

DATE: October 23, 2019

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SUBJECT: Inventory of MTPD Property and Evidence Room

Background

Two inventory audits of the Metro Transit Police Department's (MTPD) Property and Evidence Room were conducted in 2019. The MTPD moved from their Minnehaha location to a new facility located near the Heywood Office and Police Building in Minneapolis. The purpose of performing both audits was to confirm the accuracy and completeness of MTPD's evidence records both before and after their move, and to ensure that all items were successfully transferred to the new facility. The pre-move audit was done on May 8th and 9th, while the post-move audit was performed on July 31st.

The Property and Evidence room is a secure storage location for all items of evidence, items taken for safekeeping, found property, items recovered or taken for an investigation, and Compact Discs (CDs) containing video evidence from surveillance equipment. 100% of the non-CD items in the property and evidence room were audited in the pre and post move audit. A random sample of the CDs was taken due to there being more than 43,000 CDs in the inventory.

In addition to the pre- and post-move audits, Audit staff observed how property and evidence was handled during the move. The purpose of observing how items were handled was to ensure that property and evidence was being handled and transported in a reasonable manner to prevent damage and/or loss, as well as to ensure that proper chain of custody protocols were followed.

Results

Pre-Move

No items were missing for any active criminal case.

14 items were found in the wrong location and 11 items were initially missing out of 49,374 items. MTPD Property and Evidence Room staff researched the 11 missing items. According to the documentation received from Property and Evidence Room staff for the missing items:

- One item was mailed back to its owner who lived out of state.
- One item was sent to the St. Paul lab.
- One item was sent to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- Two items are believed to have been destroyed but were not removed from the system.
- The remaining six items were missing.

All missing items were removed from the inventory system with applicable reasoning/information noted.

99.98% of the overall items stored in the MTPD Property and Evidence Room were located.

Observations During the Move

- “Evidence” tape was used to seal the boxes and containers used for transport.
- There was a sheet per box/container/item that noted the contents, who packaged it, and who verified it. The officers who loaded the boxes, containers, or items also signed the sheet.
- One officer always stayed with the transported evidence and property.
- Unmarked vehicles were used to transport the evidence and property.
- Once the boxes, containers, or items arrived at the new facility, the Property and Evidence staff would sign off on the sheets once they verified the contents.

Post-Move

None of the 51,829 items were missing.

Four items were found in the wrong location.

Audit located 100% of the overall items stored in the MTPD Property Room.

Conclusions

The MTPD Property Room inventory continues to improve how they handle evidence and property even as the number of items increases each year. The overall inventory has increased from 18,211 items in 2016 to 51,829 items in 2019.

Based on Audit’s observations, how MTPD packaged, transported, and received the evidence and property from their old location to their new facility was planned, organized and well executed.

The property room at the new facility is more spacious and is better organized which, based on the pre and post move results, appears to lead to fewer discrepancies.

After the pre move audit, MTPD was advised that they should better define how property is mailed back to out-of-state owners. MTPD agreed to have a procedure in place to handle these rare instances.

The procedure will require future items to be shipped via registered mail which require a signature from the owner at delivery. MTPD will then scan the owner’s signature into the TRACKER system and then remove the item from inventory. This occurring on average once every two years.