


JOPLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT	9-14 STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE
SUBJECT: Evidence Inspection and Audit Process	REVIEW DATE: Annually – September
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 17, 2015	ACTION DATE:
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: 9-14 February 7, 2014	AMEND DATE: December 17, 2015
ACCREDITATION INDEX: 84.1.6 a, b, c, d	APPROVED:  Chief of Police

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Joplin Police Department to conduct inspections of the property/evidence storage room to ensure it is being maintained in a clean and orderly fashion, that the integrity of the property is being maintained, that directives concerning the property management system are being followed, and that property having no further evidentiary value is being disposed of promptly.

II. PURPOSE

To establish an inspection and audit process for the departmental property/evidence management function.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Audit

An official examination and verification of records.

B. Evidence/Property Inspection

An examination of the facilities, inventory, procedures, and /or other elements of the department's evidence and property administrative system.

C. Inventory

To conduct an itemized list of property.

IV. PROCEDURE: GENERAL

A. Evidence/Property Inspections

Inspections to determine compliance with department procedures governing the control of evidence and property will be regularly performed on a semi-annual basis, or at the direction of the Chief of Police. (84.1.6 A)

1. Semi - Annual Inspections. Evidence officers assigned to the Investigations Bureau shall be responsible to inspect the various aspects of the department's evidence and property control system on a semi-annual basis. Areas of concern should be:

- a. Evidence/property storage areas are clean and orderly.

- b. Integrity of property is being maintained.
 - c. Department directives concerning property are being followed.
 - d. Property is protected from deterioration or damage due to environmental deficiencies.
 - e. Property control records are current and annotated correctly.
 - f. Evidence/property is being disposed of promptly.
2. Upon completion of each semi-annual inspection, the evidence officers shall submit the findings (in writing) to the Investigations Bureau Commander.
 3. In the event the report details deficiencies or recommends corrective action be taken, remedial steps shall be instituted at the bureau level whenever possible. Should a deficiency require action by the upper command staff of the department, remedial steps will be instituted in accordance with fiscal and management policies.
 4. Unannounced Inspections. The Chief of Police shall direct unannounced inspections of the property control function at least once a year. (84.1.6 D)

B. Evidence/Property Audit

An audit of evidence and property shall be conducted whenever an evidence technician/custodian is assigned to and/or transferred from the position. (84.1.6 B) (The management of the property and evidence is shared between both Investigations Bureau Sergeants and the Evidence Technician.) The audit shall be jointly conducted by the newly appointed evidence technician/custodian and a designee of the Chief of Police. The purpose of such an audit shall be to ensure that evidence records are current and properly annotated. This will generally not require an accounting of each piece of evidence/property, but involve a sufficient sampling of same to ensure that the property management system has been administered according to established procedures. Should discrepancies be discovered, they shall be documented by the newly appointed evidence technician/custodian in a report (inter-office memorandum) directed through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. In such an instance the Chief of Police may direct:

1. Corrective action to be initiated by the Investigations Bureau Commander. In the event the discrepancies noted are of a serious or repetitive nature the Chief of Police may direct:
 - a. A complete audit of all evidence and property shall be conducted.
 - b. An internal affairs investigation shall be conducted.

C. Annual Audit

An audit of evidence/property held by the department shall be conducted on a yearly basis. The Chief of Police will appoint the supervisor and/or officer designated to conduct such audit. (84.1.6 C)

1. The audit shall consist of a random sampling of approximately five (5) percent of the existing property/evidence inventory, and will be focused toward ensuring that those policies and procedures pertinent to the property management function are being followed.

2. At the conclusion of the audit, a report shall be drafted (Inter-office Memorandum) detailing the findings of the audit, and it shall be submitted to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police shall subsequently discuss the audit with the Investigations Bureau Commander and corrective action initiated (if required).

V. COMPLIANCE

Violations of this policy, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action as described in the City of Joplin's Personnel Rules, or the Joplin Police Department's Rules and Regulations and General Orders. Members of the Joplin Police Department, while assigned to or assisting other agencies, shall comply with this policy.

VI. APPLICATION

This document constitutes department policy, is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in any evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims insofar as the employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only inform the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.