

Medina Police Department

Subject: Handling of Evidence / Property		Policy Number: 2180	Handling of Property 2180
Reference: Law Enforcement Code of Ethics		Pages: 4	
Personnel: Sworn and Non-Sworn Personnel			
Issue Date: 01-01-2004	Revised Date: 11-16-2020	Review Date: As Needed	

2180.1 – DISCUSSION

The Evidence Handbook is a useful tool in determining how and where to mark evidence properly; however, in some instances, employees are advised to deviate from general rules and to use discretion. For example, such items as recovered firearms, valuable antiques, or the proceeds of a burglary, should not be unnecessarily defaced with identifying data as this may later provoke adverse criticism.

Although a crime lab technician from county or State agencies may process a majority of evidence retrieved in high-profile cases, officers may find themselves involved in the marking and preservation of such items.

2180.2 - MARKING OF FIREARMS

- A. No loaded firearms of any type should be property tagged and stored in the property room.
- B. In criminal cases when firearms are recovered, a reinforced identification tag shall be attached with a wire lead seal to the trigger guard. The tag should be marked with identifying data, including serial numbers, description, case number, date, time, officer, location where found, etc.
- C. In criminal cases the method of marking firearms for identification is as follows:
 - 1. Revolvers: Open the cylinder and scribe on underside of top strap of weapon.
 - 2. Pistols: Scribe under the grips and on the back of the clip near flood plate.
 - 3. Shotguns & Rifles: Pull bolt back and scribe inside receiver.
- D. Firearms, which are to be checked for latent fingerprints, should be unloaded with ammunition packaged separately. The firearms should be packed in paper.
- E. In non-criminal cases, firearms should be tagged with a string tag through the trigger guard.
- F. All firearms should be secured in the evidence room firearms locker.

2180.3 -MARKING MISCELLANEOUS VALUABLE ITEMS.

When marking valuable items, including television sets, stereos, musical instruments, radios, etc., the markings should be as inconspicuous as possible, such as on the bottom, back or inside, or by using a reinforced identification tag and wire seal or a string tag containing the necessary identification data.

2180.4 -MARKING ALTERNATIVE

Items can also be marked by properly packaging and sealing them and then placing the identification data on the outside of the package.

2180.5 - LIQUID EVIDENCE

- A. Non-Volatile Liquids: Because most liquid evidence must be preserved, items such as blood, urine, semen, anti-freeze, etc., it should be placed in airtight containers which are available in the evidence processing room. The evidence must be placed on property tag, marked, and sealed properly, and must be placed in a locker or the refrigerator whichever is appropriate.
- B. Volatile Liquids: Liquid evidence of a volatile nature, such as gasoline, ether, Coleman fuel, should be placed in a clean metal can available in the evidence processing room, property tagged, and marked and sealed before placing it in a storage locker. Previously opened gasoline cans or similar items should not be stored in the property room. Volatile liquids should never be placed in glass containers.

2180.6 - COLLECTION OF BLOOD OR URINE SAMPLES IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Blood samples in criminal cases are withdrawn to determine blood types of victim and suspect, and/or to determine the presence of foreign chemicals (i.e. controlled substances, poisons).

- A. Blood is to be drawn only by a physician or a person acting under his or her direction. An officer should witness the blood being drawn and shall properly seal, number, and mark each tube drawn, and shall report the chain of evidence, including:
 - 1. Subject's name
 - 2. Date and time of collection
 - 3. Name of person withdrawing the sample
 - 4. Identification of each tube collected
 - 5. Location of each tube
- B. If a blood draw or urine sample is required, a search warrant will be obtained.

- C. Use the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's Blood Kit when screening for controlled substances. The kit has all the equipment and forms necessary to obtain the blood sample. Follow instructions provided in blood kit.
- D. In sexual assault cases, the blood kit and instructions are found in the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's Sexual Assault Evidence Kits.
- E. Blood from deceased person is done by the coroner.

2180.7 - PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- A. Packaging Blood Samples. Within two hours, if possible, after each blood sample tube has been properly sealed and marked with the case number, date, name of subject withdrawn from, officer's name witnessing drawing, and sample tube number, the individual tubes should be packaged in such a way that the glass tube is protected from breaking.
- B. Separate Property Tags Required. Place biological specimens, such as blood samples, stomach contents, urine samples, etc., on separate property tags.
- C. Placing Samples into Evidence. The sample(s) should be packaged in the BCA supplied blood/urine kit and be placed in the evidence locker in the evidence room.
- D. Disposition of Samples. It shall be the responsibility of the follow-up investigator assigned to transport all blood/urine sample(s) in a timely fashion to the State crime laboratory when appropriate. This includes samples taken from victim and/or suspects. In the case of DWIs, all samples will be mailed via Certified/Return Receipt.
- E. Disposition of Evidence in Sexual Assault Cases Where no Suspect is Known. Where there is no suspect identified, all blood samples (victim, suspect, or other) shall be turned over to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for analysis as soon as possible, or until the sample is no longer of evidentiary value. The lab will analyze the blood samples even though specific suspect is not identified. The follow-up investigator shall periodically monitor the value of maintaining other biological evidence in the evidence room.
- F. Reporting Evidence Chain. Transportation or disposition of any evidence shall be documented in a supplemental report in LETG by any officer involved in the evidence chain.

2180.8 - COLLECTION OF BLOOD/URINE IN TRAFFIC-RELATED CASES

- A. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's Blood/Urine Collection Kit shall be utilized for traffic-related cases. The supply is maintained by the department and is stored in the Intoxilyzer room. The kit has all the equipment and forms necessary to obtain the blood/urine sample.
- B. Blood is to be drawn only by certified medical personnel. The arresting officer should witness the blood being drawn and should sign the form.

Urine samples will be collected by a licensed police officer of the same sex as the offender and should sign the form

2180.9 - LATENT EVIDENCE

Items of evidence bearing or suspected of bearing latent evidence, (i.e. fingerprints, palm prints, foot or shoe prints) which are to be processed must be placed on property tags, marked and sealed, and placed in the evidence room. If there is danger of destroying possible evidence by marking the item, it must be protected and the package containing the item must be marked. In all cases, the property tag and the container should indicate "Latent Evidence--Attention Identification Section." If there is more than one item, each should be numbered.

2180.10 – PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Packaging Latent Evidence. Liquid evidence on clothing or other materials should be dried and packaged in paper. All property that may contain DNA evidence should also be packed in paper.

2180.11 - CASH HANDLING

Accurately counted paper money will be verified by a senior officer prior to being separately property tagged in a clear plastic evidence bag which both officers shall sign. The amount of cash will be reflected on the property tag. Coins must also be accurately counted and placed in clear plastic bags. (The amount of coin will be reflected on the property tag.)