

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE Aug. 01, 1987	NUMBER 6.02
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Property and Evidence Handling		



Cross Reference: 4.06

I. Introduction

The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and this directive establish the requirements for the proper handling of property by Division personnel and reporting of property belonging to a suspect **or** citizen that is lost or damaged while a Division employee is acting within the scope and hours of his **or** her employment.

II. Policy Statements

A. Recoveries

1. Division personnel handling hazardous, infectious, **or** unknown material shall:
 - a. Wear protective clothing appropriate to the extent of contamination and/or exposure.
 - b. Wear nitrile gloves for collection purposes whenever contamination is suspected or unknown.
 - c. Treat all medical or unidentified waste as potentially infectious material.
 - d. Not break, remove, or recap hypodermic needles and syringes. Place the articles in a clearly marked, rigid plastic container as outlined in Section III,A,2,f.
 - e. Advise Property Control Unit (PCU) personnel of any potential hazards if known.
2. Division personnel receiving property from private citizens shall:
 - a. Provide them with and request their signature on a Property Receipt, form S-36.116.
 - b. Advise them the rightful owner will be notified if ownership can be established. Non-contraband property will be returned when the Division no longer has an evidentiary or any other justifiable need for the property.
3. Property recovered pursuant to a search warrant shall be listed on the inventory receipt portion of the warrant.
4. Property that is not evidence may be returned directly to the owner if practical.
5. Division personnel may be subject to disciplinary action for the loss of or damage to property belonging to a suspect **or** citizen due to negligence.

6. Division personnel shall wear gloves when handling evidence to be submitted to the Forensic Services Bureau (“Crime Laboratory”) for analysis.
- B. Submitting Property
1. Property Clerks shall only accept property submitted within established Division guidelines.
 2. Division personnel shall submit property to the PCU in person unless otherwise indicated in this directive.
 3. Property shall not be submitted to the PCU by officers from foreign jurisdictions or private citizens. During field training periods, probationary officers shall submit property using their field training officer’s information.
 4. Property being held as evidence shall be handled by as few Division personnel as possible, thereby keeping the chain of custody to a minimum.
 5. All property shall be submitted to the PCU unless otherwise indicated in this directive.
 6. Division personnel shall not submit motor vehicles, motorized bicycles, boats, trailers, construction equipment on wheels, and all other licensed vehicles to the PCU. These items shall be impounded and taken to the Police Impound Lot.
 7. Explosive Devices and Flammable Materials
 - a. Division personnel shall not transport or submit explosive devices or suspected explosive devices to the PCU. Division personnel shall contact the Division of Fire Bomb Squad for the handling of these items.

Note: Firecrackers are not considered hazardous explosives and may be submitted to the PCU unless there are large quantities.
 - b. Division personnel should not submit compressed gas cylinders or highly flammable materials to the PCU without prior approval. Division personnel should notify PCU personnel of their existence and transport the items directly to the Police Impound Lot for storage unless otherwise directed.
 8. A Property Clerk shall visually identify all property prior to acceptance at the PCU. Division personnel shall open all containers prior to submission.
 9. Division personnel shall not delay submitting property. All property shall be submitted before the end of the current tour of duty.
 - a. To avoid overtime, property held for safekeeping may be submitted by another Division employee. Both employees shall sign and keep a copy of the Property Receipt for property received from citizens. The property shall be submitted prior to the end of the submitting employee’s tour of duty.
 - b. In exceptional circumstances, Crime Scene Search Unit (CSSU) personnel are permitted to utilize the CSSU evidence/storage lockers and freezers located in the CSSU laboratory as directed by the CSSU Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

10. Division personnel shall submit latent lift cards in the designated lockbox located in the "Police Only" area of the PCU.
11. Division personnel shall complete the appropriate Division form(s) in the electronic reporting system. If the system is unavailable, complete the equivalent paper version(s) as ***instructed*** by PCU personnel and outlined in this directive.

C. Removal of Property

1. Any personnel removing property from the PCU shall be responsible for that property.
2. Property held as evidence may only be removed under the following conditions:
 - a. Division personnel may remove evidence for court by presenting a subpoena or at the request of a prosecutor.
 - b. Crime Laboratory and Digital Forensics Unit personnel may remove evidence for the purpose of examination, analysis, or comparison.
 - c. Photography Unit ("Photo Lab") personnel may remove evidence for the purpose of photographic documentation.
 - d. Internal Affairs Bureau sworn personnel may remove evidence with a Property/Evidence Transfer, form A-32.105, when necessary during the course of an internal investigation.
 - e. ***Task Force Officers may permanently remove evidence with a Property/Evidence Transfer form when necessary for state or federal prosecution of a case.***
 - (1) ***Property transferred to a state or federal agency shall not be returned to the PCU.***
 - (2) ***The state or federal agency will maintain custody and control of the evidence and shall be responsible for the final disposition of the evidence.***
 - f. When necessary for training or investigative purposes, sworn or Crime Laboratory personnel may remove firearms and/or controlled substances after any required testing is completed and the property/evidence is no longer needed for trial and/or subject to appeal.
 - (1) Under these circumstances, personnel shall complete a Property/Evidence Transfer form and obtain written authorization from a bureau commander/manager or higher within their chain of command.
 - (2) When an item no longer has evidentiary value, it shall not be removed for training purposes if it is to be returned to the rightful owner.
 - (3) Controlled substances shall be weighed prior to removal.
 - (4) Upon return, the controlled substances shall be submitted to the Crime Laboratory for retesting by the PCU Sergeant.

- (5) Any deviation in the weight and/or content of a controlled substance shall require a written explanation by the removing employee.
- (6) Firearms removed by Crime Laboratory personnel may become a permanent part of the Crime Laboratory Firearms Reference Collection in accordance with internal laboratory procedures.
- g.** In all other instances, sworn personnel may remove evidence with a Property/Evidence Transfer form signed by a supervisor within their chain of command.
 - (1) If there is no chain of command supervisor available, authorization may be obtained from any Division supervisor.
 - (2) If the property is currency in the amount of \$1,000 or more, authorization shall be obtained from a lieutenant or higher.
 - (3) When it is necessary, or anticipated to be necessary, to keep the property out for more than 28 days, a lieutenant or higher shall provide an explanation in the electronic reporting system. Each 28-day extension of time shall require a new explanation in the electronic reporting system from a lieutenant or higher. Any property kept beyond 56 days will require an explanation in the electronic reporting system by a bureau commander/manager.

D. Firearms and Ballistic Evidence

1. All firearms submitted to the PCU shall be considered evidence unless a firearm is submitted for safekeeping where the owner is known.
2. A request for NIBIN entry shall be completed for all firearms (excluding revolvers and single-shot weapons) and spent casings submitted as evidence.
3. The appropriate electronic report shall be completed for all firearms submitted to the PCU. This includes firearms held for evidence or safekeeping.
4. Firearms shall only be released to the owner when the owner is legally permitted to possess the firearm, and:
 - a. The firearm is not needed as evidence in an investigation/court case;
or
 - b. A court order for the release of the firearm is presented to the Division;
or
 - c. There is no further legal basis for retention of the weapon.
5. Division personnel shall not dispose of any firearm/ballistic evidence that has a pending NIBIN lab request, a successful NIBIN hit, or is evidence in an ongoing investigation/court case.
6. Sworn personnel shall contact the Records Section ***and request a check of the serial number to verify whether the firearm is reported stolen.***

- a. If the firearm is reported **as** stolen through the Division's **electronic** reporting system, the recovering officer **shall complete the recovery report**.
 - b. **If the firearm is reported as stolen by another agency**, Records Section **personnel** will send a LEADS hit confirmation inquiry to **the originating agency when the firearm's location is known**.
 7. Firearms submitted for safekeeping when an owner is known shall not be test-fired without a search warrant or consent from the owner.
- E. Police Auctions
1. Division personnel may purchase unclaimed property at public police auctions subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. Division personnel who are directly involved with the sale of items shall not participate in an auction.
 - b. Division personnel who are on duty or in uniform shall not participate in an auction.
 2. Division personnel participating in an auction shall follow the same procedures observed by the general public.
- F. Division personnel receiving unauthorized gifts, gratuities, loans, fees, or rewards shall submit them to the PCU and shall forward a letter of explanation to the Public Accountability Subdivision Deputy Chief, who shall determine the item's appropriate disposition.
- G. Photos/Videos/Audio Recordings
1. Storage
 - a. Division personnel shall submit all photos or videos of evidentiary or historical/archival value, or those related to an administrative investigation, to the Photo Lab to be archived in a secure location. This does not apply to photos or videos involving domestic violence offenses processed by Patrol personnel or video footage from a Body-Worn Camera, Cruiser Video System, or related device.

Note: Refer to the "Domestic Violence" directive for information regarding domestic violence photos and videos.
 - b. Division personnel shall not store photos, videos, or audio recordings of evidentiary value, or those related to an administrative investigation, on a hard drive or in a network file outside of the Division.
 2. Authorized Use
 - a. Division personnel shall not share, distribute, or post evidentiary photos, videos, or audio recordings, or any photos related to an administrative investigation, by any electronic means including, but not limited to, email, text or instant messaging, or any social media source, unless it is necessary for the investigation or is otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or a designee.

- b. Division personnel shall not share, distribute, or post historical/archival photos by any electronic means including, but not limited to, email, text or instant messaging, or any social media source, unless it is approved by a Division supervisor.
 - c. Division personnel shall not take photos inside private homes or businesses for historical/archival purposes without the consent of the property owner.
3. Division personnel should not take or store evidentiary photos, videos, or audio recordings on a personally owned electronic device, except in exigent circumstances. The use of a personally owned electronic device for these purposes may subject the device and all its contents to collection as evidence.

III. Procedures

A. Personnel Submitting Property to the PCU

1. Complete an electronic Property Sheet Record and provide the Property Clerk with the record number (or incident number if no record was generated). If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Evidence and Property Inventory, form A-32.114.
 - a. Do not create multiple records for the same property. Submit a PoliceNET help ticket if a duplicate record was created.
 - b. Make a reasonable effort to identify the owner and owner's address.
2. Follow the procedures stated for each situation listed below.
 - a. Cash
 - (1) Count all cash using an electronic money counter in the presence of PCU personnel. Wear gloves and do not use an electronic money counter if the cash requires latent print development or DNA analysis.
 - (2) Seal all cash totaling \$50 or more in a tamper-proof envelope available at the PCU.
 - (3) List the amount on the outside of the envelope.

Note: Personnel should only submit cash as "Evidence" when there is a nexus between the money and the crime. Otherwise, the money should remain with the person or **be** submitted for "Safekeeping."

b. Property for Laboratory Analysis

- (1) Complete the appropriate fields on the electronic Property Sheet Record. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Request for Laboratory Examination, form I-10.101, as follows:
 - (a) For each piece of evidence to be tested, include a description of the evidence and the type of analysis requested.
 - (b) Include the incident number and property number in the spaces provided.
 - (c) When requesting DNA analysis, include a case scenario detailing how the evidence relates to the case.

- (2) Complete the appropriate form for any laboratory examinations completed by an outside agency.
 - (3) Seal the property and write the date and your initials over the seal. If a paper form is completed, attach a Chain of Custody, form A-32.113.
- c. Notify a supervisor upon finding or recovering cash, negotiable checks or bonds, precious metals, gems, or jewelry with a value in excess of \$500. If in doubt about the value, presume that it is over \$500.

Note: A supervisor need not be notified when a prisoner is transported with his or her property to the county jail, in which case the property will be inventoried and verified by sheriff's deputies.

d. Suspected Drugs

(1) Patrol Felony Drug Incidents

- (a) If the evidence was recovered out of a patrol-related incident and the suspected drugs amount to a felony offense:
 - i) Notify the Gun Crimes Unit (GCU); or
 - ii) Notify the Drug Crimes Bureau when the suspected drugs amount to an F1 or F2 offense.
- (2) List all drugs by type with a general physical description (for example, "white powder"), seal them in the appropriate container supplied by PCU personnel, and record the gross weight of the drugs and container.
- (3) List your name and badge number, or the assigned detective if applicable, in the "Responsible Officer" field on the electronic Property Sheet Record. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, include this information on the paper Evidence and Property Inventory and Request for Laboratory Examination forms.

Note: For felony drug cases, the assigned detective will complete the Request for Laboratory Examination as appropriate and submit the case electronically to the court.

- (4) If an arrest was made, complete the required electronic report and Arrest Information, form U-10.100. Ensure the report number is listed on the electronic Property Sheet Record.
- (5) Email the Crime Laboratory's Drug Identification Section at crimelab-drug@columbuspolice.org if a Request for Laboratory Examination is completed after the evidence was submitted to the PCU.
- (6) Do not request the Crime Laboratory to analyze suspected marijuana and cannabis-related evidence.
 - (a) Ensure that misdemeanor amounts of suspected marijuana are documented for destruction in the electronic reporting system.
 - (b) Notify your chain of command when recovering felony amounts of suspected marijuana to determine whether the evidence should be analyzed by an outside laboratory.

e. Firearms/Ammunition

- (1) Either tag or identify the firearm by serial number. Do not engrave the firearm.
- (2) Complete the additional firearm information on the electronic Property Sheet Record for all firearms turned into the PCU except for Division-owned firearms. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Recovered Firearm, form I-10.112.
- (3) Complete the appropriate fields on the electronic Property Sheet Record to initiate a NIBIN entry, except for Division-owned firearms or firearms submitted for safekeeping when an owner is known, unless instructed otherwise by the investigating detective. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Request for Laboratory Examination.
- (4) Clearly note on all submitted electronic and/or paper documentation if the firearm is stolen and advise PCU personnel.
- (5) Submit the gold copy of the completed Central Ohio Trauma System Ordnance Chain of Custody form, if applicable, when receiving a firearm from medical or EMS personnel.

f. Hazardous Material

- (1) Dispose of recovered needles and syringes in the rigid plastic container available in the cruiser or at the PCU, provided that the following conditions apply:
 - (a) The articles are not part of a crime scene.
 - (b) The articles cannot reasonably be assumed to be evidence of a crime and do not visibly contain any controlled substance beyond trace amounts.
 - (c) No criminal charges surrounding the articles are anticipated.
 - (d) The finder, if any, requested the articles be disposed.
 - (e) Division of Fire personnel are unavailable to dispose of the articles.
- (2) Submit full cruiser storage containers to a Division of Fire station. Obtain replacement containers from the on-duty Headquarters Operations Section supervisor.
- (3) If needed for evidence, place recovered needles and syringes in a rigid plastic tube and clearly mark the tube. Submit the tube(s) to the PCU.

g. Property for Digital Forensics Analysis

- (1) Prior to collecting digital evidence, attempt to determine if perishable evidence exists, such as unsaved open files on an electronic device.
- (2) Contact the appropriate investigative bureau to coordinate the collection of digital evidence from an electronic device.

Note: ***When collecting digital video recorder (DVR) video as evidence, it is recommended that the video be exported to***

external media in a raw uncompressed format. The Digital Forensics Unit will provide further assistance as needed to avoid activating encryption and to ensure that the digital evidence is properly collected.

- (3) Complete the appropriate fields on the electronic Property Sheet Record. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Evidence and Property Inventory form.
- (4) Complete the appropriate fields on the Digital Forensic Evidence Request, form I-10.122, for each device that requires analysis.
 - (a) Complete as many fields as possible to assist with decryption, identification, and forensic analysis and reporting.
 - (b) Complete any required documentation for digital forensic examinations performed by a foreign agency.
- (5) Attach the completed Digital Forensic Evidence Request to the incident report in the electronic reporting system.
- (6) Forward copies of the completed Digital Forensic Evidence Request and Property Sheet Record, or the equivalent paper form if applicable, to the lead investigator and to the Digital Forensics Unit by email at DigitalForensicsUnit@columbuspolice.org.

h. Property for DNA Analysis

- (1) Refer to the “Evidence Collection” Training Supplement for additional information about handling DNA evidence and submitting it to the PCU for Crime Laboratory analysis.

B. Personnel Submitting Latent Lift Cards

1. Complete a paper Request for Laboratory Examination. Include suspect information if available.
2. Complete the Evidence/Property Chain of Custody Envelope, form A-32.113A.
3. Place the completed Request for Laboratory Examination and latent lift cards in the Evidence/Property Chain of Custody Envelope and seal it with evidence tape. Write your initials and the date on the seal.
4. Place the sealed envelope in the designated lockbox located in the “Police Only” area of the PCU. Do not submit latent lift cards in any other manner.
5. Record the submission of latent prints in the electronic reporting system as outlined in the Field Report Manual and on any other applicable documentation (for example, the CAD and Arrest Information form).

C. Personnel Submitting Property to the Photo Lab

1. Digital Media Cards (Cameras)
 - a. Upload and/or submit photographic print evidence to the Photo Lab for processing.

b. Personnel uploading evidentiary or historical/archival images, excluding those involving domestic violence incidents processed by Patrol personnel:

- (1) Navigate to the U:\ drive from a Division computer equipped with an available digital media card reader.
- (2) Create a folder and name it with the incident number.
- (3) Upload the photos from the digital media card to this folder.
- (4) Complete the electronic Photo Lab Work Order, form S-34.100, that is in the unit folder.
- (5) Save the Photo Lab Work Order in the folder with the photos.
- (6) Name the Photo Lab Work Order with the incident number.
- (7) Verify that the photos have copied to the new folder.

Note: Proof sheets will be returned through inter-departmental mail. The number of proof sheets and compact discs (CDs) will be distributed according to the Photo Lab SOP. Any deviation from this shall be approved by the Photo Lab Manager.

c. Supervisors uploading images for an administrative investigation:

- (1) If no proof sheet or CD is needed, check the box at the top of the Photo Lab Work Order, indicating the photos are for an administrative investigation.
- (2) Make a duplicate copy of the entire folder (including its contents) that was created in Section III,C,1,b.

Note: The original folder will remain on the U:\ drive and maintained indefinitely by the Photo Lab.

- (3) Within the U:\ drive, access the Patrol Administrative Photographs folder.
- (4) Navigate to the folder with your name; if none exists, create a folder.
- (5) Paste the duplicate copy into the folder with your name.

d. Person/Entity responsible for final review of the administrative investigation as established in the applicable Directive or section of the Supervisor's Manual:

- (1) After the administrative investigation has been through the chain of command, and the administrative investigation folder images are no longer needed, notify Photo Lab personnel to delete the duplicate photograph folder (created in Section III,C,1,c) from the corresponding administrative investigation folder on the U:\ drive.
- (2) The final reviewing person/entity may direct their office staff, if applicable, to notify Photo Lab personnel to delete the duplicate photograph folder.

Note: Supervisors should periodically review their Administrative Photographs folder for photographs that may no longer be needed.

If unsure about the necessity for maintaining the copies, send an inquiry through your chain of command to the final reviewing person/entity for clarification.

- e. Personnel submitting digital media cards through inter**office** mail:
- (1) Complete a Photo Card, form I-10.104.
 - (2) Place and seal the digital media card and the Photo Card in an evidence bag and forward it through inter**office** mail or bring it to the Photo Lab for processing.

Note: Proof sheets will be returned through inter**office** mail.

- f. Personnel submitting archival/historical photographs via email:
- (1) Email photo(s) to DivisionPhotos@columbuspolice.org and include the following information in the body of the email:
 - (a) Incident Number (if applicable),
 - (b) A brief description of the type of event,
 - (c) The submitting employee's name and **Pnumber**, and
 - (d) A list of any covert personnel appearing in the photo(s).

2. Photo Lab Personnel Processing Digital Media

- a. Archive all images from the upload drive or digital media card in the original, unaltered format to the image database.
- b. Return through inter**office** mail any digital media cards that are submitted and include the proof sheet.

3. Personnel Submitting Video Evidence to the Photo Lab

- a. Contact **Evidence Technicians** for assistance if unable to retrieve the video evidence or there are questions concerning the video evidence.
- b. Complete the Forensic Video Processing Request, form I-20.128.
- c. Attach a Chain of Custody form or complete the chain of custody section of the Video Processing Request.
- d. Submit the video evidence and Video Processing Request to the Photo Lab.
- e. Forensic Video Analysis Personnel
 - (1) Examine/Analyze video for working images.
 - (2) **Return completed video to appropriate submitting or investigative employee through interoffice mail.**
 - (3) In the event of a problem with the video evidence, contact the person from the business listed on the Video Processing Request form.

4. Digital Video Media from Special Events

- a. Upon completion of the special event, digital video must be submitted to the Photo Lab.
- b. While completing the Photo Lab Work Order, ensure the following is also listed on the form:
 - (1) Requested by: the requesting event supervisor.

(2) Offense Type: "Evidence."

(3) Location/Address: the name of the event and the location the recording was made.

c. Forward a copy of the Photo Lab Work Order to the requesting supervisor so he or she is aware of the video record.

D. Personnel Recovering a Bicycle

1. Contact the Records Unit to determine if a theft report is on file.
2. If the bicycle is reported stolen:
 - a. Advise the Records Unit of the recovery.
 - b. Attempt to contact the owner and arrange to return the bicycle.
3. If the bicycle is not reported stolen, or if the owner cannot be contacted, transport the bicycle to the PCU and complete an electronic Property Sheet Record. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Evidence and Property Inventory form.

E. Removing Property from the PCU

1. Personnel Removing Property

a. Complete a Property/Evidence Transfer form.

Note: Property transfers between the PCU and Crime Laboratory may be recorded electronically using the Division's chain of custody software.

- (1) Keep one copy of this form with the property.
- (2) Have the person to whom the property is transferred sign the form and list his or her agency. If a signature cannot be obtained, return the property to the PCU.
- b. If property is removed for court, return the property or, if the prosecutor retains the evidence, the Property/Evidence Transfer form signed by the prosecutor to the PCU the same day.
- c. If property that requires a supervisor's signature is removed, return the property or the Property/Evidence Transfer form to the PCU within 28 days unless authorized for a longer time period by a lieutenant or higher as outlined in Section II,C,2,g,(3). Indicate any estimated additional length of time in the "Notes" field of the electronic reporting system.
- d. Return all property to the PCU before authorizing its release. Property shall only be released from the PCU.

2. ***Task Force Officer Transferring Property to a State or Federal Agency***

a. Complete a Property/Evidence Transfer form.

(1) Keep one copy of the form with the property.

(2) Complete the "Task Force Officer Transfer to" line by entering the state or federal agency name along with the state or federal case number and/or state or federal agency property number.

- (3) **Obtain the signature of your Division supervisor in the “Authorized by” field on the form.**
- (4) **Sign in the “Officer’s Signature” field and write your badge number and assignment in the appropriate fields.**
- (5) **Mark “No” in the “Will these items be returned to the Property Room” field.**
- (6) **Request the person accepting the property or evidence on behalf of the state or federal agency to sign the form in the “Transferred to” field and to complete the “Agency” field and the “Date” field on the same line. If a signature cannot be obtained, return the property or evidence to the PCU.**
- (7) **Check the box for “Permanent Transfer by TFO.”**
- (8) **Ensure the completed form with all required information and signatures is returned to the PCU on the day of transfer.**

3. PCU Personnel

- a. **Document when property or evidence has been permanently transferred to a state or federal agency to prevent dispositions being sent to Division personnel.**
- b. On a monthly basis, send an electronic Property Accountability Notice Report to the bureau commanders/managers indicating outstanding property checked out by personnel under their command.

4. Bureau Commander/Manager

Review the electronic Property Accountability Notice Report, and within 14 days of initial receipt add information to the “Notes” field of the electronic report explaining why the property has not been returned or any other action taken.

F. Property Disposition Form

1. PCU Personnel

- a. Ensure an electronic Property Disposition notification is forwarded to the assigned personnel every 180 days from the date the property was submitted, excluding firearms, property held for DNA, **and property held for a homicide**. If the electronic notification cannot be generated, forward a paper Property Disposition, form A-32.100.
- b. For property submitted as DNA **or homicide** evidence, ensure an electronic Property Disposition notification is forwarded to the assigned personnel every five years. If the electronic notification cannot be generated, forward a paper Property Disposition form.
- c. Upon receipt of the completed paper Property Disposition form or Property Disposition information in the electronic reporting system:
 - (1) In the case of a firearm, forward paper forms marked “Release to” to the GCU, which is the unit responsible for conducting a background check prior to its release.

- (2) Release property only after verifying the identity of the listed owner and upon his or her signature of receipt.
- (3) Release property to the prosecutor's office upon request and with the appropriate signed form.
- (4) If an owner cannot be located and/or property is unclaimed after 90 days, do one of the following:
 - (a) Upon request, release the property to the finder except if it is a firearm, contraband, or an electronic device containing personal information.

Note: Division personnel are prohibited from receiving recovered property.

- (b) Dispose of the property in accordance with the ORC and/or Columbus City Code (CCC).

2. Sworn Personnel

- a. Verify the status of any court case(s) and/or investigations associated with the property.

Note: Ensure the Case Status in the electronic reporting system is "Closed" and not "Open" or "Inactive." A case listed as "Inactive" indicates it may be reopened when additional information or evidence is discovered.

- b. Complete the appropriate Property Disposition fields on the electronic Property Sheet Record within 30 days of receipt. If the electronic reporting system is unavailable, complete a paper Property Disposition form and indicate one of the following dispositions:

- (1) Release to: Release property no longer needed as evidence to the owner as appropriate. Note the name, address, date of birth, and social security number of the person to whom the property is being released, if known. For release of firearms, see Sections II,D and III,F,3 of this directive.
- (2) Dispose of: The property is no longer needed for evidence and is either:
 - (a) Contraband, or
 - (b) Ownership cannot be determined after reasonable effort.

Note: For disposal of firearms, see Section III,F,3 of this directive.

- (3) Hold for Evidence: The property still has evidentiary value for an investigation, or the case is still pending in court. Include any court case number(s).
- (4) Permanent Hold DNA: Any evidence collected for DNA testing, which will be held and reviewed by the responsible detective every five years.
- (5) Send to County Prosecutor: When requesting evidence be forwarded to the **county prosecutor's office** for review or trial. Include the court case number and defendant's name.

(6) Ballistics hold for NIBIN hit: Any ballistic evidence having a NIBIN hit.
Note: A NIBIN hit indicates the evidence may be associated with another investigation.

(7) Hold for Homicide: Any homicide evidence collected which will be held and reviewed by the responsible detective every five years.

3. Releasing/Disposing/Holding of a Firearm/Ballistic Evidence

Note: GCU personnel review all paper Property Dispositions for firearms.

This process is intended to prevent the firearm from being released to a person who may be under a firearms disability, to verify that the firearm is not connected to another incident through NIBIN, and to verify there is no other reason to retain the firearm in the PCU. GCU personnel begin the background check when the paper Property Disposition is submitted to the PCU.

a. Sworn Personnel

- (1) Verify the status of the owner, any court case(s), and/or investigations associated with the firearms/ballistic evidence.
- (2) Complete a paper Property Disposition form that includes all the listed information.
- (3) Mark "Release to" with the owner's information to release a firearm when:
 - (a) The owner may legally possess a firearm, and
 - (b) The firearm is not needed as evidence in a court case or investigation
- (4) Mark "Dispose of" when:
 - (a) The firearm is not needed in a court case/investigation, and the owner may not legally possess a firearm or the owner is unknown.
 - (b) The ballistic evidence is not needed as evidence in a court case or investigation.
- (5) Mark "Hold for Evidence" if needed as evidence in a court case or investigation.
- (6) Forward to your immediate supervisor.

b. GCU Personnel

- (1) Complete a criminal history check on the individual listed.
- (2) Determine if a NIBIN examination has been completed or if there is a NIBIN hit.
- (3) Mark the Property Disposition form accordingly.
- (4) Return the completed Property Disposition form to the PCU for final disposition.

c. PCU Personnel

- (1) Verify the Property Disposition form is complete and process accordingly.

- (2) Notify Crime Laboratory personnel prior to destroying firearms. Crime Laboratory personnel shall review firearms approved for destruction and identify weapons suitable for retention as references.
 - (3) When a court order is presented for the release of a firearm:
 - (a) Ensure all mandatory checks are expedited and completed before releasing.
 - (b) Notify the Legal Advisor's Office if there is a conflict. The Legal Advisor's Office will review the court order.
 - (c) Only release the firearm to the person named in the court order.
4. Property Belonging to a Deceased Person
- a. Division personnel shall direct any person seeking to obtain the property of a deceased person to the investigating personnel. For the release of firearms, see Sections II,D **and III,F,3** of this directive.
 - b. Investigating Officer
 - (1) Determine whether the property has any evidentiary value.
 - (a) For property having evidentiary value, maintain the property in the "Hold for Evidence" status.
 - (b) For property having no evidentiary value, complete a Property Disposition form and enter "Release to the estate of (name and address of the deceased)" in the "Release to:" portion of the form.
 - i) Give a copy of the form and a copy of the Division pamphlet "A Guide to Retrieving a Decedent's Property," form I-20.116, to the representative of the deceased.
 - ii) Fax the form to the PCU.
 - iii) Forward the original form to the PCU.
 - iv) Provide a copy of the form to the representative of the deceased via personal service, email, or US mail.
 - (2) Advise the representative of the deceased:
 - (a) To take a photo ID, the copy of the Property Disposition form, and a copy of the death certificate to Probate Court to obtain a Letter of Authority or a Release **f**rom Administration order.
 - (b) To present the Letter of Authority or the Release **f**rom Administration order at the PCU.
 - (c) Firearms will only be released after the completion of a criminal background check.
 - c. PCU Personnel
 - (1) Release the property when authorized by a PCU supervisor and upon receipt of one of the following:
 - (a) A court order

- (b) A letter of authorization from a court identifying the presenter as the executor, executrix, administrator, administratrix, or commissioner of the property owner's estate

G. Lost or Damaged Suspect **or** Citizen Property

1. Involved Personnel

- a. Notify the immediate on-duty supervisor of the incident.
- b. Complete the appropriate sections of the Forced Entry/Damage to Property, form U-10.111, and forward to the investigating supervisor.**
- c. Submit damaged property needed as evidence to the PCU.
- d. Release property that is not needed as evidence to the owner following the supervisor's investigation.

2. Investigating Supervisor

- a. Cause the appropriate electronic report to be completed as necessary.
- b. Provide the suspect/citizen with a City Claim Packet.**
- c. Conduct an administrative investigation of the incident.**

(1) Forward the completed **Forced Entry/Damage to Property form** through the chain of command to the Public Accountability Subdivision Deputy Chief, and also send a copy directly to the Public Accountability Subdivision Deputy Chief. Include as part of the investigation:

- (a)** Specific details of the incident, including how the loss or damage occurred.
- (b)** A description of the property, including any serial numbers.
- (c)** A copy of the electronic Property Sheet Record or paper Evidence and Property Inventory form, when applicable.
- (d)** A copy of any applicable incident report.
- (e)** An opinion as to the officer's culpability regarding the loss or damage and a recommendation for disposition, to include disciplinary action if warranted.

d. The investigating supervisor shall complete an investigative letter and forward it with the Forced Entry/Damage to Property form, along with the required information, through the chain of command to the Public Accountability Subdivision Deputy Chief when loss of or damage to suspect or citizen property is found outside of policy.

3. Public Accountability Subdivision Deputy Chief

Notify the City Attorney's Claims Attorney of the investigation and provide a copy as requested.