SECTION 27
PROPERTY
Revised 5/97

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27.0 PURPOSE
The purpose of this section is to set guidelines for the handling of property and evidence.

27.1 GENERAL PROCEDURE
All items of property seized by members of this Department shall be classified as evidence, found property, recovered stolen, seized contraband, or safekeeping. These items are to be marked, tagged, recorded, and booked into evidence utilizing Departmental packaging material and property forms.

27.2 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES
A. OFFICERS
   It shall be the responsibility of the Officer who seizes an item of property to mark and tag that property indicating the date and time of its seizure, the seizing officer's name and badge number, and any associated DR number.
B. PROPERTY OFFICER
   It shall be the responsibility of the property officer to retain the property, to transport the property to any possible laboratory or other site for expert examination, to retrieve the property for court, or to dispose of the property, to enter all serial number of property into the appropriate computer system, and to keep accurate records of this activity.

27.3 CLASSIFICATION OF PROPERTY
A. EVIDENCE
   Any items of property which are of evidentiary value
B. SAFEKEEPING
   Property which is seized temporarily for storage. This is done for the protection of the property, or in some cases a firearm may be seized to protect against its use.
C. FOUND PROPERTY
   Any property found and appearing to be lost, misplaced, or abandoned.
D. RECOVERED STOLEN
   Property which is recovered and known or suspected to be stolen.
E. SEIZED CONTRABAND
   An item of property which is of itself illegal to possess.

27.4 PROPERTY BOOKING PROCEDURES
All items to be booked into property shall be tagged with a Departmental evidence tag. This tag shall be clearly marked with the pertinent
recognition information indicating the officer's name and badge number, DR number, date, time and where the item was recovered. In the case where an officer places the item of property into an evidence bag or envelope, when possible he should place his initials on the property and then place the evidence tag on the outer portion of that envelope or bag.

The officer shall then prepare a Departmental evidence form in triplicate. This form shall describe the property, classify the property, and give pertinent information relating it to the specific incident or crime of its association. If the property pertains to an arrest, the form shall include the arrest number.

Whenever possible, the property shall then be locked into an evidence locker along with a copy of the evidence form. An additional copy of the form will be attached to the incident or crime report. The original form shall be placed in an area designated for the property officer.

The property officer will remove the property to a secure facility. Property shall not be placed into use except as required to further the associated investigation process. Examples: required test firing of a firearm by the Crime Lab; keeping potted marijuana plants alive until introduction into court.

27.5 PROPERTY REGISTRY
The property officer is responsible to keep accurate records of the property. These records will specify:
A. The classification of the property
B. A description of the property
C. A property number
D. An associated DR number
E. The whereabouts of the property
F. The disposition of the property

The property officer will enter any serial number into the appropriate computer system. When an item of property has had the serial number removed or the serial number is unreadable, the property officer shall mark the item with a unique serial number. These serial numbers will be recorded.

27.6 HANDLING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
A. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES
In placing controlled substances into evidence, officers will be mindful of the dangers involved. Some controlled substances, such
as PCP and cocaine, have been deemed to be toxic material by the Environmental Protection Agency. Officers shall recognize that all controlled substances are potentially dangerous and shall exercise proper precautions in handling them. In handling these substances, officers are to wear protective safety equipment. This department recognizes that it is not always practical in the field, to wear protective safety equipment. However, officers shall attempt to wear some or all of the following protective equipment when convenient to do so:

1. Safety goggles or glasses
2. A lab coat or other protective sleeves
3. A pair of PVC or neoprene gloves over a pair of latex gloves
4. A ventilation/filter mask.

Controlled substances shall be heat sealed in plastic evidence envelopes. The envelope shall be clearly marked, "CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE", and a note shall be attached to the outside of the evidence locker warning that the locker contains a controlled substance.

B. BODY FLUIDS
Because body fluids can contain contagious diseases, they shall be handled with the same precautions used with controlled substances. However, body fluids will be packaged in the containers designated for their use.

C. FIREARMS
Fire arms will be entered into property UNLOADED. The ammunition will be packaged separately from guns.

D. EXPLOSIVES
When an officer seizes common recognizable ammunition or fireworks, he shall follow the normal property booking procedure except that he shall place the property into the designated "explosives lock box" container. If an officer encounters an item of property which he deems to be explosive and potentially dangerous, the officer shall not touch the item but shall cordon off the immediate area and notify the watch commander who shall notify the fire department or LASD bomb squad.

27.7 DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY
A. FOUND PROPERTY OR SAFEKEEPING
Unless ordered by a court to retain such items, found property or property for safekeeping may be disposed of after ninety (90) days, if not claimed by the legal owner. A list of these items will be compiled by the property officer and submitted to the Chief of Police for approval. Items on an approved list may then be
disposed of. Dispositions of these items may include:
1. Return to original owner
2. Retain for Departmental use
3. Sell at public auction
4. Destroy

B. NARCOTICS
When narcotics have been in property for a period of one year, the Property Officer shall ascertain from the Detective Bureau, which items are no longer needed for court. Those items may then be destroyed in the manner prescribed by law. Items of narcotic to be destroyed, shall be packaged in boxes. These boxes shall be sealed, and tagged with an inventory list. This list shall include the Department name, arrest date, and type of substance. These boxes will be numbered. An authorized personnel will transport these boxes to the disposal site.

C. TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP
Property whose ownership has been transferred by a citizen to the department with the approval of the Chief of Police shall be considered as departmental equipment, and not one of the five classifications listed in 27.3 of this order.

D. PROPERTY TO BE DESTROYED
Property to be destroyed, shall be disposed of in a manner authorized by law and approved by the Chief of Police.

27.8 AUCTION
The Department may hold an annual Police Auction where items described in section 27.6 are sold. All items sold at this auction are recorded and a receipt maintained for each sale.