



Carrboro Police Department



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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the proper collection, handling, processing, storing and disposition of evidence and property by members of the Carrboro Police Department.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Primary Property Officer:** The Primary Property Officer shall be appointed by the Chief and shall be responsible for the internal handling of all property and evidence until its disposal.
- B. **Secondary Property Officer:** The Secondary Property Officer shall be appointed by the Chief and shall be responsible for the internal handling of all property and evidence in the absence of the Primary Property Officer.
- C. **Property Room:** The property room is a secure location in which all property, evidence and records are stored. Multiple locations may be utilized for various evidence storage needs.
- D. **Chain of Custody:** Chain of custody is documentation of persons who have had physical custody or control of property and evidence.
- E. **Evidence:** Any item(s) seized by an officer in connection with any criminal action in the court process.
- F. **Found Property:** Any items(s) found by an officer or given to an officer where there is no evidentiary value.



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- G. Property Safekeeping: Any items(s) seized by an officer where there is no evidentiary value.
- H. Property and Evidence Manual: A comprehensive manual that explains in detail procedures involving aspects of property and evidence.

III. COLLECTION PROCEDURES

A. General Procedures

1. Property and evidence shall be collected, preserved and disposed of in compliance with all legal requirements. All items taken into custody shall be properly secured, stored and retrieved. The chain of custody shall be preserved at all times. Any changes in the status of seized items shall be fully documented.
2. The first officer arriving at the scene of a crime shall be responsible for the protection and preservation of any and all physical evidence. This officer shall remain responsible for all property and evidence until relieved by a supervisor or authorized investigating personnel, in accordance with the "Protocol for Contacting Investigators on Call." The officer shall secure the area and protect the evidence from tampering, weather, and the like, until investigating personnel can arrive. In the event that investigating personnel do not respond to the scene, the first officer arriving at the scene shall be responsible for the collection of all physical evidence.
3. Latent prints, sketches and/or physical evidence shall be collected whenever a serious crime(s) (such as arson, homicide, rape, robbery or serious assault) has been committed, or as otherwise directed by a supervisor.

B. Photographs

1. Photographs shall be taken on an as-needed basis and act as a visual representation to document such things as crimes scenes, victim injuries and items of evidence. These photographs shall assist in



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investigations and potential future court proceedings.

2. The standard method of photography shall be through the use of digital media photography equipment. The following handling procedure shall be followed:
 - a. The photographer shall cause a copy of all images, printed in color, to be generated. A page shall contain no more than four images per sheet. A copy of the printout shall be turned in with the officer's case file and with the Felony Prosecution Report.
 - b. The photographing officer shall upload the images from the media card to a computer file for storage purposes. This computer file may be maintained by the officer until the images no longer retain evidentiary value.
 - c. In the event of a serious crime(s) (such as arson, homicide, rape, robbery or serious assault), the images shall be uploaded onto a computer compact disc and be turned in to the property officer using normal procedures.

C. Sketches: Sketches shall be made for major crimes and shall include the following:

1. Case number;
2. Address, apartment number, name(s) and location of the victim(s) as discovered at the scene;
3. Dimensions of the room or building;
4. Locations of seized evidence;
5. Location of the crime scene in relation to other rooms, building, roads, etc.;
6. Name of person who prepared the sketch;
7. Time and date of sketch;



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8. The direction of north on the sketch; and
 9. An indication of the scale of the drawing as it relates to the actual scene.
- D. Latent prints: Latent prints shall be taken whenever necessary. Officers shall not touch evidence in any way that would contaminate the process of developing the latent prints.
- E. Processing and Documentation
1. When collected, property and evidence shall be tagged with the collector's name, date, time, and case number before it is transported for storage. Pre-printed label stickers are provided for this purpose by the Property Officer.
 2. All evidence shall be separated and placed in its own container, whenever possible. All items that are placed into a container shall be sealed. The officer shall then write his initials and the date the item was sealed across the seal.
 3. All monies collected shall be counted with a second officer, Corporal or higher in rank, verifying the amount counted. The money shall be sealed in a secure container specifically designed and marked for currency storage. The name of the second person counting the money shall be marked on the container.
 4. All evidence shall be transported from the crime scene to storage or impoundment as soon as possible.
 5. If an officer recovers an item of stolen or found property, he shall ensure that the appropriate serial numbers are checked in the NCIC/DCI database. If this procedure is not followed, documentation shall be forwarded to the Records Department advising them of why this was not



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done.

6. Officers are responsible for latent processing of evidence that they seize for items such as latent fingerprints, serological evidence, etc. An officer may request that additional processing be completed by an investigator (via a written request) or by certified lab personnel (via a State Crime Lab Request).
7. All documentation shall be maintained via the Evidence Module of the OSSI RMS computer system. Officers submitting items into evidence shall enter the items into the computer system and submit to the property officer for approval.

F. Firearms Requirements

1. All firearms and ammunition shall be stored separately. In the event a firearm is turned in with live ammunition still in the weapon (the weapons jams or the officer is unable to unload it for any reason), special notation shall be made on all documents and packaging to alert the property officer of the loaded weapon.
2. If a firearm is seized in any criminal or civil case, the officer in charge shall cause an ATF Trace Request to be generated with all required information. This ATF Trace Request shall be turned over with the firearm to the property officer for processing.
3. If a firearm is to be sent for examination by the State Crime Lab, the packaging shall be filled out, but not sealed, until the Property Officer checks it for safety.

- ## G. Found Property:
- An officer that obtains an item(s) designated as found property shall make every effort to identify the owner of said property, contact the owner, and make arrangements to return the property as quickly as possible. If the owner cannot be determined or contacted in a timely manner, then the item(s) shall be turned into the property room. All found property items shall be processed in the same manner as items of evidence.



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H. Property Safekeeping: An officer that obtains an item(s) for safekeeping shall document the reason for holding the item and justifications for release of the item. Items that are designated for safekeeping are items that hold no evidentiary value. This may include such items as firearms held during domestic violence cases and weapons seized during an involuntary commitment.

I. Submission

1. The officer in charge of the case shall be responsible for all documentation being correctly completed and ensuring the information is accurately recorded on the property label prior to submission. If any item is too large to be secured in evidence lockers until the Property Officer can arrive, it shall be placed in the possession of the supervisor until the Property Officer can take possession.
2. If the Property Officer is unable to accept the property and evidence immediately, the items shall be kept in the secured lockers until the Property Officer can accept the evidence. The items shall remain secure at all times.

IV. STORAGE

- A. The Property Officer shall be responsible for receiving, storing, maintaining, releasing, and accounting for all property and evidence in accordance with guidelines set forth by the NC Attorney General in the “Disposition of Property by Law Enforcement” manual and all applicable NC State Statutes. Access to the property room shall be restricted and all personnel entering and exiting the room shall be required to sign an access log.
- B. When property and evidence is forwarded to the Property Officer, he shall verify the information via the RMS computer system. Computer documentation shall include all information necessary to both identify the items and ensure the integrity of the chain of custody. The Property Officer shall inspect each item and all documentation to ensure they conform to this SOP and guidelines detailed in the Property and Evidence Manual. If any item or documentation is out of compliance, the Property Officer retains the RIGHT TO REFUSAL and shall alert the submitting officer to correct any deficiencies prior to accepting the



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items.

V. SENDING EVIDENCE TO OUTSIDE LABORATORIES

- A. All evidence sent to any laboratory must be packaged to the specifications on the front of the examination request form and the SBI Evidence Field Guide. The Property Officer shall be responsible for ensuring all evidence sent to the State Crime Laboratory is properly packaged. A Request for Examination of Physical Evidence (SBI-5) form shall be completed by the requesting/investigating officer and enclosed with the evidence.
- B. The Property Officer shall be responsible for maintaining all evidence submitted to the evidence room until the transportation of all evidence to the laboratory by a designated person.
- C. All receipts for evidence sent to a laboratory shall be turned over to the investigating officer.
- D. At the completion of the analysis, all returned evidence shall be forwarded to the Property Officer.

VI. REMOVING EVIDENCE FROM STORAGE

- A. Officers may remove evidence from storage for use in court or investigation purposes.
- B. Officers removing evidence for any purpose shall sign for the evidence and indicate the purpose of the removal. All appropriate forms shall be signed to maintain "chain of custody." All evidence removed from storage shall be returned by the officer or employee removing the evidence once the purpose for removing the evidence is complete.
- C. Should it be necessary to leave any evidence with the court, the officer or employee removing the evidence shall secure a signed receipt from an official of the court and return it to the Property Officer as soon as possible.



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- D. If the Property Officer is unable to accept the evidence immediately, the evidence shall be kept with the on-duty supervisor until the Property Officer can accept the evidence. The evidence shall remain secure at all times.

VII. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

- A. The Property Officer shall be responsible for purging stored items within the property room on a periodic basis.
- B. The Property Officer shall submit a Property Disposal Request form to the officer that submitted items. Officers are responsible for requesting court disposition information via calling the Clerk of Court or by accessing computer AOC records. If the property is to be held, the Property Disposal Request form shall be completed and returned to the Property Officer within three weeks of receipt. If the property is no longer needed, the seizing officer shall submit the proper paperwork to the District Attorney for evidence disposition or authorize disposition on items retaining no evidentiary value.
- C. With a court order, or under the direction of the District Attorney, items of evidence that can be returned to the rightful owner shall be delivered to him, and it is the responsibility of the officer who collected the evidence or the investigator assigned the case, to do this. If the rightful owner can produce proof of ownership of the item in court, then it may be returned to him prior to court without the written consent of the District Attorney's Office.
- D. In cases that do not reach judicial authority, the District Attorney may authorize disposition in accordance with GS 15-11.1(a).
- E. All items that do not retain any evidentiary value (property safekeeping, found property, etc.) shall be disposed of in accordance with guidelines set forth by the NC Attorney General in the "Disposition of Property by Law Enforcement" manual.
- F. Firearms: Pursuant to guidelines set forth by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) inquiry will be conducted prior to returning any firearm(s) held as evidence. A NICS Query Disposition of Firearms (QDOF) transaction will be



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conducted by authorized personnel and the results of the inquiry will determine eligibility of the owner or prospective transferee from obtaining and possessing the firearm(s) prior to its release. If the background check determines the owner or prospective transferee is ineligible by law to own or possess a firearm, the respective firearm(s) will then be disposed of in accordance with NCGS 15-11. This background check will be conducted after all requirements for disposal of evidence listed above in this policy have been completed.

- G. All items released back to the owner must be documented and signed for by the responsible party. A copy of the release must be delivered to the Property Officer.
- H. The Property Officer has the ultimate responsibility for disposal of evidence. Any designated employee shall assist the Property Officer by advising him of the disposition of any case involving evidence in storage. Statute, specific court order, and/or Carrboro Police Department SOP mandate the disposal of evidence. Items of no value and/or unlawful items shall be destroyed. Items of value shall be returned to the rightful owner, if ownership can be established. Items of value for which rightful ownership cannot be established shall be sold at public auction or destroyed.
- I. The disposition of all evidence shall be recorded on the master file maintained by the Property Officer.

VIII. PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE MANUAL

- A. The Property and Evidence Manual shall serve as a detailed guide to assist officers in procedures of collecting, storing, and disposing of property and evidence. The manual is not all inclusive, as special circumstances shall arise during the course of conducting regular police business.
- B. Copies of the manual shall be made available to all officers within the Department to be used as a reference.
- C. All new officers hired by the Department shall receive formal training on property and evidence procedures during their field training phase. The training shall be based upon the procedures set forth in the manual.



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IX. DRUG DROP BOX POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A. Purpose

1. The Carrboro Police Department recognizes the value of cooperation with a pharmaceutical drug disposal program that provides safe and efficient means for the collection and proper disposal of pharmaceutical drugs no longer needed or wanted by the public.
2. The intent of the Operation Medicine Drop Permanent Collection Box Program is to provide citizens a convenient method to properly remove unneeded medications from their homes, thereby reducing the possibility for accidental or intentional misuse. This program also provides an environmentally safe alternative to disposing of medications in the community landfill and/or sewer system.

B. Collection Box Description, Location and Operation

1. The Carrboro Police Department will utilize a steel mailbox style collection box in which citizens may deposit unused pharmaceutical medication. The box will be secured to the wall in the lobby area of Carrboro Police Department. This area is monitored Monday through Friday from 0830 to 1700 hours by Carrboro Police Department personnel. It will be accessible to the public during these same business hours.
2. Liquid medications would need to remain in the original dispensed containers. Pills or other non-liquid medications may be left in the original dispensed container or placed in secured zip-lock type bags.
3. **No sharps will be accepted.**
4. The drop box will be secured by a keyed lock. The key for the collection access door of the box will be maintained by the Carrboro Police Department Property and Evidence Custodian.

C. Policy and Procedures



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1. The CPD Property and Evidence Custodian shall be responsible for the collection and submission of all pharmaceutical drugs placed in the collection box.
2. The Property and Evidence Custodian or his designee shall collect deposited pharmaceutical drugs on a frequency deemed necessary based on usage of the box. Any designee will be a sworn member of the Carrboro Police Department.
3. The Property and Evidence Custodian will keep a record of the weight of collections in the drop box and report same to the Chief of Police or his designee and fulfill any additional reporting requirements to the State Bureau of Investigation.
4. At each time of collection from the box, the Property and Evidence Custodian or designee will complete a Property/Evidence Voucher.
5. The collected items will be weighed prior to packaging and the weight will be listed on the voucher.
6. The collected items will be packaged in accordance with standard procedures for packaging drug related property.
7. The collected items will be submitted for storage pending destruction at an approved incinerator.
8. At the end of the calendar year, the case will be closed and all supporting vouchers and destruction information will be maintained by the Property and Evidence Custodian or designee.
9. Access to the collection box shall be limited to the personnel described above.