

	DELMAR POLICE DEPARTMENT	
	Policy 12.1 Property Room Security	
	Effective Date: 07/27/14	Replaces: 2-15-1
	Approved: <u>Ivan Barkley</u> Chief of Police	
	Reference: N/A	

I. POLICY

Proper documentation, collection, preservation, and submission of physical evidence to forensic laboratories may provide the key to a successful investigation and prosecution. Through evidence located at the scene, suspects are developed or eliminated, investigative leads are established, and theories concerning the crime are substantiated or disproved. It is imperative, therefore, that each officer carefully process a crime scene in order not to overlook or contaminate or destroy evidence. Physical evidence appears in many shapes, sizes and forms, thereby necessitating various recovery, preservation, and submission techniques. The officer or investigator shall be prepared to collect, identify, and package the evidence so that it will not be changed in form and value when it reaches the laboratory. The officer collecting the evidence shall maintain a chain of custody of that evidence in order to ensure that it is presented to the court professionally and in compliance with the law.

II. PURPOSE

To establish for officers/investigators guidelines that restrict access to the Property Room and property Storage Areas.

III. BUSINESS HOURS OF PROPERTY SECTION

Business hours for the Property Section shall be during the “working hours” of the property custodian.

IV. SECURITY OF PROPERTY STORAGE AREAS

A. Entry to Property Storage Areas

1. Except as provided in this order, entry to property storage areas shall only be made under the supervision of the property custodian.

2. In the absence of the property custodian, property storage areas may be entered only when the following conditions are met:
 - a. A circumstance of emergency (as defined by departmental policy) exists; and
 - b. A supervisor is present; and
 - c. Such entry is documented as provided in Part IV. C of this order.

B. Property Storage Area Keys / Key Fobs

1. Only the following keys to the property storage areas are authorized.
 - a. One complete set of keys and one key fob to property room 1, property room 2, armory and all temporary storage lockers shall be assigned to the property custodian.
 - b. One complete duplicate set of keys shall be placed in an envelope that is sealed and kept in (a secure location designated by the chief of police).
 - 1) Whenever the duplicate key set is utilized, the key set shall be returned to the original envelope, or a substitute envelope, and the said envelope sealed and initialed by the officer utilizing the duplicate key set.
 - 2) The sealed envelope containing the duplicate key set shall be placed (in the secure location) for safekeeping.
2. Duplication or possession of keys to the property storage areas is prohibited without the express written permission of the chief of police.
3. Locks to the property storage areas shall be re-keyed and key fobs re-coded, whenever the property custodian is reassigned.

C. Documentation

1. A log shall be maintained to note unusual circumstances involving the property storage areas.
 - a. Notations shall be made in the log document:
 - 1) Upon any entry to the property storage areas in the absence of the property custodian. Such notations shall include the date, time, circumstance and justification for entry, name of the employee entering the property storage area, name of the

supervisor who witnessed the entry, and summary of actions taken while such persons were in the property storage area.

- 2) Upon relief of the regularly assigned property custodian due to vacation, sickness, etc. Such notations shall include the name of the person substituting for the property custodian and the dates that the substitute property custodian had possession of the keys.
- b. The chief of police or the person who is then responsible for the secure location where the duplicate keys are maintained shall periodically:
- 1) Examine the log for notations regarding use of duplicate keys, and
 - 2) Inspect the envelope containing the duplicate keys to ensure that the seal on the envelope is intact.