

## RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge this department's, governmental entity's and/or any of this department's employees' civil or criminal liability in any way. It is not to be construed as the creation of a specific standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to any complaint, demand for settlement, or any other form of grievance or litigation. Violations of this directive, if substantiated, can only form the basis for intra-departmental administrative sanctions.

Chief of Police: Jason Soto /s/		
Approving Deputy Chief: Thomas Robinson /s/		
General Order No: S-190-17	Issued: January 26, 2006	Revised: October 24, 2017
General Order Title: <b>EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY</b>		

### I. **POLICY**

The Reno Police Department is responsible for the safeguarding and proper disposal of evidence and property in its custody. The department strives to maintain evidence and property in the same condition as received and to preserve the evidentiary value and integrity of evidence. All department personnel encountering evidence or property will secure and document those items in accordance with this policy prior to the conclusion of their shift. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure property is returned to its rightful owner. Property which cannot be returned to its owner will be disposed of in accordance with Section 2.06.060 of the Reno Municipal Code.

### II. **DEFINITIONS**

**Evidence** – Items which are related to a case and may be used in a court proceeding. These items must be booked in such a way as to preserve their condition.

**Evidence Packaging Manual** – A reference manual available in the Evidence and Property Intake Room that provides guidance on the appropriate methods of packaging, labeling and booking of evidence or property.

**Evidence Technicians** - Personnel assigned to the Administration Division responsible for receiving, storing, and the control of physical evidence or property in the custody for the department. Evidence Technicians are responsible for inventorying and tracking evidence and property; for transferring evidence or property from the evidence lockers to the evidence facilities; and for ensuring that the Evidence and Property Intake Room has sufficient supplies.

**Investigators** – Any law enforcement personnel, Reno Police Officer, Community Services Officer, Police Services Specialist or any other department employee who is assigned to take reports and collect property and/or evidence.

**Property** – Items which are not connected to a case.

**Evidence and Property Intake Room** – Designated area, where investigators package and secure evidence and property in the designated lockers.

**Evidence and Property Log** – A tracking sheet in the Evidence and Property Intake Room and at the Sub-Station Evidence Lockers, used to list all evidence and property that has been booked in.

**Sub-Station Evidence Lockers** - Reno Police Department evidence lockers located at various sub-stations which can be used to book evidence or property, except for storage of money, suspected narcotics, or weapons.

**Temporary Storage**- Designated area where evidence and property can be secured for up to 48 hours until the final packaging and transfer can be made.

### III. PROCEDURES

#### A. General Evidence and Property Storage Procedures

**Booking Evidence or Property** – Except in cases requiring special storage procedures (see section B.), the following procedures apply when booking evidence or property into the lockers in the Reno Police Department Evidence and Property Intake Room or one of the Reno Police Department Sub-Station Evidence Lockers.

1. When collecting evidence or property, collection must be done to protect the condition of the property and/or evidence and the evidentiary value of the evidence. Investigators must use the same care when transporting the evidence to the station and when packaging the evidence or property for booking.
2. Packaging will be done in accordance with the Evidence Packaging Manual.
3. A bar code label must be affixed to each item of evidence or property. If multiple pieces of evidence or property are packaged together, the first barcode label shall be affixed in the upper left-hand corner of the package and additional barcode labels can be placed on the back of the package.
4. A chain of custody form must be completed for every item of evidence or property.
5. Once the evidence or property is properly packaged, the package must be placed in a locker in the Evidence and Property Intake Room or Sub Station Evidence Locker and immediately locked.
6. Investigators booking evidence or property must complete the Evidence and Property Log.
7. All evidence and property must be appropriately itemized in the investigator's report.
8. No evidence or property will be left undocumented or unprocessed as outlined in this general order.
9. No evidence or property will be stored in any location or receptacle that is not specifically identified for such purpose.

## **B. Special Storage Procedures**

In addition to the General Evidence and Property Storage Procedures listed above, these Special Storage Procedures will be followed for the evidence and property types listed below:

**1. Bio-Hazards** – Evidence or property potentially carrying blood-borne pathogens and/or bio-hazards will be packaged and labeled with a biohazard label placed on the package.

**2. Firearms** – Firearms may be booked as evidence or pursuant to a court order. For firearms that are surrendered pursuant to a protection order, see below. When booking a firearm, the following will occur:

- a. Unloaded firearms will be packaged in an evidence gun box, one per box.
- b. Ammunition belonging to a specific gun can be kept in the same container with the gun that uses that ammunition.
- c. When reasonable and safe to do so, efforts shall be made to ensure that firearms are unloaded; otherwise, the Ranger Master may be called for assistance.
- d. If a firearm is jammed, cannot be cleared or cannot be unloaded, indicate that on the evidence gun box and notify Evidence Technicians ([property@reno.gov](mailto:property@reno.gov)).
- e. A Firearm Trace Request form must be completed for each firearm, except those booked pursuant to a protection order.

**3. Firearms Surrendered Pursuant to Protection Order** – When an individual request to surrender a firearm pursuant to a protection order, the following will occur:

- a. The investigator will take custody of the firearm(s) being surrendered pursuant to a court order.
- b. A Receipt of Firearms form will be completed, listing all firearms surrendered. A copy of the receipt will be booked with the firearm(s). No Firearm Trace Request needed.
- c. The adverse party will be given the original "Receipt of Firearms" form.
- d. The firearm will be booked into the Evidence and property Intake Room in accordance with this general order.
- e. Evidence Technicians will transfer the firearm(s) for storage and will be responsible for the disposition of the firearm(s).

**4. Flammables** – Evidence or property containing highly flammable materials or chemicals, including those powered by gasoline, will be stored in the motor pool. Spray-paint cans, butane lighters, etc. can be stored in lockers.

**5. Identification Cards** – When evidence, ID cards will be booked in accordance with this G.O. When inadvertently kept by an investigator, the ID card should be brought to the front desk where a police service specialist will attempt to contact the cardholder. No report is required when the owner has been found.

**6. Money** - Money envelopes will be used when booking monies. Investigators will place all money, coins, gaming tokens, etc., in a money envelope and will clearly describe the contents on the money envelope. Money envelopes will be booked in the floors safe in the Evidence and Property Intake Room. Evidence Technicians will be responsible for transferring money envelopes from the intake room safe to the evidence safe.

**7. Oversized Items** - If the evidence or property is of such quantity or size that it would be impractical to store in the Evidence and Property Intake Room, it shall be placed in the main station basement garage, in the caged area designated for oversized items.

**8. Digital Evidence** - thumb drives, disks or any other digital storage device containing photographs, audio or video, must be kept in a separate envelope from other evidence.

**9. Wet Evidence or Property** – Evidence or property that is wet with water, bodily fluid or any other liquid, shall be dried prior to booking. Investigators will use the drying chambers located in the temporary locker storage area, in accordance with the posted procedures. Once dried, investigators will complete the booking process by following the standard booking procedures.

### **C. Exceptional Evidence and Property Storage Procedures**

It is recognized that there may be times when due to the complexity of the evidence or property being booked, the quantity of evidence or property being booked or due to overtime restrictions, it may not be practical to book evidence or property prior to the end of a shift. Should such a situation arise, the following steps will be taken to assure that all evidence or property is identifiable to a specific investigator and case. In such situations, the investigator shall:

1. Request authorization from a Supervisor.
2. Obtain access to a temporary storage locker.
3. Place an Evidence Tracking Form in the evidence locker with the evidence or property and list: name and badge number; date evidence or property was left; case number; and name of approving supervisor.

Evidence or property will not be left in this temporary manner more than 48 hours or over an investigator's regular days off.

Exceptional Evidence and Property Storage Procedures do not apply to the following items, which must be booked by the end of shift:

1. Firearms
2. Narcotics/Controlled Substances
3. Money – not counterfeit