envelope. The envelope should be left unsealed.
 - (c) When received, the Evidence Custodian will count the money and have the count verified by another detective. The envelope will then be sealed. The Evidence Custodian, as well as the witnessing detective will sign the envelope.
 - 2) Guns: All guns will be packaged separately from other evidence and/or recovered property.
 - (a) The appropriate block will be completed:
 - i) Evidence
 - ii) Found
 - iii) Recovered
 - (b) The following information should be documented, if known:
 - i) Make
 - ii) Model
 - iii) Serial Number
 - iv) General Description (i.e. caliber, gauge, barrel length)
 - (c) Gun color should be listed.

Note: This should be the intended color of the gun (if determinable) and not its current condition such as rusted or pitted. These descriptive terms should be included in the "description" section.
 - 3) Drugs: All drugs will be packaged separately from other evidence and/or recovered property. The following information will be documented:
 - (a) Description and name of the drug(s).
 - (b) Description of the container the drugs are in, if any.
 - (c) Number of items (pills, vials, etc)
 - (d) If known, the verified name of the drug(s) should be included in the "description."
 - 4) Drug Paraphernalia: All drug paraphernalia will be packaged separately from other evidence and/or recovered property. The following information will be documented:
 - (a) Description of paraphernalia
 - b. Regardless of the type of evidence and/or recovered property being submitted, the following blocks on the Property Record will be completed as follows:
 - 1) Type of Property: Evidence, Found or Recovered.
 - 2) Incident Report number - Appropriate Incident Report number associated with the evidence and/or recovered property.
 - 3) The block marked "For Official Use Only" shall be left blank to be used by the Evidence Custodian to affix the bar code label
 - 4) Found/Recovered From Name and/or Location
 - 5) Date an time in police custody
 - 6) Quantity.
 - 7) Description of property
 - 8) Relinquished by (From): Name of member/person turning over control of the

evidence and/or property.

9) Received by (To): Name of Evidence Custodian taking control of the evidence and/or recovered property, along with the purpose, date and time relinquished.

- c. The submission of more than one Property Record for evidence and/or recovered property from a single case may be required depending on the number of items.
3. Evidence and/or recovered property can be submitted at any time, whether or not the Evidence Custodian is available. If an Evidence Custodian is not available the following procedure will be followed:
 - a. All paperwork must be completed and submitted with the evidence and/or recovered property as previously described.
 - b. A supply of Property Records forms are available in the Evidence Processing Room and in the Patrol Equipment Room. The impounding officer who is leaving the evidence for storage shall ensure that all items are tagged, bagged, or otherwise marked as indicated above.
 - c. Inside the Evidence Processing Room the evidence and/or recovered property shall be placed into a temporary evidence locker.
 - d. The locker door shall be locked after putting evidence and/or recovered property in the locker.
 - e. If an item to be submitted is perishable, such as a rape kit or biological fluids, it should be placed in the refrigerator portion of the Temporary Evidence Locker unit.
 - f. Care should be taken that evidence and/or recovered property is not left that is hazardous. For example, hypodermic needles should only be stored in appropriate containers and bio-hazard material, such as blood soaked clothing, should not be placed there at all. The Detective Sergeant or Evidence Custodian should be contacted for difficult or unusual circumstances such as these.
4. The Detective Sergeant or an Evidence Custodian will be contacted for evidence and/or recovered property requiring added security, to include large amounts of money, very valuable jewelry or large amounts of dangerous drugs which needs to be additionally secured within the Evidence Room in a locked cabinet or safe.

C. Bicycles

1. Whenever bicycles are recovered they will be secured by lock to the bicycle rack located in the garage on the township property. A message will be left for the Detective Sergeant or Evidence Custodian informing them that a bicycle has been recovered.
2. A metal bar is affixed to the floor outside the Bicycle Storage Room with chains and padlocks (unlocked). This is for the temporary storage of these items. Bicycles should be placed outside the Bicycle Storage Room and be affixed to one of the chains, using the padlock to secure the chain closed.
3. All documentation required for any other evidence submission shall be completed when a bicycle is recovered and the Property Record will be placed into the bin in the Evidence Processing Room.
4. No item of evidence, including a bicycle will be accepted unless a police report has been written.

D. Evidence Removal

1. The computerized Property Management System will be utilized to document all transfers of property. A current Property Record will be provided to officers where required.
2. When evidence and/or recovered property is removed from the Evidence Room, the Evidence Custodian will make an updated entry into the Property Management System with the following information:
 - a. Relinquished by
 - b. Received by
 - 1) Date and time
 - 2) Reason for removal, i.e.

- (a) Court
 - (b) Send to Lab
 - (c) Other appropriate reasons
 - 3. Members who assume custody of evidence and/or recovered property from the Evidence Room bear full responsibility for ensuring its security, proper storage and maintenance, and for the ready retrieval of such evidence upon demand.
 - 4. When the evidence and/or recovered property is returned, the Property Management System will be completed with the following information by the Evidence Custodian:
 - a. Date and time
 - b. Name of member received from
 - 5. If a member checks evidence and/or recovered property out and then returns it to its owner or it is not going to be returned to the Evidence Room, the appropriate section of the Property Record shall be completed and a supplemental report must be written detailing the disposition of the item(s).
 - a. Evidence can only be disposed of in accordance with General Order 615, "Destruction of Evidence".
 - 6. If evidence is to be returned and an Evidence Custodian is not available, the following procedure will apply:
 - a. the evidence shall be placed into the Temporary Evidence Storage Locker and a supplemental report shall be prepared to reflect the date and time that the evidence was secured
- E. Notification of Recovered Property
- 1. Recovered Property will be disposed of as follows:
 - a. Members will notify owners of recovered property when proper identification has been established.
 - 1) Owners will be required to sign the Property Form in the Property Returned to Owner section verifying receipt of recovered property.
 - b. The Recovering/Impounding Officer will undertake an effort to identify and notify the owner(s) of the recovered property by searching department records for similar reported incidents, and document same.
 - c. If the property has been secured in the Evidence Room or a Temporary Evidence locker the owner will be advised to contact the Evidence Custodian during their working hours to make arrangements to retrieve the property.
 - d. Property, other than guns, drugs, and other contraband, will be disposed of when the owner cannot be determined or located despite reasonable efforts to do so, and at least two years have elapsed.

Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson
Chief of Police