

COLUMBUS POLICE DEPARTMENT



General Order 83: Collection and Preservation of Evidence

CALEA Standards: 83.1.1
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Replaces: General Order 83 effective December 19, 2017

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Policy:

The Columbus Police Department will make every attempt to ensure that all accident and crime scenes are examined thoroughly for physical evidence that may be present. Any evidence shall be collected, preserved, and properly processed according to the procedures outlined in this chapter.

83.1 Administration

83.1.1 24-Hour Availability

Officers qualified to process crime scenes and traffic collisions will be available on a 24-hour basis.

- A. Officers trained in processing crime scenes and/or traffic collisions should be utilized to process such scenes if they have received the training and have the ability to do so.
- B. If a trained officer is unavailable, the on-call detective should be utilized to process a crime scene, or an accident reconstructionist should be utilized to process a traffic collision. The responding detective and/or accident reconstructionist shall provide instructions to officers at the scene to ensure that the officers on-scene know how to proceed until their arrival.
- C. If the on-call detective determines that their ability to process the scene is too limited, a crime scene investigator shall be notified.
- D. If the department does not have an accident reconstructionist and/or crime scene investigator available, then an outside agency may be called for assistance. Prior to contacting an outside agency, an on-duty supervisor is to be contacted for approval.

83.2 Operations

83.2.1 Guidelines and Procedures

- A. Procedures for the collection, storage, and transportation of evidence.
 - 1. The general guidelines for approach to scene processing are:
 - a. Once it is safe to do so, the scene of an incident containing evidence shall be secured by the officers on that scene.
 - b. If necessary, officers are to set up a perimeter to secure and protect the scene, and maintain a Crime Scene Entry Log.
 - c. The person to process the scene shall be determined in accordance with General Order 83.1.1.

2. Collection and processing items of evidence

- a. All items of evidence shall be collected in a manner that best preserves the condition of the evidence and prevents the introduction of foreign materials to it.
- b. Money - The following procedures shall be followed when handling monies:
 - i. All monies, or items containing money \$100 (one hundred dollars) or more will be counted by both the submitting officer and second officer.
 - ii. All monies will be submitted in a sealed package and initialed by both the submitting officer and the second officer. The evidence package must identify the amount of money, who submitted it, and who verified the count.
 - iii. The evidence seal will not be broken for a currency recount when accepted into the evidence room. If an inspection of the package contents is necessary, two (2) people shall witness the breaking of the seal and the re-sealing. Upon release of the currency, the seal shall be broken in the presence of the person receiving the currency.
- c. Digital photographs and video collected from an outside source - All digital photographs and videos that are collected from an outside source pertaining to an incident or suspected crime:
 - i. Shall be either received on digital media from the outside source or placed on digital media. (i.e. An officer receives security video via e-mail from witness and copies the video to a CD or place the digital media on a thumb drive.) Officers will be issued a thumb drive, and when submitted as evidence he/she should make a request for a replacement thumb drive in accordance with G.O. 17.5.2(E)(3);
 - ii. When possible, the incident number should be written on the digital media. (i.e. A CD/DVD has space on the surface to write on it with a Sharpie marker.)

- iii. Shall be placed in a CD sleeve and deposited into the media drop box. Thumb drives and SD cards will all fit into a CD sleeve. If the digital media will not fit into a CD sleeve, it should be placed in an evidence bag and deposit the media as you would any other evidence;
 - iv. Package and label the CD sleeve or evidence bag as required by G.O. 84.1.1(D). CD Sleeves should not be sealed with tape; they should be folded over and secured with the tab that is on the sleeve; and
 - v. Enter the digital media into the Property and Evidence Module in the department's electronic case management system as evidence.
- d. Syringes – Because of the inherent dangers of handling syringes, syringes should generally be photographed and placed in a Sharp's container for disposal. If a liquid substance is inside of the syringe, the officer may extract the substance into an evidence collection vial for testing before placing the syringe in the Sharp's container.
- e. All items of evidence collected shall be packaged and labeled in accordance with General Order 84.1.1(D), except:
- i. IC 35-43-4-4(h) permits an officer that is holding as evidence property over which a person is alleged to have exerted unauthorized control or to have otherwise obtained unlawfully, may return that property to its owner if:
 - ii. The property has been photographed in a manner that will serve the purpose of demonstrating the nature of the property, and if these photographs are filed with or retained by the law enforcement agency in place of the property;
 - iii. Receipt for the property is obtained from the owner upon delivery by the law enforcement agency;
 - iv. The prosecuting attorney who is prosecuting a case that involves the property has not requested the law enforcement agency to decline requests for return of the property to its owner; and
 - v. The property may be lawfully possessed by the owner.

- f. IC 35-33-5-5 permits an officer to destroy or cause to be destroyed chemicals, controlled substances, or chemically contaminated equipment (including drug paraphernalia as described in IC 35-48-4-8.5) associated with the illegal manufacture of drugs or controlled substances if all the following conditions are met:
 - i. The officer collects and preserves a sufficient quantity of the chemicals, controlled substances, or chemically contaminated equipment to demonstrate that the chemicals, controlled substances, or chemically contaminated equipment was associated with the illegal manufacture of drugs or controlled substances;
 - ii. The officer takes photographs of the illegal drug manufacturing site that accurately depict the presence and quantity of chemicals, controlled substances, and chemically contaminated equipment; and
 - iii. The officer completes a chemical inventory report that describes the type and quantities of chemicals, controlled substances, and chemically contaminated equipment present at the illegal manufacturing site.

3. Procedures for placing evidence under the control of the property room are governed by General Order 84.1.1.

B. Evidence collection training requirements for persons collecting evidence – In addition to the training obtained by officers at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, select officers have additional training in collecting evidence, along with specialized training by Crime Scene Investigators (CSI). Before an officer can collect evidence, he/she must have been trained on the proper procedures of collecting the evidence.

C. Procedures for the submission of evidence to accredited laboratories;

- 1. Before an employee can transport evidence to a laboratory, he/she may make an appointment prior to the delivery.
- 2. The employee will property document in the property room system that the pieces of evidence are “checked out” of the property room. Information pertaining to the evidence items being checked out should include:
 - a. Personnel checking out the item;
 - b. Date time checked out; and

- c. Where the evidence is being taken to.
 3. Proper handling should be conducted to decrease the likelihood of damage to the evidence;
 4. Transporting personnel should be mindful of the chain of custody at all times and shall take security measures to ensure that the evidence is never left unattended or unsecured.
 5. Once at the laboratory, the personnel will check in with the laboratory personnel and transfer the chain of custody to the facility.
- D. Transfer of custody of physical evidence - If any evidence is transferred to another officer prior to being placed under the control of the property room, the following shall be documented:
1. The date and time of transfer;
 2. The delivering officer's name and/or badge number; and
The receiving officer's name and/or badge number.
- E. Special procedures for locating stolen property:
1. If the property was reported stolen to CPD and recovered by CPD during the same shift:
 - a. The recovering officer shall contact their supervisor to determine whether it is appropriate to contact a detective.
 - b. The recovering officer shall complete a supplement to the original report number.
 - c. The recovering officer shall notify dispatch to remove any IDACS entries for the property.
 - d. The recovering officer will attempt to notify the owner of the property. All attempts to notify the owner must be documented in the report.
 - e. The shift supervisor reviewing the report shall ensure that it is documented in the report that the property has been removed from IDACS, and the attempts made to contact the owner of the property.
 2. If the property was reported stolen to CPD and recovered by CPD during a different shift:

- a. The recovering officer shall contact their supervisor to determine whether it is appropriate to contact a detective.
 - b. The recovering officer shall complete a new report with a new report number.
 - c. The recovering officer shall notify dispatch to remove any IDACS entries for the property.
 - d. The recovering officer will attempt to notify the owner of the property. All attempts to notify the owner must be documented in the report.
 - e. The shift supervisor reviewing the report shall ensure that it is documented in the report that the property has been removed from IDACS, and the attempts made to contact the owner of the property.
3. If the property was reported stolen to CPD and recovered by another agency:
- a. EOC will contact the shift supervisor.
 - b. The shift supervisor will determine whether or not the property was in fact recovered.
 - c. The shift supervisor will determine whether it is appropriate to contact a detective.
 - d. A new report with a new report number must be completed by either the shift supervisor or an officer.
 - e. The report will document the pertinent details of the recovery such as the agency, the names of any agency officials involved, phone numbers of any contacts, and the location of property.
 - f. The supervisor/officer completing the report shall notify dispatch to remove any IDACS entries for the property.
 - g. The supervisor/officer completing the report will attempt to notify the owner of the property. All attempts to notify the owner must be documented in the report.
 - h. The shift supervisor reviewing the report shall ensure that it is documented in the report that the property has been removed from IDACS, and the attempts made to contact the owner of the property.
4. If the property was reported stolen to another agency and recovered by CPD:

- a. Upon an officer's request, EOC will contact the agency in which the property was reported stolen.
- b. The other agency will be responsible for any additional follow-up.
- c. The other agency will be responsible for removing the property from IDACS.
- d. The other agency will be responsible for contacting the original complainant.]
- e. The property should only be released to the other agency, unless the other agency authorizes the release of the property to the original complainant/owner.
- f. The officer shall complete a report on his/her involvement in the recovery.

83.2.4 Equipment and Supplies

The department provides or has access to personnel, equipment, and supplies used for processing scenes for the following purposes:

- A. Recovery of latent fingerprints – Hinge lifters will be furnished to all officers and detectives trained in the area of lifting latent fingerprints. If no on-duty officers are trained to lift latent fingerprints, the on-call detective may be contacted to collect such evidence.
- B. Photography and Videography – All officers will be equipped with a digital camera in accordance with General Order 41.3.2(A). The detective division will have access to higher quality cameras and covert photographic or video cameras.
- C. Sketch of the scene – Officers may use any type of paper to sketch a scene. All official diagrams will be completed by a crime scene investigator and/or an accident reconstructionist, who are available as outlined in General Order 83.1.1.
- D. Collection and preservation of physical evidence – All officers are authorized to use routine evidence recovery supplies, which will be made available at the department. Any specialized evidence recovery equipment will be available to officers trained in the specialized evidence recovery. In the event of a major scene, a detective shall be contacted and should be in charge of evidence collection and processing.

83.2.6 Report Preparation

A report shall be prepared by the person who processes a crime and/or traffic collision scene. Information contained within the case report shall include at least:

- A. A narrative of the events that transpired at the scene including photographs, measurements taken, listing of evidence recovered, etc.;
- B. Case Number;
- C. Date and time of incident;
- D. Location of incident; and
- E. Names of those involved (suspects, arrestees, victims, owners, witnesses, officers, etc.).

83.3 Evidence Handling

83.3.2 Evidence, Laboratory Submission

The following guidelines shall be observed for submission of evidence and/or property to a forensic laboratory for examination:


- A. The Property Room Manager is responsible for assuring that all evidence and/or property to be examined by a forensic laboratory is submitted to a lab.
- B. The methods for packaging and transmitting evidence and/or property to a laboratory shall be performed as required by the receiving laboratory.
- C. The inventory status of all evidence and/or property submitted to a laboratory shall be documented in the department's computerized record system. Additionally, any other form required by the receiving laboratory shall accompany each item.
- D. All officers submitting evidence and/or property to a laboratory shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of the chain of custody by requiring a receipt for all items submitted.
- E. All laboratory results shall be submitted in writing.

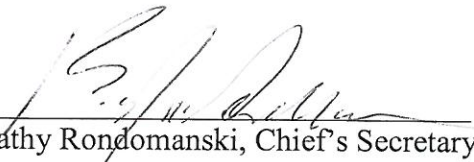
Acceptance by Columbus Police Department Captain's Board:

Date: 9-25-2018


Jonathan L. Rohde, Chief

Attest:


Michael Richardson, Deputy Chief

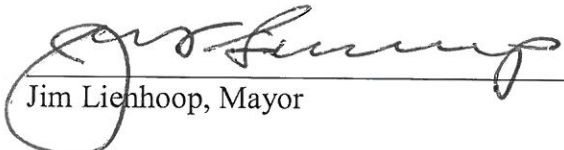

Kathy Ronomanski, Chief's Secretary


Steve Norman, Uniform Captain

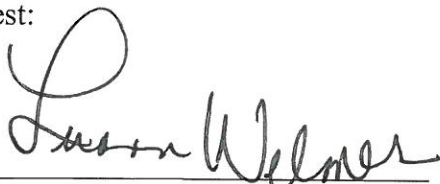

Brian Wilder, Administrative Captain

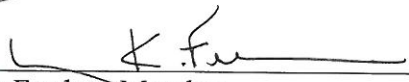
Acceptance by Columbus Board of Public Works and Safety:

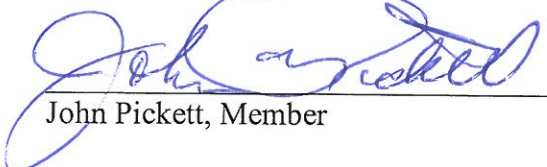
Date: 9/25/18


Jim Lienhoop, Mayor

Attest:


Luann Welmer, Clerk-Treasurer


Mary Ferdon, Member


John Pickett, Member

Jim Strietelmeier, Member


Brenda Sullivan, Member