

City of Virginia Beach Police Department

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide



A Guide for Department Personnel

Guidelines for the handling of property and evidence

This Field Guide is Prepared and Updated by the Virginia Beach Police Department Forensic Services Unit and Property and Evidence Unit,

Under the Approval of the Police Chief _____

Paul W. Neudig

Table of Contents

Introduction 7

Contact Numbers 7

SECTION I: CRIME SCENE SECURITY AND SEARCHES

Securing the Crime Scene 8

Crime Scene Searches 9

Preparing to Search 9

Search Methods 9

SECTION II: PACKAGING AND SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Submission of Evidence to the Property & Evidence Unit..... 10

First Precinct and Detective Bureau 10

Second, Third and Fourth Precincts 11

Special Investigations 13

Forensic Services Unit 14

Special Operations..... 14

Animal Control 15

General Evidence Guidelines 15

Property vs. Evidence 16

Recovered Stolen Property (Pawn Shop)..... 16

Recovered Stolen Property (Auction Company) 16

Firearms and Related Evidence 17

Firearms 17

Collection 17

Packaging of Firearms 17

Paperwork..... 18

Lab Requests..... 19

Firearms as Property..... 19

Safekeeping of Firearms 19

Cartridges, Cartridge Cases and Bullets 20

Packaging of Cartridges, Cartridge Cases and Bullets 20

Drug Evidence 21

Grow Operation Lights and Transformers 23

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Submission of Narcotics or Dangerous Drugs	23
Lab Requests	23
High Value and Sensitive Items of Property & Evidence	24
Currency	24
Jewelry and Other Items of Exceptional Value	25
PERK Evidence	25
Computer Evidence	26
Mobile Devices.....	27
Bicycles as Evidence	27
Hazardous Materials and Suspected Explosive Devices	28
Fireworks	28
Compressed Gases	28
Flammable Liquids.....	28
Refrigerated Evidence.....	29
Release Procedures	29
Property	30
General Guidelines for Property.....	30
Wallets, Purses, Backpacks and other Containers	31
Bicycles as Property.....	31
Street Signs and other City-Owned Property.....	31
Prisoner Property	32
Prescription Drug Take-Back Program.....	33
SECTION III: PROPERTY & EVIDENCE UNIT	
Viewing	34
Court Requests	34
Release of Evidence	34
Release of Currency	35
Submission of Evidence for Laboratory Analysis.....	35
Forensic Services Unit	35
Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Forensic Science	36
Computer Evidence Recovery Unit	37
Retention of Evidence.....	37

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Misdemeanor Evidence.....	37
Violent Felonies	38
All Other Felonies	38
PERK Kits	38
Suicide Evidence	39
Audio Tapes, SANE Disks, Forensic Interview Documents and Similar Documents.....	38
Disposition of Evidence.....	39
Narcotics.....	40
Firearms.....	40
Computers and other Electronic Devices that Retain Personal Data	41
Court-Ordered Disposition	41
SECTION IV: FORENSIC SERVICES UNIT	
Documenting the Crime Scene	42
Photographing and Videotaping.....	42
Video Evidence Section	42
Audio Evidence	42
Collection	43
Video Evidence Technical Support.....	43
Submitting Video/Audio Evidence to the Forensic Services Unit for Analysis	44
Crime Scene Sketching.....	44
Crime Scene Search Reports.....	46
Trace Evidence	46
Hair and Fibers	46
Collection of Hair.....	47
Collection of Known Samples.....	47
Fibers, String, Rope & Cords	47
Collection	47
Submission	48
Primer Residue	48
Collection	48
Submission	48
Serial Number Restoration.....	48

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

General Chemical	49
Collection	49
Glass	49
Types of Lab Examinations	49
Collection	49
Paint	50
Types of Paint Examinations.....	50
Collection	50
Impression Evidence.....	51
Class Characteristics	51
Individual Characteristics	51
Types of Lab Examinations	51
Collection	51
Submission	51
Fingerprint Evidence	52
Types of Prints Left on Surfaces	52
Developing, Lifting, Labeling and Preserving Latent Fingerprints	52
Fingerprint Powders.....	53
Chemical Development.....	53
Collection and Submission.....	53
Known Samples	54
Request for Direct Latent Comparison to Subject(s) (PD-48).....	54
Biological Evidence	55
Training.....	55
Safety Precautions.....	55
Identifying DNA.....	56
Collection and Preservation	57
Cross Contamination.....	57
Preservation.....	57
Special Circumstances.....	58
Elimination Samples	58
Types of Lab Examinations	58

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Laboratory Limitations.....	59
Bloodstains	59
Basic Bloodstain Patterns	59
Documentation.....	60
Sexual Assault Evidence.....	60
APPENDIX A	
How to Complete the Property & Evidence Voucher	62

Introduction

The objective of this field guide is to provide Department personnel practical information concerning how to use physical evidence to assist in a criminal investigation. This guide is a reference for the procedures for the collection, preservation, and submission of the evidence. This guide is not intended to cover all situations or to supersede Department directives. Personnel are encouraged to consult with their supervisor or contact Property & Evidence and/or Forensic Services Unit staff for additional guidance.

Contact Numbers

Property & Evidence (main): (757) 385-4578

Property & Evidence supervisor: (757) 385-8037

Forensic Services Unit (main): (757) 385-5650

Forensic Services Unit supervisor: (757) 385-8187

Section I: Crime Scene Security and Searches

Securing the Crime Scene

The first responder plays a critical role in any successful investigation. Officers must gain control of chaotic situations. Modern forensic science and technology are of little value if evidence is unidentified, contaminated or destroyed.

The first responders should cautiously approach the scene to apprehend suspects, provide medical attention if needed, and identify potential witnesses. The officer's next priority is to evaluate the crime scene to identify and protect potential physical evidence and determine where boundaries should be defined. The following can be used to ensure necessary procedures are completed in a timely manner:

- Establish physical boundaries using crime scene tape, vehicles, personnel etc. (boundaries should include but not limited to the area the crime occurred, points of entry/exit, places where evidence has been located)
- Maintain an entry log and document everybody that enters the scene. Include their name, time entered/exited, and their purpose in the scene.
- Do not allow personnel to enter the scene unless they have a specific function in the security or investigation of the scene
- Determine the need for additional resources (ex: detectives, forensics, fire investigators)
- Identify chemical, biohazard, and other potentially hazardous materials and take necessary precautions.
- Conduct a preliminary survey of the scene, if needed, to identify potential evidence. Limit movement in the crime scene and establish a working route.
- Brief investigators and transfer control of the scene.

The following list of precautions should be taken to ensure physical evidence is not contaminated or destroyed:

- Do not touch the bodies of victims, firearms, weapons, or any other items in the scene
- Do not allow items to be removed from the scene
- Do not bring suspects back into the scene
- Do not smoke, spit, eat or drink in the scene
- Do not use the bathroom facilities or telephone
- Do not adjust the temperature or alter lighting
- Do not allow medical personnel to clean up or remove equipment from the scene

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- If anything is disturbed or changed within the scene due to officer safety or in an effort to preserve physical evidence make sure the investigator or forensic technician is notified.

Crime Scene Searches

The purpose of a crime scene search is to locate and recover evidence where criminal activity has occurred or a location connected with a criminal activity. A coordinated search should be done after physical boundaries have been established and authorized by the incident commander.

Preparing to Search

- First make a quick preliminary survey of the area you are going to research; it is important at this point that you do not go in the area.
- Determine where the obvious evidence would most likely be located.
- Decide on the best method of searching the scene
- Instruct personnel on method and procedure of the search

Search Methods

Search patterns ensure thoroughness by design. They provide a systematic approach to locating evidence.

- Quadrant or Zone Method: Commonly used during search warrants. The scene is divided into areas or quadrants. After the search is completed, do a second search with officers switching assignments.
- Strip Method: Commonly used in large open areas, usually with outside scenes. Area is formed in shape of rectangle; searchers proceed slowly at the same pace along paths parallel to each other. When evidence is found, the finder announces their discovery and all searches halt. The evidence is marked and the search continues.
- Grid Method: Similar to strip method except the officer first search parallel to the base of rectangle and then parallel to the sides.

The following list provides helpful reminders and precautions when conducting searches:

- Remember that the environment is three-dimensional. Check under furniture, bedding, and ceilings.
- Use a flashlight with oblique lighting and use mirrors in obscured areas.
- Dismantle equipment and check for hidden compartments
- Proceed with extreme cautions, do not move forward until you examine where you are stepping. Be careful when searching hidden areas such as pockets, car seats or furniture for sharps such as needles, knives and razors.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Do not move any evidence when it is found. The item should be documented with photos, notes or measurements prior to recovery.
- Look for areas that appear to have been recently disturbed.

Section II: Packaging and Submission Procedures

Submission of Evidence to the Property & Evidence Unit **(CALEA 83.3.1, 84.1.1 A, B, C)**

All evidence that comes under the control of the Virginia Beach Police Department shall be documented on a Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) as soon as possible. The voucher must be filled out completely to include the following information:

- Each item shall be described in detail, including make, model and serial number, where applicable.
- Circumstances regarding the seizure of the evidence will be documented in the “brief statement of fact” and “remarks” sections of the voucher.
 - If custody of evidence is transferred prior to submission to the Property & Evidence Unit, all transfers will be recorded on a Chain of Evidence form (PD-235).
 - Custody of evidence after submission to the Property & Evidence Unit shall be documented in accordance with General Order 15.01.
- Specific instructions, as required (ex: refrigerate items, hold for detective, send to FSU).
- Required signatures
- A red evidence tag (PD-87) must be affixed to each item of evidence.

All property and evidence shall be documented and secured prior to the end of a tour of duty. Department personnel shall not maintain personal custody of any evidence. Under exceptional circumstances, such as when large quantities of evidence are required where proper documentation and packaging cannot be accomplished within the officer’s shift or a reasonable amount of overtime, the officer may, with a supervisor’s approval, secure the evidence ensuring the chain of custody remains intact and return as soon as practical to complete the processing of the evidence. The name of the supervisor and circumstances that caused the delay shall be summarized in the narrative section of the property voucher. Under no circumstance is evidence or property to leave the workplace or be taken home by any Department employee.

Evidence and property shall be submitted to the Property & Evidence Unit utilizing the following means:

First Precinct and Detective Bureau

- Deliver evidence and property directly to the Property & Evidence Unit between the hours of 0700 and 1600, Monday through Friday.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- After hours, evidence and property can be secured in the hall lockers on the ground floor. Keys to the refrigerated lockers shall be placed in the respective key slot immediately after use.
 - Large item rooms are also available for items too large for the hall lockers. A key is not required to lock these doors. Once the items have been placed in the room, simply press the lock button on the keypad to lock the door.

Second, Third and Fourth Precincts

The Commanding Officer of each precinct shall appoint a supervisor to manage the Property and Evidence function at the precinct. The appointed supervisor shall work with the supervisor of the Property and Evidence Unit to ensure that the following procedures are adhered to:

- A Property and Evidence storage facility and drug evidence locker shall be established within each precinct.
- The storage facility, lockers and drug evidence locker shall be secured at all times.
- Access to the storage room shall be controlled by Lenel Access Control Proxy Readers and assigned access cards.
- Officers vouchering any property or evidence shall log the items into the precinct property and evidence logbook.
- Officers vouchering any drug evidence shall log the items into the precinct drug evidence logbook and secure the drug evidence in the drug evidence locker. If the drug evidence or paraphernalia is too large to deposit in the drug evidence locker, it is to be secured in an evidence locker or the precinct property and evidence storage room.
- Officers will secure evidence in a locker, and/or property in a secured room.
- A log of all entries into the room shall be maintained within the room, noting:
 - Time of entry
 - Officer name
 - Voucher number of the property and/or evidence deposited
 - Location or locker number
 - Time that the room is secured
- When possible, all evidence shall be secured within a locker inside the storage room. Bulky items may be stored within the secured room, or transported to the Property & Evidence Unit.
- The Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478) shall be stored with the found property or seized evidence and the locker number that it was placed into will be noted on the Property Voucher (PD-478), if applicable. The locker number will also be documented in the Precinct Property and Evidence logbook (PD-185).

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- If applicable, after securing evidence in a locker, the locker key will be deposited into a locked box which is only accessible to the appointed supervisor of the property and evidence function and/or the designated sworn member assigned to transport the evidence. The key to the storage area shall be maintained by the on-duty Precinct Desk Officer at all times.
- Property may be stored within the storage rooms on shelves in order to facilitate the return of the property to located or inquiring owners. Such returns may be accomplished upon sufficient proof of ownership by Precinct Desk Officers.
- When an item is returned to its owner, the “released to owner” section of the Property & Evidence Voucher shall be completed by the Department member and signed by the owner. The completed voucher is then forwarded to the Property & Evidence Unit.

The appointed supervisor within the precinct shall designate a sworn member to transport found property and seized evidence to the Property and Evidence Unit during normal business hours. The appointed member shall:

- Transport property and evidence to the Property and Evidence Unit weekly.
- For all items, the appointed sworn member shall complete the required sections on the Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478) noting that he or she is in the chain of evidence (on evidentiary items), and the date and time the property or evidence was retrieved from the storage room and delivered to the Property and Evidence Unit.
- The designated custodian(s) in each command will be responsible for reviewing all submitted property and evidence to ensure it is packaged correctly, all required paperwork is attached and completed correctly.
- Any issues/errors will result in the property or evidence being held at the command pending the submitting officer making the required corrections and notifying the designated custodian of those corrections.
- The custodian will transport all property and evidence to P&E as normal after review of all items.
- P&E personnel will review all property and evidence ensuring all items are packaged correctly and all required paperwork is attached and completed correctly.
- Any property or evidence with errors will be brought to the custodian’s attention and returned to the command for corrections.

In the event that evidence to be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit is of such unusual size or nature, the case officer or investigator should contact the Property and Evidence Unit to determine the most appropriate means of storage.

Special Investigations

As the majority of evidence seized by Special Investigations occurs during non-business hours, and given the circumstance that Special Investigations operates from a facility separate from other city or police-owned buildings, the following procedures shall govern the handling of property or evidence seized by Special Investigations personnel.

The Commanding Officer of Special Investigations shall appoint a Lieutenant to oversee the property and evidence function at Special Investigations. This Lieutenant will work in cooperation with the Property and Evidence Unit Supervisor and will ensure the following:

- Secure areas (either lockers or storage bins for bulky items) are designated for the storage of all property and evidence.
- Keys to the storage areas or lockers shall be signed out to the sworn member seizing the evidence and a witnessing sworn member by an on-duty supervisor.
- The seizure, securing, packaging, and delivery of property and evidence is executed by an evidence officer, and witnessing officers. Both shall be sworn members assigned to Special Investigations
- In the event a seizure of evidence conducted after hours, is significant in quantity or value, the on duty supervisor must approve the storage of the evidence at Special Investigations. In the event that the evidence cannot feasibly be stored at Special Investigations, the evidence will be properly packaged and the on call Property and Evidence officer will be called out to receive the evidence at Property and Evidence.
- A property and Evidence Voucher shall be completed at the time of storage and taped to the outside of the locker or storage area to indicate the items stored within.
- A chain of evidence form (PD-235) shall be completed on all evidentiary items in addition to the Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478.)
- All packaging of property and evidence occurs by the sworn member seizing the evidence and a witnessing sworn member
- All evidence shall be photographed for courtroom prosecution.
- Property and Evidence seized by sworn members of Special Investigations shall be logged into the Special Investigations Property and Evidence logbook.
- Special Investigations personnel shall deliver all evidence and property to P&E as soon as possible after collecting it. All deliveries must be received by 1500 unless prior arrangements have been made.

Storage areas and the property and evidence function maintained by Special Investigations shall be subject to inspection, and or audits by either the Property and Evidence Supervisor or the Internal Affairs Bureau.

In either case, the supervisor conducting the inspection or audit shall be respectful of the Special Investigations environment, and shall not arrive in vehicle or wear clothing that would identify themselves as law enforcement officers.

Forensic Services Unit

As members of the Forensic Services Unit often collect evidence on behalf of sworn members that require additional processing prior to packaging and storing, the following is established to facilitate this function.

The Supervisor of the Forensic Services Unit shall work cooperatively with the Property and Evidence Supervisor. The Supervisor of the Forensic Services Unit shall establish within the Forensic Services Unit a secured area or areas for the secure storage of evidence. The following procedure shall be adhered to by members of the Forensic Service Unit when seizing evidence on behalf of sworn members:

- All evidence seized shall be documented on a Crime Scene Search Report and a Property and Evidence Voucher Number (PD-478.)
- Any evidence that will not be processed and/or examined by the conclusion of the Forensic Technician's shift may, with the approval of the Forensic Services Supervisor be securely stored within the Forensic Services Unit for processing.
- All evidence shall be securely stored within the Forensic Services Unit prior to the end of the Forensic Technician's shift.
- Access to the storage area shall be limited to the seizing technician and the Supervisor of the Forensic Services Unit.
- All evidence requiring processing by the Virginia Department of Forensic Science shall be packaged and either delivered by the Forensic Tech directly, or submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit for delivery prior to the conclusion of the Forensic Technician's scheduled work period (workweek).
- All evidence requiring processing or further examination by the Forensic Services Unit, shall be processed or examined, and then submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit prior to the conclusion of the Forensic Technician's scheduled work period.

Storage areas and the property and evidence function maintained by the Forensic Services Unit shall be subject to inspection, and or audits by either the Property and Evidence Supervisor or the Internal Affairs Bureau. For additional information on evidence procedures pertaining to the Forensic Services Unit, see Forensic Service Unit, Unit Order 1.02, Evidence Storage.

Special Operations

Items of property or evidence seized by Special Operations officers shall be submitted to the Property and Evidence unit or any of the precincts supporting the property and evidence function with approved storage areas.

Animal Control

Items of evidence seized by Animal Control shall be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit or the Property and Evidence function at the First Police Precinct prior to the end of the seizing officer's shift.

General Evidence Guidelines

The following list provides standards for packaging evidence involved in a criminal investigation. The purpose of packaging evidence in this manner is to document the evidence, maintain a chain of custody and preserve the evidence for laboratory testing. All evidence regardless of classification that comes under the control of the Virginia Beach Police Department shall be handled, at a minimum, in the following manner. The Property & Evidence Unit has the right to refuse any evidence that does not meet the requirements outlined in this guide.

- Prior to handling any potential evidence, officers should take into consideration any forensic value the evidence may have. Prior to handling evidence that has been determined to have no forensic value, there are many concerns for safe handling that should be considered. Some considerations are:
 - Personal protection measures
 - Weather conditions that may damage evidence
 - Photographing of evidence
 - What value a photograph may have for court purposes in lieu of unnecessary handling of large, bulky or dangerous items
 - Return of property to victims in lieu of holding it for court
- When applicable, evidence will be documented or photographed prior to removal and collection.
- Evidence will not be packaged in anything smaller than a 5 x 7 container. *Staples will not be used to seal any item of evidence.*
- Sharps, razors, needles, glass, knives, glass crack stems, etc. will be packaged in a rigid container and marked with item description.
- All items of evidence packaged will have a minimum of a tamper proof seal, case number, officer's initials, date and time of collection and a red evidence tag (PD-87), except for cash and jewelry, which will follow a separate packaging protocol (see Currency and Jewelry sections on pages 21-22).
- The officer completing the voucher shall document the circumstances under which any evidence came into the control of the Department in the "brief statement of fact" section of the Property & Evidence voucher.
- Unless impractical, all items will be packaged in a box, envelope or plastic bag, unless other packaging is indicated. Vouchers shall not be taped to the item or packaging.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Evidence shall be secured in an approved property and evidence storage area unless otherwise authorized by a supervisory member.
- Evidence shall be logged into the precinct property and evidence logbook.

Property vs Evidence

Officers are tasked with vouchering items of property and evidence in the performance of their duties and sometimes have to determine whether the item should be classified as “property” or “evidence.” As a general rule, any item that is related to an offense, including recovered stolen property, should be classified as “evidence.” Any items that are found and/or not directly related to an offense should be classified as “property.” Personal property not accepted by the jail shall be classified as “prisoner property.”

Vouchering an item as evidence does not in and of itself preclude the owner from claiming it. In the event officers voucher evidence and the owner is authorized to claim it, the classification should still be “evidence” with a note to release it to the owner. As a reminder, officers are not authorized to have “property” held. If an item needs to be held for investigation, it must be related to an offense and classified as “evidence.” Pursuant to state law, we only hold “property” for the required period of time (30 days for bicycles, 120 days for firearms, and 90 days for everything else) and we must return it to the owner upon request.

Recovered Stolen Property (Pawn Shop)

Officers often encounter situations where stolen property is located in a pawn shop. City Code 25-7 requires pawn shops to turn over, upon reasonable demand and with just cause, “any merchandise suspected of being, or identified as, stolen property” to the police department. The pawn shop is not required to release suspected stolen property to the citizen when an officer is not present. This code does not apply to retail stores operated by nonprofit organizations (such as Salvation Army), antique dealers, and retail merchants that accept secondhand merchandise as partial payment or as trade-in on new merchandise (such as Game Stop). However, that does not preclude these businesses from *voluntarily* releasing the property to an officer.

When a pawn shop releases suspected stolen property to an officer, the officer shall voucher the stolen property as *evidence*. The suspect can be charged with obtaining money by false pretenses, which will also assist the pawn shop with recovering any money lost. When dealing with these situations, officers should seek guidance from the Pawn Unit and/or Commonwealth Attorney’s Office, as necessary.

For additional information, see Chapter 25 of the City Code.

Recovered Stolen Property (Auction Company)

While less common, officers could also encounter situations where stolen property is located at an auction company. When stolen property is located at an auction company, the officer needs to determine how the company came into possession of the item.

Any property that has been turned over to an auction company by the Property & Evidence Unit has been deemed “*abandoned*” since it remained unclaimed for the required period of time, and was properly advertised, in accordance with State Code.

Officers are not authorized to simply remove the property from the auction company and return it to the original owner/victim. Likewise, officers are not authorized to simply take the property from a private citizen, who has purchased an item of property from an auction company, and return it to the original owner/victim. Officers should explain the circumstances to the auction company manager (or the private citizen in the event they purchased the property at auction). It is up to the manager or citizen whether he or she returns the property to the original owner/victim. In the event the auction company or citizen does not elect to return the property, the original owner/victim's options would be to seek court-ordered restitution from the individual, who stole the property, as part of the sentence in the criminal case, or pursue other any other civil remedy that may exist. When dealing with these situations, officers should seek guidance from the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, as necessary.

Firearms and Related Evidence

Firearm evidence not only consists of firearms but also ammunition, cartridge casings, and bullets. This type of evidence is sometimes difficult to locate at the scene and requires a systematic approach. Firearm related evidence such as cartridge casings and metal fragments have the potential to be anywhere.

Firearms

Photographs should accurately display the location of the weapon. If a weapon is recovered from a suspect, the listed conditions can still be photographed prior to recovery. Prior to the recovery of a firearm the following information should be documented:

- Hammer Position
- Safety Position
- Inventory and location of ammunition (ex: 1 cartridge in the chamber, 5 cartridges in magazine)
- Position of the slide or rotation of cylinder

Collection

Due to the potential dangers related to collecting firearms, ensure safety precautions are followed:

- Always assume the weapon is loaded and ready to fire
- Always be prepared for the weapon to fire
- Always point the weapon in a safe direction
- Unload the weapon prior to transport, if this is not possible contact a Supervisor

Packaging of Firearms

The following steps should be taken when packaging a firearm (evidence or property):

- Wear gloves to preserve potential evidence.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Make sure the weapon is safe. Insert a safety plug or other device into the chamber to prevent the action of the weapon from operating.
- Do not introduce foreign objects into the barrel for any reason.
- Remove any live ammunition from the weapon's cylinder/barrel. Ammunition recovered from the firearm (including attached magazine) will be counted and noted on the evidence voucher.
- The firearm and magazine should be packaged together in a rigid container, such as a gun box, with only 1 empty magazine, when available. (Ammunition/cartridges and extra magazines should always be packaged separately from firearms)
- Seal the box with tamper resistant tape. Initial all seams on the box.
- Mark the outside of the container indicating the condition of the gun is **UNLOADED** (only one "unloaded" stamp is needed).
- Notwithstanding this directive, all firearms should be treated as if they are loaded.
- For the purposes of packaging, BB guns and airsoft weapons shall be handled as firearms and packaged in a cardboard gun box. The officer shall write "BB GUN" on the outside of the box.
- The following information will be recorded on the Property and Evidence Voucher.
 - Make
 - Model number
 - Serial number
 - Type
 - Caliber
 - Color
 - Distinguishing characteristics, modifications or marks

Paperwork

The following paperwork is required to be completed for ALL firearms collected as property or evidence:

- Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478)
- Criminal Firearms Clearinghouse report (PD-487)
- Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE)

Property and Evidence staff will enter the data off the Criminal Firearms Clearinghouse Report into the ATF E-Trace computer system, as required by State Code 52-25.1

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

To facilitate the utility of the database, officers need to include the following information in the “person from whom the firearm was taken” section of the form:

Lab Requests

All semi-automatic handguns, slide action rifles, bolt action rifles and shotguns recovered as evidence shall be sent to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science for test firing and to have the results submitted to the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) system. Revolvers and derringers are never sent for NIBIN testing. Additional examinations that may be requested include:

- Distance Determination
- Mechanical Condition of the firearm
- Operability of Safety Features
- Trigger Pull

Court dates for cases involving firearms that require laboratory examination should be set **at least 45 days** from the date of arrest. The court date must be noted on the Request for Laboratory Request form.

If evidence is being submitted to the Forensics Services Unit prior to the Department of Forensic Science lab, complete a PD-47 and check the “Items to FSU” block so the evidence is not sent directly to the state lab.

Firearms as Property

Firearms that are considered property will be packaged in the same manner as evidence firearms, including the completion of the paperwork listed above. Firearms collected as property will be submitted to the Department of Forensic Science for test firing/NIBIN after it has remained unclaimed for 120 days, as required by State Code [15.2-1721](#).

A yellow property tag (PD-88) will be completed in the same manner as the PD-87 for evidence. The officer completing the voucher shall document the circumstances under which the firearm came into control of the Department in the “brief statement of fact” section.

It is the policy of the Virginia Beach Police Department, in the interest of public safety, to accept firearms and ammunition from citizens for destruction. Any firearms received from citizens for the purpose of destruction will be sent to the Department of Forensic Science for test firing/NIBIN prior to disposal.

Recovered Firearms

Firearms that are located abandoned and/or cannot be immediately linked to an owner should be recovered and appropriately vouchered as evidence or property, depending on the circumstances of the case. Additionally, the officer recovering the firearm should call the VCIN desk to have the firearm entered into NCIC as a recovered firearm. This provides a record in NCIC in the event the owner of the firearm reports the firearm stolen.

Safekeeping of Firearms

The Virginia Beach Police Department will hold firearms for the purpose of safekeeping. Reasons for safekeeping include, but are not limited to, the existence of protective orders, mental health concerns and military deployments. When a citizen requests to have a firearm held for safekeeping, an officer will package the firearm in accordance with the instructions listed above. A Property & Evidence voucher (PD-478) will be completed with the "safekeeping of firearm" block checked. The citizen is required to complete an "Authorization for Safekeeping of Firearm" (PD-407-2) form, which must be witnessed. Completion of a Criminal Firearms Clearinghouse report (PD-487) and Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) for test firing and NIBIN will also be required. The completed paperwork shall accompany the firearm to Property & Evidence.

Firearms held for the purpose of safekeeping will be held for 120 days or until the expiration of the protective order, unless previous arrangements have been made. Unclaimed firearms will be submitted to the Department of Forensic Science for test firing/NIBIN.

Cartridges, Cartridge Cases and Bullets

Prior to collection, evidence should be properly documented through the use of photographs, notes and measurements, as needed. When recovering any evidence, officers shall ensure they are properly gloved. Do not forcibly handle cartridges, cartridge casings, bullets or metal fragments; they have the potential for trace, DNA and fingerprint evidence.

Packaging of Cartridges, Cartridge Cases and Bullets

- Place in a glassine or paper envelope, further package in a 5x7 envelope or small rigid container.
- Place items from separate areas in separate packages.
- Package shall be sealed with tamper resistant adhesive evidence tape and red evidence tag will be attached.
- Submit evidence to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science when applicable. All cartridge cases, regardless of condition, will be submitted for NIBIN entry.
- Examinations that may be requested include:

Bullets

- Identification of brand
- Potential firearm
- Identification to a particular firearm
- Caliber of the firearm

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Cartridge Casings

- NIBIN
- Potential firearm
- Identification to a particular firearm

The Property and Evidence Unit will retain all expended, identifiable bullets/projectiles and cartridge casings and bullet fragments for an indefinite period of time. If these items are no longer needed as evidence, Property & Evidence will remove these items from an officer's assignment and retain them in long term storage in case they are needed for future NIBIN comparisons.

Drug Evidence

The risk of exposure from unknown substances to officers is of great concern. To reduce the risk of exposure, the following procedures shall be followed when handling suspected narcotics. Nitrile gloves shall be worn to reduce exposure risks. If an officer encounters a drug that is transdermal in nature, that officer should call for a second officer prior to collecting. Transdermal drugs are those that are absorbed through the skin. Many of these are in pill, powder and patch form **AND HAVE BEEN FOUND TO CONTAIN FENTANYL**. Those officers shall have Narcan at their immediate disposal prior to beginning collection. Once collected, those officers shall respond immediately to a command to properly package and voucher the evidence. Officers will then wait at the precinct for 20 minutes before returning to duty. This period begins once the item is sealed unless directed otherwise by a supervisor. There may be instances where calling for a second officer is not feasible (i.e. seized during a search incident to arrest). In this case officers shall package and voucher the item(s) immediately following clearing from the associated arrest. All other narcotics and drugs shall be packaged and secured PRIOR TO the end of shift. A supervisor may make exceptions when large quantities of drugs have been seized. If an exception is granted, the evidence must be secured in a secure location that maintains the chain of custody. Under no circumstance should evidence leave the workplace or be taken home by an officer or detective. When packaging narcotics and dangerous drugs, the following procedures shall be followed:

- Narcan shall be at the immediate disposal of either the packaging officer or the witnessing officer when packaging any suspected opiates or transdermal drugs.
- It is highly recommended that officers utilize the N95 respirator mask when packaging.
- Officers must have a witnessing officer present during the entire packaging process (denoted by a printed name and initials in the "witnessed by" block of the Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478)).
- Witnessing officer information will be noted on the Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478). Witness officer information shall include: Name, Rank, Duty Station and signature

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Weigh all narcotics and dangerous drug items but do NOT include weights on the Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478)
- Count and weigh all pills, capsules and similar single dosage units
- Items counted shall be indicated in the description area of the Property and Evidence Voucher. Example: *suspected Talwin, 52 Pills, LSD (blotter) 34 units*
- Trace or residues found in paraphernalia or foil may be packaged intact to prevent loss of evidence.
 - Residues found in foil should be placed in clear pill bottles prior to being put in a clear plastic bag.
- Multiple drugs or items related to the same suspect shall be placed in individual clear plastic bags.
- All clear plastic bags containing narcotics or dangerous drug evidence shall meet the following requirements:
 - All bags shall be heat sealed
 - A narcotics evidence label (PD-168) will be completed and affixed to each bag
 - Tamper-proof adhesive evidence tape will be placed on the seals of each bag
 - The packaging officer shall place their initials and date on the tamper proof tape on every seam
- Powdered narcotics must be sealed in a Ziploc bag then sealed inside a clear plastic evidence bag to prevent exposure.
- Syringes **MUST** be properly enclosed in a plastic safety tube that is specifically designed for the transport of syringes. The plastic tube shall then be sealed in a clear evidence bag. A biohazard label must be affixed to the outer evidence bag and clearly labeled with the words “**CONTAINS A SYRINGE.**”
- Paraphernalia not to be examined by the lab, but which is to be used as evidence, will be packaged separately
- Separate any U.S. Currency used to snort cocaine or any other drug and package that money separately. If circumstances dictate that the money and the drugs cannot be separated the case officer will respond to Property and Evidence upon adjudication of the case and separate the two items for destruction.
- All narcotics and dangerous drugs that require laboratory analysis must include a Department of Forensic Science Request for Laboratory Examination
- The following information must be included on the Request for Laboratory Examination prior to submission:

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- The specific criminal charge(s) related to the item(s) submitted (code section and/or charge description).
 - Example - **Date and Type of Offense:** 7/17/2016 – Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana / 18.2-248.1
- When multiple items and multiple suspects are involved, please indicate which suspect is charged with which items
 - Example – Item 1: Two Ziploc bags containing chunky material (Suspect #1)
 - Item 2: Ten plastic bags containing plant material (Suspect #2)
- Narcotics that are to be destroyed still require tamper-proof adhesive evidence tape and a red evidence tag (PD-168), but a Request for Laboratory Examination form is not required.
 - “To be destroyed” should be noted on the Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) and the evidence tag (PD-168).
 - Evidence, including narcotics and dangerous drugs, can only be disposed of by the Property & Evidence Unit and not by an individual officer.

Grow Operation Lights and Transformers

Officers and Detectives that seize grow lamps and transformers will package those items in the following manner:

- Either as a stand-alone item or in a box large enough to accommodate the packed item
- A red evidence tag will be placed on the top of the box or on the item itself
- A voucher containing the details and contents of each box or stand-alone item will be completed and submitted to Property & Evidence

Submission of Narcotics or Dangerous Drugs

Personnel assigned to bureaus/precincts located outside of Police Headquarters shall deposit completed drug packages in designated secure drug lock boxes. Between the hours of 0700 and 1600, Monday through Friday, personnel assigned to Police Headquarters will deliver complete drug packages to the Property and Evidence Unit window. After normal business hours, personnel will utilize the designated secure drug locker provided by the Property & Evidence Unit and located on the ground floor near the hall lockers. Narcotics, dangerous drugs and related paraphernalia are not to be placed in hall lockers or lockers not designated for the storage of narcotics. The only exception is when an officer has a large amount of drugs that will not fit in the drug lockers.

Lab Requests

The following procedures shall be followed when submitting narcotics and drug evidence to the Division of Forensic Science for laboratory examination:

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- A Request for Laboratory Examination is required for any evidence being submitted to the lab.
- Any items that require testing for latent fingerprints must be separated from items being sent directly to the lab.
- Evidence that is not being sent to the lab shall not be packaged with evidence that is being sent to the lab.
- Do not sign the chain of custody section of the Request for Laboratory Examination form.
- Court dates for arrests involving evidence requiring laboratory examination should be set at least 45 days from the date of arrest
 - The court date must be noted in the court date field of the Request for Laboratory Examination form.
 - The Certificate of Analysis received from the laboratory shall be filed with the appropriate Clerk of the Court at least seven days prior to the trial or preliminary hearing.

High Value and Sensitive Items of Property & Evidence (CALEA 84.1.1 E)

Currency

All currency must be packaged in a clear plastic currency bag whether it is being vouchered as evidence or property. The only exceptions are when the currency is wet or contaminated with blood or other biological material or contains evidence of narcotics. If currency is wet or contains biological material, it shall be packaged in a paper envelope with a "BIOHAZARD" sticker applied to the outside. Currency containing evidence of narcotics shall be packaged as a separate item in a clear evidence bag. Currency shall be listed by individual denominations and, when practical, as the first item(s) on the Property & Evidence Voucher.

Personnel counting currency shall do so in the presence of a witnessing officer. Gloves should be worn for personal protection and to prevent evidentiary contamination. Officers should notify Property and Evidence in advance when currency will be processed or submitted for analysis. If needed, serial numbers should also be listed. Whenever possible, the voucher shall be completed at the Property & Evidence Unit and the amount witnessed by a member of Property & Evidence.

Regardless of where the currency's Property & Evidence Voucher is completed, currency requires the department member who prepared the voucher and a second department member who witnessed the amount to complete the "Prepared by" and "Witnessed by" blocks of the voucher with their printed name and signed initials.

Whenever the actual currency is not needed as evidence in court, authorization will be made to deposit it in the Property & Evidence bank account. This is accomplished by checking "yes" in the "deposit money in bank" block. Property and Evidence will be responsible for arranging the return of currency when notified the release is authorized.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Large quantities of currency should be brought directly to the bank for deposit accompanied by a Property & Evidence employee. Detectives with large quantities of money should give advanced notice to Property & Evidence and arrive at the bank no later than 1430 hours in order to allow the required time for counting and processing. If an officer or detective, other than Special Investigations personnel, recovers or seizes currency over \$1000 outside of Property & Evidence's regular hours of 0700-1600, the Property & Evidence supervisor should be contacted for guidance.

Under extenuating circumstances cash/monies recovered as evidence may require special packaging due to the circumstances in which the item/items were recovered. In such cases items may be packaged according to recommendations set forth by the staff of the Property & Evidence Unit. However, the value of such items will still be annotated on the property voucher form.

Jewelry and Other Items of Exceptional Value

When recovering or seizing jewelry or other items of exceptional value, officers or Forensic Technicians should proceed in the presence of a witnessing officer, until the items are properly packaged and submitted to the Property & Evidence Unit. The following procedures shall be followed:

- All jewelry should be packaged in a clear plastic evidence bag to safeguard it from being lost. The only exception is jewelry that is wet or contaminated. Jewelry that is wet or contaminated shall be packaged in an envelope with a "biohazard" sticker applied to the outside.
- Jewelry will be individually itemized and a detailed description will be provided for each item on the Property and Evidence Voucher (PD-478).
- The evidence bag will be sealed and labeled with evidence tape.
- Foreign currency will be placed in a plastic currency bag and labeled; i.e. 100 foreign coins or 25 foreign notes with no breakdown of denomination or value.
- Collectible currency should be placed in a plastic currency bag, taking care not to remove the currency from its protective displays. If the display will not fit in a currency bag, it should be placed in a brown paper bag. The voucher will list the currency just as it would for any non-collectible currency, such as; ".75 cents in a cardboard display." No attempt should be made to assign a value beyond the face value. The voucher should also be labeled; "Collectible currency, Do Not Deposit."

PERK Evidence

Medical personnel should recover victim Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (VPERKS). The urine and blood sample taken from the victim should be separated from the kit and stored in the evidence refrigerator. These items should be listed separately on the evidence voucher. (Example: Item 1- victim PERK, Item 2- blood sample from victim PERK, Item 3- urine sample from victim PERK.) The remaining items in the VPERK do not need to be refrigerated; however, these items should not be stored in a wet or extremely humid environment. If a PERK kit requires refrigeration, the detectives shall

ensure a “Refrigeration” sticker is applied to the outside of the PERK kit and “Requires Refrigeration” is noted on the voucher.

The disk containing images from the victim’s SANE exam should be listed on a voucher as a separate item. The disk is then placed in the video locker at the Forensic Services Unit. Detectives should ensure the chain of custody record is properly completed. After the disk is uploaded to the Legacy program, it will be transferred to the Property & Evidence Unit for storage.

Computer Evidence

Electronic data from computers can yield valuable evidence to investigators. Improper handling of computers can lead to damaged evidence or equipment as well as unnecessarily disrupt legitimate business and create Department liability. This guide is not intended to apply to every situation the officer may encounter. Advances in computer technology create new and unique challenges to law enforcement. Computers and other electronic devices frequently contain information that can be lost if the device is powered off incorrectly. To prevent the unintentional loss of evidence, a Computer Forensic Examiner or a member of the Computer Crimes Unit should be consulted prior to evidence recovery.

The following general guidelines are applicable to stand alone computer systems:

- Photograph or document through notes/sketches the computer system.
- If the computer is off, leave it off.
- Disconnect phone, modem or cable line.
- Disconnect the power supply from the rear of the computer, not the wall outlet.
- Place evidence tape over drive slots and terminals.
- Package computer in paper bag or cardboard box.
- If the computer is on, photograph or otherwise document the screen including open files and running applications prior to disconnecting power source. Do not use the on/off button.

The following precautions should be considered when dealing with computer evidence:

- When interviewing the suspect(s)
 - Attempts should be made to determine who utilizes the computer and how many user accounts are on the computer.
 - Attempt to determine passwords for particular user accounts, if they exist.
 - Attempt to determine what email accounts are associated with particular user accounts, if any.
 - If possible, assess the level of computer knowledge of the users on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being advanced.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Determine if there is any anti-virus or encryption software on the computer.
- When recovering the computer evidence or device(s):
 - Do not allow the suspect or self-taught computer experts to assist in the recovery.
 - Avoid touching exposed media, exposed wires or circuit boards.
 - Do not package in plastic or boxes of foam peanuts.
 - Avoid magnetic fields, including your car radio transmitter.
 - Do not place near excessive heat or direct sunlight.

Mobile Devices

Mobile devices (cellular telephones, tablets, iPods, GPS devices, etc.) can contain valuable evidence. Due to the frequent changes in devices and operating systems, contact the Forensic Services Unit or Computer Crimes Unit for the best practice to preserve and collect mobile devices.

Officers need to be aware that browsing a device, attempting to unlock or altering the power status of the device utilizing methods not otherwise indicated may alter the evidence. When dealing with unfamiliar circumstances, contact the Computer Crimes Unit with questions.

Mobile Devices and Electronic devices containing Child Pornography

During the course of investigations, officers and detectives may encounter electronic devices (cellular telephone, computers, tablets, etc.) that they have probable cause to believe contain child pornography. The Virginia Beach Police Department shall not return such items with the child pornography intact to its owner as this would constitute an additional dissemination of child pornography.

There are two acceptable practices to prevent such dissemination and it shall be at the discretion of the Detective/Officer on which method is used.

1. The device is destroyed
2. The device is returned to the owner after factory resetting the device.

If the owner of the device refuses to provide a password, fingerprint or other means of opening the electronic device to allow the device to be factory reset, then the device shall be destroyed when it is no longer needed for criminal prosecution. It is the responsibility of the case officer/detective to ensure that devices are sanitized of child pornography prior to its return to the owner or destroyed if appropriate.

Bicycles as Evidence

Careful consideration must be given to the evidentiary value of the bicycle prior to submitting it as evidence. Such considerations are, but not limited to:

- The value of a photograph instead of the actual bicycle

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Will the actual bicycle be used as evidence in court?
- If the bicycle has DNA evidence, perhaps FSU can collect that evidence without submitting the entire item.
- The intent of the seizing officer

If it is determined that the bicycle is to be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit the officer/investigator will explain on the Property & Evidence Voucher the circumstances in which the bicycle was seized and an explanation of how the officer wishes the bicycle to be handled for testing. An evidence tag will be attached to the bicycle in a sealed plastic evidence bag.

Hazardous Materials and Suspected Explosive Devices

If an officer comes across or in contact with hazardous, suspected hazardous materials or suspected explosive devices he or she shall adhere to the following:

- Contact their supervisor and follow the procedures for managing the scene they have responded to.
- Contact the Virginia Beach Fire Department and/or VBPD Bomb Squad.
- Allow the appropriately trained personnel to collect the material and dispose of the same.

At no time will hazardous materials or explosives be submitted to the Property & Evidence Unit.

Fireworks

When an officer comes into possession of fireworks he or she will deposit the fireworks with a completed red Evidence Tag (PD-87) attached into the fireworks container located outside one of the precincts.

Officers shall also submit a completed Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) to the Property and Evidence Unit noting which Precinct container was used. The Property and Evidence Unit will then notify the Bomb Squad that fireworks have been deposited in one of the outside containers for pick up. A member of the Bomb Squad will empty the Precinct containers and the fireworks will be destroyed in a manner in accordance with the law.

At no time will Fireworks be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit.

Compressed Gases

The Property and Evidence Unit will not accept or store compressed gases. The Virginia Beach Fire Marshal's Office has declared it unsafe and a fire hazard to store compressed gases in the Property and Evidence Unit. Officers that find compressed gas canisters are to notify the Virginia Beach Fire department for proper disposal or for evidence storage.

Flammable Liquids

Flammable liquids and items containing flammable liquids (Mopeds, gas-powered tools, gas cans, etc.) shall be left outside and chained to a bicycle rack. If this is not possible, contact a member of Property & Evidence for guidance.

Refrigerated Evidence

Evidence that requires refrigeration shall be delivered to the Property and Evidence Unit between the hours of 0700 and 1600, Monday through Friday. Evidence that requires refrigeration after normal business hours shall be stored in the evidence refrigerator located in the hall lockers on the ground floor of headquarters.

When packaging evidence that requires refrigeration, officers shall adhere to the following procedures:

- The items shall be placed in an evidence envelope, paper bag or other appropriate container.
- The Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) must have a notation that the evidence is refrigerated and where it is located.
- A biohazard label shall be placed on any evidence packaging containing bodily fluids or tissue.

Release Procedures

Items seized as evidence may only be released to the owner of the item:

- In person, by the investigating officer, his/her designee or supervisor
- By a member of the Property & Evidence Unit, after authorization to the Property & Evidence Unit by the investigating officer or pursuant to a court order

All releases, regardless of the item shall be made to a person who is either known or reasonably identified via the presentation of a driver's license, photo identification etc. The release shall be documented on the original copy of Property and Evidence Voucher (White Copy,) and the following information shall be recorded:

- The item(s) released
- The Name and Signature of the person claiming the item(s)
- The address of the person claiming the item(s)
- The phone number of the person claiming the item(s)
- The type of ID presented by the person claiming the item(s)
- The name of the employee releasing the item(s)
- The date and time that the item(s) were released

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

All property and evidence vouchers documenting the release of items shall be forwarded to the Property and Evidence Unit for entry into the Property and Evidence Unit Records Management System.

Property

General Guidelines for Property (CALEA 84.1.1 A, C, D, F, G)

When property is located or recovered and it requires packaging and submission to the Property and Evidence Unit, officers will do the following:

- The property shall be checked against stolen property records
- The property should be described in detail on the Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478). This should include, but is not limited to:
 - Type of item
 - Make
 - Model
 - Serial number
 - Owner applied markings or numbers
 - Identifiable characteristics
 - Size
 - Color
- The Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) number shall be logged into the precinct property and evidence log book.
- The item(s) shall be tagged with a Property Tag (PD-88).
- The packaging officer shall document the circumstances under which the property has come into the control of the Department in the “brief statement of fact” section of the Property & Evidence Voucher.
- The completed Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478) shall accompany the item(s) of property to the Property & Evidence Unit. Do not attach the Property & Evidence Voucher to the items with tape or staples.
- If there are multiple items belonging to different owners, officers should complete one voucher per owner so property can be easily released to the appropriate person.

Items vouchered as property will be available for immediate pickup by their rightful owners and subject to the retention and disposal requirements outlined by the Code of Virginia and Virginia Beach City Code. Department personnel do not have the authority to order property held. If an item needs to be held for any reason, it needs to be classified as evidence and related to a specific crime.

Prior to the submission of found property to the Property & Evidence Unit, personnel shall make every reasonable effort to locate the owner. If property is returned to the rightful owner, the “Released to Owner” section of the Property & Evidence Voucher must be completed by the officer and signed by the owner. The completed and signed

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Property & Evidence Voucher is then forwarded to the Property & Evidence Unit. If the owner cannot be located, the property shall be packaged and the efforts to locate the owner shall be noted on the property voucher.

The Property & Evidence Unit has the right to refuse any property that doesn't meet the requirements outlined in this guide.

Wallets, Purses, Backpacks and other Containers

Currency must be separated from wallets, containers, etc. and packaged separately in a plastic currency bag.

All containers designed for the purpose of storing personal papers or effects will be packaged in the following manner:

- Make a complete inventory of the items inside the container and list them separately on the Property & Evidence Voucher.
- Separate any currency inside the container and list it separately on the Property & Evidence Voucher, listing the currency by its denominations. (Example: 6 dollars and 20 cents- 1 Five dollar bill, 1 One dollar bill, 1 dime, 2 nickels)
- Other items found during inventory such as weapons, currency, drugs should be packaged separately according to directions found in this guide.
- All currency shall be submitted in a clear plastic currency bag and appropriately filled out.

After the officer has conducted a complete inventory of the container, identified any items as evidence of a crime or as hazardous, and has dealt with said items he may then place the container in a clear plastic evidence bag or brown paper bag. If the container is too large for either type of bag the property tag may be affixed to container itself. When officers come into possession of such items as wallets, purses, briefcases, luggage, backpacks, and other containers designed to hold/store personal items as property they are obligated to investigate and determine, if possible, who is the owner of said property and make reasonable effort to return the property and have the owner sign the release portion of the property and evidence voucher.

Bicycles as Property

Bicycles that are found as property will be tagged with a property tag and delivered by the finding officer to his or her precinct and secured by a means in accordance with that command's procedures. Bicycles can also be delivered directly to the Property & Evidence Unit during normal operating hours.

Each precinct will deliver bicycles to the Property & Evidence Unit during normal business hours on a weekly basis.

Street Signs and Other City-Owned Property

Any time an officer comes into possession of city-owned street signs or other city-owned property during regular city business hours, he or she will contact the department that owns the property to facilitate its return.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Any time an officer comes into possession of city-owned street signs or other city-owned property after regular city business hours, he or she will secure the found property in their precinct property room until a precinct representative can contact the appropriate city agency to claim the property.

The Property & Evidence Unit will NOT accept city-owned street signs or city-owned property unless it is being held as evidence of a crime.

Prisoner Property

Personal property found on a subject who has been physically arrested shall be brought with the prisoner to the appropriate holding facility. The personal property shall be vouchered by the incarcerating official/s on either a PD 79-3 (Precinct Detention Record) or CJ-103-5 (Inmate Property Voucher). Personal property shall not be left in vehicles or with third parties, without the expressed permission of the arrested person. Should property be left with a third party, it shall be vouchered, signed by the owner and the third party.

When an arrestee has property that the jail will not accept, the officer will complete a Prisoner Property Voucher (PD-445V-2), list the individual items, and have the arrestee sign the form before the officer leaves the jail. The officer shall list the name, mailing address, and phone number of the recipient that the arrestee names to claim their property.

This form serves as notice to the arrestee that our Department is in possession of their property and that it will be disposed of, if unclaimed, after 90 days. Officers not completing this form will be required to return to the jail at a later date to have the arrestee sign it. All prisoner property will be transported to headquarters and packaged. A packaging station is available in the hallway outside of Property & Evidence (by G51). Once packaged, the prisoner property and Prisoner Property Voucher (PD-445V-2) will be delivered to the P&E window (during business hours) or secured in one of the designated prisoner property lockers (during non-business hours). The prisoner property lockers are the old light blue lockers on the ground floor hallway. These lockers are marked "Prisoner Property" and lock using padlocks, which remain in the open position when not in use. The dark blue lockers are for evidence and regular property only and are not to be used for prisoner property. Large items that will not fit in any of the designated prisoner property lockers should be secured in one of the large item rooms at the end of the hallway, just past the hall lockers on the left. All items must be logged in the Property & Evidence Voucher Log Book located across from the prisoner property lockers. The prisoner's name shall also be listed in the description field.

If a citizen is released from the jail and comes to HQ to claim their property when P&E is closed, an officer or supervisor will retrieve the locker key from the locked box maintained by the NCIC clerk, complete the key log and retrieve the property from the locker. The locker key is then locked inside the same locker so it can be retrieved by the P&E staff. The citizen will sign for the property on the Prisoner Property Voucher (PD-445V-2), which is then placed in the P&E mailbox near G51. In the event prisoner property is secured in a large item room, the P&E supervisor will need to be contacted since these rooms also hold evidence. The key to these rooms is not in the lock box.

Prescription Drug Take Back Program

A Prescription Drug Take Back locker is located in the lobby of each precinct. These lockers are available to the citizens of Virginia Beach 24 hours a day at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th precincts, and from 0600-0200 at the 1st precinct. This program is anonymous and requires no personal information from program participants. PDOs and officers are available to answer questions or provide assistance related to this program. A locked red sharps container is attached to each collection container for the safe collection of needles and other sharps. Each locker is identified with signage, including the types of medication and items that are and are not accepted as part of the program. Prescription medications collected through this program will be disposed of in the same manner as all other narcotics.

With the exception of the 1st Precinct, each precinct is responsible for designating the appropriate sworn personnel to be responsible for the following:

- Maintenance and operation of these lockers.
- Delivering all prescription drugs collected to the Property & Evidence Unit on a weekly basis.
- Checking the lockers on a daily basis to ensure there is sufficient room for additional prescription drugs to be turned in overnight.
- Empty the boxes as needed, but at a minimum every Friday to ensure there is sufficient room for any prescription drugs turned in over the weekend.
- When the drug lockers are emptied, the disposable container will be sealed and weighed on a scale provided by Property & Evidence. The prescription drugs will be documented on a Property & Evidence Voucher (listing “miscellaneous prescription medication.” The custodian will sign the voucher with a second officer signing as a witness to the process.
- The containers of prescription medications will be secured in the precinct’s Property & Evidence room until the custodian makes their regular scheduled delivery of evidence and property to the Property & Evidence Unit.

Signage is provided to direct citizens to speak to the Precinct Desk Officer prior to dropping prescription medications in the locker. Precinct Desk Officers are responsible for:

- Reminding citizens what is accepted and what is not accepted by the Department as part of the program.
- If the citizen has loose pills or liquid medication in containers that are not secured in a clear plastic bag, the PDO will have Ziploc bags of sufficient size to provide the citizen. The citizen will place the loose pills or liquid containers in the Ziploc bag to ensure they do not spill or leak inside the drug locker.
- Advising citizens that any prescription drugs or liquid medication in paper bags, cardboard boxes, etc. need to be transferred to clear Ziploc bags so Department personnel can see the items.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Ensuring drug company representatives and medical facilities are not depositing prescription medications in the drug lockers.

Section III: Property & Evidence Unit

The Property & Evidence Unit is located in the ground floor of Police Headquarters with a long-term storage facility on Leroy Drive. The hours of Property & Evidence are 0700-1600, Monday through Friday. The unit will be closed on all city holidays. An employee of the unit is available after hours by contacting Communications or a supervisor.

Viewing

Personnel needing to view evidence, or sign out evidence for any reason other than court, must provide at least one business days' notice to allow time to locate and pull the evidence. Evidence viewings will take place in the Property & Evidence viewing room under the supervision of a Property & Evidence member. Requests for viewing must be received at least 24 hours in advance to allow time to locate and pull the evidence.

Evidence is not allowed to be removed from Property & Evidence for the purpose of viewing. In the rare situation that a case officer needs evidence for investigative purposes and it is not practical to view it in the viewing room, the evidence will be signed out for "Follow-up Investigation" and the officer or detective shall return the evidence once it has served its purpose.

This does not preclude an investigator from signing out evidence to be sent to the lab, FSU, SID, OCME or another agency for further analysis.

Court Requests

Department members who need evidence for court proceedings shall request their evidence at least 2 business days prior to the court date to allow time to locate and pull the evidence. Requests can be made through the BEAST property viewer program, in person, via telephone, by email (vbpdEvidenceRequests@vbgov.com), by completing a Court Requisition for Evidence (PD-428) form and by listing the initial court date on the Property & Evidence Voucher (PD-478). Evidence that is not requested at least 2 business days in advance will not be pulled except in extreme circumstances.

Release of Evidence

Upon reasonable proof of ownership, property may be released to the owner by the recovering officer, a precinct desk officer when the property is stored in a precinct storage area, or by a member of the property and evidence unit when the property is in their custody. The owner shall provide reasonable proof of identification to the officer or member releasing the property.

The Property & Evidence Unit does not have the authority to release any evidence without the express written consent of the case investigator. If evidence is to be released to a citizen, the case investigator must provide written authorization via email or a signed Evidence Release Authorization (PD-411) form. Officers and detectives can also authorize a release in person at Property & Evidence.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

If authorization is given via telephone, the authorizing officer or detective must follow up with an email to Property & Evidence summarizing the authorization to release the evidence.

Department personnel shall not direct a citizen to report to or contact Property & Evidence to claim their property without first sending a release authorization to Property & Evidence.

Upon the direction to release property or evidence, members of the Property & Evidence Unit shall, upon proof of identity, release the item(s) as follows:

- Update the status of the property in the Property and Evidence Records Management System (BEAST)
- Capture the signature of the person claiming the property or evidence electronically
- Make a note in the comments how the owner was identified (driver's license, school ID, etc.)

Evidence collected at the scene by Forensics personnel and turned over to a detective/officer for release to the owner needs to be documented on a voucher. Additionally, the owner must sign the back of the voucher to acknowledge receipt of the property. Since Forensics personnel type their vouchers after leaving the scene, this could result in two vouchers being completed for the same item. If this occurs, the detective/officer releasing the property to the owner shall include the voucher number used by the Forensics technician in the comments section of the voucher. This will allow Property & Evidence staff to account for the evidence on the Forensics voucher and link the vouchers in the BEAST software.

Release of Currency

Currency may be released in the form of a check to the owner and must be supported by some type of documentation. The following documentation will be made a part of the permanent record in the BEAST system:

- Written release by investigating officer, or their supervisor
- A court order

Currency will not be released to citizens in the form of cash, except in extreme cases and with the approval of the Property & Evidence supervisor.

Submission of Evidence for Laboratory Analysis (CALEA 83.3.2)

Forensic Services Unit

The Forensic Services Unit can process evidence by swabbing of potential DNA, development of latent fingerprints, and restoration of obliterated serial numbers. Other processing may be considered or facilitated upon request.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Officers requesting examinations by the Forensic Services Unit (FSU) shall ensure the evidence is properly packaged to preserve fingerprints, DNA, etc. Indicate the need to “Hold for FSU” in the remarks section of the voucher and submit a PD-47 (Request for Evidence Processing) to FSU. Upon receipt of the PD-47, a Forensic Services Technician will retrieve the evidence from the Property and Evidence Unit for examination. All transfers of evidence will be documented in the Property and Evidence records management system. The results of all processing examinations by FSU shall be summarized on the PD-47 request form that will be returned to the requestor. Additional report(s) from FSU may provide additional detail regarding the results of processing examinations. FSU does not routinely accept PD-47 (Requests for Evidence Processing) for controlled substances packaging and paraphernalia. FSU is not equipped to safely handle such types of evidence due to the inherent dangers associated with unknown substances and the techniques used to develop and collect/capture fingerprint evidence. If requested on the RFLE, DFS can process controlled substances packaging and paraphernalia for latent fingerprints alongside substance analysis while at the lab.

If evidence is being submitted to the Forensics Services Unit prior to the Department of Forensic Science lab, complete a PD-47 and check the “Items to FSU” block so the evidence is not sent directly to the state lab.

Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Forensic Science

Officers requesting a laboratory analysis from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Forensic Science shall complete a Department of Forensic Science Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) form. The completed form along with the evidence to be examined shall be submitted to the Property & Evidence Unit or designated temporary precinct storage facility.

Evidence is delivered to the lab every Friday. In order for evidence to be delivered to the lab on Friday, a properly completed RFLE must be received in Property & Evidence by 1500 hours on Wednesday. Any lab requests received after this deadline will be sent to the lab the following week, unless exigent circumstances exist.

Upon receipt of evidence that is to be examined by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Forensic Science Laboratory, sworn personnel from the Property & Evidence Unit will log evidence out of the Property & Evidence Unit records management system. The evidence will then be delivered to the State Laboratory where the sworn Property and Evidence member and the receiving laboratory representative will document the transfer of evidence, by signing and dating the laboratory request form. A copy of the laboratory request form will be returned to the Property and Evidence Unit to be returned to the submitting officer for case file documentation.

Upon completion of the laboratory examination a sworn member of the Property & Evidence Unit will retrieve the items of evidence documenting the transaction on the request for laboratory examination form. A copy of the laboratory request form will be provided to the laboratory representative and the evidence will be returned to the Property and Evidence Unit. Upon return the Property & Evidence Unit, the evidence will be logged into the records management system.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Copies of the certificate of analysis will be mailed to either the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney (Felony cases) or the submitting officer (misdemeanor cases). Certificates of analysis for NIBIN results will be picked up by Property & Evidence personnel, scanned into the case in BEAST, then sent to the case investigator through inter-office mail.

When a DC-304 (Notice, Motion and Order for Chemical Analysis of Alleged Plant Material) is received from the courts, an email will be sent to the case officer so a Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) form can be completed and returned to Property & Evidence. Since this is a court order, the case officer must complete and submit the RFLE within one week. Once the RFLE is received in Property & Evidence, the evidence will be transferred to the state lab.

Computer Evidence Recovery Unit

Officers requesting a forensic examination of a computer or computer media should complete a Request for Forensic Examination Form (PD-68) and submit the form to the Special Investigations Computer Evidence Recovery Unit. To facilitate the timely release of evidence to Special Investigations personnel, officers should also note on the voucher that the evidence needs to be sent to Special Investigations for additional investigation.

A member of the Computer Evidence Recovery Unit will respond to the Property and Evidence Unit and take possession of the computers or computer equipment. All transfers of computers or computer equipment will be documented in the Property and Evidence records management system.

Retention of Evidence

The Property & Evidence Unit is responsible for securing and maintaining over 75,000 items of evidence and property. For this reason, it is important for officers to dispose of evidence no longer needed for the prosecution of cases. The following guidelines will assist personnel in disposing of their evidence in a timely manner.

Misdemeanor Evidence

Misdemeanor Evidence should be disposed of if ALL of the following criteria are met:

- The case has been adjudicated for all defendants
- The time for appeals has passed (90 days from conviction) and all appeals are exhausted
- There are no litigation holds for the evidence
- The prosecution limitations have expired if charges haven't been filed
- The evidence isn't needed for a related case
- There are no pending civil matters

Violent Felonies

Violent felonies include homicide, manslaughter, malicious wounding, robbery and sexual offenses. Evidence related to violent felonies will be handled in the following manner:

- If the case is unsolved, hold all evidence for at least 20 years. Disposal and/or release of evidence requires approval from the violent crimes lieutenant.
- If the case has been adjudicated with a conviction, hold all evidence for the length of incarceration or ten years, whichever is longer
- If the case has been adjudicated with an acquittal, hold all evidence for ten years. Depending on the circumstances of the case and the acquittal, the violent crimes lieutenant and Commonwealth Attorney's office can approve the disposal and/or release of evidence.
- If the case has been adjudicated with a verdict of "not guilty by reason of insanity," hold all evidence for the duration of hospitalization or ten years, whichever is longer.
- Exceptionally cleared cases – Hold all evidence for 5 years. Disposal and/or release of evidence requires approval from the violent crimes lieutenant and the Commonwealth Attorney's office.
- Unfounded cases – Hold all evidence for one year. Disposal and/or release of evidence before one year is at the discretion of the violent crimes lieutenant and the Commonwealth Attorney's office.

All Other Felonies

Evidence related to non-violent felonies will be held for five years, whether the case has been solved or remains unsolved. Disposal and/or release of evidence before five years is at the discretion of the investigator and their supervisor. The Commonwealth Attorney's office can be consulted for guidance.

PERK Kits

Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (PERK) kits related to sexual offenses will be handled in the following manner:

- Blind kits will be destroyed after two years
- All other kits will be held for 10 years after analysis by the Department of Forensic Science (DFS) or until the victim turns 20 years old if the victim was a minor at the time of offense, whichever is longer.
- PERK kits from unfounded cases that have not been sent to DFS can be destroyed with the approval from the violent crimes lieutenant and Commonwealth Attorney's office.

Suicide Evidence

Since new evidence can be discovered years later that proves a suicide was actually a homicide, all evidence related to suicide cases will be held for five years. If there is irrefutable evidence that the death was, in fact, a suicide, the violent crimes lieutenant can authorize the disposal and/or release of evidence.

Audio Tapes, SANE Disks, Forensic Interview Documents and Similar Documents

Since this evidence is considered documents, as defined by the Library of Virginia, they will follow the GS-17 retention schedule as follows:

- Evidence related to resolved (cleared by arrest, unfounded, other) serious offenses will be held for 75 years.
- Evidence related to unresolved (pending inactive, pending active) serious offenses will be held for 100 years.
- Evidence related to resolved (cleared by arrest, unfounded, other) non-serious offenses will be held for 10 years.
- Evidence related to unresolved (pending inactive, pending active) non-serious offenses will be held for 5 years.

Serious offenses include homicide, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, abduction, robbery, aggravated assault, sex crimes, rape, incest and crimes against children.

Non-serious offenses include blackmail, bribery, counterfeiting, curfew, destruction of property, disorderly conduct, drug/narcotic offenses, DUI, embezzlement, extortion, forgery, fraud, gambling, identity theft, intimidation, larceny, loitering, peeping tom, pornography, prostitution, runaway, simple assault, thefts, trespassing, vagrancy, vandalism, arson and weapons law violations.

Disposition of Evidence

Property & Evidence by its very nature collects and disposes of a wide variety of items and the process must be consistent and done in a timely fashion in order to prevent an overload of the system.

Twice each year, Property & Evidence personnel will generate an evidence disposition tracer for every sworn member who has evidence stored in the Property & Evidence facility. This list will be comprehensive and broken down into a single case per page of the report. Each page will be signed by the officer who approved the disposition, the Property & Evidence employee who physically disposed of the items and a second Property & Evidence employee who verified the requested disposition. Additionally, a detective bureau lieutenant is required to sign for violent crimes (robbery, sexual offenses, death investigations) when the evidence is to be disposed of.

Officers can request that evidence be auctioned, destroyed, returned to the owner or converted to city use. The decision on the type of disposition is the sole responsibility of the case officer and the Property & Evidence personnel will do as they are instructed unless they suspect an act of negligence or obvious error.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Property & Evidence employees retain the right to ensure that evidence is disposed of correctly and in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth and City.

When authorizing the return of property to an owner, officers shall provide the name of the owner and a complete mailing address so a letter can be mailed to them.

Narcotics

When an officer decides that narcotic evidence can be destroyed, Property & Evidence personnel will note the fact in the BEAST computer system and place the evidence in an isolated location separate from other evidence to prevent the potential for accidental destructions of evidence.

When the Property & Evidence staff feels they have sufficient narcotics to be destroyed, it will be transported to an appropriate incinerator and destroyed. The move of the narcotics will be done in as confidential and unpredictable manner as possible to prevent theft or tampering. The movement of the narcotics will be conducted with a minimum of two armed officers and any other civilian Property & Evidence officers as deemed appropriate. Additionally, two SWAT officers will accompany the narcotics move and only be responsible for site security.

Prior to the disposal of narcotics and other dangerous drugs, the Property & Evidence Unit shall notify the Special Investigations Division and the Internal Affairs office of the following:

- Location of the disposal
- Date and time
- Types of drugs
- Quantities of drugs (total items)

Firearms

When an officer decides that firearm evidence can be destroyed, Property & Evidence personnel will note the fact in the BEAST computer system and place the evidence in an isolated location separate from other evidence to prevent the potential for accidental destructions of evidence. When the Property & Evidence staff feels they have sufficient firearms to be destroyed, they will be transported to an appropriate facility and destroyed. The move of the firearms will be done in as confidential and unpredictable manner as possible to prevent theft or tampering. The movement of the firearms will be conducted with a minimum of two armed officers and any other civilian Property & Evidence officers as deemed appropriate. Additionally, two SWAT officers will accompany the firearm move and only be responsible for site security. Prior to the destruction of a firearm, Property & Evidence employees will ensure that a NIBIN test has been conducted on the appropriate guns and the Criminal Firearms Clearinghouse Report (PD-487) has been completed.

Computers and Other Electronic Devices that Retain Personal Data

Due to the difficulty of ensuring that hard drives and internal memories have been completely purged of questionable or personal data, it is the policy of the Property & Evidence Unit to destroy all computers, smart phones and other electronic devices that are capable of retaining personal data and not make them available to the public through auctions.

Court-Ordered Disposition

When evidence is kept by the courts or ordered destroyed by a judge, a Court-Ordered Disposition (PD-421-2) form is required to be completed. The evidence held by the courts and/or ordered destroyed is listed and a judge or court clerk must sign the form. The completed form must be turned into Property & Evidence immediately after court in lieu of the evidence.

Section IV: Forensic Services Unit

Documenting the Crime Scene

Photographing and Videotaping (CALEA 83.2.2)

The purpose of photographing the crime scene is to provide a permanent visual record of what occurred at a crime scene prior to, during, and after the commission of an offense. To aid in reconstructing the crime scene at a later time and refresh memory, substantiate testimony, and clarify understanding. Crime scene photos should depict the placement and significance of physical evidence in order to convey to a jury the circumstances of the crime.

Photographs must be accurate, authentic and relevant to be entered as evidence in court proceedings. Personnel will follow Forensic Service Unit directives to ensure these standards are met.

Photographs and video taping should be complete pursuant to the collection of evidence and should depict the following:

- Over all Photos: General photographs of crime scene. Photograph as soon as possible, preferably before anything is disturbed and anyone is allowed into the scene. A grayscale marker or template should be photographed to establish the location and pertinent case information.
- Midrange Photos: Link between overall and close ups photos showing relationship of pertinent evidence. These photographs should be taken from a natural perspective.
- Close up Photos: Photographs of individual items of evidence with and without a ruler and evidence marker.

Video Evidence Section

The Forensic Services Unit has a technician that specializes in the analysis of audio and video evidence. When dealing with unfamiliar circumstances, contact the video specialist at (757) 385-7938.

Audio Evidence

Audio Analysis: Audio recordings can be analyzed by suppressing or eliminating background noise and clarifying speech patterns and signals. In some instances the background noise can render information that was previously undetected. Audio recordings can also be saved from the recorded device to a digital format.

Video Analysis: Both analog and digital video recordings can be analyzed in effort to identify suspects and/or obtain other pertinent information to aid in an investigation.

The capabilities of video analysis include:

- Converting analog video to digital format
- Converting digital video to other digital formats for viewing

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Frame grabbing and still images can be produced from video and made as prints or digital files
- Image enhancement and stabilization to maximize clarity
- De-multiplexing for multiple camera systems
- Production quality tools such as magnification, slow motion or highlighting
- Multi-source input/output: VHS, DVD, CD-ROM, Hi-8, DVR, Blu-ray
- Cropping video length to show only areas of interest

Collection

Audio collection/submission: Audio recordings should be submitted in their original format with a memo describing the requested analysis. In cases with digital recordings, times should be noted. Special considerations must be given to analog audio recordings, for instance, minimal playback should be performed and extreme temperatures should be avoided. Contact the Digital Evidence Section with questions about the submission process.

Video collection: Most DVR systems have a CD/DVD writer to retrieve video recorded on the system. Generally, most systems will have a specific function listed as archive, backup, copy or export in which you can write the data directly to the CD/DVD writer. In almost all cases, you will also need to copy the proprietary viewer in addition to the video. Some systems will do this automatically while others may require you to manually select this option. The best practice for protecting video evidence is to record it on write once media (CD-R or DVD-/+R). This is considered the master evidence. The system may require you to format the CD/DVD on the system. When the above method is unavailable due to the limited options of the recording system a temporary storage device such as an SD card or USB flash drive may be used. Each Detective Squad will have USB flash drives available for this purpose. These flash drives should be properly identified to be used for evidence retrieval only to limit potential data corruption. When evidence is retrieved on a temporary storage device the data should be transferred to permanent media as soon as possible to create master evidence. Detectives may complete this task on their own. If additional video analysis is needed, detectives can submit their temporary storage device to the Forensic Services Unit and indicate on the PD-92 that a master evidence copy is needed. The master evidence will be created for them in addition to the requested analysis. The preferred method is to submit to FSU. Once the video evidence has been transferred to the master evidence media the temporary device should be wiped (deleted/formatted) in preparation of the next evidence retrieval. This maintenance process will minimize data loss on the device. Special considerations should be taken with analog video evidence, contact the Digital Evidence Section for questions regarding the handling and submission of analog evidence.

Video Evidence Technical Support

If an officer/detective is unable to recover video evidence after these steps have been taken, the Forensic Services Unit provides Video Evidence Technical Support on a case by case basis.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

If an officer is unable to retrieve video with the assistance of the business owner submit form PD-92 explaining the problems encountered; DVR specifications, and the contact information. At this time, a video forensic specialist will take the necessary steps to obtain the video from the location. Depending on the circumstances of the case the storage device may be need to be seized and brought back to FSU. This may require the detective to be on scene as well. Since this service cannot be provided in the same manner as our response to crime scenes for evidence collection Video Technical Support will be provided by appointment only and should be set up with at least 24 hours' notice when possible. FSU Technicians are not trained in the recovery of video evidence at crime scenes and do not carry CDs, DVDs, or flash drives on them; therefore, the appointments are necessary to ensure that a trained Specialist and proper media are available for the recovery.

Master evidence will be created from surveillance video submitted on USB drives. A PD-92 must be submitted with an incident report. Contact the Digital Evidence Section with questions about the submission process.

Video recordings that are considered master evidence as described in this guide should ultimately be submitted to the P & E unit in accordance with the Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide and General Order 4.05.

Submitting Video/Audio Evidence to the Forensic Services Unit for Analysis

- Fill out a Request for Video Analysis form (PD-92) thoroughly. If pertinent information is left off it may delay the results. If the assigned examiner should have any questions regarding a request the requesting person will be contacted at the number provided on the request form or by email.
- Place the video evidence, Request for Video Analysis form (PD-92) and chain of custody form in an available video locker in the Detective Bureau. More than one video may be placed into a locker as long as the associated paperwork is completed for each case. The key should be retained by the requesting person. The requesting person will write their name and the date the evidence was submitted on the board above the lockers next to the appropriate locker number. Additionally, a digital evidence drop box is located in the hallway of the Special Operations Complex located at 2667 Leroy Road, outside of FSU.
- Once a request has been completed the requesting person will receive an email to notify them that the case has been completed and the materials are ready for pick-up either in person or from the locker. If the video evidence locker was utilized, the completed materials should be retrieved as soon as possible to free up locker space.

The key retained by the requesting person will be used to remove the materials from the assigned locker and left in the door once it is empty.

Crime Scene Sketching

The purpose of crime scene sketching is to fill in the gap between photos and written notes in order to document the placement of evidence and illustrate dimensions and features of the area.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Crime scene sketches are usually performed for more serious offenses to include homicides, malicious assaults and police related shootings.

A scanner or CMM (coordinate measuring machine) may be used in lieu of or to supplement traditional measuring techniques. See Forensic Services Unit directives for specific instructions.

Crime scene sketches are done in three stages to include a rough sketch which is initiated at the scene, an intermediate sketch (which is a more refined version of the rough sketch) and a final sketch. The final sketch is created using approved crime scene diagramming software.

The rough sketch will document with accurate measurements the locations of pertinent evidence, overall dimensions of the area, and any other relevant objects. Services provided by other city agencies, such as pictometry, should be considered as source of information regarding geography.

The intermediate sketch will depict a clear and accurate view of the crime scene. The sketch should be drawn using a standard scale. The *legend* of the diagram will document the following information:

- Name (drawn by)
- Date and type of offense
- IBR number and address
- Compass direction

Under the heading *key* will be a numerical listing of evidence included in the diagram. Item numbers should correspond with those numbers indicated on the crime scene search report. *Symbols* will appear under a separate heading to clarify characters used in the diagram. Item of evidence that were not measured at the crime scene should not be depicted in the scale drawing.

The final sketch is usually completed at the request of investigating officer or Commonwealth Attorney for the purpose of court presentation. This version of the diagram is usually produced on a larger format and may require services to be rendered outside the department.

Personnel responsible for sketching crime scenes will have the following available:

- Graph Paper
- Pencils (preferably mechanical)
- Tape Measures, various sizes
- Compass, to determine direction

Crime Scene Search Reports (CALEA 83.2.6)

Forensic Case Management (FCM) reports will be completed to document all work done at the crime scene by Forensic Technicians or Crime Scene Officers. The report will include date and time of arrival, description of photographs/videotapes, examinations conducted, and any evidence recovered.

Forensic Case Management reports will also include a complete and detailed account of actions performed at the crime scene and/or the forensic lab.

There will be a complete list of all items collected as evidence. The list will include item number, date of recovery, time of recovery, and handling, which will consist of any type of processing done on said item. When describing evidence recovered from a crime scene, technicians will refer to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science Evidence Handling Guide for definitions.

All Forensic Case Management Reports must be done completely in a timely manner and are subject to review by a forensic supervisor. Reports must be thorough, accurate, and legible. Reports should be completed by the end of the shift unless an exception is made by a supervisory member.

Trace Evidence (CALEA 83.2.1)

Trace evidence consists of materials that are small or in quantities sometimes too small to be detected by the unaided eye. Hair, fiber, Primer Residue (PRK), chemicals, glass, and paint are examples of trace evidence. At times these items can easily be exchanged through contact or transferred by air currents because of their size. Trace evidence should be searched for, immediately collected, and properly packaged before any fingerprint dusting is done. In some cases trace evidence is seldom conclusive alone, but when combined with other forms of evidence, it becomes very valuable. When collecting pieces of evidence that may contain valuable trace evidence it is very important not to shake, fold or unnecessarily handle the items prior to placing them in a paper bag. Clothing should not be placed in plastic or airtight containers. If conditions permit, in a controlled environment, have the subject stand on a clean sheet of paper when removing any clothing to be collected. This paper should be carefully folded and placed in a paper bag and forwarded to the laboratory with the subject clothing. When drying wet or bloody clothing or any other type of saturated evidence in the drying cabinets, package items of evidence along with any paper that was used on the bottom of the drying cabinet. When collecting both suspect and victim clothing, avoid contamination by packaging the two separately.

Hair and Fibers

Hair and fibers are the most common pieces of evidence transferred between people who come in contact or from a person entering and leaving a scene. Hair can be very important form of evidence because a lab examination of a single strand of hair can provide the following details:

- Human or animal
- Race

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Hair color
- If hair was chemically treated
- The part of the body from which it originated
- Whether the hair had been burned, cut, or forcibly removed
- If suitable for DNA profile. The hair root tissue can provide a DNA profile. If not root is present, genetic analysis of the hair shaft provides mitochondrial DNA (inherited from maternal bloodlines).

Examinations to determine that a hair is either human or animal and whether or not a human hair is suitable for DNA testing will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science.

Examinations to determine race, body origin, method of removal and animal species will be submitted to the FBI trace evidence unit.

Collection of Hair:

The VDFS will not accept evidence that requires extensive searching for hairs/fibers such as bedding and large carpets, so it should be recovered in the following manner. Hair should be collected using tweezers / low tack adhesive pads and placed inside a rigid container, folded in paper, or placed in a glassine envelope. Taking caution not to fold or crush the ends of the hair. Hair and small fiber evidence should never be packaged in plastic. A static charge can build and when the package is open it may cause the evidence to “jump” out of the package.

Collection of Known Samples:

Use clean scissors to cut a minimum of 25 hairs as close to the skin as possible.

Fibers, String, Rope & Cords:

Fibers are classified as animal (fur, wool, silk, etc.), vegetable (linen, cotton, hemp, jute, etc.) or synthetic (acetate, acrylic, aramid, fluorocarbon, glass, metallic, nylon, olefin, polyester, rayon, saran, and spandex). From fibers a lab exam can provide the color, type, characteristics, melting points and micro-chemical of a fiber. Fiber matches are not 100% and therefore require substantiation with corroborative evidence. String can be identified by its fibers and its twisted or braided patterns. Braiding and twisting strings together using different types of fibers make ropes and cords.

Collection:

- Fibers should be collected using tweezers or the sticky portion of Post-It notes and placing them in glassine envelopes. Areas such as car seats, rugs, and furniture that a suspect was in contact with are generally the areas from which to obtain fiber samples.
- When collecting string, rope & cords DO NOT disturb any knots. Cut away from the knot as to avoid it from coming undone. Label the end you have cut. The ends should be taped.

Submission:

Effective 11/05/2014, the submitting agency will be required to consult with the laboratory prior to submission of any hair/fiber evidence.

Primer Residue

Primer residue is the material deposited on a surface resulting from a discharged weapon. It consists of organic and inorganic materials from the bullet, jacket, cartridge case, powder, & primer component residues. When collecting evidence in a case that involves a firearm discharge, where primer residue was deposited on the surface of the items collected, items should be photographed using infrared photography. Trace metals used in primer composition:

- Antimony – used as primer fuel and as a hardener in the projectile and is absent in most rim fire ammo and shotgun shells
- Barium – used as the primer oxidizing agent and used in most ammo
- Lead – major component of primer and projectile
- Other elements – silicon, sulfur, calcium, copper, etc.

Collection

- Complete questions in the Primer Residue package provided by the Virginia Department of Forensic Science
- Wear clean gloves for each test performed
- Follow the instructions provided in the Primer Residue kit.

Submission

Effective 07/01/16, primer residue examinations of samples obtained from living persons suspected of firing a weapon will be routinely accepted. Primer residue kits collected from the following will not be routinely accepted: gunshot victims, inanimate objects, and individuals in possession of a weapon. Do not submit cotton clothing for primer residue analysis. Only submit “skin-like” material such as leather, plastic, etc. Cotton material does not provide good probative value as the primer residue can be retained in the cotton material for long period of times even after several washings, therefore, it cannot be established when the residue was actually deposited. This also applies to vehicles used in a drive-by shooting. Collect one sample from a leather, vinyl, or plastic area – no fabric – and strike out the left hand or right hand annotation on the vial and write in the area information. Consult VDFS Evidence Guide if there are any questions on the submission criteria.

Serial Number Restoration

If the serial number used to identify the firearm has been tampered with or obliterated, it should be submitted to the Forensic Services Unit. Often the stamping methods distort the metal below the surface and allow for the recovery of the number. A Request for Evidence Processing forms (PD-47) can be dropped off or submitted through inter-office mail to the Forensic Services Unit 24-hours a day.

The investigator should consider whether other evidence such as fingerprinting or DNA needs to be recovered prior to the serial number exam and indicate that on the request form as well.

General Chemicals

General chemicals consist of unknown liquids and powders, household products, oils, etc. DFS will routinely accept the following types of evidence: clandestine laboratory precursors, bank dye, pepper spray, tear gas, taps, adhesives, salt (deer bait) and acids/bases. Effective 11/05/2014, the submitting agency will be required to consult with the laboratory prior to submission of General Chemical evidence not specifically listed above.

Collection

- A swab of the liquid is NOT recommended.
- Leave household products in its container if possible. If sampling, pour out no more than one ounce.
- Treat acids like explosives – use a small glass jar with a lid that contains no metal (or is a coated metal lid) or if using the existing container place it in a paint can packed with soil, sand, paper, or Styrofoam around the jar.
- Always package to protect officers & lab personnel
- Consult the Fire Department or the Virginia Department of Forensic Science if needed.

Glass

Glass fragments differ in optical properties. Lab examination can determine the various ways in which glass fragments were subjected to force. When recovered from a crime scene they can often aid in the solution of the case.

Types of Lab Examinations:

- Type of fracture
- Fracture matches
- Direction of blow
- Color or tint
- Tempered
- Fluorescence
- Thickness
- Surface marking
- Density
- Optical properties

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

With glass from auto headlamps, plastic lenses & grill parts lab examinations can determine the year & make of the auto and may be able to match it to the suspects' vehicle.

Collection

- Submit all pieces (if available) if examining for fracture match or side of force determination, for all other examinations submit a piece the size of a postage stamp.
- Carefully package in a rigid container to prevent damage.
- Mark glass removed from frame indicating – interior and exterior
- If available submit dry outer clothing of suspect. Do not package clothing with shoes.

Paint

Paint covers the surface of many items and is one of the most common amongst transferable evidence. Paint connects evidence at the scene to the source; it substantiates witness testimony, and determines authenticity. Paint is manufactured in batches so identifications are never 100% conclusive.

Types of Paint Examinations

- Physical matching – irregular borders, brush stroke striations, polish mark striations & surface abrasions
- Chemical comparison – organic and inorganic
- Uniqueness – composition, layer sequence, color, type and texture
- PDQ (Paint Data Query) is used to identify the make & model

Collection

- Known sample – collect a sample about nickel size with all layers intact by cutting down to the substrate (metal, brick, wood, etc.) from an area next to the damage area.
- Place sample in a rigid container, vial, or glassine envelope
- Unknown sample – package the same as the known sample except in fracture match examinations. For fracture match examinations place pieces in a rigid container and cushion with tissue paper.
- DO NOT:
 - Scrape paint from the surface
 - Use a paper envelope as the primary envelope
 - Use lifting tape or any other tape to collect paint
 - Pack with cotton

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

Along with the known and unknown samples submit:

- Make and model of all vehicles involved
- Color of all vehicles involved
- Specify victim and suspect samples
- Specify known and questioned samples
- The lab no longer offers analysis stating if items were cut versus torn, but they provide fracture match to show portions were at one time part of a single unit such as torn condom wrappers and pieces of tape to a roll. Rope that is submitted to the lab will be checked for fracture matches of the ends first, and if this is unsuccessful they will conduct an analysis of the chemical components of the rope.

Impression Evidence

An impression occurs when an object impacts a surface and characteristics or features are transferred onto the receiving surface. Impression evidence is the most overlooked evidence at a scene. The two most common types of impression evidence left at crime scenes are by footwear and automobile tires. Tools used to force entry may also leave impressions. Impression evidence may provide class characteristics or individual characteristics.

Class Characteristics

- Pattern and size
- General wear pattern
- Trademark & design

Individual Characteristics

- Cuts and scratches
- Glass and rocks embedded in the sole or tire
- Anything unique to the item that is a chance happening

Type of Lab Examinations

- Three-dimensional impressions – ex. Shoe and tire impressions in soil, snow and mud
- Two-dimensional prints – ex. Shoeprints on a floor
- Fabric impression transfers – ex. Gloves or cloth patterns
- General transfers – ex. Bloody knife print on sheet

Collection

- Photograph the impression with and without a scale at the same depth as the impression with the camera at a 90° angle. Both oblique and direct lighting

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

methods can be used to enhance the details in the impression. For best results, photograph the impression with the flash at 10°, 30°, and 45° angles with a minimum of four photos for each position angle.

- Cast shoe and tire impressions (3D) using dental stone or similar material. Before hardening, etch the case information into the back of the cast or use a permanent marker to write the information on the dried cast. Once dry, lift and DO NOT remove any of the debris from the cast. Package carefully as if packaging glass – do not package in plastic, use a rigid container to ensure cast does not break.
- Two dimensional impressions may be recovered using a variety of techniques including fingerprint powders, electro static dust lifters, and gels.
- Use Mikrosil or similar material on tool impressions.

Submission

- Two-dimensional glove impressions may be submitted along with latent fingerprints lifts directly to the Identification section of Forensic Services.
- All other casts or lifts recovered as evidence will be submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit.
- A written request will be sent to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science to compare unknown samples to known sources.

Fingerprint Evidence (CALEA 83.2.3)

A fingerprint is an impression of the friction ridge pattern of the fingers left on a surface. Friction ridges are the lines that form patterns on the fingers, palms, toes, and sole of the feet, which are used for gripping. Ridge patterns form during fetal development and do not change from birth to death, although they may be altered. Fingerprints are unique and therefore considered one of the most positive means of identification.

Types of Prints Left on Surfaces

- Latent fingerprints – friction ridges contain rows of pores that excrete perspiration. Perspiration is composed of over 98% water and less than 2% salts, urea, amino acids, etc. When items are touched the impression of the friction ridges are left on the surface. Latent fingerprints may need to be enhanced to be visible. Therefore items in question should not be handled prior to processing.
- Plastic fingerprints – Impression of the friction ridges left on a pliable surface – such as wax, soap, or butter. Plastic fingerprints are visible.
- Patent fingerprints – Fingerprints left on a surface once friction ridges come into contact on other mediums such as blood, dirt, grease, etc. Patent fingerprints are visible.

Developing, Lifting, Labeling and Preserving Latent Fingerprints

The development of latent fingerprint evidence is a crucial part of many investigations. Surfaces and items that may hold fingerprint evidence should be handled with great care.

There are many factors involved in depositing and subsequently developing latent fingerprints. These factors should be considered when determining the correct method for processing the item/area. Processing a surface for fingerprints is the last process to be done after all evidence is collected to avoid contamination.

- **Fingerprint Powders**

- Fingerprint Powders are the most common tools used to develop latent fingerprints. The powders adhere to moisture in the latent fingerprints and work best on dry smooth non-textured surfaces. Once fingerprints are located they are lifted using transparent tape and placed on a backing card.

- **Chemical Development**

- There are numerous chemical products available for use in the Forensic Services Unit. These options should be considered when dealing with difficult surfaces and older evidence. Items can be recovered, packaged to preserve prints, and vouchered to Property & Evidence along with the completed form PD-47 requesting FSU process the evidence since chemical processing should not be done in the field in most cases.
 - Ninhydrin- contains ninhydrin crystals, alcohols, and petroleum ether. It reacts with the amino acids in the fingerprint residue. Heat is used to accelerate latent development. Ninhydrin is used on porous surfaces such as paper, cardboard, and money. Cyano acrylate (super glue) – reacts with water, fatty constituents, and other components in the fingerprint. The fumes polymerize the ridge detail creating a hard whitish deposit. It can be used on nonporous surfaces such as guns, plastic bags, etc. Fingerprints can then be photographed or further enhanced with fluorescent dyes or an alternative light source.
 - Fluorescent Dyes- used after the cyano acrylate process to enhance the detail of the fingerprint making it readily visible.

Collection and Submission

After the fingerprint has been developed using the above techniques it must be documented, recovered, and submitted to AFIS. Depending on the circumstances the fingerprint will either be photographed (i.e. in a visible substance such as blood) or submitted per Forensic Unit Directives (i.e. a cut-out portion of window frame) or the following procedure will be initiated for lifted fingerprints:

- Fingerprint backing cards (PD-69) will show the date collected, IBR#, offense type, address, where latent was lifted from, name of technician who lifted the card and their code number. Space is provided to draw a sketch on the back of the card if needed. Forensic technicians will also place their initials over the lifting tape and indicate the direction of the print if applicable.
- All fingerprint cards/latents will be placed in a PD-102 (or larger envelope if needed) before delivery to the Identification section. All pertinent case information including type of offense, case number, address, date, control number, officer at scene, zone, and technician's initials will be marked on these envelopes. This

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

information should be updated as needed (ex: type of offense changes, GNWD to HOMI, LARC to BGLR, etc). Provide supplemental information such as "second submission" or "evidence may be related to another crime scene" when applicable. **If latent fingerprints are recovered from a vehicle, the description of the vehicle will be written on the envelope.** A small piece of red evidence tape shall be placed across the opening of the PD-102 to ensure the integrity of the evidence within. The red evidence tape shall be initialed and dated by the recovering officer.

- Ridge detail that is developed through a process in which the lifting technique will not work to recover the fingerprint will be photographed. These processes include but are limited to ninhydrin on paper products, cyanoacrylate on plastic surfaces, or dye stains on metals. Photographs will be properly labeled and documented with a scale and submitted for analysis. The surface item processed may be submitted to the P&E Unit for storage. If needed, the fingerprint examiner can check the item out of P&E during the course of the analysis.
- All fingerprint evidence will be documented in a crime scene search report then submitted to the latent fingerprint section in a sealed inter-office envelope. All fingerprint evidence will be placed in the locked deposit box. Hand delivery of fingerprint evidence to latent examiners should only be done if the case requires immediate attention. If you are unable to complete this task prior to the end of your shift a supervisor will be notified.

Known Samples

Known fingerprints and palm prints will be collected when latent fingerprints are recovered as evidence from the crime scene when possible. These fingerprints should be rolled on Form PD-71 and palm prints placed on a Latent Print Backing Sheet. Name of individual will be printed on the elimination card as well as their signature. The forensic technician crime scene officer rolling the prints will also sign and date the card. Indicate the person's relationship to the crime scene on the back of the form (example: victim, resident, witness, officer at scene).

Other issues related to known samples (sources) that will need to be considered when collecting evidence are those cases that deal with hair, fibers, fabrics, paint, glass, wood, soil and tool mark evidence. In these cases, FSU should be responsible for collection of a sample from a known source to accompany any evidence for laboratory comparison or examination.

Request for Direct Latent Fingerprint Comparison to Subject(s) (PD-48)

If a suspect is developed on a case after the original fingerprint cards were turned in from the scene, the investigator may complete a PD-48 including the offense type, technician at the scene, IBR#, and suspect information. The form will be sent to AFIS for a direct comparison of that individual's known prints to the latent cards recovered at the scene.

Biological Evidence (CALEA 83.2.7)

Biological evidence found at a crime scene has become a very valuable tool as it relates to crime scene investigation. Biological evidence recovered from a scene has the potential to contain DNA.

DNA-Deoxyribonucleic Acid is the fundamental building block for an individual's entire genetic makeup.

- It is a component of virtually every cell in the human body
- DNA is the same in every type of cell
- DNA is unique to every person except identical twins

Because of that difference DNA collected from a crime scene can either link a suspect to the evidence or scene, link a victim to a suspect, link a victim to the scene or eliminate a suspect. Just as in fingerprints, DNA recovered from multiple crime scenes can link the same suspect locally, statewide or nationally. The human cell contains two parts where DNA can be recovered, the nucleus and the mitochondria.

- Nuclear DNA is located in the nucleus part of the cell, and is found in substances such as sweat, blood, saliva, semen and skin.
- Mitochondrial DNA located in the mitochondria of the cell, found in bone, hair, and teeth. Mitochondrial DNA is located in a higher quantity in the cell than Nuclear DNA. mtDNA is inherited strictly from the mother, and will match remains to maternally related individuals. It is very useful when the sample found is very old, also in missing persons or found remains cases.

Training (CALEA 83.2.7 C)

Collection of evidence for laboratory analysis should only be done by Forensic personnel, Crime Scene Officers, or other trained Departmental personnel. In the case of DNA evidence collections, this should only be performed by personnel who have been specifically trained in that area. All personnel responsible for recovering DNA evidence will be required to attend training on the proper techniques for evidence recovery and preservation.

Safety Precautions

Biological evidence must be handled with universal precautions, treat every item as if it were contaminated.

- Wear Gloves and Change them when handling different pieces of evidence
- Appropriately mark the packages "Biohazard"
- Avoid hand to face contact and wash your hands immediately after handling evidence
- Use disposable equipment if possible, if not make sure the equipment is properly sanitized with a water bleach solution

Identifying DNA

DNA can be collected from virtually anywhere, including non-traditional sources. Examine the probative value of potential evidence. As discussed earlier Nuclear DNA can be found in sweat, blood, skin and saliva. Refer to the chart below as a guide:

Evidence	Possible Location of DNA on the Evidence	Source of DNA
baseball bat or similar weapon	handle, end	sweat, skin, blood, tissue
hat, bandanna, or mask	inside	sweat, hair, dandruff
eyeglasses	nose or ear pieces, lens	sweat, skin
facial tissue, cotton swab	surface area	mucus, blood, sweat, semen, ear wax
dirty laundry	surface area	blood, sweat, semen
toothpick	tips	saliva
used cigarette	cigarette butt	saliva
stamp or envelope	licked area	saliva
tape or ligature	inside/outside surface	skin, sweat
bottle, can, or glass	sides, mouthpiece	saliva, sweat
used condom	inside/outside surface	semen, vaginal or rectal cells
blanket, pillow, sheet	surface area	sweat, hair, semen, urine, saliva
"through and through" bullet	outside surface	blood, tissue
bite mark	person's skin or clothing	saliva
fingernail, partial fingernail	scrapings	blood, sweat, tissue

Collection and Preservation

DNA evidence needs to be properly air dried to prevent the growth of bacteria. Bacteria growth can destroy genetic material and potentially interfere with testing. In order to further protect potential DNA evidence, ensure that the items of evidence are kept out of direct sunlight and extreme heat. In order to ensure air drying of your item occurs, package the item in paper or boxes. Plastic should only be used as a temporary measure, if there is a concern of contamination through saturation.

Cross Contamination

Cross contamination can easily occur if the collecting officer is not cautious. Cross contamination occurs when DNA from one source comes into contact with another place, person or item of evidence. To avoid this, here are a few simple guidelines.

- During the collection of items, ensure that stained areas of an item do not come into contact with an unstained area of the same item.

EX: A shirt should not be rolled so that blood can contaminate other areas of a shirt. A barrier should be placed such as paper or cardboard inside as well as over and under the garment
- Other officers' DNA can contaminate biological evidence. Do not allow other officers to spit, smoke, drink or eat in a crime scene
- Change your gloves often, especially when handling different items of evidence.

Preservation

Once an item has been properly packaged, you must ensure that it is preserved in such a way to protect the DNA material.

- DO NOT allow items to stay in the heat or direct sunlight
- DO NOT allow wet items to remain in plastic packaging, air dry them as soon as possible
- DO NOT allow separate items of evidence to come into contact with other pieces of evidence or persons.
- DO NOT use staples for sealing packaging containing potential biological fluids.

At times, especially prior to latent fingerprint recovery it is necessary to try to retrieve DNA from an object. This is done through swabbing. Whether you are swabbing the mouth of a bottle or can, or the trigger of a handgun the same precautions should be taken. When you are unable to recover an object due to the size or permanent position, swabs can be taken to attempt to recover DNA; areas may include steering wheels, doorknobs and visible stains located on surfaces or the ground. The following is the procedure for recovering swabs of evidence or surfaces:

- With gloved hands, place two drops of distilled water on a cotton applicator, if the area is dry. If the area is already wet, no distilled water is necessary

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- With a necessary amount of pressure rub the area with the cotton applicator; ensure complete saturation of the entire applicator.
- When swabbing surfaces for touch DNA evidence, the Va. Department of Forensic Science, has recommended using one swab for all surfaces to increase the probability of recovering a usable sample. Examples include; 1) one swab for both the firearm trigger and grip, 2) one swab for both steering wheel and gearshift 3) one swab to sample all door handles of a vehicle. (Do not mix swabs with interior and exterior locations if trying to determine someone's seating position in the vehicle).
- Place the stained applicator in a swab carton.
- Label the carton with case information, location of where the swab came from, time and date.
- Place the carton in a 5x7 envelope and label with an evidence tag, mark as "biohazard" if this applies.

Special Circumstances

- When recovering food that has been bitten or partially eaten, collect the entire food item. Refrigerate immediately and submit to the lab as soon as possible.
- When attempting to recover DNA from feces the best practice is to swab the exterior of the object. Due to the amount of bacteria in feces it is difficult to preserve the sample and obtain a DNA profile. Most identifications occur because there are skins cells on the exterior. The Lab will not accept swabs from toilet water.

Elimination Samples (CALEA 83.3.1)

Oftentimes when you recover evidence for DNA analysis, there is going to exist on that item more than one genetic profile. To help the lab further establish identity there is a need to recover elimination DNA samples, in the form of a Buccal (pronounced Buckle) swab. Buccal swabs are named for the buccal cell located in the inside of the cheek. Buccal swabs are easy to recover and can be done anywhere.

- With gloved hands, gently swab the inside of your subjects' cheek; swabs of both sides can be packaged together.
- Place the stained applicator in a swab carton.
- Label the carton with case information, and subject's name, birthday, race, and sex.
- Place the carton in a 5x7 envelope and label with an evidence tag

Type of Lab Examinations

Cases involving potential blood samples

- Is it blood?

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- Is it human?
- What is the genetic profile of the stain?

Cases involving other potential samples

- Is there DNA present?
- What is the genetic profile of the stain?

The Virginia DNA data bank is a collection of DNA profiles of convicted offenders. Buccal swabs are collected from every person convicted and/or arrested of certain felonies. The samples collected from scenes are cross-references with samples in the databank. If the offender is in the system, this is considered to be a “hit”.

Laboratory Limitations (CALEA 83.2.7 D)

Effective 6/9/17, DFS no longer requires authorization from the Commonwealth Attorney prior to the submission of “trace” DNA (previously known as “touch” DNA). However, only 2 items of potential trace DNA evidence will be analyzed for lesser felony crimes such as property crimes, drug possession and possession of a firearm by a felon. Known DNA samples from the listed suspects must be submitted along with the “trace” DNA evidence for drug/firearm/ammunition possession cases as they are not searchable in the DNA Data Bank.

The DFS policy requiring large multi-item DNA evidence submission to be reviewed in advance by a Forensic Biology examiner or supervisor remains unchanged. Effective 10/12/2004.

The DFS policy that any request for DNA analysis in a non sex-related misdemeanor case will not be accepted unless accompanied by a written request for such analysis from the Commonwealth Attorney remains unchanged. Effective 5/14/2002.

Prior to submission of evidence to DFS for DNA analysis, the requestor is encouraged to contact FSU for guidance. If circumstances require DNA testing to be done by another laboratory the FSU Supervisor should be consulted.

Bloodstains

The purpose of this section is to ensure personnel recognize the importance of bloodstain pattern evidence, can accurately document the evidence, and know when it is appropriate to contact a field expert. Bloodstain analysis is based on the fact that blood is a fluid and because it is a fluid it follows some of the rules of physics and fluid dynamics. One basic principle that we rely on is what’s called cohesive forces, which like molecules are attracted to themselves and they want to stay together. It takes some type of force or some type of trauma to actually shatter the cohesive force to get blood to break to separate.

Basic Bloodstain Patterns

Drip Stain – a bloodstain resulting from a falling drop that formed due to gravity.

Projected Blood - a bloodstain pattern resulting from the ejection of a volume of blood under pressure.

Cast Off - a bloodstain pattern resulting from blood drops released from an object due to its motion.

Transfer Stain - a bloodstain resulting from contact between a blood-bearing surface and another surface. Sub-categories for transfer stain are swipe pattern (having characteristics that indicate relative motion between the two surfaces) and wipe pattern (an altered bloodstain pattern resulting from an object moving through a preexisting wet bloodstain).

In some cases bloodstain pattern analysis completed by a field expert may be able to determine the position of the victim, events that created the bloodstains, and establish a sequence of events.

Documentation

- Photographs should be taken with slow speed film or high resolution images with 50mm lens
- Camera should be mounted on a tripod parallel to the stained surface
- Overall photographs should be taken to show the entire area of interest
- Midrange photographs should be taken showing the relationship of the stain surface to the surrounding areas. These photographs should be taken with and without scale. The scale photographs should depict the height and the horizontal spread of the pattern.
- Close-up photos should be taken with and without scale to depict the relative size of a specific bloodstain. (Metric scale)
- A blood stain analysis expert should be consulted when:
 - It is determined that the evidence has probative value to the investigation
 - The preliminary survey of the evidence contradicts testimony
 - There is significant or unusual stains caused by a violent crime

Sexual Assault Evidence

The following best practice recommendations are intended to efficiently use the limited space in the Property and Evidence Unit while ensuring delicate physical evidence remains preserved.

Crime Scene Evidence

- If the assault occurred on a bed, collect the top surface of the bed linen, which may hold evidence. If the assault occurred in a vehicle or carpeted flooring, the actual fabric should be cut out if practical, if not swabbing of the stains will suffice. Any towels or other articles used by the suspect or victim to clean up should also be recovered.

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

- If there are no visible stains or if the specific area of the assault cannot be determined then an alternative light source (ALS) should be utilized. The detective should contact the forensic technician to discuss the scope of the search to allow the technician to determine which ALS to bring to the scene. Specific lighting conditions are required to properly use ALS.
- All wet biological stains should be air-dried prior to submission to P&E. Any items with suspected biological stains should be packaged in paper to promote drying. The exterior package should be labeled as a biohazard. Staples should not be used to seal packaging.

Appendix A

How to Complete the Property & Evidence Voucher (PD 478)

1. Include page number and total number of pages for voucher.
2. Insert the date the form is completed.
3. Check the appropriate block: Evidence, Property, Prisoner Property, Safekeeping of Firearm.
4. This section is for the primary case officer information and assisting officer information (if applicable). A Probationary Police Officer should never be listed as the primary case officer.
5. List the offense date, offense time, offense location, offense type (robbery, assault, etc.) and collection location in this section.
6. Provide a court date, if known and/or applicable, so the evidence can be pulled and available on that date.
7. This area is designated for documentation of all known parties involved in the offense and/or evidence recovery. Select the appropriate option for the name listed: victim, suspect, victim is owner, suspect is owner, owner, finder, designated recipient, or involved other.
8. List the full name of the person (Last, First, Middle Initial)
9. Provide a complete mailing address for the name listed. Include city, state and zip code.
10. Provide a phone number for the name listed. Include area code.
11. Provide a complete date of birth for the name listed.
12. Each item of evidence/property is to be assigned a number corresponding with the packaging and described in this area.
13. Describe the item. Include make, model and serial number. List any money denominations. List items separately. Be sure to identify an owner for each item if multiple names are listed.
14. Insert date and time the item was collected.
15. Can the item be released to the owner? As a reminder, items listed as property cannot be ordered held since property must be released to its owner upon request. If any item needs to be held, it needs to be classified as evidence and related to a crime.
16. Include which items can be released (all items or only specific items). List item numbers for specific items.
17. If money is listed as evidence, should it be deposited in the bank? Money should be deposited unless the actual money is needed as evidence.
18. Can the items be disposed of? If so, which items?

Evidence Collection and Handling Field Guide

19. Is the evidence needed for court?
20. Is the evidence being sent to the state lab? If so, include a RFLE.
21. Is the evidence being sent to FSU? If so, complete a PD-47.
22. Provide a brief statement explaining how the items listed came into the possession of the Department.
23. Include any applicable comments/information related to the evidence/property and/or its handling.
24. Complete the chain of custody section and sign. A witnessing officer is required for all narcotics, money, jewelry and other high value items.
25. Indicate whether the items were checked in NCIC. Firearms and other property with a serial number or owner applied number must be checked.
26. Insert the incident report number associated with the case.
27. Additional space for multiple items.
28. Complete this section in its entirety when items are released to the owner. ID type refers to how an owner was identified (license, college ID, etc.)
29. When items are released to the owner, the owner must print, sign and date this section.
30. Insert the incident report number associated with the case.

