

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

Property Room Standards

16. PROPERTY FOR SAFEKEEPING

Law enforcement agencies are required to temporarily take personal property into custody on occasion as a result of arrests that are made, incapacity, or domestic violence calls that are investigated.

Excessive personal property that does not fit into a jail property bag should be booked as Property for Safekeeping and a notice given for the owner to claim the item within a specified time, or make arrangements for a third party to claim it within this period. Caution should be used to ensure that such property is thoroughly searched to prevent unwanted items from entering the Property Room. Property that is filthy, trash, open consumables, or items that may contain lice or other contagion should be disposed of and not brought in to contaminate the Property Room.

Personal property is sometimes encountered when owners are temporarily disabled due to a health emergency or some other type of incapacity. In such instances, a notice should be provided via first class mail to an available mailing address advising the party to make arrangements to claim the property within the specified time period. When no such address is known, a receipt, and instructions on how to claim property should be personally served, if possible.

Domestic violence calls are frequently requiring law enforcement personnel to take firearms into custody for a specific period of time. When such instances occur, a receipt should be provided along with instruction on how to claim the weapons. A sworn investigator who is familiar with domestic violence laws should authorize the release of these weapons. In addition to screening for any current restrictions upon the release of such weapons, a criminal history check should be conducted to see if any prior arrests qualify for firearm restrictions. Due to significant liability exposure, caution should be exercised to ensure the accuracy of information when any release of a firearm is contemplated.

Property for Safekeeping items should be stored in a Property Room location where it is segregated from other items of general evidence by virtue of its short-term storage requirement. Property for Safekeeping reports should also be segregated from other reports by virtue of the same criteria. Safekeeping items should be placed on its own separate property report form and not commingled with other items of general evidence or other items that require special handling.