
PROPERTY PROCESSING

This order outlines procedures for processing of property for identification which includes evidence and non-evidence, narcotics, volatile or inflammable substances, and destructive devices.

I. POLICY

A. RESPONSIBILITIES. The member who first receives or takes property is responsible for it until the item is processed as property for identification and is received at the district station or at the Property Control Section.

II. DEFINITIONS/GUIDELINES

A. CLASSIFICATION OF PROPERTY. Property is divided into four major categories:

1. PROPERTY FOR IDENTIFICATION. Property for Identification is divided into two sub-categories:

a. **EVIDENCE (E):** Property (except narcotics) or money that is related or possibly related to a crime (see DGO 6.02, Physical Evidence).

b. **NON-EVIDENCE:** Property or money not apparently related to a crime. Non-evidence property is further divided into two categories:

- Found Property (F)
- Property for Safekeeping (P)

2. NARCOTICS. Substances that are suspected of being a narcotic.

3. VOLATILE OR INFLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES

4. DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES. Any of the weapons or devices defined in Sec. 12301 P.C.

III. PROCEDURES

A. PROPERTY FOR IDENTIFICATION

1. **PROPERTY RECEIPT FORM.** When taking or receiving Property for Identification from a person (including an arrestee), complete a Property Receipt (SFPD 315) in duplicate. Give the person the original and keep the copy. If the form is not issued, state the reason in your incident report.
2. **COMPUTER CHECKS.** If any item has a serial number or a mark of identification, query the computer to determine if it is stolen.
3. **HANDLING AND PACKAGING .** When booking property, you are responsible for the safe and proper packaging of the item. Ensure that fragile items are protected from breakage. Detailed procedures for collecting and preserving physical evidence are found in DGO 6.02, Physical Evidence.
 - a. **KNIVES, ETC.** Carefully wrap knife blades and items with sharp points so they do not pierce the envelope or container. Safely wrap narcotic paraphernalia, and always place hypodermic syringes into syringe containers before booking them.
 - b. **BODY FLUIDS.** Affix a BIO HAZARD label on any envelope or package containing an item that has been contaminated with a body fluid, e.g., blood, semen.
 - c. **ENVELOPE.** Place the item (except money) in a Property for Identification Envelope with a copy of SFPD 315. List the item(s) it contains on the face of the envelope, seal it, write your initials and star number over the edge of the flap, and seal it with transparent tape.
 - d. **MONEY.** Package all money (U.S. and foreign currency) in a green Money for Identification Envelope. Show the amounts in both figures and words. Before sealing the envelope, have the station keeper verify the amount of money contained in the envelope. If the amount is correct, the station keeper shall sign his/her initials and star number on the edge of the flap next to the initials of the officer booking the money. The station keeper shall also ensure that the envelope is properly sealed with transparent tape.

- e. **OTHER CONTAINERS.** If the item is too large for a Property for Identification Envelope, use a Property for Identification Bag. If the bag is too small, use a suitable container, attach a Property for Identification Tag to it, and attach SFPD 315 to the tag. If a container is not practical, attach a Property for Identification Tag directly to the item and attach SFPD 315 to the tag.
- f. **FIREARMS.** Unload firearms before packaging or tagging them. Always package firearms and ammunition separately from all other property. Packaged ammunition may be placed in the same container with the unloaded weapon. The supervisor and the officer booking the firearm must sign their names and star numbers on the envelope, bag or property tag certifying that the weapon is unloaded.
 - *If you cannot unload a firearm or are unfamiliar with its operation, place it in a secure location at the station until a member of the Police Range can respond and disarm it. The station keeper on duty (or next scheduled) when the Police Range is open, shall make the arrangements. After the firearm has been disarmed, the station keeper will package or tag the firearm and forward it to the Property Control Division.*
4. **PROPERTY LOG/INVENTORY.** When receiving property at the district stations, the station keeper shall enter the property on the District Station Property Log (SFPD 230). If the property is taken directly to the Property Control Section, a Property Transfer Receipt Form (SFPD 361) must be completed and given to the member accepting it. When relieved or reporting on or off duty, inventory any property held, and enter the number of items (packages) held in station log book.
5. **BICYCLES.** Use a Property for Identification Tag and list the serial number of the bicycle on it. Attach the tag to the frame and retain the bicycle at the station. The Property-Control Section will pick up bicycles held as property for identification at district stations each Friday.
6. **MOTOR VEHICLES.** See DGO 9.06, Vehicle Tows.
7. **PRISONER PROPERTY.** See DGO 4.01, Booking of Prisoners.

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8. **COMPUTERS** (also see DGO 10.08, Use of Computers). If you attempt to examine computer files before booking a computer for evidence, but are not wholly familiar with the technical aspects of the system, it is possible that certain files in the systems may be altered, deleted or corrupted. If the computer is returned to the owner, the Department may be held liable for any alteration or loss of data. Therefore, all computers seized as evidence shall be booked into the Property Control Section, and the MIS Unit notified prior to any investigation of the contents. In emergencies, the MIS Unit shall be contacted through the Operations Center.
9. **PERISHABLE PROPERTY**. Unless specifically authorized by the Officer-in-Charge of the Property Control Section, perishable items (e.g., produce, meat, frozen food, etc.) shall not be booked as Property for Identification. These kinds of items should be photographed for evidentiary purposes and appropriately disposed of in accordance with the direction of a superior officer.
10. **INCIDENT REPORT**. Write an incident report each time when booking Property for Identification and indicate its sub-classification, e.g., (E) evidence, (F) found, (P) property for safekeeping.
11. **RETURNING PROPERTY AT THE DISTRICT STATION**
 - a. Property may be returned to its owner if it is not contraband and cannot be connected to a crime. Certain evidence connected to a robbery or a pursesnatch may be returned if keeping it causes a substantial inconvenience to the owner. This evidence may include driver licenses, passports, identification cards, credit cards, money, keys or similar articles.
 - b. Always consult your lieutenant and get his/her approval before returning any property. The decision to release the property must be based on the facts in the case, the advice of the Investigations Bureau, the jeopardy to prosecution, and the real and urgent need of the owner.

- c. When releasing property, complete a Property Release form (SFPD 158) and forward it to the Property Control Section. Explain the reason the property was returned in the incident report. The station keeper must then make a notation of the District Station Property Log (SFPD 230) that the property has been returned to its owner.

11. SIGNING OUT PROPERTY/PROPERTY CONTROL SECTION. When taking Property for Identification from the Property Control Section, you assume responsibility for its care, physical custody and return.

- a. When taking Property for Identification, complete a Property Request (SFPD 250) and sign the Court Log Book. Write your name, star number, and the destination of the property in the log.
- b. If the property is admitted into evidence, returned to its owner, or held in court by the judge, clerk or district attorney, submit a memorandum indicating when the property was signed out and to whom it was given. If the property was retained in court, indicate the date, the court number and the name of the judge.

12. RETENTION OR DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY FOR IDENTIFICATION.

- a. Each month the Computer Management System will provide the Property Control Section with a printout containing a list of all evidence held for various units of the Department. The list will be sent to the Officer-in-Charge of each unit who shall ensure that the assigned investigator indicate whether he/she wishes to hold or dispose of the evidence by writing "hold" or "dispose" next to the case number and printing his/her name and star number adjacent to the case number.
- b. The Officer-in-Charge of each unit shall have forty-five (45) days after receiving the printout to complete the information and return it to the Property Control Section. The Property Control Section shall be responsible for maintaining these printouts in accordance with the Record Destruction Schedule.

B. NARCOTICS

1. **PACKAGING.** Package suspected narcotics (except paraphernalia) in an Analyzed Evidence Envelope. If more than one envelope is needed, number each envelope along with the total number of envelopes. Seal the envelope, write your initials and star number on the edge of the flap, place transparent tape over it, and seal it with sealing wax. If the suspected narcotics are too large for packaging in envelopes, find a suitable container (e.g., a cardboard box) and securely attach the Analyzed Evidence Envelope to it.
2. **CHAIN OF CUSTODY.** The arresting or confiscating officer must deliver suspected narcotics to the Crime Laboratory (Hall of Justice, Room 435). If the Crime Laboratory is closed, place the envelope(s) into the Narcotics Drop located between Rooms 435 and 437. If the package is too large for the slot, contact the Operations Center to arrange for the package to be properly secured. Indicate in your incident report the disposition of the suspected narcotics.
3. **SIGNING OUT NARCOTIC EVIDENCE.** Narcotic evidence taken from the Crime Laboratory must be signed out. A Narcotic Sign Out Log is kept in the front office and indicates the name of the member taking the narcotic, the purpose and the location where it is being taken.
4. **RETURNING NARCOTIC EVIDENCE.** Narcotic evidence must be returned to the Crime Laboratory on the same day it is signed out. If the case is concluded, continued or recessed, and the substance has not been admitted into evidence, immediately return it to the Crime Laboratory. If you are in possession of narcotic evidence and must leave the Hall of Justice, return it to the Crime Laboratory before leaving. After 1700 hours, return narcotic evidence by placing it into the Narcotic Drop. If the package(s) is too large, take it to the Operations Center and you will be given a copy of the Chain of Custody form as a receipt. If the narcotic evidence is held in court, notify the Crime Laboratory the same day and make an appropriate entry into the Narcotic Sign-Out Log. After 1700 hours, prepare a memorandum indicating the court in which the narcotic evidence is held and the name of the judge. Sign the memorandum and place it into the Narcotic Drop.

C. VOLATILE OR INFLAMMABLE (FLAMMABLE) SUBSTANCES. The Arson Task Force is responsible for the storage and analysis of volatile or inflammable substances, including firebombs and incendiary devices. Contact the Arson Task Force at 861-8000 ext. 301 between 0800 and 1700 hrs. or at ext. 347 between 1700 and 0800 hrs.

D. DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D.) personnel collect and preserve all destructive device evidence (see DGO 8.08, Bomb Threats, Destructive Devices, Explosions).

1. FIREWORKS. Officers assigned to district stations shall book fireworks at the stations, and officers assigned to the Hall of Justice shall book fireworks at the Property Control Section, when:

- The fireworks consist of small explosives (e.g., firecrackers or pin wheels) and will fit into one (1) property envelope.
- The fireworks consist of larger explosives (e.g. cherry/barrel bombs) and number ten (10) or less.

a. NOTIFICATION OF E.O.D. When booking fireworks at the district station between 1000 and 1800 hrs., immediately notify the E.O.D. Unit. If the fireworks are booked after 1800 hrs., the station keeper on duty the next day at 1000 hrs. shall notify the E.O.D. Unit. The E.O.D. Unit is responsible for the pickup of fireworks booked at district stations.

b. IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION. The station keeper shall immediately notify the E.O.D. Unit at its office or through the Operations Center when:

- The quantity of the fireworks exceed those specified above.
- A large quantity of fireworks has accumulated at the station and could cause extensive personal or property damage.
- The age or volatility of the fireworks is unknown.

c. INFORMATION/ADVICE. The E.O.D. Unit will provide members with instructions or information concerning the handling, transportation and storage of fireworks when requested.