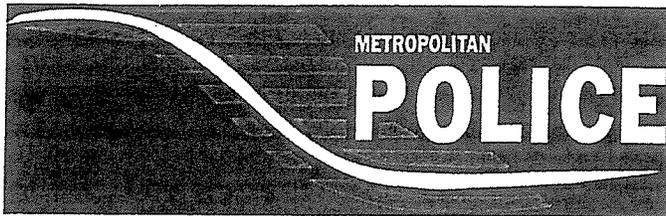


STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Title
Mobile Evidence Control Unit
Property Retrieval Procedures

Series / Number
SOP-ECB-03-04

Issue Date
April 29, 2003

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I. PURPOSE:

To streamline the method in which property is transferred from the Patrol Units to the Evidence Control Branch (ECB), standards of care are defined and handling procedures are set forth. These standards and procedures establish a methodology that ensures efficiency while maintaining systematic security and integrity of all items in custody of the department. This plan will be effective immediately.

II. SCOPE:

This policy applies to the receipt of any/all property by any member of the Evidence Control Branch. All members assigned to Evidence Control Branch and members that hold Property Clerk positions shall familiarize themselves with the contents of the procedures set forth and comply with them at all times.

III. DEFINITIONS:

The definitions shall be used as a general guide. Common sense and operating in good faith with a view towards efficiency and integrity shall prevail. In the event that a member has any question or doubt about an event or item, and a clear understanding is not possible, then an ECB Supervisor shall be notified and the final decision made by them strictly adhered to.

- Manifest - A list or description of items to be given to the members of the Mobile Evidence Unit by the ECB Supervisor on a daily basis that is comprised of the complete list of property that is ready for pick-up.
- Discrepancy – Any item, description, faulty form, or missing or incorrect information that would inhibit the ability to effectively process any item, or raise reasonable doubt as to the integrity of any ECB member or the Evidence Control Branch as a whole. It is expected that under most circumstances, the team members, in conjunction with the element

property officer, most errors and minor variations can and will be corrected during the pick –up process.

IV. PROCEDURES:

Preparation: Prior to departing for the element(s) scheduled for pick-up, each team shall prepare ahead of time in every reasonable manner so as to minimize any chance for circumstances that would compromise the efficiency and integrity of the process. These preparations are inclusive of, but not limited to, the following procedures.

- The District Property Officer will email to the Evidence Control Branch Supervisor a list of that districts property that is completely processed and ready for relocation and storage at Evidence Control Branch by the end of that shifts tour of duty. If the District Property Clerks do not have any property completely processed and ready for pick-up they *will* email the Evidence Control Branch Supervisor by the end of their tour of duty and inform the supervisor of their pick-up status.
- The Mobile Evidence Unit Supervisor will email each perspective Patrol District Property Clerk with a date and time of when the Mobile Evidence Unit will respond to collect the items they have ready and on hand.
- The District Property Clerk will assist the Mobile Evidence Unit with access into the property office, as well as, processing any property that is currently ready for pick-up.
- The Mobile Evidence Unit will obtain all equipment necessary for receiving, securing and transporting items of evidence. If necessary equipment isn't available, thereby preventing the property from being picked-up, an official of ECB shall be notified so that arrangements for obtaining the equipment and property can be made.

Arrival at the Element: Upon arrival at the element scheduled for pick-up, each team shall ensure that the vehicle is parked in a secure location and one that will not require returning to the vehicle or other interruptions during the pick-up process.

- Each team shall respond to the element property office together and review the intake sheet prepared by the element property officer for completeness. No team member shall depart company from the other team member during the review process except under exigent circumstances. Any departure of separation shall be noted on the Pick-up Manifest with the reason.

- Advise the District Property Officer to remain in the property office at all times during the property pick-up.
- All items should be prepared in an orderly fashion by the Element Property Officer prior to the arrival of the team. If the items are not prepared in an orderly fashion, then it shall be noted by the team and review of the items will continue with the property officer finding and displaying items to the team as they are requested.
- All items shall be inspected for completeness, security of packaging, discrepancies, necessary forms and legitimate descriptions. (Example: an item described as a greenish weed-like substance, but is actually white rocks is unacceptable; an item described as a greenish weed-like substance, but appears to be brownish would be acceptable). All envelopes, bags, heat seals, etc. must be sealed and properly marked before they will be accepted.
- Any item that appears unacceptable shall be left with the District Property Officer for immediate corrections. If it cannot be immediately corrected then it shall be noted on the manifest along with a completed discrepancy sheet with the signature of the Mobile Evidence Technician and the District Property Officer. A copy of the discrepancy sheet will be left at the district for the official who is in charge of the property office. In addition the District Property Officer shall give an estimated date of readiness when ECB member can return to pick-up that piece of property.
- If at any time, it is determined that the District Property Officer at the originating element is severely unprepared, uncooperative or that the property to be picked up is in serious question an official of ECB shall be immediately contacted and a decision as to whether to leave the property shall be made.

Processing at the Warehouse: Upon arrival at the warehouse, the Mobile Evidence Technicians shall immediately unload the property from their trucks and position the items on the conveyer belt to place the items in the appropriate shelving/filing locations.

- At no time shall property items be left unattended or in undetermined locations awaiting proper placement.
- Once all of the items are stored properly the Mobile Evidence Technician shall respond to an available computer terminal and begin the transfer of property from PCB to the specific warehouse location where each piece of property has been placed.

- All errors and missing information on any single item shall be rectified prior to processing the next item. If the team cannot correct an item then an ECB Official shall be notified and shall attempt to rectify the error. If the error cannot be corrected due to reasons caused by the originating element, then the Property Officer shall be contacted by phone in an attempt to correct the error. Only after every reasonable effort has been made to correct the error shall the item be warehoused and a letter shall be forwarded to the originating element for correction with a return date of seven (7) days.
- Upon completion of the transferring of property, both physically and electronically, all PD 81s shall be turned into the ECB office for filing.

V. SUPERVISORS:

The Mobile Evidence Supervisor shall retrieve the emails daily from the District Property Officers and send responding emails to each individual element with a scheduled date and time for pick-up by the Mobile Evidence Unit.

- In the event that a unit level property office is not ready for a property pick-up, or if the unit level office is experiencing problems preparing property for retrieval, an ECB Official shall contact the member(s) of that office to ascertain the problem and assist in reaching a solution.
- The Evidence Control Supervisor shall make every attempt to assist and rectify problems with the property and/or property pick-up process as soon as possible.
- Element Officials shall be notified in the event of a substantial problem, or if resolving the discrepancy will be more effectively handled by that units official. If a discrepancy letter is sent to an outside element, the Warehouse Official shall be responsible for tracking the outcome.

VI. RIDE AND REVIEW PROGRAM:

The Mobile Evidence Official shall, on a weekly basis ride with a Mobile Evidence Team on a property pick-up to assist and observe the property pick-up process for efficiency, integrity and overall effectiveness.

- A monthly after action report shall be submitted through channels, to the manager of the Evidence Control Division, noting the discrepancies, problems and suggestions for overall improvements.
- The Evidence Control Division Lieutenant and Captain shall perform the same ride and review function on a bi – yearly basis.

Our self-review and improvement of services is an on-going process and this step is a major part of maintaining outstanding performance.



Keith L. Williams
Captain/Manager