

	<b>ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> 151 Douglas Avenue Elgin, Illinois 60120	
<b>Effective Date:</b> 01/01/03	<b>STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b> 11/26/13
<b>Chief of Police:</b> 	Physical Evidence Operations, 83.1	
<b>Cross Reference:</b> SOP 84.1 Property Evidence Control		<b>Policy Sections:</b> 83.1.1 Evidence Response Team/Traffic Crash Investigator Availability 83.1.2 Initial Response 83.1.3 Evidence Technician Responsibilities 83.1.4 Submitting Evidence/Chain of Custody 83.1.5 Processing Recovered Stolen Vehicles 83.1.6 Photography and Videotaping 83.1.7 Processing Fingerprints 83.1.8 Equipment and Supplies 83.1.9 Evidence Technician Reports 83.1.10 Computer Equipment as Evidence 83.1.11 DNA Evidence Collection

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish department protocol to ensure the proper collection, processing and preservation of physical evidence.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the Elgin Police Department to ensure department resources, to include evidence technicians and traffic crash investigators, are utilized to facilitate the collection, processing and preservation of evidence. The department recognizes that a certain set of skills are necessary to ensure the integrity of the evidence. Specialized training is provided to officers tasked with crime scene processing and traffic accident reconstruction.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **83.1.1 EVIDENCE RESPONSE TEAM/TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATOR AVAILABILITY**

- A. When possible, each patrol shift shall be staffed with at least one member of the Evidence Response Team. When this practice is not possible, members shall be on call.
- B. Traffic crash investigators shall be available on a 24 hour basis.
- C. When an evidence technician is needed, the on duty supervisor shall make contact with the respective Evidence Response Team supervisor who shall then assess the situation to determine the logical needs the situation necessitates and facilitate the team's response.
- D. When a traffic crash investigator is needed, the on duty supervisor shall contact the traffic investigations sergeant who shall assess the situation to determine the logistical needs to complete the investigation.
- E. Supervisors shall also have access to a 24 hour call list depicting members of the Evidence Response Team and traffic crash investigators.
- F. When department personnel are not available to meet the needs of a situation, the on scene supervisor may request assistance from an outside agency.

#### **83.1.2 INITIAL RESPONSE**

- A. When safe, the first responding officer shall secure the scene to protect the integrity of the evidence; entry to the scene shall be restricted to authorized persons.

- B. The on-duty supervisor or designee shall ensure that an evidence technician responds to a crime scene. This may be facilitated by following the protocol established in section 83.1.1(c) of this policy.
- C. Prior to being processed for evidence, the on duty supervisor or designee shall ensure the scene is protected from contamination.
- D. The on duty supervisor or designee shall provide pertinent case information to the evidence technician to help him/her assess the evidentiary needs of the case.
- E. The first responding officer shall remain on scene until the evidence has been processed or when released by the evidence technician.
- F. The fire department will be notified in cases of arson or suspected arson.

### **83.1.3 EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Ensure the availability of the necessary equipment to process and preserve the scene.
- B. Determine if the particular scene requires special expertise or equipment beyond their capability. The evidence technician shall determine if additional personnel are needed and make notification to the on duty supervisor or designee.
- C. Determine the progression of tasks. Evidence technicians shall photograph, sketch and fingerprint the scene, mark, collect, preserve and submit evidentiary material to initiate the chain of custody.
- D. Major crime investigations will require the aid of a crime scene sketch. The basic elements shall include, but not be limited to:
  - 1. Dimensions.
  - 2. Relation to geographical features, buildings or roads.
  - 3. Address, floor and room number.
  - 4. Location of victim(s).
  - 5. Date and time of preparation.
  - 6. Name(s) of person(s) preparing the sketch.
  - 7. Direction of north.
  - 8. Location of evidence.
  - 9. Report number.
- E. Sketches are not a substitute for good notes or photographs. When necessary, sketches will be used to supplement photographs in clarifying investigative data, such as measurements or identifying evidence.

### **83.1.4 SUBMITTING EVIDENCE/CHAIN OF CUSTODY**

- A. Items secured as evidence shall be properly packaged and marked prior to being submitted into evidence.

- B. All evidence packaging will depict the following information:
1. The case number.
  2. Description of the item.
  3. Badge number.
  4. Date.
- C. The evidence technician or officer securing any item shall complete a Property/Evidence Report listing all items secured as evidence. This form shall be submitted into evidence, along with items secured. A copy of this form shall be attached to the officer's police report. The report shall indicate the circumstances in which the item came into the custody of the officer. For more information on this report, refer to Standard Operating Procedure 84.1 Property Evidence Control.
- D. All property/evidence, property evidence reports and lab transmittals shall be placed in a temporary, secured evidence storage location prior to the end of the submitting officer's tour of duty. Any exceptions to this protocol must be approved by immediate supervisor. The temporary storage locations are as follows:
1. Employees have access to temporary storage lockers of various sizes. It is the responsibility of the employee submitting the evidence to ensure that the locker is secured.
  2. Cages are available for items that are too large for the temporary storage lockers. Employees are responsible for ensuring the cage is secured.
  3. Evidence that requires air drying may be temporarily placed in the storage unit designed for drying evidence. Upon completion of drying, the evidence is to be packaged and secured in one of the evidence storage locations.
  4. Active cannabis plants need to be dried prior to storage in the Property Evidence Room. The employee shall place the plant(s) in the separate drying area designed for drying the plants. The submitting employee is responsible for monitoring the drying process. Upon completion of drying, evidence shall be packaged and secured in the drying area with the fan on.
  5. In cases where property is large and cannot be placed in a temporary property evidence storage locker or cage and the evidence room is not staffed, a supervisor shall contact the property evidence custodian to determine an alternate, secured location.
  6. Perishable items requiring refrigeration shall be placed in the appropriate secured department refrigerator, located in the Property Evidence Room, not a refrigerator used for storage of food or beverages for human consumption. An evidence custodian shall be called in by a supervisor when the evidence room is not staffed.
- E. When evidence is transferred from one person to another, prior to being entered into the department's records management system, the transfer will be recorded in the report. The record of transfer shall include:
1. Date and time of transfers.
  2. Receiving person's name and position title.
  3. Reason for the transfer.
  4. Type of examination desired, name and location of the laboratory, if applicable.

5. Synopsis of the event.

#### **83.1.5 PROCESSING RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLES**

- A. Upon the recovery of a stolen vehicle, the vehicle shall be assessed to determine if evidence technicians are needed to process the vehicle. If the circumstances do not warrant an evidence technician, the responding officer may process the vehicle.
- B. When the vehicle is stolen from another jurisdiction, notification shall be made to the agency to determine their preferences. The vehicle may be processed by an evidence technician when sufficient personnel are available or if the department pursues criminal charges.
- C. The vehicle may be processed at the scene of the recovery or towed to a location where the vehicle can be more efficiently processed. The processing in all cases should be completed prior to the vehicle being assigned to a contracted storage facility.
- D. Recovered stolen vehicles shall be towed by an authorized department towing firm.
- E. The department shall attempt to notify vehicle owners as soon as possible of the recovery of the stolen vehicle; this shall be documented in a police report. Notification to owners outside the city's jurisdiction shall be the responsibility of the originating agency.

#### **83.1.6 PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING**

- A. Digital Photography
  1. Using department authorized equipment, digital photography shall be the primary method used by the department.
  2. Crime scene photography may be completed by responding officers. However, upon an assessment of the scene, it may be determined that the situation necessitates an evidence technician. All aspects of the scene shall be photographed.
  3. Officers shall ensure the date and time settings for the camera are correct.
  4. No deletion of photographs shall be done once the assignment begins.
  5. Prior to the collection of evidence, photographs shall be taken of the crime scene and evidence in its original state, unless exigent circumstances exist.
  6. If a scale measurement is used, there will be one photograph with and one without said measurement.
  7. All care shall be taken to ensure that photographs depict an accurate, authentic and relevant aspect of the scene.
  8. As soon as practical, but prior to the end of their shift, the officer shall download the images into the evidence image server and verify the download was completed prior to deleting images from the memory card, unless exigent circumstances exist.
    - a. This evidence image server is located in the Emergency Communications Center.
    - b. These images are automatically backed up daily.
- B. The Records Division is responsible for all requests for copies of photographs. Employees shall make requests in writing to the Records Division.

C. Video Recording

1. Video recording may be used at any scene, as deemed necessary, by the evidence technician or detective.
2. Prior to the removal of any items of evidentiary value or photographs of the scene, a video recording may be conducted by trained personnel.
3. Videos will be used for the purpose of supplementing photographs and will not replace photographs.
4. Video recordings of a scene shall be taken without sound and submitted as an evidentiary item.

**83.1.7 PROCESSING FINGERPRINTS**

- A. Items of evidence that may support latent or partial fingerprints that cannot be adequately processed at the scene shall be packaged in such a way that the prints are protected from any action that may destroy or contaminate them.
- B. All fingerprint evidence shall be placed in an evidence bag or envelope and properly marked with the following:
1. Date.
  2. Time.
  3. Case number.
  4. Location of the lift.
  5. Collecting officer's initials and badge number.
- C. Fingerprint evidence shall be submitted to the laboratory in accordance with crime laboratory guidelines. Otherwise, fingerprint evidence will be kept in the evidence and property storage area.
- D. Elimination prints from known victims and comparison prints from suspects will be recovered and sent to the crime laboratory along with fingerprint evidence.

**83.1.8 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

- A. The department maintains evidence processing equipment. Equipment shall include, but not be limited to:
1. Latent fingerprint recovery equipment.
  2. Photographic equipment.
  3. Measurement equipment for traffic crash and crime scenes.
  4. Accident investigator supplies.
  5. Containers for the collection and preservation of evidence.
- B. Requests for additional supplies should be made to an evidence response team supervisor.

- C. Evidence technicians may request the use of equipment from an outside agency through an evidence response team supervisor.

#### **83.1.9 EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN REPORTS**

- A. The evidence technician that is processing a scene shall be required to submit a supplemental report regarding their observations and evidence collection activities. The report shall document the evidence that was collected, photographs and sketches of the scene.
- B. If no evidence was collected, an explanation shall be included in the report.

#### **83.1.10 COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AS EVIDENCE**

- A. When collecting personal computer equipment, networked systems or laptop computers as evidence, employees trained in computer forensics should be consulted. The procedures for seizing the equipment are as follows:
  - 1. If the computer is turned off, leave it off.
  - 2. If the computer is turned on, do not touch the machine and remove all non-police personnel from the area. Computer data may be destroyed by a single key stroke.
  - 3. Draft notes on the content of the computer screen. If possible, photograph the screen. A shutter speed of 1/30 is generally optimal.
  - 4. Photograph the scene, as well as any instruction manuals and software in the area.
  - 5. Once the computer and workstation area are photographed, the computer shall be turned off by removing it from the power source.
  - 6. Laptop computers shall be turned off by removing the battery; then the plug may be removed from the computer.
  - 7. Once the computer/laptop is off:
    - a. Record the time and date the computer was shut down.
    - b. Remove all cables and label where and to what they were connected to.
    - c. Seal the power port and case with evidence tape.
  - 8. Keyboards and other components of the computer shall be preserved for fingerprints.
  - 9. All computer equipment should be transported upright, as fragile cargo, and in such a manner to avoid sudden jarring.
- B. Before seizing a multi-user, networked business computer system, a supervisor and an employee trained in computer forensics shall be consulted.
- C. The procedures for devices capable of storing data in an electronic format are as follows:
  - 1. Photograph the scene.
  - 2. Store each item separately in an antistatic or paper bag.
  - 3. Keep away from heat, moisture and magnetic fields.

### **83.1.11 DNA EVIDENCE COLLECTION**

- A. The following precautions must be followed to avoid cross-contamination of DNA evidence:
  - 1. Gloves must be worn and changed before and after obtaining a sample.
  - 2. Use disposable instruments. If disposable instruments are not available, instruments must be cleaned thoroughly before and after handling each sample.
  - 3. Avoid touching the area of the evidence where you believe DNA may exist.
  - 4. Use proper hygienic methods when handling the evidence. Avoid talking, sneezing, scratching, and coughing over evidence.
  - 5. Prior to packaging, the evidence must be thoroughly air dried, out of direct sunlight.
  - 6. Insert evidence into new paper bags or paper envelopes; do not use plastic bags or staples.
- B. All DNA evidence must be kept dry and at room temperature, even during transport.
- C. All evidence must be sealed, labeled and transported in a way to ensure proper identification of where it was found and proper chain of custody.