


POLICY 105.1	EVIDENCE and PROPERTY PROCEDURES	
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	CFA STANDARDS: CHAPTERS 27 AND 24	REVIEWED: AS NEEDED THIS VERSION EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines pertaining to handling of evidence/property by Department personnel.

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A. ADMISSION TO THE EVIDENCE/PROPERTY UNIT

1. Entry is restricted to evidence/property personnel. Admission to the Evidence/Property Unit beyond the service counter is prohibited without the expressed permission of the Evidence Supervisor or designee. In no case will any person enter this area without an escort by an Evidence Unit employee. If entrance is required, personnel shall sign in/out utilizing the Entry Log. All such persons will fully comply with security procedures as directed.
2. All property, evidence, found property, etc. held by the Fort Lauderdale Police Department shall be kept in designated secure areas. These areas will have controlled entry to prevent the alteration, unauthorized removal, theft, or other compromise of evidence/property stored by the department and to maintain chain of custody.

B. GENERAL

1. Responsibilities:
 - a. Departmental personnel are responsible for safeguarding the property of others. All employees shall properly process and secure all evidence/property which may have been confiscated, or which otherwise has come under their care.
 - b. Except for evidence, contraband, etc., which must be handled according to policy, personal property of an arrested individual will be separated from the person, packaged, and appropriately identified as to owner. The package shall be transported with the arrestee to the confinement facility. Bulk property (i.e., backpacks/suitcases, bags or other containers used to store/transport personal belongings) shall not be accepted by the confinement facility, therefore these items shall be entered into the computer Evidence Management System (FileOnQ). Each item contained within the bulk property container shall be logged into the notes section of the computer management system. Any currency, sharp objects, medication, syringes, or jewelry shall be removed, entered, and packaged separately.
 - c. Collection of Evidence/Property
 - (1). Crime Scene Investigators respond to and are responsible for the preservation, collection, packaging and processing of major crime scenes. Their procedures are outlined in the CID SOP.
 - (2). Department personnel responding to the scene of a crime shall:

- (a). Minimize the number of personnel entering the scene. Clear all nonessential personnel from the crime scene including all officers not collecting evidence.
- (b). Establish an entry/exit point to the scene that was least likely to have been used by a subject(s). This choice protects the evidence that may be easily destroyed or moved.
- (c). Maintain a crime scene log (list of all persons entering and exiting the crime scene) so elimination standards such as DNA, fingerprints or footwear may be obtained if necessary.
- (d). Wear personal protective equipment such as gloves, shoe covering, facemasks etc. to prevent exposure to possible biohazards and contamination of the scene.
- (e). Identify, collect, properly package, store, and document evidentiary items collected.
- (f). Ensure all evidence is preserved prior to, during and after collection.
- (g). Obtain sufficient samples at different areas at the scene as practicable.
- (h). Ensure each item collected is packaged in separate, clean and properly sized containers to prevent cross-contamination or damage.
- (i). Ensure each item is properly sealed to retain the evidence and prevent unauthorized handling.
- (j). Ensure liquids are submitted in their original container whenever possible. However, this should only be done when a leak-proof closure can be made. Liquids from an open container (such as a glass, cup, or open can) should be transferred to a clean container having a tight closure, such as a small vial or bottle, available at Property Control. The container shall prevent leakage, evaporation and intrusion of foreign substances.
- (k). Collect blood and store it in sterile containers that are properly sealed and marked.
- (l). Submit blood and other perishable evidence to the laboratory as soon as possible. During the hours when the lab is not open, containers will be refrigerated until transmitted to the laboratory for testing.

- (m). Ensure all wet evidence collected is properly dried prior to packaging. Wet evidence should be sent to the Crime Scene Unit for proper drying procedures after it is entered into the FileOnQ system.
 - (n). Follow proper procedures for packaging, sealing, marking and labelling all evidence collected. Refer to the appropriate laboratory evidence submission manual. For example, the FDLE Crime Lab Evidence Submission Manual found on PowerDMS, or the Training Guidelines provided by the Evidence/Property Supervisor.
 - (o). Ensure all evidence/property collected is entered into the Evidence/Property Management System (FileOnQ) and submitted to the Evidence/Property Unit prior to the end of your shift.
 - (p). Utilize the lockers and refrigerators to securely store evidence and property when the Evidence/Property Unit is closed.
- d. All evidence/property must be entered into the FileOnQ system, to include a description of the evidence/property, and submitted to the Evidence/Property Unit by the end of the member's shift, unless otherwise approved by a supervisor for exigent circumstances to include, but not limited to, weather related incidents such as hurricanes or serious employee injury. The reason for the delay, name of the supervisor who approved the delay, and the method used for temporary storage will be documented in the offense report and the Evidence Unit Supervisor will be notified via email.

2. Procedures:

- a. **Abandoned Property:** Whenever abandoned property is received from someone other than the owner of the property, the name, address, and telephone number will be recorded across the front of an Evidence Property Form. The person relinquishing the property will, in the presence of the impounding employee, sign the Evidence Property Form in the "Found Property" receipt section. The form will be submitted to the Evidence Unit for it to be scanned and attached to the evidence case number via the FileOnQ System.
- b. **General Procedures:** Property recorded on an Evidence Property Form which is released before being stored should be photographed with the owner or recipient whenever possible and uploaded to the Digital Evidence Management System. The Evidence Property Form is then forwarded to the Records Unit.
- c. During exigent circumstances (i.e. FileOnQ down, etc.), handwritten Evidence Property Forms shall be utilized.

3. Storage:
- a. Latent print cards will be placed in the receptacle provided in the write-up room.
 - b. Storage disposition for unstable or hazardous items, i.e., ammunition, explosives, or volatile liquids will be coordinated by an immediate supervisor with the Evidence Unit and Bomb Unit. Volatile liquids or substances will not be submitted in plastic containers. These items will be enclosed in metallic containers with lids to prevent leakage. All other flammable liquids must be removed from lawn equipment, gas cans, bottles, and containers before being submitted. The fuel shall then be turned over to the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department Hazardous Material Unit.
 - c. All monies received at the Evidence/Property Unit must be counted by the submitting employee and a witness employee. Monies shall arrive at the Evidence Unit pre-counted, with denominations separated and listed in the FileOnQ System. All monies submitted to evidence must be placed into a large plastic envelope and sealed. The evidence bag seal must be initialed by the employee and the witness dated and include the signed money label from the FileOnQ System.
 - d. Monies not personally delivered to a member of the Evidence Unit will be placed in the Evidence Unit lockers. Exigent circumstances may require the presence of the Evidence/Property Unit Supervisor or designee, or if the amount is more than \$10,000.00. Monies more than \$10,000.00 shall arrive at the Evidence/Property Unit pre-counted and separated by denominations by the submitting employee and witness. The monies will again be counted by the employee and the Evidence/Property Supervisor or designee via the money counter for verification of the hand count. Once the count is completed and matched the hand count, the money counter receipt will be placed inside the evidence bag along with the monies being submitted to the Evidence Unit. When the count is completed, it will then be entered into the FileOnQ System. This can be accomplished by having the submitting employee's supervisor request a call out of the Evidence/Property Supervisor or designee. Wet money must be placed in a paper envelope and logged into the FileOnQ System. The Evidence Unit Supervisor will be notified of any wet money so proper drying procedures can be accomplished in conjunction with the Crime Scene Unit. Once dry, the money shall be placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to the Evidence Unit.
 - e. Perishable and Oversized Property: An Evidence Technician will coordinate storage of oversized items, e.g. stoves, refrigerators, and similar large objects. All perishable items will be photographed and/or returned to the owner or disposed of, if the owner is unable to take possession of the perishable items. The disposal of perishable item(s) shall be noted in the offense report. The photographs of the perishable item(s) will be uploaded to the Digital Evidence Management System.

- f. Live plants (other than contraband), flowers, food, etc. shall not be placed into evidence. These items shall be photographed, after which the items shall be properly disposed of or returned to the owner. The photos shall be uploaded into the Digital Evidence Management System. All items that have been disposed of or returned to the owner shall be noted in the offense report.
 - g. The manner in which the destruction of the plants, flowers, food, etc. shall be at the discretion of the impounding officer's supervisor.
4. Night Storage (after hours):
- a. Lockers are available for secure storage of evidence and property items when the Evidence/Property Unit is closed or not accessible. Members must ensure the locks are secured after utilizing the lockers.
 - b. A refrigerator is available for overnight storage. This refrigerator has locked compartments for placement of urine, blood, and other pathogens. After placing pathogens in a compartment, members shall ensure the lock is secure.
 - c. Evidence will be removed from this refrigeration by Evidence Unit personnel during the day and placed into a secure refrigeration system within the evidence room.
5. Property Identification and Packaging:
- a. Knives and other sharp instruments shall be boxed in a knife box available at Police Supply or the write-up room, unless being transported to B.S.O. Crime Laboratory for analysis.
 - b. Hypodermic syringes shall be enclosed only in a container available at Police Supply or the write-up room.
 - c. Glass containers or other breakable objects shall be securely wrapped and legibly identified as GLASS-FRAGILE in red letters.
 - d. Sexual Battery: Any rape kit received from the Nancy J. Cotterman Center shall be sealed and stored in the small refrigerator provided in the evidence storage locker room (See Special Handling Section).
 - e. Safes submitted as evidence shall be opened for safety reasons. The safe's contents shall be inventoried. If a safe cannot be opened, the officer shall contact the Bomb Squad and ensure it is safe for submission.
 - f. Batteries from such items as stun guns, flashlights, or other battery-operated items must be removed before they are submitted.

- g. Batteries from stun guns that have been used as a weapon shall be photographed and uploaded to the Digital Evidence Management System to prove the gun was energized and capable of working when it was seized.
 - h. All packages must be submitted utilizing Department approved/issued packaging.
6. Alcoholic Beverages:
- a. Samples of alcoholic beverages shall be placed in a special vial obtainable at Police Supply. The original container may be disposed of once photographs are taken. The sample liquid shall be submitted for analysis via the FileOnQ System. The photograph shall be uploaded to the Digital Evidence Management System.
 - b. Vials shall be tightly sealed to preclude leaks and contamination prior to lab analysis.
7. Bicycles:
- a. Unless they are properly claimed, all bicycles entered into the FileOnQ System as Found Property or Return to Owner will be stored for a minimum of ninety (90) days.
 - b. Bicycles shall be placed in the designated area for bulk property. The key for the bulk property area is located in the Keyper System.
 - c. All bicycles shall be entered into the FileOnQ System and include the serial number, make, model and color. The bar code shall be affixed to a yellow tag and zip-tied to the bicycle's handlebars.
 - d. A Teletype check shall be completed, by the submitting officer/PSA, on all bicycles with a visible serial number and entered into the FileOnQ System in the appropriate boxes listed below:

FCIC/NCIC Check	<input type="text"/>
Performed By	<input type="text"/>
NCIC/FCIC #	<input type="text"/>
NCIC/FCIC Notes	<input type="text"/>

Additionally, the NCIC/FCIC box shall be checked if it is “Hit or Clear”. In cases where the bicycle has a “Hit”, the officer or public safety aide is responsible for the recovery of the bicycle. Only in cases where a bicycle has a “Hit” will the NCIC/FCIC number be provided. The hit information shall be listed in the offense report and include the agency name and case number.

- e. Bicycles seized only for not being City registered shall be entered utilizing the Evidence Category “Non-Registered Bicycle”.
8. Recovered Property:
- a. Property of large quantity or bulk, e.g., numerous televisions, cases of beverages, tires, stoves, refrigerators, need not be transported for storage.
 - (1). Photographs of recovered stolen property can be used, as evidence, for court purposes and the property returned to the owner, if the photograph is properly documented. This would pertain to theft, burglary, and robbery cases. A detective or any Investigations Bureau supervisor shall make the decision regarding the return of recovered stolen property to the victim. When no owner can be located, the property will be handled as applicable.
 - (2). Evidence Property Forms will be completed FOR ALL RECOVERED PROPERTY and submitted to the Records Unit. Items returned to the owner shall be noted with appropriate signatures affixed.
 - b. If all evidence is returned to the owner in the field, the Evidence Property Form shall be submitted to Records, with a photograph of the returned property uploaded into the Digital Evidence Management System.
9. Firearms:
- a. Any time that a firearm is taken for any reason, an offense report shall be completed.
 - b. All firearms shall have an Evidence bar code with the officer’s name and case number.
 - (1). Found Property Firearms – Found Property Firearms may not be claimed by the finder Pursuant to F.S.S. 790.08(4), “All such weapons, electric weapons or devices, and arms now in, or hereafter coming into, the hand of any peace officer of this state or any of its political subdivisions, which have been found abandoned or otherwise discarded, or left in their hands and not reclaimed by the owners shall, within 60 days be delivered by the peace officers to the sheriff of the county aforesaid.”
 - (2). Handguns shall be unloaded and packaged in a handgun box. Shotguns and rifles shall be unloaded and packaged in a shotgun/rifle box. All firearms shall be packaged separately. All firearms shall be secured with a zip tie on the inside of the box and a blue tag placed through the barrel. The magazine/clip shall be packaged with the firearm. In the additional description box in FileOnQ it shall state “Firearm with magazine/clip”. All

ammunition will be entered into the FileOnQ system and packaged separately. All firearm boxes shall be sealed with evidence tape that includes initials, date and marked “safe” on the firearms box.

- (3). If the firearm is evidence in a criminal case, the offense type and victim information shall be entered into the FileOnQ System.
- c. A teletype check shall be completed on all firearms and entered into the FileOnQ System in the appropriate boxes listed below:

FCIC/NCIC Check	<input type="text"/>
Performed By	<input type="text"/>
NCIC/FCIC #	<input type="text"/>
NCIC/FCIC Notes	<input type="text"/>

Additionally, the NCIC/FCIC box shall be checked if it is “Hit” or “Clear”. In cases where the firearm has a “Hit”, the officer is responsible to complete the recovery of the firearm. The hit information shall be listed in the offense report and include the agency name and case number.

- d. All firearms shall be unloaded and rendered safe. The word “safe” shall be written on the box and the package submitted with the firearm except as listed below, prior to being submitted for storage.

Firearms, which cannot be unloaded and rendered safe shall be placed in the red metal gun box by the submitting officer (available at Police Supply). The firearm shall be placed in the box on its side, using the pegs to secure the grip, barrel and trigger and entered into the FileOnQ system. The Training Unit Sergeant or designee shall be notified by the Evidence Unit that assistance is required with a loaded firearm. If a firearm is unable to be rendered safe by the submitting officer and cannot be secured in a red metal box, the firearm package shall be clearly marked “Unsafe”.

- e. A copy of any court order directing the return of a firearm shall be attached in the FileOnQ System documents section; however, pursuant to F.S. 790.08(1)(d), a court order is NOT required in order for the department to effectuate the return upon request.
- f. Upon request, and pursuant to a satisfactory background check through FDLE’s Firearm Eligibility System (FES), and, if necessary, any other investigative means, a firearm may be returned to its lawful owner. It should be noted that the results from FDLE’s FES are to be used as an investigative tool/guide, and that other investigative means shall also be used to determine whether an individual is lawfully allowed to be in possession of a firearm.
- g. In the event the lawful owner is unable to possess a firearm, the firearm may be released to a third party if evidence can be shown that ownership interest

was transferred to that third party AND the third party is lawfully allowed to possess a firearm pursuant to a satisfactory background check through FDLE's FES, and, if necessary, any other investigative means.

10. Return of Weapons and Firearms Following an Arrest

- a. Pursuant to F.S. 790.08(1)(b), law enforcement agencies are required to return any weapons, electric weapons or devices, or firearms that are taken from a person following an arrest, but that are not seized as evidence or subject to forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act within 30 days after such a request is made if requestor meets the following criteria:
 - (1). He or she has been released from detention;
 - (2). He or she provides a form of government-issued photographic identification, and
 - (3). If requesting the return of a firearm, a completed criminal history background check confirms that he or she is not prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law, including not having any prohibition arising from an injunction, a risk protection order, or any other court order prohibiting the person from possessing a firearm.
- b. A court order is NOT required for the release of the firearm.

11. Weapons Taken During a Baker Act or Risk Protection Order

- a. A Risk Protection Order is an action or petition to temporarily prohibit individuals who are determined by a court to be a danger to harm themselves or others from accessing firearms or ammunition.
- b. Firearm Possession and Firearm Ownership Disability prohibits an individual who has been adjudicated mentally defective or who has been committed to a mental institution, from owning or possessing a firearm until the person requests and obtains relief from the disability by a court.
- c. Firearms or ammunition seized or voluntarily surrendered shall be made available for return upon release from the Baker Act facility, unless a risk protection order was entered under F.S. 790.401 and directs a law enforcement agency to hold the firearms or ammunition for a longer period or the person is subject to a firearm purchase disability under F.S. 790.065(2), or a firearm possession and firearm ownership disability under F.S. 790.064. Pursuant to F.S. 394.463, firearms or ammunition must be made available for return no later than 24 hours after the person taken into custody can document that he or she is no longer subject to involuntary examination and has been released or discharged from any inpatient or involuntary outpatient treatment provided or ordered.

- d. The process for the actual return of the firearms or ammunition seized or voluntarily surrendered may not take longer than 7 days.
- e. The Property/Evidence Unit Supervisor or designee shall perform a background check to determine a person's eligibility to own or possess a firearm through the Firearms Eligibility System (FES) prior to releasing, returning, or disposing of firearms and/or ammunition.

Firearm Eligibility System (FES) is a web-based application available via the Florida Criminal Justice Network (CJNet). A background check submitted through FES includes a demographic search of FCIC, NCIC, state, and national criminal history and the NICS Index, which includes records related to mental health.

- f. Ammunition shall be returned upon request; however, it shall not be returned on the same day as the firearm.
- g. If the firearm or ammunition was taken/received pursuant to a Risk Protection Order, the Police Legal Unit shall provide notice prior to the release of any firearm(s) to the appropriate family/household members and others who may be at risk of violence, by using the Department's Notice of Return of Firearm(s) and Ammunition Form.
- h. Any firearm and/or ammunition surrendered by a respondent pursuant to a Risk Protection Order which remains unclaimed for 1 year after a Risk Protection Order was vacated or expired shall be disposed of in accordance with the Department's policies for disposing of firearms.

12. Jewelry and Metals:

- a. All packages containing jewelry and metals shall be sealed with evidence tape and initialed. If submitted in a clear plastic evidence bag, it shall be sealed, initialed, and dated on the back of the clear plastic evidence bag.
- b. Articles of jewelry and metals that are submitted to the Evidence Unit shall be identified as "WHITE STONES", "RED STONES", etc., and "WHITE METAL", "YELLOW METAL", etc.

13. Property/Evidence Removal Authorization:

- a. Only the impounding employee, assigned investigator, or their immediate supervisor are authorized to sign for and remove property/evidence for investigative purposes from the Evidence Unit. Investigators who sign out evidence for investigative purposes will return the evidence within seven days. If the property/evidence is required to be retained longer for investigative purposes the investigator will get approval from the Bureau Lieutenant via email. This approval shall be forwarded to PDEvidence (FLPDEvidence@flpd.gov). If no approval is obtained, then the investigator must return the evidence to the Evidence Unit, have it signed in and sign it back out for an additional seven days. Property or Evidence

removed for court will acquire a copy of the subpoena to be emailed to PDEvidence or a copy of the subpoena shall be provided by the officer/detective at the time of pick up.

- b. If the property/evidence is being returned to owner or next of kin, a signed chain of custody must be returned to the Evidence/Property Unit within 24 hours. If the property/evidence is being transferred from the CSI to the detective, CSI personnel are responsible for having the detective sign a chain of custody for the item and then email it to the Evidence Unit to show the movement from one person to another. If the detective releases the property/evidence, they are responsible for sending the signed chain of custody to evidence to show it was released.
- c. When property is signed out responsibility shall rest with the officer/investigator taking possession, until such property is returned or a court receipt showing disposition is furnished to the Evidence Unit.
- d. Except when admitted as court evidence, property removed for court purposes shall be returned to the Evidence Unit at the conclusion of the court day.
- e. If admitted as evidence into court, a Transfer form shall be completed, signed by a representative of the court, and presented to the Evidence Unit within 24 hours.
- f. When property/evidence is signed out by the CSI personnel for processing once the processing is completed, and if the evidence is turned over to another unit for processing, then CSI personnel will notify the evidence unit VIA a signed chain of custody or a request in the request module in FileOnQ stating where the item is being transferred to.

C. EVIDENCE/PROPERTY SUBMITTED FOR ANALYSIS

1. All items submitted for laboratory analysis must be properly sealed and accurately described and recorded in the FileOnQ System.

The FileOnQ Property form contain the following information:

- a. Date, time, and method of transfer.
 - b. Receiving person's name and responsibility.
 - c. Reason for the transfer.
 - d. Date and time of receipt in the laboratory.
 - e. Name and signature of person in the laboratory receiving the evidence.
2. The following information shall be included on the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Request for Service form: This form shall be used in cases involving Homicide,

Traffic Accidents, Sexual Battery, and any other instances required by the BSO Lab and becomes part of evidence/property chain of custody.

- a. Name and location of the laboratory.
 - b. Synopsis of the event; and
 - c. Examination desired.
3. All items submitted to the Evidence Unit for laboratory analysis, will be transported to the B.S.O. Crime Laboratory by an Evidence employee. Personnel assigned to the B.S.O. Laboratory will inspect each item to see that it is properly packaged before affixing their signature for chain of custody. Any discrepancy between evidence reportedly submitted and evidence received by the crime lab shall be documented and reported to the Evidence Unit Supervisor. The submitting officer shall include a B.S.O. Request For Service form (which is available at the Evidence and Property Unit, the Department Document Template folder, Police Supply, or in the FileOnQ System under reports) which includes "D" indicated below. Be sure to indicate the examination desired.
 4. Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS): In order to maintain absolute chain of custody, the person transporting CDS evidence to the Crime Laboratory shall submit the sealed evidence envelope(s) and/or container(s) and the appropriate documentation to the laboratory technician where it will remain secure until analyzed by a laboratory chemist. Include the name and location of the laboratory, synopsis of the event, and examinations required in the FileOnQ System. All CDS evidence transported to the laboratory shall be properly sealed and accurately described on the Evidence Property Form. The individual transporting the CDS and the individual receiving the CDS at the laboratory will complete the chain of custody portion of the form indicating responsibility, date, and time of deposit of the CDS at the laboratory. The transporting individual shall return a receipted copy of the BSO Property Receipt to the Evidence Unit files.

D. FILEONQ CLASSIFICATION

Classifications: The FileOnQ System provides eight separate evidence/property classifications for impounded articles. The classifications are reflected by using the drop-down box in FileOnQ. No other classification may be used.

1. Evidence: Articles determined as useful or necessary in the prosecution of a suspect.
2. Found Property: Articles whose ownership is unknown, or the owner cannot be immediately advised of the recovery.
3. For Destruction: Articles, which are not needed as evidence and are of no value to the City and the owner is unknown.

4. Return to Owner: Articles impounded for safekeeping which may be returned to rightful owner(s).
5. Prisoner Property: Articles impounded which may be returned to rightful owner(s).
6. Return to Next of Kin: Articles impounded which may be returned to the Next of Kin
7. Non-Registered Bicycles: Bicycles that are taken for Bicycle Civil Ordinance Violation.
8. Shot Spotter: Casing(s) impounded reference a shot spotter call for service.
9. Admin: For Internal Affairs use only
10. Unlawfully Stored Property: For use in City Ordinance Chapter 16.

E. ITEM NUMBERING AND IDENTIFICATION

1. General: When more than one item is recorded in the FileOnQ System, the items will be numbered.
2. Information Required: All pertinent information relative to the property shall be reflected to include the following:
 - a. Serial number(s) and other identification data
 - b. Case Number
 - c. Impounding employee name and CCN number

F. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

The Evidence Unit shall provide a disposal program for all articles in storage.

1. Evidence used to support an arrest will be disposed of sixty (60) days following final disposition rendered by the court of jurisdiction, or if an appeal was filed, following the affirmance of the conviction by the appellate court.
2. Found Property: All found property, which is not used to support an arrest, is eligible to be disposed of ninety (90) days following the date of receipt of the article. Disposition of found property shall be in accordance with §705.101, Fla Stat. (2025) and established procedure.
 - a. All found property with an identifiable owner must be entered into the FileOnQ system with all the owner's information including the complete address if applicable.

b. Identifiable owners are notified by certified mail at their last known address. Arrangements can be made through the Evidence Unit for pick up.

c. Return to Finder

Found property in which ownership cannot be established may be released to the finder by request to the Evidence Unit supervisor, provided that the claimant has signed the Evidence Property Form in the space provided, in the presence of the impounding employee at the time the property is received for impoundment. However, the request shall not be approved for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of impoundment.

(1). Found property which the finder wishes to claim must be accompanied with a payment of \$25.00 for the cost of publishing notices. Said payment shall be made within 24 hours of the time the found property is submitted to the Evidence Room.

(2). Employees act as agents for the City and are not considered as the finder entitled to the return of the found property.

d. Firearms: Firearms shall not be returned to a finder. All firearms, unless awarded to the City, that are eligible for disposal/destruction shall be recorded on a firearms inventory log and entered into the Evidence Management System. They will then be turned over to the Broward County Sheriff's Office's Evidence Unit for disposition in accordance with applicable Florida law.

e. Return To Owner

(1). Return of evidence/property is authorized when a request is received via the FileOnQ System.

(2). Return is authorized if the officer having jurisdiction marks the return to owner section in the FileOnQ System and documents the name of the rightful owner along with the address, city, state, and zip code in the owner's section of the FileOnQ System. The Evidence and Property Unit does not ship any items in the Tri-County area.

(3). Owners are notified by phone, mail, or email, when known, and arrangements are made with the owner regarding the cost of shipping UPS, FedEx, or U.S. mail. If no information is provided in the FileOnQ system, no action will be taken by the Evidence Unit.

(4). The owner shall present proper Identification for all property being returned: State Driver's License, State Identification Card, or Passport.

- f. Court Orders: Property may be returned, if it is not subject to forfeiture, upon the presentation of a true copy of the order to the Evidence Unit by the owner of said property or his authorized representative. If the authorized representative of an owner is not listed on the order as authorized to take possession of the property, said representative shall be required to produce a fully executed original Power of Attorney authorizing them to take possession of such property on behalf of the owner. Evidence Unit personnel shall scan a copy of the original Power of Attorney and attach it in the FileOnQ documents section for record keeping purposes.
- g. Hazardous Materials: All hazardous materials and volatile liquids shall be disposed of by authorized personnel having the training and facilities to properly control and store these items. Disposition of these items will be coordinated with the Evidence Unit and Fire Marshall.
- h. Unclaimed Property: Property that has remained unclaimed for a period of ninety (90) days following the date of receipt of the article and which is of no evidentiary value shall be disposed of in accordance with governing law and established procedures.

G. VIEWING OF EVIDENCE

- 1. Request for Viewing of Evidence:
 - a. If the case is presently being or has already been prosecuted, the State Attorney's Office shall be advised of the request.
 - b. The assigned detective shall coordinate the proper paperwork requests.
 - c. The assigned detective shall be responsible for verifying the existence of the evidence.
 - d. The assigned detective shall ensure that all evidence has been processed and all laboratory examinations have been completed prior to scheduling the requested viewing.
 - e. All written requests to view the evidence shall be included in the case file.
- 2. Preparation for Viewing:
 - a. The assigned detective shall coordinate the location and inventory of the requested evidence with Evidence personnel prior to the scheduled viewing of the evidence.
 - b. The Lieutenant in charge of the Evidence Unit and Investigative Captains shall be advised of any evidence that appears to have been tampered with.
 - c. The assigned detective shall coordinate the scheduling/viewing of the evidence with the State Attorney's Office, the Evidence Supervisor, and the

Crime Scene supervisor so each may assign personnel to prepare for the viewing.

- d. The assigned detective shall document any discrepancy noted between the evidence sheets and the items submitted for evidence.

3. Set-Up for Viewing:

- a. The viewing shall take place in a designated location at the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, unless otherwise directed by a court order.
- b. The viewing area shall be conducive to the preservation of the evidence so as not to cause any contamination by the viewing parties.
- c. The assigned crime scene investigator and/or the assigned detective shall prepare the viewing area to ensure the integrity of the evidence is maintained.

4. Viewing:

- a. The evidence shall be properly displayed in the viewing area prior to the viewing party's arrival.
- b. The assigned detective shall verify the viewing parties through proper identification and accompany the viewing parties throughout the entire viewing session.
- c. Only the Crime Scene Investigator and or assigned detective shall handle the evidence while wearing the proper protective gear and remaining cognizant of cross contamination.
- d. The viewing session shall be videotaped.
- e. Requests to handle specific items of evidence will be decided based upon the consideration for the concern of contamination of the item of evidence.
- f. The viewing parties will be allowed to photograph and/or videotape the session provided it does not affect the integrity of the evidence.

5. Post Viewing:

- a. The evidence shall be repackaged by the Crime Scene Investigator and or assigned detective in conjunction with Evidence personnel.
- b. The requesting party may be billed for any costs incurred by the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

H. INSPECTIONS, EXAMINATIONS, AND INVENTORIES

1. The Office of the Chief of Police shall ensure that the evidence/property custodian is accountable for all property within their control. Accountability shall be verified annually, through inventories, examinations, and yearly random inspections. The inspector shall be a supervisor or manager not directly connected with property and evidence storage.
2. Unannounced inspections, and annual examinations, and inventories of evidentiary and non-evidentiary property shall be accomplished:
 - a. By a designee of the Chief of Police not directly connected with the property/evidence function.
 - b. A minimum of 1500 pieces of evidentiary property shall be inventoried; and
 - c. At least 10% of non-evidentiary property held by the Evidence Unit shall be inventoried.

I. PROPERTY/EVIDENCE LOST, MISSING, OR STOLEN MAINTAINED BY THE EVIDENCE UNIT

1. Property/Evidence that is lost, missing, or stolen from the Evidence Unit shall be reported immediately to the Evidence Unit Supervisor or designee.
2. The Evidence Unit Supervisor or designee shall order an immediate search for any evidence/property that cannot be accounted for as reported by any member of the Police Department.
3. The Evidence Unit Supervisor or designee shall immediately report the incident to the Lieutenant in charge of the Evidence Unit.
4. If the lost evidence/property is located, the Evidence Unit Supervisor shall prepare a departmental memo, which shall contain the following:
 - a. The reason the evidence/property could not be immediately located. (clerical error, storage location misidentified, etc.)
 - b. Corrective action taken or recommended to minimize future occurrences.
5. This memo shall be forwarded to the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau via the chain of command for review.
6. If the evidence/property cannot be located after an extended search, the Evidence Unit Supervisor shall immediately inform their chain of command, who shall initiate an investigation.
 - a. A supplement to the original Offense Report shall be generated.

- b. If the missing item(s) are determined to be evidence, the State Attorney's Office shall be notified.
- 7. The Evidence Unit chain of command shall immediately inform the Chief of Police of any missing, lost, or stolen evidence/property.