

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

**CONTACT:**

Lt. Scott Wahl at (619)-531-2675 or [swahl@pd.sandiego.gov](mailto:swahl@pd.sandiego.gov)

## **City Improving Police Property and Evidence Management**

### **2016 Audit Recommendations Lead to Improvements**

**San Diego** – The City of San Diego continues to improve its management of the Police Department's Property and Evidence Room. A Performance Audit was conducted to follow up on the recommendations included in the Grand Jury Report dated June 1, 2015.

As indicated in the Grand Jury Report, the Department has relatively new management over the Property and Evidence Unit. Numerous improvements had been implemented prior to the Grand Jury investigation, including but not limited to:

- Addition of 8,000 square foot location for long term storage of evidence (sex crimes and homicides);
- Securing 8,000 square foot leased space for active impound storage;
- Sending email disposition notices on the remaining paper property tags, which resulted in the disposition of evidence more than doubling compared to two years prior; and
- Modifying the automated email system with the assistance of the District Attorney's Office, to send disposition notifications when cases are resolved, helping to improve the timeliness of evidence dispositions.

To ensure ongoing and consistent processes, several additional measures were taken:

- The Operations Manual was reviewed and revised;
- Written procedures were created and implemented;
- Department Policies and Procedures relating to impounding and disposition of property/evidence were reviewed and revised;
- Training confirmation forms were implemented for consistent, complete training of new staff; and
- Quality control audits were implemented and conducted on a quarterly basis.

As a result of the Grand Jury investigation, numerous recommendations were implemented including the following:

- The management team completed the certification process through the International Association for Property and Evidence;
- The use of entry logs has been implemented for the safes and entry door;
- Security cameras have been installed; and
- A schedule for monthly inventories has been created, which upon completion after one year, will result in a full inventory.

The entire disposition of evidence process has improved over the past few years.

The automated email notification system, that was implemented one year ago, with the assistance of FileOnQ, notifies detectives which specific barcodes are up for review on a monthly basis. Within these monthly emails are direct links to take detectives to the appropriate screen in the case management system, and in the evidence management system (EvidenceOnQ), where they enter their request to hold, release or authorize disposal of impounded items.

With the assistance of the District Attorney's Office, the Property Unit has been able to identify more than 18,000 active impounds that appear to be eligible for disposition. The City Attorney's Office will also be assisting with this identification of impounds likely eligible for disposition. This process will significantly improve the timeliness of the disposition of evidence.

As a result of the Grand Jury Report and the City Auditor's Report, additional improvements underway include:

- The Property and Evidence Room's Operations Manual is being further revised to reflect the current audit processes and guidelines. Procedures for rectifying any discrepancies found during an inventory will also be detailed in the Operations Manual;
- The Property and Evidence Room will conduct additional formal inspections of facilities, as recommended by Police Officer Standards and Training (POST). These inspections will be documented and related records will be retained for a period of at least two years;
- The audit, inventory and inspection results will be directed to the Chief of Police, or designee, to ensure alignment with POST and the International Association of Property and Evidence best practices;
- The Research and Planning Unit will be responsible for conducting regular quality assurance audits of the Property Unit operations;

- The Department has been working to identify sites that meet the operational needs of the Property Unit. Currently, no suitable City-owned sites are available for this purpose. The Department has identified a site that will meet their needs and is currently negotiating with the property owner;
- The Department is working with other City staff to ensure that the Property and Evidence facility at SDPD headquarters complies with applicable building codes; and
- The Property Unit is working with the property management representative of its leased warehouse to resolve some minor water damage risks. No damage to property or evidence has occurred.

Full implementation of all planned additional improvements is expected by November 1, 2016.

The Property and Evidence Unit continues to review current policies and procedures, striving to use the best practices, in order to provide excellent customer service to both members of the Department and to the people of the City of San Diego.

###