Subject: PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE CONTROL

Effective Date: March 1, 1978
Last Revised: October 20, 2004
Policy Number: 84.1
Special Instructions: O-166
Distribution: All Personnel
Reevaluation Date: Annually
Number of Pages: 3

I. PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the securing and storage of property and/or evidence that have been taken into the possession of the Kenosha Police Department.

II. POLICY
It is the policy of the Kenosha Police Department to ensure that all property and/or evidence in its custody is properly secured and stored, readily retrievable, and that any changes in its custody are documented.

This will include any motor vehicle taken into the possession of the Kenosha Police Department.

Found property will be stored in a secure manner and every effort will be made to identify the legal owner and to return their property to them.

The Joint Services Property/Evidence Department is responsible for the protection and storage of all evidence that has been collected and must do so in a manner that will ensure that the chain of custody has not been broken.

III. PROCEDURE
A. Any officer who seizes evidence or collects found property will turn that property over to the Joint Services Property Evidence Department in a timely manner.

B. Employees shall not manufacture, conceal, falsify, destroy, remove, tamper with, withhold, or convert to their use or the use of another, any property or evidence.

C. Each officer will properly handle, mark and package all evidence and transport the evidence to the property room, or other authorized secure location, as soon as practical.

D. No officer shall handle any evidence collected by another officer unless they are expressly requested or directed to do so.

E. Evidence of a hazardous nature will be appropriately packaged and stored in accordance with established practices and state and federal law. Such substances include but are not limited to items that may have been exposed to biohazards, hazardous chemicals, waste products, explosives or combustible products. When appropriate, the person impounding this type of property will contact the Identification Technician to arrange for proper storage and control.

F. Officers will not enter the property storage rooms unless they are authorized to do so.

G. The following procedure will be adhered when placing any property into the control of the Joint Services Property Evidence Department:
   1. Obtain a case number.
2. Properly package and tag evidence.

3. Complete the property/evidence card. (If the property/evidence card or tag is not property completed, a request for completion will be routed to the submitting officer’s Shift Commander requiring the proper information.)

4. Log the property into the Evidence Log Book and place the property log number on the property/evidence card and each evidence tag.

5. Complete an Investigation Report detailing how the evidence or property was obtained and what the disposition of that property/evidence was.

6. Unless otherwise directed by on duty ID personnel:
   a. Secure the properly tagged evidence in an evidence locker with the padlock that is provided. The property card is to be placed in the bin on the Evidence Room door.
   b. If property seized is too large for the lockers, a Shift Commander may open the Identification Technician’s office and the evidence and property card may be placed in this office.
   c. Items such as gasoline, flammable liquids, engines containing gas and oil, etc. should be stored in the Service Garage Evidence Area until they can be properly stored in Evidence Room.

H. Vehicles

1. Vehicles seized as evidence will be secured in a location appropriate to the evidentiary needs of the investigation. This may include a secure evidence bay or secured storage facility.

2. Inventory Searches of Impounded Vehicles
   a. An inventory of a vehicle shall be done if the automobile is legally impounded. All closed containers found with the vehicle shall be opened for the purposes of the inventory. A vehicle inventory is designed to protect motor vehicles and their contents while in police custody, to protect the Department against claim of lost, stolen or damaged property and to protect department personnel and the public against injury or damaged property due to any potential danger from hazardous materials or substances that may be in the vehicle.

   NOTE: Depending upon the circumstances of the investigation it may be appropriate to obtain a warrant prior to the search of a vehicle.

3. The following procedure will be adhered when placing a vehicle into the control of the Joint Services Property Evidence Department:
   a. Obtain a case number.
   b. Properly package and tag evidence.
   c. Complete the property/evidence card.
   d. Log the property into the Evidence Log Book and place the property log number on the property/evidence card and each evidence tag.
   e. Complete an Investigation Report detailing how the evidence or property was obtained and what the disposition of that property/evidence was.
f. Secure vehicle in appropriate facility.

I. The Identification Technician will distribute the property record as follows:
   1. White copy to Records.
   2. Blue copy to Investigations Bureau
   3. Buff card to File in property room.

J. If the property/evidence is checked out for Court, inspection or for transmittal to the Crime Lab:
   1. The on-duty Identification Technician will require the receiving officer's signature, date and time, and specification of property taken and the destination of the property be recorded on the back of the buff card. This information is also required on the property tags of each item that is checked out.

K. When property is returned:
   1. The Identification Technician will pull the buff card and log the signature of officer returning the property, date and time returned.
   2. The Identification Technician will properly file the buff card in Property Card file, and return the property to the property room.

L. If the property is order disposed of by the court:
   1. The Identification Technician will note the disposition on the property card and dispose of the evidence according to the order.
   2. Identification Technician will forward the buff card to Records Bureau.
   3. The buff card and the white copy will be filed with original complaint.
   4. A copy of the court order will be forwarded to Records Bureau

M. If property or evidence is returned to the lawful owner or agent: (Proof of ownership may be required.)
   1. An Identification Technician will have the owner or agent sign the back of buff card and will sign as a witness.
   2. An Identification Technician will forward the buff card to the Records Bureau to be filed with the white copy and the original complaint.

N. Disposal of Property or Evidence
   1. When no longer needed for evidentiary purposes all evidence will be disposed of in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes.

   2. Abandoned property for which no owner can be identified will be disposed of in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes and City of Kenosha Municipal Ordinances.

\[Signature\]

DANIEL C. WADE, CHIEF OF POLICE