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**Office of the City Auditor**

**Audit Report**

**AUDIT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS AT THE  
DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROPERTY UNIT  
(Report No. A08-013)**

**May 16, 2008**

**City Auditor**

Craig D. Kinton

## **Table of Contents**

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>Audit Results</b>	
Section 1: Policies and Procedures	5
Section 2: Physical Security and Access Controls	8
Section 3: Inventory Tracking System Controls	13
Section 4: Inventory Management Controls	18
Section 5: Temporary and Long-term Storage Controls	23
Section 6: Storage Practices	32
Section 7: Money Processing Controls	42
Section 8: Training and Organizational Placement	43
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix I – Background, Objective, Scope and Methodology	46
Appendix II – Major Contributors to This Report	50
Appendix III – Management’s Response	51

## Executive Summary

Significant internal control deficiencies were noted in the Dallas Police Department's (DPD) Property Unit's (Property Unit) systems over the receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory items and records associated with property and evidence. The combined effect of these internal control deficiencies results in a risk that significant errors and/or fraud could occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions.

### Internal Control Deficiency

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, detect, or correct: (1) impairments of effectiveness or efficiency of operations, (2) misstatements in financial or performance information, or (3) violations of laws and regulations, on a timely basis.

**Source:** Government Auditing Standards, Chapter 7.21.

Because of the importance of addressing these internal control deficiencies timely, the City Auditor's Office communicated audit issues to the Chief of Police and DPD management as soon as the issues were identified. The Chief of Police and DPD personnel were responsive and demonstrated a commitment to improving the internal control deficiencies documented in this report within time and budgetary constraints. During the course of the audit, DPD personnel were also evaluating the Property Room and making operational improvements. These improvements are discussed in more detail in DPD management's response to this report.

The significant internal control deficiencies noted related to: 1) policies and procedures; 2) physical security and access; 3) inventory tracking; 4) inventory management; 5) temporary and long-term storage; 6) storage practices; and, 7) training and organization. These control deficiencies are discussed in more detail below.

**Policies and Procedures** - Property Unit's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are not current and do not address all performed processes. The DPD Property Unit's SOPs have not been revised since 2004 and are not written in sufficient detail to help ensure the Property Unit, and other DPD personnel responsible for property and evidence, comply with applicable state statutes, the Dallas City Code and Administrative Directives, and DPD management objectives.

**Physical Security and Access Controls** - Property Room security and access controls are not functioning as intended. As a result, the Property Unit cannot ensure that entry to property and evidence areas is controlled to prevent the alteration, unauthorized removal, theft, or other compromise of property stored in the Property Room.

**Inventory Tracking System Controls** - Property Unit management does not have reliable information necessary to properly manage and control property and evidence.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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The Property Unit implemented a new inventory tracking system, *Evidence Manager*, without a detailed transition plan which would have specified the personnel, the transition schedule, required monitoring activities, and how to resolve noted discrepancies. *Evidence Manager* was also implemented without automatic notification and batch processing, which are critical system functions needed to ensure efficient disposal of property and evidence.

**Inventory Management Controls** - Property Unit personnel have not conducted physical inventories of property and evidence, except for a recent firearm inventory, which is not completely reconciled. Therefore, Property Unit personnel have no assurance that property and evidence items stored in the Property Room are accurately and completely documented in the inventory tracking systems. In addition, Property Unit management does not perform regular and unannounced inventory audits.

**Temporary and Long-term Storage Controls** - Temporary storage controls over some property and evidence items are not in place or operating as intended, placing these items at higher risk for loss. In addition, property and evidence packaging requirements have not been sufficiently documented. As a result, DPD personnel may submit items to the Property Room that are not consistently and appropriately packaged. This reduces the Property Unit's ability to maximize its use of limited storage space and could compromise legal actions or create safety issues.

The Property Room does not have a formal process to identify property and evidence that is a candidate for disposition. The inability to eliminate inventory items as holding requirements are met is one of the most significant problems faced by Property Room managers across the country.

**Storage Practices** - Storage practices use too much shelf space resulting in inefficient use of storage space and the commingling of property items of high-evidentiary value with found property or items of less-evidentiary value. Some DNA evidence is stored in non-environmentally controlled areas making the evidence susceptible to degradation over time. Also, some drug items are improperly stored throughout the Property Room, which increases the risk of loss and creates health risks for Property Unit personnel.

**Training and Organizational Placement** - Property Unit management has not required Property Unit personnel to attend regular formal training or to obtain professional association certifications or memberships.

The Property Recovery Team's organizational placement within the Property Unit does not meet the International Association of Property and Evidence (IAPE) standard, "Staffing the Property Unit with personnel who are not involved in the collection or disposition of property and evidence will simplify control procedures and enhance the integrity of the Property Room."

## **Summary of Recommendations**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure the significant internal control deficiencies noted in the DPD Property Unit's system of internal controls over the receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records associated with property and evidence are corrected by addressing the recommendations made throughout this report.

## **Summary of Management's Response**

The DPD agrees with thirteen of the recommendations made within the report. In many instances, it will be found that DPD has already initiated corrective actions. The DPD only partially agrees with one recommendation regarding the use of non-fixed storage locations. Specific actions taken to address each finding are listed after each recommendation. The DPD's complete response is included as Appendix III to this report.

## **Summary of Objective, Scope and Methodology**

The audit objective was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over the various Property Unit processes for the period of August 2007 to March 2008. The scope of the audit covered the Property Unit's processes over the receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records associated with property and evidence.

The audit methodology included: gaining an understanding of Property Room operations and computer systems; reviewing applicable state statutes, Dallas City Code, Administrative Directives, and professional standards related to property and evidence; and, observing and testing certain Property Room processes and controls.

During the course of this audit, City Auditor's Office personnel also completed Agreed-upon Procedures for seven firearms destructions where 6,425 firearms were destroyed and two drug destructions where 11,300 pounds of drugs were destroyed as authorized and compiled according to the Judgments in REM (JIR) signed by the Dallas County 4<sup>th</sup> Criminal District Court.

# Audit Results

## Overall Conclusions

Significant internal control deficiencies were noted in the Dallas Police Department's (DPD) Property Unit's (Property Unit) systems over the receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory items and records associated with property and evidence. The combined effect of these internal control deficiencies results in a risk that significant errors and/or fraud could occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions.

These significant internal control deficiencies related to policies and procedures, physical security and access, inventory tracking, inventory management, temporary and long-term storage controls, storage practices, and training and organization are discussed in more detail in the following report sections.

## Section 1: Policies and Procedures

### **Property Unit standard operating procedures are not current and do not address all processes performed**

The Property Unit's standard operating procedures (SOPs) have not been revised since 2004 and do not address all processes performed. Additionally, the SOPs are not written in sufficient detail to provide the necessary guidance to personnel who are responsible for the intake, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records. Without this guidance personnel may not process property and evidence appropriately in compliance with applicable state statutes, the Dallas City Code and Administrative Directives, and DPD management's objectives related to property and evidence.

For example, the SOPs discuss property and evidence packaging; however, to ensure items are properly packaged for storage, a packaging manual, providing specific guidance, including photos, would help DPD personnel in packaging items appropriately. In addition, SOPs do not address (or do not address in sufficient detail) many of the inventory management, security, and monitoring issues, including:

- Periodic update of access codes to main entrance and storage areas designated for high-risk items (firearms, drugs, money) as well as access code changes upon departure of key personnel (Commander and Supervisors)
- Entry logs for high-risk areas (firearms, drugs, money)
- Regular periodic monitoring (and documentation of monitoring) of camera surveillance system

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- Periodic physical inventories and inventory audits
- Chain of custody and security requirements when property and evidence is delivered and temporarily stored at one of the patrol stations or other locations
- Packaging and storage requirements for biohazard or DNA property and evidence
- Property diversions (Property diverted for DPD use, such as flat screen televisions)

Policies and procedures provide the guidance for DPD personnel to follow to ensure that DPD management's objectives are met. As such, policies and procedures should be reviewed regularly, and revised as necessary, to ensure they are:

- Reflective of the activities performed
- Meet all state and local statutes as well as departmental policies pertaining to the intake, processing, storage, disposal of property and evidence, and maintenance of inventory records of property and evidence
- Aligned with management's directives

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the General Orders and the Property Unit's SOPs are revised to include all activities noted above. Additionally, the SOPs should be written in sufficient detail so that the Property Unit, and other DPD personnel responsible for property and evidence, complies with the following:

- Applicable state statutes
- Dallas City Code
- City of Dallas Administrative Directives
- DPD management's objectives related to property and evidence

We also recommend the Chief of Police ensure that revised SOPs are disseminated in an efficient manner to personnel who will be held accountable for adhering to them.

**Management's Response**

Agree. The Department agrees with this finding regarding the Property Unit's SOP.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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The following actions are being taken:

- The Property Unit is currently in the process of a complete rewrite of its Standard Operating Procedures to ensure all processes are fully and accurately documented. The new SOP will document policy, practices and procedures identified by the City Auditor's Report as not being covered by the Unit's current SOP. In addition the new SOP will include improvements identified by the Department's own internal review. Once completed, each employee will be issued a copy of the new SOP. The creation of a new Property Unit SOP was added to the Department's Quarterly Action Plan in October 2007. This report is forwarded to the City Manager through the First Assistant City Manager. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*
- The Department is in the process of implementing multiple policy and procedure changes to comply with standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). There are eight standards specifically established regarding the procedures for handling property and evidence received by police departments and the management of property and evidence inventory. The CALEA standards regarding property and evidence management are in the process of being included in the Department's General Orders. *(Estimated Completion: May 2009)*
- The Police Department continues to review policies and practices not specifically addressed by CALEA to determine if they are consistent with the best practices and standards recommended by the International Association of Property and Evidence (IAPE). Property Unit personnel have also met with representatives from the County's forensic laboratory to discuss best practices and standards for the long term storage of evidence. Current documented practices found to be outdated, no longer applicable, or incompletely documented are being updated to address the identified deficiency. These identified changes and updates will be included in the Department's General Orders and Property Unit SOP. *(Estimated Completion: On-going)*

Implementation Date: May 2009

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

## Section 2: Physical Security and Access Controls

### Property Room security and access controls are not functioning as intended

#### Physical access controls are not in place

The access code to the main entrance and card swipe electronic locks for the high-risk areas (firearms, drugs, and money vaults) are not reset regularly and upon key Property Unit personnel changes. According to Property Unit personnel, the access codes to the main entrance and electronic locks to the interior vaults were changed in May 2007; however, there is no documentation of the changes. The Property Unit has had three Unit Commanders since July 2007.

#### **Property Room Facility**

The Dallas Police Department rented the current facility for the property and evidence storage function from 1984 to 2001. In 2001, the City purchased the facility for an approximate cost of \$1.1 million, to defray the annual leasing costs of \$155,306. The Property Room operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Access to high-risk areas within the Property Room is not documented or monitored. Documenting and monitoring access into high-risk areas could be done with an entry / exit log that includes the following: date, time of entry, signed and printed name, purpose of entry, badge number (if applicable), name of the Property Room personnel who accompanied the individual, and the time of exit.

The two-person rule is not followed or addressed in the SOPs as a requirement to have two people present when working in the areas designated for money and drug storage.

#### Camera surveillance system is not functioning

The camera surveillance system is currently not functioning and the Property Unit does not know how long the system has been inoperable. The camera surveillance system includes one computer server and 42 cameras that have been affixed throughout the Property Room; however, the server needed to operate the camera surveillance system failed and, according to Property Unit management, is not repairable. Additionally, Property Unit management does not perform regular monitoring (and documentation of monitoring) of the camera surveillance system to ensure the system is operating as intended.

According to the International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE), “entry to property areas should be controlled to prevent the alteration, unauthorized removal, theft, or other compromise of property stored by the agency to maintain a chain of custody.” In addition, a camera surveillance system provides enhanced security of property and evidence.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the internal controls over Property Room security are in place, functioning consistently, monitored, and documented. The following should be performed:

- The access code to the main entrance and electronic card-swipe locks for the high-risk areas should be changed regularly and when there is a change in key Property Room personnel
- Property Room management should create an entry log form to be placed at the entrance for each high-risk area. The entry log should include the date, time of entry, printed name of the individual, purpose of entry, badge number (if applicable), name of the Property Room personnel, and time of exit
- Property Unit management should enforce the two-person rule when Property Unit personnel work in the storage areas designated for money and drugs
- Property Unit management should monitor the camera surveillance system periodically and document the results to ensure the camera surveillance system is operating as intended

Monitoring of the internal controls over physical security should be documented and maintained at the Property Room.

**Management's Response**

Agree. The Department concurs with the five recommendations on internal controls. The Department has taken the following actions to address each of these recommendations:

- The security access codes were changed on the main entry and card-swipe locks to high risk areas in March of 2008. The new Property Unit SOP will include a requirement for the periodic changing of access codes and the requirement for removing access authorization when personnel are no longer assigned to the Property Unit. However, these locks are outdated and do not record who entered a location or the date and time of entry. The Department is currently installing new proximity locks for the main entry, the officer secured entry and at each high risk area entry point. These locks are activated by an employee's identification card and record the date and time of entry. *(Estimated Completion: June 2008)*
- Entry logs have been implemented for all high-risk areas. The entry logs include the information outlined in the City Auditor's recommendation. In addition to the implementation of the entry logs, the Department requires monthly audits of the logs by a Property Unit Supervisor. These audits are

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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documented on each page of the entry book. Personnel who improperly or only partially complete an entry are notified. *(Implemented)*

- Property Unit management has re-enforced the importance of all personnel following the two-person rule while working in either the narcotics or money vault. Two-person rule will be documented in the new Unit SOP. It is important to note the Department feels this is an important internal control to protect the employees working in these areas as well as the integrity of the Department. However, due to authorized staffing levels, compliance significantly slows the amount of work that can be processed in these high risk areas. Employees constantly have to stop their work to accompany another employee into one of the vaults. When an employee stops his or her work to accompany another employee, he or she must properly secure the items (money or narcotics) being processed. These interruptions also cause breaks in multi-step processes which can lead to processing errors. The two-person policy requires much more effort and is much more disruptive than simply walking into another room. The Department submitted a request for additional positions for the Property Unit as part of the FY 08-09 budget process. *(Implemented)*
- The Department is in the process of acquiring new surveillance cameras. Department personnel have met with different vendors to view the various surveillance technologies currently available. The specifications for the surveillance system have been written and forwarded to the City's Purchasing Department for processing. The Unit's new SOP will include the periodic review of the surveillance system and documentation of this review. *(Completion: January 2009)*

In addition to the above actions that specifically address the recommendations made in the City Auditor's Report, the Department has made a number of other improvements based on its own internal review. These improvements are as follows:

- The Property Unit constructed an officer work area to limit access of non-Property Unit personnel to a controlled area. Surplus modular office walls and counters were used to construct this space. All supplies needed by officers to properly package property and evidence are made available in this area. *(Implemented)*
- The drug packaging area used by officers to prepare narcotics for submission to the Property Unit has been moved from the Drug Team work area to the officer work area. In addition, the drug drop box was moved to the officer work area. This eliminated the need for officers to access various areas beyond the officer work area to prepare drug evidence. *(Implemented)*
- The after-hours bulk drug storage containers have been relocated to be adjacent to the officer work area so they can be kept in view of Property Unit staff during evening and early morning hours when fewer staff members are working. *(Implemented)*

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- The Property Unit has designated a secure drug correction box and moved it outside of the narcotics vault. This has eliminated the need for supervisors to access the main drug vault during hours when members of the Drug Team are not available to process corrections to drug evidence tags. *(Implemented)*
- The Property Unit has purchased new security key boxes to better segregate and control keys to high risk areas. A separate key box is being established for each high risk area. Only authorized personnel for each high risk area will have access to the applicable security key box. *(Estimated Completion: June 2008)*
- An individual alarm code is being established for authorized Property Unit personnel. This will allow the Department to determine which employee activated or de-activated specific alarms. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- Established new secure auxiliary bulk drug storage area. This eliminated the need to store some drug evidence in a secured area also used for firearms storage. *(Implemented)*
- In the process of adding fencing to separate the gun vault from an adjacent vault area being used for additional storage. Currently, a wall separates the two areas, but the wall does not extend to the ceiling. The fencing will secure the area between the ceiling and the top of the wall. *(Estimated Completion: November 2008 – EBS required for installation)*
- The policy of periodically testing the alarm system has been reinstated. The responsibility for this testing has been added to the performance plan of an employee on the administrative staff. *(Implemented)*
- The Property Unit is in the process of creating a property intake area separate from the property storage area at the Police Auto Pound. Both Property Unit and Auto Pound Unit personnel will have access to the property intake area, but only Property Unit personnel will have access to the property storage area. Property initially received at the Auto Pound will be placed in the intake area. Property Unit personnel will then move items from the intake area to the storage area. This process will significantly increase the internal control over items stored at the Auto Pound. Funding will be needed for additional fencing and roofing to fully implement this action. *(Estimated Completion: May 2009 – Based on construction of roof and fence. Also depends on availability of funds.)*
- Two sergeant positions were added to the Property Unit. As a result, there is now a separate supervisor over the Gun Team, the Drug Team and the second watch property Intake Team. This additional staffing has allowed for more in-depth involvement by supervisors for each work group to ensure all internal control requirements are being followed. *(Implemented)*
- Two money counters with counterfeit detection capabilities have been purchased and are currently in use. Previous money counters could not detect counterfeit currency. *(Implemented)*

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- A new procedure was implemented requiring a separate deposit be completed for money submitted from separate incidents. This procedure was implemented to specifically identify the employees involved if a deposit was found to have a shortage. *(Implemented)*
- A policy has been established that requires the Department's Inspection Team, which is independent of the Property Unit, to conduct at least three scheduled audits and one unannounced audit of the money bags prepared for deposit each year. *(Implemented)*
- New money tags are being designed to capture additional information to increase overall accountability of deposits with multiple money bags. The new tag will show the total number of bags associated with a single police service number. The tag number will also be bar coded to eliminate data entry errors. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department has discontinued the practice of allowing partial releases of money. On occasion, money is recovered belonging to several individuals. Previously, if one of the individuals appeared at the Property Unit to collect his or her portion of the money, and the money had been authorized for release, the deposit bag would be opened and the money returned. This practice caused several internal control and accountability issues. *(Implemented)*

Implementation Date: May 2009

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

## Section 3: Inventory Tracking System Controls

### Property Unit management does not have reliable information needed to properly manage and control property and evidence

The inventory tracking system, *Property Room Inventory Management System (PRIMS)*, was not reliable (accurate and complete) and did not meet the needs of Property Unit management. Due to the significant size of the inventory (over 560,000 items) and the need to accurately track the movement and status of items from intake through final disposal, Property Unit management needs reliable information from the inventory tracking system.

The new inventory tracking system, *Evidence Manager*, was implemented in January 2008 without a sufficiently detailed transition plan. A detailed transition plan should include a provision for training of personnel to ensure consistency in evaluating and entering data into *Evidence Manager*. A detailed transition plan should also specify the personnel, the transition schedule, how discrepancies will be resolved, and monitoring activities.

The *PRIMS* inventory tracking system contained incomplete and duplicate records. During the *PRIMS* implementation in 2001 and 2002, data from the previous inventory tracking system, *Automated Property Room Information System (APRIS)*, was electronically transferred (uploaded) to *PRIMS*. *PRIMS* programming errors caused the data uploads to be incomplete. While attempting to correct the problem, data from *APRIS* was transferred to *PRIMS* multiple times, resulting in duplicate records. When inventory items were disposed and the *PRIMS* inventory tracking system was updated, a duplicate record continued to show these items as “on location”; however, Property Unit personnel were unaware that a duplicate record existed at that time.

DPD purchased a new inventory tracking system, *Evidence Manager*, in August 2006 for \$30,000 to address the *PRIMS* data reliability issues. Beginning in January of 2008, property and evidence submitted to the Property Room is entered into *Evidence Manager*. All of the property and evidence inventory records in *PRIMS* are being transitioned into *Evidence Manager* as soon as practical; however, Property Unit management estimates this transition process will take several years to complete.

The transition of inventory records from *PRIMS* to *Evidence Manager* will be labor intensive and dependent on the availability of personnel resources. In order to prevent the duplicate, missing, or incomplete records which occurred during the *PRIMS* implementation, DPD personnel are performing a visual inspection of each

#### Duplicate Records in *PRIMS*

As of the termination of *PRIMS* on January 15, 2008, there were 23,310 duplicate records (property tag numbers).

There were 3,393 duplicate invoices in *PRIMS* all relating to the ID Classification for firearms.

Also, there were 14,908 incomplete records (i.e., records in *PRIMS* where Property Tags had no ID Classification).

**Source:** *PRIMS* inventory system (unaudited)

item before the item is entered into *Evidence Manager*. Personnel are reviewing the information on the property tag to verify the accuracy and completeness of the inventory record before importing it into *Evidence Manager*. Any items not in *PRIMS* will be entered into *Evidence Manager* so that once the transition is completed a complete physical inventory will have been performed on the property and evidence in the Property Room.

Due to the length of time to complete the transition from *PRIMS* to *Evidence Manager*, and the historical personnel turnover at the Property Room, a sufficiently detailed plan is essential to ensure all necessary activities are performed consistently over the transition period. Without a detailed transition plan, there is a risk that information transitioned from *PRIMS* to *Evidence Manager* will be incorrect or inconsistent and may result in data reliability issues similar to those identified in *PRIMS*.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure an inventory transition plan is developed and documented to include adequate detail on how the transition of *PRIMS* records into *Evidence Manager* will be performed. This plan should also include:

- What instruction and training is to be provided
- Who will perform the transition
- Estimate of time needed to transition *PRIMS* records into *Evidence Manager* by classification of property
- Discrepancy resolution
- Description of the monitoring activities to be performed to provide assurance that *PRIMS* inventory records are imported completely and accurately into *Evidence Manager*

**Management's Response**

Agree with comment. The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the property transition plan. However, part of the recommendation states the transition plan should include an estimate of time needed to transition items by classification. The Property Unit has been performing transitions and has discovered it will not be possible to transition one property classification at a time. Since items have to be transitioned before they can be moved, the transition staff is constantly switching between property classifications due to several factors such as destruction preparation, space needs and compliance with recommendations made within this audit report. In addition, multiple property classifications may be on a single property tag. All items on a tag must be located and transitioned together.

The Department is planning or has taken the following actions:

- A property Transition Team is being established to begin a verified migration of information from the *PRIMS* system to *Evidence Manager*. The team will consist of a supervisor, four sworn personnel, and five civilian personnel. The supervisor has been selected and will report to the Property Unit on April 30, 2008. Several other members of the team have also been selected and will report on various dates depending on the needs of their previous assignment. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*
- Each member of the Transition Team will receive in-depth training on the transition process from an experienced member of the Property Unit. In order to ensure consistency, the Team will work together during this process. *(Training conducted as members selected)*
- The Transition Team supervisor will be responsible for auditing the evidence transitioned to *Evidence Manager* to ensure the process is done correctly and all information has been included in the transfer. This will be a continual and on-going process. *(Implemented)*
- The Department has previously reported the transition of property will take approximately three years to complete. This will be documented in the Transition Plan. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*
- The Department will develop an in-depth Transition Plan that outlines the Transition Team training, the process for resolving discrepancies, and a description of the supervisor reviews to be conducted. This plan will also include the method to address all potential items located in inventory that were not found in *PRIMS* or items not located but reported on location in *PRIMS*. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*

Note: In order to ensure all items are transitioned, property that has been added to Evidence Manger can not be physically located with current inventory items that have not yet been transitioned. This will create a critical shortage of storage capacity and greatly complicate location management. It is unclear at this time, if the Property Unit will be able to maintain the separation of items recorded in the different inventory management systems due to space limitations.

Implementation Date: July 2008

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

### ***Evidence Manager lacks critical functionality***

The Property Unit implemented *Evidence Manager* without automatic notification and batch processing, which are critical system functions needed to ensure efficient disposal of property and evidence. Automatic notification would provide an automated process to identify property and evidence that is a candidate for disposal. Batch processing would significantly increase efficiency when updating the status related to

a large number of items, such as firearm destructions. Adding automatic notification and batch processing will require additional programming and expense.

Automatic notification would alert responsible DPD personnel that a particular item in inventory has met the offense related statute of limitations to assist in the identification of property and evidence that is a candidate for disposal. The automatic notification would send the applicable DPD personnel a request to authorize the item for disposal, hold the item, or release the item to the owner (if applicable). With over 560,000 items in inventory, automatic notification is essential in ensuring property and evidence is retained only as long as necessary.

Batch processing functionality is needed to allow Property Room personnel to efficiently update the status of multiple items simultaneously in the inventory tracking system. Without batch processing functionality, Property Room personnel must access each individual record in the inventory tracking system to make updates for location assignments or status changes, such as “authorized for disposal”, “scheduled for disposal”, and “disposal”.

Firearms are generally scheduled for destruction in batches of 1,000. When firearms are authorized for disposal, they are physically moved to a destruction storage location. Then, the following updates to the inventory tracking system must be made:

- Each firearm’s location is individually changed to the destruction storage location
- When the date of the destruction has been determined, the status of each firearm is individually changed to “scheduled for disposal”
- When firearms are disposed, the status of each firearm is individually changed to show the method and date of disposition

As a result, when firearms are destroyed, up to 4,000 individual system changes are required. Batch processing would save Property Unit personnel significant time in updating the inventory tracking system. This functionality would have a similar impact for all classifications of property and evidence.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure additional functionality of automatic notification and batch processing are added to *Evidence Manager* as soon as possible. Additionally, Property Unit personnel should be provided with detailed training on the additional functionality so that property and evidence is consistently and accurately reflected in the inventory tracking system.

## Management's Response

Agree. The Department concurs with the recommendation to acquire additional functionality for *Evidence Manager*. The full implementation of *Evidence Manager* has been planned over several phases.

- Phase One was the initial implementation which required *Evidence Manager* to provide the same basic inventory management support as *PRIMS*. The issues involving *PRIMS* and the need for its replacement are well documented. *PRIMS* does not have the ability to perform batch processing or to generate automated final disposition requests. While the importance of these functions were recognized the time and budget constraints in August of 2006 precluded the Department from a single phase development and deployment solution to replace *PRIMS*. It was determined by the Department, CIS, the Auditor's Office and the product developer (Orion Communications) that a multi-phase development and deployment methodology would provide the best long term tested solution. (*Implemented*)
- Phase One-A consisted of a significant number of enhancements to *Evidence Manager* beyond the initial scope of simply replacing *PRIMS* with its inherent functionality. For example, this phase, which was developed and deployed at the application "Go-Live" event on January 15, 2008, included the Data Transition Plan developed in partnership with both CIS and the Auditor's Office. (*Implemented*)
- Phase Two of implementation includes functionality that has been determined to be a critical need. Both batch process and automated disposition requests are part of the Phase Two implementation. Phase Two also includes improvements to address anticipated future needs to ensure *Evidence Manager* is a sustainable long-term evidence management application. However, Phase Two only includes improvements where the supporting infrastructure and integration capabilities are currently in place. Phase Two is currently in both the procurement and development stage at this time. (*Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved*)
- Phase Three provides for additions and enhancement that further increase the efficiency in the processing and management of *Evidence Manager*. Phase Three includes a direct integration with Dallas County's Southwest Institute of Forensic Science (SWIFS) and integration with Dallas County's District Attorney's Office. The integration with SWIFS will allow improved accountability and control of evidence and the integration with the DA's office will provide timely case resolution status to assist in the scheduled disposition of evidence. (*Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved*)
- Funding was requested for *Evidence Manager* as part of the Department's FY 08-09 budget proposal. (*Completed*)

Implementation Date: Six months after funding approved

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

## Section 4: Inventory Management Controls

### Physical inventories of property and evidence (except firearms) have not been performed

Property Unit personnel have not conducted physical inventories of property and evidence, except for a recent firearm inventory, which is not completely reconciled. Therefore, Property Unit personnel have no assurance that property and evidence items stored in the Property Room are accurately and completely documented in the inventory tracking systems (*APRIS*, *PRIMS*, *Evidence Manager*) until all items are visually inspected before entry into *Evidence Manager*.

#### **PRIMS Inventory Records**

As of the termination of *PRIMS* on January 15, 2008, there were 327,893 invoices and 564,276 corresponding items with a status of "on location" in the Property Room.

**Source:** *PRIMS* inventory system (unaudited)

A physical inventory of firearms was conducted in August 2007. Property Unit personnel are continuing to research and reconcile discrepancies noted during this inventory. The Property Unit decided to inventory firearms because:

- Firearms are considered high risk
- The *PRIMS* inventory tracking system was determined to be unreliable

Due to the significant number of items and storage locations in the Property Room, a complete physical inventory, conducted over a short period of time, may not be practical. A continuous physical inventory process that is documented and covers each classification (firearms, drugs, money, and property) would be more manageable.

Physical inventories are performed and documented to verify that recorded inventory is on hand and to confirm or identify its location. Inventory documentation generally includes who performed the inventory, the date the inventory was performed, discrepancies noted, and associated resolutions. Without performing routine physical inventories, there is no assurance that all of the property and evidence maintained in the Property Room has been captured in the inventory tracking system completely and accurately.

IAPE standards state that "An inventory should be conducted annually or whenever key personnel changes are made" and "Large property rooms may decide to divide the room into areas to be inventoried each month. By the end of the year, the entire room should have been reconciled."

### Recommendation:

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure routine physical inventories are performed for all classifications (firearms, drugs, money, and property) of items in the Property Room. The results of the physical inventory should be documented and compared to the inventory tracking system. At a minimum, the documentation should include who performed the inventory, dates the inventory was conducted, discrepancies noted, and associated resolutions.

The results of all physical inventories should be documented and retained at the Property Room.

### Management's Response

Agree with comment. The Department agrees an on-going inventory system should be established. However, the Property Unit is insufficiently staffed to perform on-going inventories. The Department has requested additional staffing in its FY 08-09 budget submission. If this request is not approved, the Department will be required to re-assign personnel from other work groups or use overtime with existing personnel. The re-assignment of personnel from other work groups would negatively effect that groups' operation and probably result in the need for overtime.

- A staffing model has been developed which would require both an increase in the staffing level of the Property Unit and the upgrade of current civilian classifications. The additional staffing is needed to address several work load issues, including the ability to conduct on-going inventories. The new staffing model would require the addition of two sworn positions and 14 civilian positions. In addition, all current civilian positions would be reclassified or upgraded to Crime Technician -E. This request has been submitted to the Human Resources Department and is included in the Property Unit FY 08-09 budget proposal. (*Budget Request: Completed; Hiring if Positions Approved – 6 Months*)
- The Department is currently transitioning each item in *PRIMS* to *Evidence Manager*. This transition requires a hands-on, visual verification of the information on the package compared to the information in *PRIMS* before the information is entered into *Evidence Manager*. This method of transition will be, in effect, an inventory of all items in the Police Property Unit. Once the transition is complete, a review of all items that show not to have been transitioned to *Evidence Manager* will be conducted. This review will be used to address inventory discrepancies. (*Estimated Completion: Summer 2011*)
- The requirement to conduct an on-going inventory will be added to the new SOP currently in development. The SOP will outline how the inventory will be conducted, who will perform the inventory, and how discrepancies will be resolved. (*Estimated Completion: September 2008 – After SOP completion*)

- Phase Two of the *Evidence Manager* program includes a complete inventory management module. This method will allow immediate inventory checks of small or large storage areas and will fully document the inventory action, the results and the resolution of any discrepancies. The feature will allow inventory of a single location area, i.e. a box of evidence, or the complete inventory of multiple storage locations. The resulting inventory records will allow the Property Unit to manage inventory actions over time to insure that all areas are appropriately inventoried. The results will be maintained for review by both internal and external auditing agencies. (*Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved*)

Implementation Date: Summer 2011

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

### **Property Unit management does not perform regular and unannounced inventory audits**

Property Unit management has not performed periodic inventory audits. Inventory audits are different from physical inventories in that they are performed more frequently and on a sample basis. Physical inventories are performed on all items in a location to determine if there are discrepancies between what is on the shelf and what is in the inventory tracking system.

According to the IAPE standard on audits, “The integrity of the property system is largely based on the paper trail and how well the movement of property through the system is documented.” The IAPE standard also states “An audit of a particular piece of property, or documentation remaining after the property is disposed of, should be able to tell the entire story of the property’s contact with the agency.”

Routine inventory audits test the compliance with applicable standards and Property Unit SOPs for the receipt, processing, storing, and maintenance of records. Without performing regular inventory audits, Property Unit management may not detect errors and inconsistencies in the processing and storing of items.

Inventory audits also include both a shelf-to-system and system-to-shelf tests. The shelf-to-system audit is performed by selecting a sample of items from the shelf and comparing information associated with the item, such as location and invoice number, to information for the item in the inventory tracking system. The system-to-shelf audit is performed by selecting a sample of items from the inventory tracking system to verify: 1) location accuracy; and, 2) information associated with the item is completely and accurately documented in the inventory tracking system.

To test the accuracy of the *PRIMS* inventory tracking system, we performed two tests that included the four classifications of items (firearms, drugs, money, and property) in the Property Room. The first test was a shelf-to-system test and the second was a

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

system-to-shelf test. A total of 83 invoices (and 520 attributes) were tested, 40 invoices for the shelf-to-system and 43 invoices for the system-to-shelf tests.

Overall results of testing revealed an error rate of eight percent (42 divided by 520 = 8%). The majority of discrepancies noted involved invoice number, location references, and documentation discrepancies. Based on the number of invoices in *PRIMS* as of January 15, 2008 and the testing error rate, it is reasonable to believe over 26,000 invoices were not accurately and/or completely recorded in *PRIMS*. See Table 1 below for the summary of test results.

**Table 1 – Inventory Test Results**

Test Performed	Sample Size	Attributes Tested	Type of Discrepancy			Total Errors
			Invoice	Location	Chain of Custody	
Shelf-to-System	40	250	7	6	6	19
System-to-Shelf	43	270	0	5	18	23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that Property Unit management schedule and perform inventory audits on a sample basis at least quarterly. Additional unscheduled inventory audits should be conducted at least once a year and as often as deemed necessary by Property Unit management. As inventory audits are more frequent than physical inventories, the shelf-to-system and system-to-shelf audits should include items from each classification of property and evidence.

The results of the inventory audits should be documented and retained at the Property Room. At a minimum, the documentation for each inventory audit should include who performed the inventory audit, date of the inventory audit, discrepancies noted, and associated resolutions.

**Management’s Response**

Agree. The Department agrees with the recommendation that inventory audits should be scheduled and performed on a regular, reoccurring basis and at least one unscheduled audit should occur each year. Also, the results of the audit should contain the information outlined in the recommendation. The following actions will be taken:

- The requirement to conduct periodic audits will be added to the new SOP currently in development. The SOP will outline how the audits will be

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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conducted, who will perform the audits, and how discrepancies will be resolved.  
*(Estimated Completion: September 2008 – After SOP completion)*

- The performance of periodic audits will be added to the performance plan for each supervisor and Unit Commander. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department's Inspection Team will conduct an unscheduled, independent audit of each property type at least once a year. Documentation of the results will be maintained by the Property Unit and the Inspection Team. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- Property Unit supervisors are now required to review random samples of property processed by each of their employees for quality control purposes. *(Implemented)*

Implementation Date: August 2008

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit and Commander of the Inspections Unit

## Section 5: Temporary and Long-term Storage Controls

### Internal controls over temporary storage of some property and evidence are not in place or operating as intended

DPD's General Orders and the Property Unit's SOPs do not establish proper internal controls over the temporary storage of some property and evidence. Without proper internal controls over temporary storage, DPD cannot easily demonstrate that the property and evidence was properly managed and secured until the Property Room received the item.

Temporary Storage
The International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE) defines temporary storage as the gap between the time the employee who seized the evidence leaves it at the station and the time that it is actually received by the Property Room.

DPD personnel generally bring property and evidence directly to the Property Room; however, there are instances where property and evidence is initially brought to one of following locations:

- DPD patrol stations (North Central, Southwest, South Central, Northeast, Northwest and Southeast)
- The Dallas County Jail (Lew Sterrett)
- Parkland Hospital
- The Southwest Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS)

This review of temporary storage internal controls was limited to DPD patrol stations.

Temporary storage locations at the DPD patrol stations are inherently more risky than at the Property Room because the patrol stations' primary focus is not the receipt, processing, and storage of property and evidence. As a result, internal controls over temporary storage must be well-designed to ensure that the property and evidence is properly managed, secured, and taken to the Property Room timely.

During the audit, an unannounced visit was made to one of the DPD police substations to observe the controls over the temporary storage location. The following are some of the observations noted.

- **Property and evidence at the temporary storage location is not controlled effectively**

The substation's temporary storage location was unlocked, which created an opportunity for unauthorized DPD access. According to DPD personnel, the key to the storage room is generally the responsibility of the station

Administrative Sergeant. When DPD personnel need to place an item in the temporary storage location, the key is obtained from the station sergeant; however, the station sergeant does not always accompany the officer or maintain an access log which shows the name of DPD personnel, the badge number, date, time, and, if applicable, the person accompanying them into the temporary storage location.

- **DPD patrol stations are not consistently transferring property and evidence stored in the temporary storage locations to the Property Room timely**

We tested the inventory transfer logs for all six patrol stations from the period January 2008 through April 7, 2008. There were 16 instances where patrol stations property and evidence transfers were eight days or more from the previous transfer. The longer property and evidence is maintained at the patrol stations, the more risk that items could be lost or not released appropriately.

The Public Service Officer (PSO) at the station is responsible for transporting property and evidence in the temporary storage location to the Property Room. Memorandums from the Property Unit to DPD stations provide a choice to the patrol stations of two days a week to transfer all of the property and evidence to the Property Room.

- **The Property Room does not have a formal process for tracking and monitoring items that have been returned for correction**

Property Room personnel return items to appropriate DPD personnel for correction when the property tag is incomplete, incorrect, or if the packaging is not appropriate. The Property Unit does not have a formal process to track the property returned. Without a formal process to track the items returned, Property Room personnel do not know if property or evidence that was delivered and subsequently returned for correction was ever brought back to the Property Room.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the DPD's General Orders and Property Unit's SOPs establish proper internal controls over the temporary storage and transfer of property and evidence. We also recommend that DPD periodically review patrol station transfer logs to ensure that property held in temporary storage is consistently transferred to the Property Room according to the established schedule. Additionally, a formal process to track items that were submitted but returned for correction should be developed and implemented.

## Management's Response

Agree. The Police Department concurs with the recommendations regarding the internal controls and management of the temporary property storage locations located at the patrol divisions. The following actions are planned or have been implemented:

- A committee has been formed to review standards and procedures for temporary storage locations maintained at patrol divisions. A new General Order will be established based on committee's recommendations. *(Estimated Completion: September 2008)*
- Officers will no longer be allowed to store firearms at temporary storage locations. All firearms must be brought to the Property Unit prior to the end of the seizing officer's shift. *(Implemented)*
- A funding request has been submitted for the FY 08-09 budget to purchase property storage lockers for Divisions with temporary storage locations. These lockers will allow officers to secure property and evidence separately from items submitted by other officers. *(Budget Request: Completed; Purchase if Funding Approved – 3 months after beginning of FY 08-09)*
- Crime Scene Response Section Personnel are currently being trained to enter evidence they collected in the field directly into *Evidence Manager*. This will eliminate the delay in entering evidence into the system due to being sent directly to the County's forensics lab prior to coming to the Property Unit. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*
- New property tags are being designed with an area for station sergeants to sign to indicate they have reviewed the tag to ensure it has been properly completed. This review will be conducted prior to the submitting officer placing an item in a temporary property storage location. This action should reduce the number of errors on property tags and increase personal accountability. The Property Unit will ensure training is provided to patrol supervisors on property tag requirements. *(Estimated Completion: September 2008)*
- The patrol division's Property Transfer Logs are being standardized to ensure all divisions are capturing and reporting required information in the same manner. *(Estimated Completion: September 2008)*
- E-mail notifications are being sent to officers and their supervisors for property tags needing correction. *(Implemented)*
- The Property Unit now requires the original log sheet filled in by officers at the division when a divisional transfer is conducted instead of a copy. *(Implemented)*
- Property Unit personnel have reinforced the importance of maintaining the established transfer schedule of items stored at the patrol division temporary storage locations. This action was taken to eliminate the potential backlog of

property at the temporary storage locations and to ensure property is entered into *Evidence Manager* in timely manner. (*Implemented*)

Implementation Date: September 2008 except for purchase of temporary storage lockers which is three months from funding approval

Responsible Manager: Patrol Division Commanders, Chairperson of the Property Review Committee, and the Commander of the Property Unit

## **Property and evidence packaging requirements have not been sufficiently documented**

There is no property and evidence packaging manual to provide DPD personnel detailed instructions for packaging property and evidence brought to the Property Room. As a result, DPD personnel may submit items to the Property Room that are not consistently and appropriately packaged.

Improper or inconsistent packaging methods could compromise legal actions and/or create significant inventory management and safety issues. For example:

- Crime scene evidence with DNA that has been improperly packaged and stored is susceptible to degradation over time and may not be of use for prosecution or exoneration at a later date
- Drug items that have not been packaged or stored properly are more susceptible to deterioration and theft without detection
- Large quantities of drug items, such as marijuana (in bulk), create storage issues when more than a representative sample is retained
- Sharp objects such as knives and syringes that are improperly packaged and stored may cause injury to DPD and Property Unit personnel
- Inconsistencies in how multiple items are shown on the property tag and entered into the inventory tracking system create confusion regarding the number of items in the inventory tracking system

Also, the SOPs do not address requirements for repackaging property and evidence when there is a reasonable need to open a package, such as when the item is checked out to court. Without repackaging procedures, DPD personnel may not consistently document the necessary information in the inventory tracking system to demonstrate that the “chain of custody” has been properly maintained.

DPD personnel are responsible for the collection of property and evidence as well as packaging. They have several packaging options at their disposal, such as multiple

size boxes, envelopes, and plastic bags. Without specific guidelines that outline acceptable packaging methods, personnel may select packaging materials that are inappropriate for the item, which creates inventory management and safety issues.

The International Association of Property and Evidence (IAPE) standard on Packaging, Handling, and Storage recommends that agencies develop specific policies that outline the acceptable methods for packaging property and evidence. One recognized method would be to develop a photo-based manual that illustrates the proper packaging methods.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police develop a property and evidence packaging manual, with example photos by classification (firearms, drugs, money, and property) to ensure that DPD personnel package property and evidence consistently and appropriately. This manual should be distributed to each patrol station and be made available in the Property Unit's packaging area as well as on-line through the DPD on-line training system, Breeze, or through the DPD intranet.

**Management's Response**

Agree. The Department concurs with this recommendation regarding the creation of a property and evidence packaging manual. The following actions have occurred or are planned:

- A property and evidence packaging manual has been created and will be released in the near future. The manual has not been released at this point due the number and frequency of changes needed based on the audit and internal review. The manual has step by step packaging procedures with color photographs. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- A hard copy of the property and evidence packaging manual be will be placed at each temporary storage location, the Crime Scene Response Section, and the officer work area in the Property Unit. If possible, the manual will also be placed on the DPD intranet. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- Within the last six months, the Department required all sworn personnel to participate in online training on drug packaging procedures and standards. *(Implemented)*
- The Property Unit has created several examples of proper packaging methods which are displayed in the officer work area to demonstrate to officer proper packaging requirements. Packaging examples have also been made for Property Unit staff to display where certain information should be recorded and how tags should be attached. *(Implemented)*

Implementation Date: August 2008

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Property Unit

**The Property Room does not have a formal process to identify property and evidence that is a candidate for disposition**

Property Unit personnel do not have a formal disposition process that routinely and accurately identifies and disposes of property and evidence that is a candidate for disposition. The inability to eliminate inventory items as various holding requirements are met, such as statutory limitations, is one of the most significant problems faced by Property Room managers across the country.

**Holding Requirements**

Property and evidence, by classification and associated charge, brought to the Property Room are associated with different statutes of limitations.

With some exceptions, such as murder, when the statute of limitations expires, DPD personnel should make a determination to hold, dispose, or release property and evidence.

The Property Room does not have an automated notification system in place that notifies Property Room personnel when items have met holding requirements based on charge and classification of property. Additionally, there is no automated notification to DPD personnel to obtain the required authorization for disposition. The manual system used is based on hand-written notifications to individual detectives with no response tracking system. As a result, the Property Room is experiencing significant storage management issues.

The Property Room has received 507,678 items from the period January 2000 through December 2007 with an average number of items received per year of 63,460. The table below shows the number of items received by classification and the corresponding number of items disposed by year. The Property Room had an average net increase of 34,730 items per year over this period. See Table 2 below for a summary of items received and disposed by classification and year.

**Table 2 – Items by Classification and Corresponding Disposals**

Year	Number of Items Received by Classification				Items Received by Year	Items Disposed by Year	Net Gain / (Loss) by Year
	Firearms	Drugs	Property	Money			
2000	6,512	13,808	31,762	555	52,637	2,758	49,879
2001	7,224	10,110	43,329	1,264	61,927	10,757	51,170
2002	6,769	11,126	36,509	1,122	55,526	17,028	38,498
2003	7,941	11,701	39,660	1,404	60,706	22,588	38,118
2004	7,591	11,538	38,484	1,203	58,816	23,491	35,325
2005	12,063	13,833	42,870	1,335	70,101	58,727	11,374
2006	11,190	15,711	43,792	1,340	72,033	45,037	26,996
2007	10,769	16,123	47,603	1,437	75,932	49,451	26,481
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,059</b>	<b>103,950</b>	<b>324,009</b>	<b>9,660</b>	<b>507,678</b>	<b>229,837</b>	<b>277,841</b>
<b>Average / Yr.</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>12,994</b>	<b>40,501</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>63,460</b>	<b>28,730</b>	<b>34,730</b>
<b>Average / Mo.</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,288</b>	<b>2,394</b>	<b>2,894</b>

Source: PRIMS Inventory System (Unaudited)

The lack of an effective process to identify items that have met minimum holding requirements contributes to the Property Room's storage capacity issues. As the number of items in the Property Room increases and storage space is significantly reduced, there is a risk that property and evidence needed for legal proceedings, such as prosecution or exoneration, may be misplaced or lost.

Additionally, the lack of regular disposals has contributed to the current build-up of inventory within all property and evidence classifications. The current rate of property and evidence intake is a little more than two times the number of disposals per year. Without regularly scheduled disposals for items that meet holding requirements, storage capacity issues have occurred and will continue to get worse.

As a result of the disposition backlog, DPD has utilized temporary help and overtime to process items for disposition. Temporary help and overtime costs can be minimized if disposals are scheduled regularly and sufficient Property Room staffing is available to process the disposals.

### **Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure the critical functionality of automatic notification for *Evidence Manager* is acquired as soon as possible to assist Property Unit personnel by identifying property and evidence in the Property Room that has met the statute of limitations based on offense and that is a candidate for disposal.

We also recommend the Chief of Police ensure regular dispositions for all classifications of property and evidence are established and followed to assist in more effectively managing inventory, storage, and the workflow of Property Unit personnel and to reduce unnecessary overtime.

### **Management's Response**

Agree. The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the acquisition of automatic disposition request capabilities for *Evidence Manager*. The Department also agrees that regular dispositions for all classifications of property and evidence be established. However, additional personnel are needed to physically locate and process items that have been authorized for final disposition. Also, the proper position classification is needed to reflect the knowledge base and decision making skills necessary for Property Unit personnel processing items identified for potential final disposal.

The following actions have been taken or planned:

- The Department is pursuing the purchase of phase two of *Evidence Manager*. Phase two includes both the automated disposition processing and batch processing.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- The Department conducted drug destructions on December 19, 2007 and April 2, 2008 to reduce the amount of narcotics in the Property Unit. Another destruction is planned for July 2008. *(On-going Process)*
- The Department has conducted eight gun destructions since February 2007. The Property Unit staff is preparing for another gun destruction but a date has not been set yet. *(On-going Process)*
- The Department has recently advertised found money in the Dallas Morning News as required by State Law. Advertisements were run on December 15, 2007 and April 5, 2008. In addition, the new SOP will designate how many times each year an advertisement will be published. This requirement has also been added to the money vault supervisor's performance plan. *(On-going Process)*
- The Property Unit has discontinued the practice of sending final disposition requests in mass. A new method has been developed which involves sending a spreadsheet to the division with investigative follow-up. The division will then coordinate the review and return the spreadsheet once it has been completed. The method is much more effective and efficient since it is easier to track and ensures recommendations are received on all items listed. *(Implemented)*
- Found Property Detectives are in the process of a row by row review of items associated with property crimes in which the statute of limitations has expired. Lists of these items are forwarded along with a final disposition request to the division with investigative follow up responsibility. *(Estimated Completion: November 2009)*
- An additional Found Property Detective and a detective on special assignment have been assigned to speed the identification and final disposition of found property. As a result, more found property is being returned to the owner. In addition, the Found Property Detectives have successfully identified potential suspects based on when the property was recovered and when the property offense occurred. *(Implemented)*
- As mentioned in previous responses, a staffing request has been submitted to address several issues identified in the audit report. Some of the additional positions will be utilized to create a disposition team to facilitate the final disposition process. *(Budget Request: Completed)*
- In an effort to reduce the inventory, Department staff have met with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office about photographing all evidence and maintaining representative samples from certain bulk property types such as drugs, counterfeit clothing and alcoholic beverages and destroying the remainder. The drug request is still under consideration. The request for other types of property was denied. *(Completed)*
- The Narcotics Division has assigned a sergeant to review old narcotics evidence to determine eligibility for destruction. This process is being facilitated through *Evidence Manager*. *(Implemented)*

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- A tenured investigative sergeant has been assigned to the Property Unit on special assignment to develop an evidence disposition process for Found Property Detectives and detectives with investigative follow-up. *(Implemented)*
- Additional temporary staffing has been added to the Property Unit to address various backlogs which slowed the final disposition process. *(Implemented)*
- Members of the Department's Executive Staff met with ATF officials to develop a plan to address the backlog of weapons needing NIBIN testing. As a result, actions to facilitate the firing of weapons are being implemented. *(Completed)*
- Items submitted as found property have been consolidated. These items have been organized in a manner to quickly identify items ready for final disposition. Visual cues have been attached to boxes to signify where the items are within the disposition process and to indicate State mandated requirements have been met. As a result, Property Unit Personnel can easily walk through the area and pull items for final disposition. *(Implemented)*

Implementation Date: November 2009

Responsible Manager: Multiple managers involved in the creation or reallocation of civilian positions. In addition, a budget Results Team is responsible for the scoring and ranking of the budget request for the additional positions. Commanders over divisions with investigative follow up are responsible for ensuring final disposition requests are completed in a timely manner. The Commander of the Property Unit is responsible for the on-going final disposition process.

## Section 6: Storage Practices

### Storage practices result in inefficient use of shelf space

The Property Room’s property and evidence storage and placement methods are not consistent with standards set forth in the IAPE Packaging, Handling, and Storage standard. Property and evidence is stored based on packaging type, such as storing all boxes in the non-temperature controlled area of the facility. As a result, property items of high-evidentiary value, such as evidence related to murder charges, are commingled with found property or items of less-evidentiary value. In addition, this results in an inefficient use of storage space.

As items are brought to the Property Room, they are stored where space is available. This makes retrieval of property and evidence less efficient and difficult at times, especially if the inventory tracking system is not updated as items change locations.

The Property Room has mapped the fixed storage locations. These fixed storage locations are used to identify where an item is stored throughout the Property Room. The Property Room also uses non-fixed storage locations, such as cardboard boxes which are placed on the floor where there is available space. Since the boxes are not stored on fixed locations, movement is difficult to track as the location reference in the system does not change, but the boxes physical location does change. As a result, items stored in these non-fixed locations are more susceptible to being misplaced or lost.

For ease of storage, tracking, and retrieval, the various numbering systems, labeling of shelves, and guidance to where certain items are to be stored should be documented. IAPE standards state “Being able to specifically identify and document each storage location used by the agency is a critical step in the evidence function. All rooms, bays, bins, shelves, racks, and containers need to have a clearly readable address. Every effort needs to be made to guarantee that all locations are properly marked. Using an organized numbering system that is specific is a critical element of the system.”

#### Recommendation:

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the Property Unit discontinues the use of non-fixed storage locations and organizes and stores like-sized packages in fixed storage locations by classification and by offense type to:

#### Storage Capacity

Based on organizing a section of existing shelving with like-sized packaging, Property Unit management determined an increase of least 30% in storage capacity.

As of January 15, 2008, the Property Room contained over 560,000 items in inventory. By reorganizing all of the shelving using like-size packaging space for an estimated 170,000 items could be created.

**Source:** PRIMIS inventory system  
(Unaudited)

- Maximize the use of shelving space
- Increase efficiency of retrieval
- Better manage property with high evidentiary value

### **Management's Response**

Partially Agree. The Department partially concurs with the recommendation on the discontinued use of non-fixed storage locations. The Department agrees non-fixed locations should not be utilized for long term storage. Non-fixed storage locations are used in the destruction processing procedures. For example, multiple guns approved for destruction are pulled from multiple fixed storage locations from within the gun vault. These guns are placed in a single box which is given a name such as "DESTG1". The location of each gun is changed in the computer system to show their location as "DESTG1". This box is moved to different locations depending on where it is in the destruction process. However, the guns continue to be shown at location "DESTG1". The Department does agree non-fixed storage locations should have limited use and only for specific functions such as destruction processing. Processes using non-fixed storage locations will be well documented in the Property Unit's SOP.

The Property Unit is also using boxes as storage locations in the drug vault. These boxes could be considered non-fixed locations. However, there is insufficient shelving to accommodate all boxes at this time. Although the box has the location written on it, its location in relationship to the other boxes is determined by a defined numbering system. In short, "box 123" comes after "box 122" but before "box 124". If "box 123" is taken down for items within it to be moved, no other box is placed in the space vacated by "box 123". The Department is authorized to purchase additional shelving for the drug vault area and the drug vault expansion which will address this issue. A more detailed explanation of the shelving is bullet-pointed below.

The Property Unit is aware of other non-fixed storage locations that should be corrected through either the final disposition of the contents or the return of the contents to fixed locations. However, all of the items are in the *PRIMS* inventory system. In order to dispose of them or place them in a new location, each item would have to be transitioned to *Evidence Manager*. This would be a time consuming task and would require the diverting of resources and manpower from initiatives with much higher priority. The Property Unit attempts to keep these items together in a single physical location to help mitigate the use of boxes as non-fixed storage locations.

The following actions have been taken or are planned:

- A new boxing method was implemented which results in a 30% to 50% increase in storage capacity on shelving units used for property envelopes. *(Implemented)*

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- Thirty two pallets of packing supplies, such as bio-hazard bags and property storage boxes, were relocated to temporary storage containers to make more evidence storage space within the warehouse. *(Implemented)*
- The Department worked with EBS to identify and acquire an auxiliary storage facility for low-risk bulk items such as gambling machines, bicycles and golf clubs. Since this building was empty when the Department took possession, items could be organized to maximize space. *(Implemented)*
- The Department is authorized to purchase additional high density shelving for the drug vault, gun vault and warehouse storage area. \$460,000 in equipment notes have been issued for this purchase. This purchase has not been made at this time for the following reasons:
  1. It was decided that purchases should not be made until the audit report was complete. This was to ensure the appropriate shelving was purchased to comply with possible recommendations.
  2. The Department was conducting its own internal review which could also result in changes to current shelving and storage practices.
  3. Some of the shelving is to be placed in the drug vault expansion. The purchase was to be made after the expansion was completed to ensure the shelving didn't hamper construction or have to be moved to allow for the addition of the ventilation system. The drug vault expansion has been delayed due to issues with the selected contractor.
  4. The Department will attempt to purchase all the shelving at one time to ensure it all works together with a comprehensive storage plan, to minimize the disruption caused by installation and to achieve the best purchase price.

*(Estimated Completion: May 2009)*

- The drug vault is being expanded to increase storage space. However, the general contractor was unable to meet certain City requirements to begin the construction. EBS is in the process of selecting another vendor. *(Estimated Completion: January 2009)*
- The Department is considering a new storage method for firearms in order to increase accountability and efficiency in retrieval. However, based on issues recently identified, the storage space required to make this improvement is now needed to place evidence which may require an environmentally controlled storage area. *(On-going Process)*
- The Department continues to make the best use of the limited environmentally controlled area. A request has been submitted to remove a large inoperable refrigeration unit that wastes space in the environmentally controlled area of the Property Unit. *(Budget Request for Removal: Completed)*
- Property Unit personnel continue to identify items that are not stored in a manner to make the best use of available space. There are multiple examples

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- of changes made based on packaging type. Video tapes have been moved from a high density storage unit to static shelving based on the size of the tapes and the size of the shelving. Also, the practice of placing empty sexual assault test kit boxes in plastic bags has been discontinued. The adding of a plastic bag made the item odd shaped therefore the item could no longer be easily stacked and wasted space. Property storage tubes have been consolidated in a single storage area. Previously, the tubes were stored in the same boxes as envelopes which was not the most efficient storage method. The pallet storage area was reorganized to best utilize the available space and renumbered for consistency. *(On-going Process)*
- With the assistance of the Auto Pound staff, a 56 ft. tractor trailer was identified and converted to store bulk items at the Police Auto Pound. The Property Unit is currently utilizing three tractor trailers and 2 connex trailers located at the Auto Pound to store property due to insufficient storage space at the primary facility. This is not the preferred method of storage but is the only option currently available. Due to the use of off-site storage locations, Property Unit personnel are required to spend time away from the primary warehouse. *(Implemented)*
  - The Department is in the process of increasing the size of the Property Unit storage area at the Police Auto Pound. This area is used to store certain bulk items and gasoline powered equipment. A request will be submitted to fence the additional area and add roofing in order to increase the security and provide for better internal controls. *(Estimated Completion: May 2009 – Based on construction of roof and fence. Also depends on availability of funds.)*
  - Found property has been consolidated into a single area to maximize shelving space and to increase the efficiency of the final disposition process. *(Implemented)*
  - The Department has solicited additional shelving from a local business that may have a surplus supply. As a result, some shelving was donated by Kroger and they are attempting to locate additional suitable shelving. A Kroger representative has offered to review some of our storage methods and make recommendations. *(On-going Process)*
  - Property Unit personnel have met with a shelving company representative to review shelving and space saving options. *(Completed)*

Implementation Date: May 2009

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Support Services Division and the Commander of the Property Unit

## DNA evidence is stored in non-environmentally controlled areas

The Property Room stores significant amounts of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) evidence in non-environmentally controlled areas. The Property Room has some temperature-controlled storage areas; however, these areas are not sufficient to store all items that contain DNA or that could have evidentiary value for prosecution or exoneration at a later date. According to the Innocence Project website<sup>1</sup>, as of March 21, 2008, 214 defendants previously convicted of serious crimes in the United States had been exonerated by DNA testing.

Upon receipt, the Property Unit must decide how to properly store items submitted; however, it is not always clear at that point in time whether the items contain DNA or if the items could have evidentiary value at a later date. As a result, the most reasonable way to ensure that items are useable is to store all items in an environmentally controlled area in which temperature and humidity are stabilized, controlled, and uniform.

The quality of the DNA left at a crime scene is reduced if the DNA evidence is subjected to environmental factors, such as heat, sunlight, moisture, bacteria, and mold. As a result, when the Property Unit stores DNA evidence in non-environmentally controlled areas the risk increases that the DNA evidence will not be usable if needed.

A recent series of independent reports<sup>2</sup> of the Houston Police Department's (HPD) Crime Lab and Property Room noted that "Storage of biological evidence has been an ongoing problem for the Property Room. The primary issue is the lack of sufficient temperature-controlled space for storing such materials." One of the recommendations made by the independent investigator states "The Property Room storage facility is sorely in need of replacement with a modern, secure, climate controlled warehouse large enough to accommodate all evidence, to include forensic

### DNA Collection and Storage

DPD investigative personnel, such as the Physical Evidence and the Crimes Against Persons Sections, evaluate a crime scene and make determinations regarding the items that appear to have evidentiary value.

Based upon these determinations, items are submitted to one of the following locations which are responsible for:

Parkland Hospital – processing, packaging, and submitting certain types of items to SWIFS for testing

Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences - receiving, processing, testing, and storing items as requested by DPD investigative personnel.

Property Room - receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records associated with property and evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> The Innocence Project was established in the wake of a landmark study by the United States Department of Justice and the United States Senate, in conjunction with Columbia Law School. The Innocence Project performs research and advocacy related to the causes of wrongful convictions.

<sup>2</sup> The City of Houston and HPD commissioned the independent investigation, which began in March 2005, following a series of damaging public disclosures that raised questions about the reliability of forensic science work performed in the Crime Lab and HPD's storage of evidence. The series of press releases and reports related to the independent investigation may be found on the internet. The web address is [www.hpdlabinvestigation.org/pressreleases.htm](http://www.hpdlabinvestigation.org/pressreleases.htm)

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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evidence, with room for expansion....The new facility should be large enough to accommodate all forensic evidence (controlled substance, biological, firearms, questioned documents, fingerprint) and non-forensic evidence and property.” In response to this issue and other issues noted in the report, the City of Houston has allocated funds for the construction of a new Property Room.

Texas Code of Criminal Procedures Article 38.43, Preservation of Evidence Containing Biological Material (effective April 5, 2001), requires that in a criminal case in which a defendant was convicted that the DNA evidence be preserved:

- Until the inmate is executed, dies, or is released on parole, if the defendant was convicted of a capital felony, or
- Until the defendant dies, completes the defendant's sentence, or is released on parole or mandatory supervision, if the defendant is sentenced to a term of confinement or imprisonment

Statutory changes and scientific advancements in evaluating DNA material for prosecution and exoneration means property and evidence containing DNA may need to be retained for several decades. As a result, the Property Room is faced with storing more items for a longer period.

The IAPE standard on Long Term Storage of Evidence states that “Special attention should be given to ensure that biological evidence is not exposed to any heat greater than normal room temperature.”

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the Property Unit stores all property and evidence items in an environmentally controlled area. We also recommend that the Chief of Police work with City management to evaluate the cost benefit of:

- Upgrading the current Property Room facility, and/or
- Building or acquiring a new facility

**Management’s Response**

Agree with comment. The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding the storage of all items in an environmentally controlled area. It is not possible to move all the items currently in inventory to the environmentally controlled area of the Property Unit. However, an attempt is being made to move as many items with potential DNA evidence to the environmentally controlled area.

The following actions have been taken or are planned to address this issue:

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- A kitchen area has been closed and will be converted into an environmentally controlled storage area. *(Estimated Completion: November 2008 but depends on extent of possible lead contamination)*
- All incoming items of high evidentiary value and potential DNA are being stored in the environmentally controlled storage area. *(Implemented)*
- The Property Recovery Squad is being relocated to Police Headquarters. This office area will be converted to storage of items with potential DNA evidence. However, there are structural deficiencies that must be addressed prior to this entire area being utilized in this manner. In addition, shelving is needed to best utilize this space. *(Estimated Completion: 6 Months from date the structural deficiencies are addressed)*
- The Property Unit has converted an area of the gun vault to storage for evidence with potential DNA. Evidence is currently being relocated from the general warehouse, which is not climate controlled, to the newly created location. This will be done until this climate controlled area is full. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department has established a committee to review best practices for the packaging and storage of potential DNA evidence. The recommendations and guidelines will be used to help establish the proper storage requirements for various evidence types. The guidelines will be documented in the Property Unit's SOP. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department has requested funding in during the FY 08-09 budget process to convert the entire warehouse into an environmentally controlled area. *(Budget Request: Completed; Construction, if approved: 18 months)*
- There have been many advancements in forensic science as it relates to the processing and storage of crime scene evidence. In addition, there are State Laws establishing storage standards and final disposal requirements for various types of evidence. The primary civilian position classification in the Property Unit is Storekeeper II – C. This classification describes a position whose primary function involves basic warehouse functions. A proper position classification is needed to reflect the knowledge base and decision making skills necessary for Property Unit personnel. Staff must be able to review incoming evidence to determine the proper packaging methods and storage requirements. Staff should also be able to review police reports in order to verify the information on the report is consistent with the item being identified for potential disposition. The Property Unit has submitted a proposal to upgrade or reclassify all current civilian positions to Evidence Technician – E positions. *(Reclassification Request: Completed)*

Implementation Date: November 2009

Responsible Manager: Multiple managers are involved in the creation or reallocation of civilian positions. In addition, a budget Results Team is involved in the scoring and ranking of the budget request for the additional positions. Multiple managers are

associated with the process to gain approval for significant facility changes. The commanders of the Property Unit and the Crime Scene Response Section are responsible for implementing recommendations made by the Evidence Packaging and Storage Committee.

## **Some drug items are improperly stored throughout the Property Room**

Some drug items are improperly stored throughout the Property Room due to space constraints in the drug vault and the lack of regularly scheduled drug destructions. This increases the risk of loss and creates health risks for Property Unit Personnel.

To address this storage issue, Property Unit personnel are working with the DPD Narcotics Unit and the City Auditor's Office to identify and destroy drug items that are eligible for disposal. Drug destruction procedures were performed on December 19, 2007 and on April 2, 2008, eliminating 11,300 pounds of inventory.

### **Health Risks**

Aspergillus is a group of molds that can pose pathogenic problems. It grows in decaying vegetation, including marijuana. Handling the decaying material can result in an inhalation exposure. Symptoms from this exposure can range from sinusitis conditions to pulmonary infections to more severe conditions.

Mice like to eat and nest in marijuana. Health hazard comes with deer mouse infestations. These mice carry Hantavirus, which attacks the respiratory system.

**Source:** International Association of Property and Evidence (IAPE)

The Property Unit recognizes the need to properly secure drug items and to store these drug items until disposition in well-ventilated areas. The Property Room has a designated area for drug items which has a separate ventilation system that exchanges air in the storage vault externally several times per hour. Additionally, the storage area is secured by electronic card-swipe locks, alarm, and surveillance cameras.

The IAPE standard states "Narcotics evidence should not be commingled with any other property types, except when a common enhanced security area is shared. All items in this category should be handled and processed with extreme caution." The IAPE Long Term Storage standard states "Narcotics storage should be secure, independently keyed, and placed in an area where it is covered by an intrusion alarm and has adequate ventilation to control noxious odors. Ventilation is of special concern with narcotics. Narcotics fumes should not be circulated within a common ventilation system. Exhaust ducts that vent directly outside are highly recommended for property rooms."

### **Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that all drug items are properly secured in storage areas that have appropriate ventilation systems. We also recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the Property Unit conducts regular drug destructions to minimize storage space for these high-risk items.

### **Management's Response**

Agree with comment. The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding the storage and ventilation of the drug storage area. The Department also agrees that regular drug destructions should occur.

It is important to note that from January 2002 until March 2005, the Department did not conduct drug destructions due to the "Fake Drug" investigation. There is still drug evidence which cannot be destroyed due to this investigation. As a result of not being able to destroy drugs for a period of over three years, the drug inventory surpassed the capacity of the drug vault. Several overflow areas were created and security measures installed. These overflow areas were created in both the common work area and in a non-environmentally controlled area of the warehouse. Neither of these areas are equipped with the type ventilation system recommended by the IAPE. Although the Department has resumed drug destructions, there is still insufficient space within the drug vault to house the entire drug inventory.

The following actions have been taken or are planned to reduce the Department's drug inventory and/or increase the amount of properly ventilated space for drug storage:

- The Department has been authorized to expand the current drug vault and add proper ventilation. The construction project was submitted to City Council in December 2007 by EBS. Unfortunately, the selected vendor could not meet all City requirements in order to begin construction. EBS will be taking the project back to City Council to select a new general contractor. *(Estimated Completion: January 2009)*
- The Department specifically reviewed bulk drug seizures to determine if they were eligible for destruction in an effort to create the most storage space. *(Completed)*
- The Department conducted drug destructions on December 19, 2007 and April 2, 2008 to reduce the amount of narcotics in the Property Unit. Another destruction is planned for July 2008. *(On-going Process)*
- Narcotics Division personnel met with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office regarding taking representative samples from certain bulk drug seizures and destroying the remainder before the case is adjudicated. This is allowed by State Law. This is still pending. *(Estimated Completion: November 2008)*
- The successful completion of drug destructions has been added to the Drug Team Sergeant's performance plan and will be part of the new Property Unit SOP. *(Estimated Completion: July 2008)*

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- A legal opinion has been requested to determine if the Department could destroy drug paraphernalia upon intake under certain circumstances. This practice appears to be authorized by State Law. A response has not been received at this time. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department is implementing a new bulk drug packaging method requiring large items to be sealed in polytubing instead of placed in bio-hazard bags prior to being boxed. This method has several advantages over the current method. Since polytubing is heat sealed on both ends, it will help ensure the contents remain in the bag if they begin to decompose. Polytubing also serves as a secondary container in the event the seal on the main box loses its integrity. This will help in future destruction verification audits. Also, to strengthen the integrity of narcotics evidence, officers will be required to sign and date the interior of the bag prior to being sealed. Since polytubing is purchased in large rolls, it can be cut to the desired size. Often the current bio-hazard bag is much larger than needed. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*
- The Department purchased a portable decontamination shower and also replaced all eye wash stations. In addition all employees have been trained on the use of the decontamination shower. *(Completed)*
- The Department continues to ensure a sufficient number of respirator masks and gloves are available for all employees. *(Completed)*
- The Department has requested an environmental study of the facility to determine if any environmental health hazards currently exist. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*

Implementation Date: Various

Responsible Manager: EBS Management for construction project, Commander of the Narcotics Division for agreement with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, and the Commander of the Property Unit

## Section 7: Money Processing Controls

### Appropriate segregation of duties exists over money received and processed by Property Unit personnel

The Property Unit appropriately segregates personnel duties over the processing of money received. The Property Unit receives from DPD personnel money that is confiscated during various law enforcement activities such as narcotics and vice operations, as well as, crimes against persons (CAPERS) or any money that is found.

#### Money on Hand

As of March 19, 2008, there were 198 money invoices totaling \$206,978 in the money vault.

The amounts associated with these invoices ranged from \$.03 to \$44,240.

**Source:** *Evidence Manager* inventory system (Unaudited)

Segregation of duties means that no single individual has control of two or more responsibilities within a process, such as receiving cash, depositing cash, and reconciling the bank statement. Segregation of duties is a key internal control that is used to ensure that errors or fraud are prevented or detected on a timely basis by employees in the normal course of business.

Based on our review of cash processing, Property Unit personnel duties are properly segregated for intake, deposit preparation, data entry into the accounting system, and reconciliation of the accounting records to the bank records.

We commend the Chief of Police for establishing appropriate segregation of duties over money received and processed by Property Unit personnel and have no recommendations for improvement in this area at this time.

## Section 8: Training and Organizational Placement

### Regular formal training and professional association membership is not required

Property Unit Management has not required regular formal training for Property Unit personnel. Training for handling, packaging, and storing high-risk items and hazardous materials, such as blood borne pathogens, is critical in order to protect employees and ensure property and evidence, such as DNA, is properly preserved. Additionally, Property Unit personnel have not been provided opportunities for membership or to obtain certifications in professional associations such as IAPE or the Texas Association of Property and Evidence Inventory Technicians (TAPEIT).

Formal training and opportunities to become members and obtain certifications in professional organizations would help to ensure that all Property Unit employees are qualified and adequately trained to ensure that they understand the most current practices for handling and storing property and evidence.

The IAPE notes, “There are no generally accepted standards for property room training, but many experts in the field recommend that all Property Officers, supervisors, and managers be required to attend a Property and Evidence Management school.” Furthermore, “Training should be timely, continuous, and documented. Involvement in professional associations is highly recommended.”

#### Recommendation:

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that entry-level Property Unit personnel receive appropriate training for handling, packaging, and storing high-risk items and hazardous materials. We also recommend the Chief of Police encourage the attainment of appropriate professional certifications and memberships for property and evidence personnel.

#### Management’s Response

Agree. The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding training for entry level personnel. The Department also agrees that Property Unit personnel should be encouraged to attain professional certifications and memberships. The following actions have been taken or are planned to address this issue:

- The new SOP requires appropriate training for all new employees. It specifies the topics to be covered and includes a requirement the training be documented. (*Estimated Completion: July 2008*)
- In January 2008, the Department sent multiple employees to a two-day training conference sponsored by the IAPE on national property unit best practices. The cost of enrollment included a membership to the IAPE. (*Completed*)

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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- The Property Unit submitted a funding request to renew the IAPE membership of an employee who had previously completed the training. *(Completed)*
- The new civilian Property Unit Commander will be required to complete the IAPE training within a reasonable amount of time from hire. *(Estimated Completion: Within 12 Months of Hire)*
- In June 2008, a Property and Evidence Unit management training class is scheduled to be held in Arlington. Funding has been requested to allow several staff members to attend. *(Estimated Completion: June 2008, if funding approved)*
- In April 2008, the Property Unit Commander and an In-take Supervisor attended a conference that focused on the importance of DNA evidence. *(Completed)*

Implementation Date: May 2008 and on-going process

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Support Services Division and the Commander of the Property Unit

**The Property Recovery Team organizational placement does not comply with the IAPE standard**

The Property Recovery Team's organizational placement within the Property Unit does not meet the IAPE standard for Organizational Placement which refers to authority lines and reporting relationships affecting the Property Unit. According to these standards, the Property Unit should only be responsible for property custody and documentation. The Property Recovery Team is currently housed in the Property Room facility and, organizationally, is under the direction of and reports to the Property Unit Commander.

As of April 2008, there were 13 personnel assigned to the Property Recovery Team, which is led by a Sergeant. The Property Recovery Team seeks to:

- Recover stolen property through entry of pawn shop tickets into a law enforcement database for identification of stolen property
- Makes monthly visits to all pawn shops in the City to pick up pawn shop tickets, check for compliance with applicable laws, and identify stolen property

Per the IAPE standard on Organizational Placement, "Segregation of duties is paramount to maintaining organizational independence and integrity of the Property Unit." In order to protect the integrity of the Property Unit, the Property Unit should not be involved in property decisions about collection or disposition. Ideally, the Property Unit should be responsible for property custody and documentation only.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend the Chief of Police ensure that the Property Recovery Team is not under the direction of, or reporting to, the Property Unit Commander.

**Management's Response**

Agree with comment. The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the Property Recovery Squad not reporting the Property Unit Commander. The Department is in the process of physically moving the Property Recovery Team to Police Headquarters. The responsibility for the Property Recovery Team will be removed from the commander of the Property Unit once this move is complete. *(Estimated Completion: August 2008)*

For clarification purposes, the IAPE standard on disposition and purging states that generally, property officers should not be making final decisions on the disposition of property and evidence, the disposition should be based on input and signed approval of the investigating officer. The standard further states that some departments, by policy decision, delegate dispositions of found property and property for safekeeping (excluding firearms) to the property unit, but such authority should not extend to the disposition of items held as evidence. The Dallas Police Department, by policy decision, does allow Found Property Detectives, who are assigned to the Property Unit, to review and authorize for disposal found property and items held for safekeeping. This practice is permissible under the standard outlined by the IAPE.

Implementation Date: August 2008

Responsible Manager: Commander of the Support Services Division

## Background, Objective, Scope and Methodology

### Background

#### Dallas Police Department (DPD) Property Unit (Property Room)

The main responsibilities for the Property Room are to:

- Receive, process, store, and maintain records associated with all property and evidence placed into custody
- Maintain property and evidence in a safe and secure manner so that property and evidence remains readily accessible to the appropriate parties
- Lawfully release or destroy property and evidence
- Document the processes noted above to the satisfaction of any court

In order to meet these responsibilities, the Property Room must adhere to the:

- Statutes of limitations on all offenses as prescribed in Chapter 12 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure
- State and local statutes and departmental policies governing the storage and disposition of seized, abandoned, or unclaimed property

#### Property Room Organization and Staffing

The Property Unit Commander is a Lieutenant of Police who is directly responsible to the Support Services Division Commander. Since July 2007, the Property Unit has had three different Commanders. As of April 2008, the Property Unit was authorized for a total of 36 employees.

The Property Recovery Squad, under the direction of the Property Unit Commander seeks to recover stolen property through data entry of pawn shop tickets, into the Law Enforcement Automated Database Search on-line program.

#### Property Room Facilities

The DPD rented the current facility for the property and evidence storage function from 1984 to 2001. In 2001, the City purchased the facility for an approximate cost of \$1.1 million, to defray the annual leasing costs of \$155,306. The Property Room operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Computer Systems / Systems

The *Property Room Inventory Management System (PRIMS)* was implemented at the Property Room in 2000 and replaced the previous *Automated Property Room Inventory System (APRIS)*. The current inventory management system, *Evidence Manager*, was implemented at the Property Room on January 15, 2008.

Items in Inventory

As of January 15, 2008, there were 327,893 invoices with 564,276 corresponding items in the *PRIMS* inventory tracking system. A breakdown of the total invoices, by classification, is shown below:

<b>Classification of Items</b>	<b>Invoices in <i>PRIMS</i> as of 01/15/08</b>
Firearms	47,968
Drugs	132,291
Money	232
Property	147,402
<b>Total Invoices</b>	<b>327,893</b>

**Source:** *PRIMS* inventory system (Unaudited)

Related Statutes

- Dallas City Code, Section 2-37.7 – Destruction of Restricted Weapons; Exceptions
- Administrative Directive 4-13, Cash and Debt Management Policies and Procedures, Section 5.1.2
- Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 481 – Texas Controlled Substance Act
- Texas Code of Criminal Procedures Chapter 38 – Evidence in Criminal Actions and Chapter 47 – Disposition of Stolen Property

**Objective, Scope and Methodology**

This audit was conducted under the authority of the City Charter, Chapter IX, Section 3 and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The City Auditor’s Office used reference materials from the International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE). City Auditor’s Office personnel also attended training to establish criteria for appropriate internal controls over property and evidence.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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The audit objective was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over the various Property Room processes for the period of August 2007 to March 2008. These processes include receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records associated with property and evidence.

To gain an understanding of the relevant internal controls the following steps were performed:

1. Obtained and reviewed organization charts
2. Interviewed DPD and Property Room personnel; Dallas County's Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS); Dallas County Criminal Court officials; Dallas County Sheriff's Department Property / Evidence personnel
3. Reviewed DPD and Property Room policies and procedures
4. Reviewed applicable state statutes and city resolutions related to property and evidence
5. Observed the physical location of the Property Room
6. Observed physical security, such as door access and security cameras, over the Property Room and its inventory
7. Observed the physical and organizational inventory layout
8. Observed key Property Room processes, including firearm and drug destructions, as noted below
9. Documented or obtained documentation for the Property Room's business processes
10. Attended the IAPE training course to understand best practices for property room management
11. Performed a limited review of the new inventory tracking system, *Evidence Manager*
12. Selected and tested a random sample of 43 invoices (12 firearms, 11 money, 10 property, and 10 drugs) to verify all invoices listed in the inventory tracking system were physically located in the Property Room and that the information on the item agreed to the inventory tracking system (system-to-shelf)
13. Selected and tested a judgmental sample of 40 invoices, 10 from each classification (firearms, drugs, money, and property) to verify all items on the

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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shelf were in the inventory tracking system and documented accurately (shelf-to-system)

14. Observed internal controls over temporary storage of property and evidence at a patrol station.

During the course of this audit, City Auditor's Office personnel completed Agreed-upon Procedures for seven firearms destructions and two drug destructions to ensure the destructions were properly authorized and compiled according to the Judgments in REM (JIR) signed by the Dallas County Criminal Court.

- Observed destruction of 6,425 firearms.
- Observed destruction of 11,300 pounds of drugs

**Major Contributors to this Report**

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## Management's Response

### Memorandum

RECEIVED

MAY 14 2008



CITY OF DALLAS

CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

DATE: May 14, 2008  
TO: Craig Kinton  
City Auditor  
SUBJECT: An Audit on – Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit

The Dallas Police Department has reviewed the audit report on internal controls at the Police Property Unit. Prior to the Department's response, it is important to establish the core function performed by the Property Unit and the environment in which this function is performed.

The Property Unit's core function is to store property and evidence until it is needed for a criminal trial or claimed by the rightful owner. The Police Department has been able to consistently produce or account for evidence requested for criminal proceedings. This is a remarkable accomplishment given that it could be years between the time evidence was submitted to the Property Unit and later needed for court. The performance of this core function is made more difficult due to several factors such as an inadequate facility, advances in forensic science, and staffing issues.

The Property Unit has been located in a 52,760 square foot facility since 1984. This facility houses over 40,000 guns, all illegal drugs, and the majority of property held for evidence. Some property is stored at either the Police Auto Pound or an auxiliary storage location due to lack of storage space in the main facility. The current facility was not designed to be used as a storage location for police evidence. As a result, the Department has continued to make modifications in an effort to ensure the best physical internal controls and environmental storage conditions are in place. However, the design of the building has often made the best solution unattainable. As a result, a number of stop gap measures and modifications have been made. Since some of the internal control issues can not be addressed due to facility limitations, the Department has been forced to rely on implementing restrictive policies and procedures which rely on employee compliance to be effective.

In addition to not being designed for use as a police evidence storage location, the current facility is aged and continues to have critical structural issues. The previous roof leaks in the drug vault and over a physical evidence storage location are well documented. During the period in which this audit was conducted, several problems with the facility have occurred. EBS notified the Department of structural issues along the west side of the building requiring substantial repair. A large section of electrical wiring burned out resulting in the loss of air conditioning for the entire facility. The facility suffered several power outages which resulted in the catastrophic failure of the server used by the security cameras. During one of these power outages, the back up

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

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Page 2 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

generator used to provide emergency power to several evidence refrigeration units failed to initiate. Recently, a drainage line used to empty a 500 gallon water tank utilized to capture fired rounds in the NIBIN process was rerouted. Because the water captures bullets, there is the potential that it becomes lead contaminated over time. However, due to the condition of the pipes and the amount of water to be drained, the potentially lead contaminated water backed into a sink in the employee break room used to prepare meals and wash dishes. This was not discovered by Property Unit management until a later date. As result, several employees opted to be tested for lead contamination. All tested negative. The Department is working with EBS to determine the extent of the potential contamination and coordinate any needed cleanup. In short, both the design limitations and age of the current facility make it difficult, if not impossible, to meet or maintain many evidence storage standards.

The State plans to expand Interstate 30 which is adjacent to the current facility. The area of expansion will include land on which the building is located. The State will purchase the building in the next five to ten years, and a new building will be requested in a future bond program or other funding mechanism.

There have been many advancements in the field of forensic sciences and its application to prove the guilt or innocence of a suspect. The standards for collecting, processing, and storing potential DNA evidence continue to change as new discoveries are made. It was not until the late 1980's, that DNA analysis began being used by law enforcement agencies. Early forms of DNA were limited and required a sizeable sample for testing. Later advancements allowed for the "growth" of small amounts of DNA material until a testable quantity was created. Because of these advances, items once believed not to have DNA evidence may now have additional evidentiary value. It is important to note that not every piece of evidence has DNA material but its existence cannot be determined without testing. Most items stored at the Police Property Unit were stored based on the standards at the time submitted. Because of evolving processes and scientific advancements, storage and packaging standards for DNA evidence were not readily available or continued to change.

In 2000, the U.S. Justice Department's National Commission on the Future of DNA Evidence refused to take a position on the preservation of DNA in criminal cases. The Police Department is unaware of a definitive study on the degradation of DNA and how quickly it occurs in various storage conditions. However, the International Association of Property and Evidence recommends that most DNA evidence should be stored within a temperature controlled environment (65 to 75 degrees). The County's forensic lab also recommends that DNA evidence be maintained in a climate controlled environment between 68 and 76 degrees Fahrenheit, and 20 to 60 percent relative humidity. Less than one third of the Property Unit's storage capacity is capable of maintaining the standard for temperature.

The State Legislature passed a DNA statute that took effect April 5, 2001 which applies to all criminal cases in which the defendant is convicted. Under this statute, agencies are required to preserve all evidence in its possession, if scientifically tested, would

Page 3 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

more likely than not establish the identity of the guilty person or exclude others as the guilty person. The statute does provide for destruction of these items but requires mailed notification to the defendant, the last defense attorney of record and the convicting court. The destruction can not proceed if a written objection is received from one of these parties. The Department does send high value evidentiary items to the County's forensics lab for testing prior to being stored at the Police Property Unit. During DNA testing, lab personnel collect a sample of the item tested and maintain it in optimal conditions in the event it is later needed.

In short, the standards for collecting, processing and storing of DNA evidence are continuing to evolve. Evidence collected prior to DNA testing or once thought not to have DNA present, may now be subject to testing due to scientific advances. There is no method to determine if evidence has DNA material upon its collection. Also, importance of a piece of evidence may not be clear upon its submission to the Property Unit. The State mandates that certain items must be held for long periods of time unless certain criteria are met. All of these factors combined have led to the need for additional environmentally controlled storage space. When that space was not available, evidence with potential DNA was stored in less than ideal conditions.

The Property Unit is open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The staffing is broken into three distinct work groups: the Gun Team, the Drug Team and the In-take Team. The Gun Team and Drug Team each process high risk items and have their own restricted access vault. The second watch In-take Team maintains the money vault which other members of the Property Unit do not have access. Because of the different job functions and access levels, the Property Unit can not move personnel from one function to another on a daily basis and maintain the current level of internal control. Some internal control processes, such as money deposit preparation, requires the separation of duties and two people present. This is difficult to accomplish since members of the Intake Team have staggered days off. The Property Unit can not stop the intake of evidence submitted by officers. The Property Unit does have flexibility in when and how the final disposition process occurs. As a result, the disposition process is the first area to be neglected when allocating personnel resources.

The primary civilian position classification assigned to the Property Unit is Storekeeper 2 – C. This classification is responsible for the intake, documentation, placement and final disposition process for all classifications of evidence. As stated previously, there have been considerable advances in forensic science and State statutes in the area of evidence handling and storage. The Storekeeper 2 classification does not recognize the need of an employee to be able to evaluate evidence in light of changing storage and disposition requirements. In addition, employees must be able to compare evidence on hand with the Department's police reporting system to ensure they agree. Otherwise, evidence transitioned from PRIMS to Evidence Manager may be inadvertently tied to the wrong criminal case. This could result in the unintentional destruction of needed evidence.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 4 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

The Department continues to address the above issue but additional resources are required. The following are some of the items submitted for funding in the FY 08-09 budget. These will be considered with other requests in the FY 08-09 budget.

- Additional civilian positions and upgrades for current positions - \$560,800
- Add climate control system to general warehouse area - \$500,000  
(Note: \$460,000 was originally submitted in the funding request but EBS has provided a revised estimate)
- Purchase of lockers for temporary storage of evidence - \$80,000
- Evidence Manager software system enhancements - \$50,000
- Peripherals to support Evidence Manager software - \$16,400
- Materials to implement enhanced drug packaging method - \$13,983
- Full year funding for portable storage units - \$10,000

The Dallas Police Department has reviewed the audit report on internal controls at the Property Unit. The Department's responses to the recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the significant internal control deficiencies noted in the DPD Property Unit's system of internal controls over the receipt, processing, storage, disposal, and maintenance of inventory records associated with property and evidence are corrected by addressing the recommendations made throughout this report.

Agree           Disagree           Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with most of the recommendations made within the report. In many instances it will be found the Department has already initiated corrective actions. The Department only partially agrees with Recommendation 11 regarding the use of non-fixed storage locations. Specific actions taken to address each finding are listed after each recommendation.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the General Orders and the Property Unit's SOPs are revised to include all activities noted above. Additionally, the SOPs should be written in sufficient detail so that the Property Unit, and other DPD personnel responsible for property and evidence, complies with the following:

- Applicable state statutes
- Dallas City Code
- Administrative Directives
- DPD management's objectives related to property and evidence

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 5 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

The report also recommends the Chief of Police ensure that revised SOPs are disseminated in an efficient manner to personnel who will be held accountable for adhering to them.

Agree                       Disagree                       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with this finding regarding the Property Unit's SOP.

The following actions are being taken:

- The Property Unit is currently in the process of a complete rewrite of its Standard Operating Procedures to ensure all processes are fully and accurately documented. The new SOP will document policy, practices and procedures identified by the City Auditor's Report as not being covered by the Unit's current SOP. In addition the new SOP will include improvements identified by the Department's own internal review. Once completed, each employee will be issued a copy of the new SOP. The creation of a new Property Unit SOP was added to the Department's Quarterly Action Plan in October 2007. This report is forwarded to the City Manager through the First Assistant City Manager. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- The Department is in the process of implementing multiple policy and procedure changes to comply with standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). There are eight standards specifically established regarding the procedures for handling property and evidence received by police departments and the management of property and evidence inventory. The CALEA standards regarding property and evidence management are in the process of being included in the Department's General Orders. **(Estimated Completion: May 2009)**
- The Police Department continues to review policies and practices not specifically addressed by CALEA to determine if they are consistent with the best practices and standards recommended by the International Association of Property and Evidence (IAPE). Property Unit personnel have also met with representatives from the County's forensic laboratory to discuss best practices and standards for the long term storage of evidence. Current documented practices found to be outdated, no longer applicable, or incompletely documented are being updated to address the identified deficiency. These identified changes and updates will be included in the Department's General Orders and Property Unit SOP. **(Estimated Completion: On-going)**

**Implementation Date:** May 2009

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 6 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Recommendation 3:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the internal controls over Property Unit security are in place, functioning consistently, monitored, and documented. The following should be performed:

- The access code to the main entrance and electronic card-swipe locks for the high-risk areas should be changed regularly and when there is a change in key Property Unit personnel.
- Property Unit management should create an entry log form to be placed at the entrance for each high-risk area. The entry log should include the date, time of entry, printed name of the individual, purpose of entry, badge number (if applicable), name of the Property Unit personnel, and time of exit.
- Property Unit management should enforce the two-person rule when Property Unit personnel work in the storage areas designated for money and drugs.
- Property Unit management should monitor the camera surveillance system periodically and document the results to ensure the camera surveillance system is operating as intended.
- Monitoring of the internal controls over physical security should be documented and maintained at the Property Unit.

Agree       Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with the five recommendations on internal controls. The Department has taken the following actions to address each of these recommendations:

- The security access codes were changed on the main entry and card-swipe locks to high risk areas in March of 2008. The new Property Unit SOP will include a requirement for the periodic changing of access codes and the requirement for removing access authorization when personnel are no longer assigned to the Property Unit. However, these locks are outdated and do not record who entered a location or the date and time of entry. The Department is currently installing new proximity locks for the main entry, the officer secured entry and at each high risk area entry point. These locks are activated by an employee's identification card and record the date and time of entry. **(Estimated Completion: June 2008)**
- Entry logs have been implemented for all high-risk areas. The entry logs include the information outlined in the City Auditor's recommendation. In addition to the implementation of the entry logs, the Department requires monthly audits of the logs by a Property Unit Supervisor. These audits are documented on each page of

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 7 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

the entry book. Personnel who improperly or only partially complete an entry are notified. **(Implemented)**

- Property Unit management has re-enforced the importance of all personnel following the two-person rule while working in either the narcotics or money vault. Two-person rule will be documented in the new Unit SOP. It is important to note the Department feels this is an important internal control to protect the employees working in these areas as well as the integrity of the Department. However, due to authorized staffing levels, compliance significantly slows the amount of work that can be processed in these high risk areas. Employees constantly have to stop their work to accompany another employee into one of the vaults. When an employee stops his or her work to accompany another employee, he or she must properly secure the items (money or narcotics) being processed. These interruptions also cause breaks in multi-step processes which can lead to processing errors. The two-person policy requires much more effort and is much more disruptive than simply walking into another room. The Department submitted a request for additional positions for the Property Unit as part of the FY 08-09 budget process. **(Implemented)**
- The Department is in the process of acquiring new surveillance cameras. Department personnel have met with different vendors to view the various surveillance technologies currently available. The specifications for the surveillance system have been written and forwarded to the City's Purchasing Department for processing. The Unit's new SOP will include the periodic review of the surveillance system and documentation of this review. **(Completion: January 2009)**

In addition to the above actions that specifically address the recommendations made in the City Auditor's Report, the Department has made a number of other improvements based on its own internal review. These improvements are as follows:

- The Property Unit constructed an officer work area to limit access of non-Property Unit personnel to a controlled area. Surplus modular office walls and counters were used to construct this space. All supplies needed by officers to properly package property and evidence are made available in this area. **(Implemented)**
- The drug packaging area used by officers to prepare narcotics for submission to the Property Unit has been moved from the Drug Team work area to the officer work area. In addition, the drug drop box was moved to the officer work area. This eliminated the need for officers to access various areas beyond the officer work area to prepare drug evidence. **(Implemented)**
- The after-hours bulk drug storage containers have been relocated to be adjacent to the officer work area so they can be kept in view of Property Unit staff during evening and early morning hours when fewer staff members are working. **(Implemented)**
- The Property Unit has designated a secure drug correction box and moved it outside of the narcotics vault. This has eliminated the need for supervisors to access the

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 8 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

main drug vault during hours when members of the Drug Team are not available to process corrections to drug evidence tags. **(Implemented)**

- The Property Unit has purchased new security key boxes to better segregate and control keys to high risk areas. A separate key box is being established for each high risk area. Only authorized personnel for each high risk area will have access to the applicable security key box. **(Estimated Completion: June 2008)**
- An individual alarm code is being established for authorized Property Unit personnel. This will allow the Department to determine which employee activated or de-activated specific alarms. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- Established new secure auxiliary bulk drug storage area. This eliminated the need to store some drug evidence in a secured area also used for firearms storage. **(Implemented)**
- In the process of adding fencing to separate the gun vault from an adjacent vault area being used for additional storage. Currently, a wall separates the two areas, but the wall does not extend to the ceiling. The fencing will secure the area between the ceiling and the top of the wall. **(Estimated Completion: November 2008 – EBS required for installation)**
- The policy of periodically testing the alarm system has been reinstated. The responsibility for this testing has been added to the performance plan of an employee on the administrative staff. **(Implemented)**
- The Property Unit is in the process of creating a property intake area separate from the property storage area at the Police Auto Pound. Both Property Unit and Auto Pound Unit personnel will have access to the property intake area, but only Property Unit personnel will have access to the property storage area. Property initially received at the Auto Pound will be placed in the intake area. Property Unit personnel will then move items from the intake area to the storage area. This process will significantly increase the internal control over items stored at the Auto Pound. Funding will be needed for additional fencing and roofing to fully implement this action. **(Estimated Completion: May 2009 – Based on construction of roof and fence. Also depends on availability of funds.)**
- Two sergeant positions were added to the Property Unit. As a result, there is now a separate supervisor over the Gun Team, the Drug Team and the second watch property Intake Team. This additional staffing has allowed for more in-depth involvement by supervisors for each work group to ensure all internal control requirements are being followed. **(Implemented)**
- Two money counters with counterfeit detection capabilities have been purchased and are currently in use. Previous money counters could not detect counterfeit currency. **(Implemented)**
- A new procedure was implemented requiring a separate deposit be completed for money submitted from separate incidents. This procedure was implemented to specifically identify the employees involved if a deposit was found to have a shortage. **(Implemented)**

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 9 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

- A policy has been established that requires the Department’s Inspection Team, which is independent of the Property Unit, to conduct at least three scheduled audits and one unannounced audit of the money bags prepared for deposit each year. **(Implemented)**
- New money tags are being designed to capture additional information to increase overall accountability of deposits with multiple money bags. The new tag will show the total number of bags associated with a single police service number. The tag number will also be bar coded to eliminate data entry errors. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department has discontinued the practice of allowing partial releases of money. On occasion, money is recovered belonging to several individuals. Previously, if one of the individuals appeared at the Property Unit to collect his or her portion of the money, and the money had been authorized for release, the deposit bag would be opened and the money returned. This practice caused several internal control and accountability issues. **(Implemented)**

**Implementation Date:** May 2009

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 4:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures an inventory transition plan is developed and documented to include adequate detail on how the transition of *PRIMS* records into *Evidence Manager* will be performed. This plan should also include:

- What instruction and training is to be provided
- Who will perform the transition
- Estimate of time needed to transition *PRIMS* records into *Evidence Manager* by classification of property (firearms, drugs, money, and property)
- Discrepancy resolution
- Description of the monitoring activities to be performed to provide assurance that *PRIMS* inventory records are imported completely and accurately into *Evidence Manager*

Agree  - With Comment

Disagree

Partially Agree

Page 10 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the property transition plan. However, part of the recommendation states the transition plan should include an estimate of time needed to transition items by classification. The Property Unit has been performing transitions and has discovered it will not be possible to transition one property classification at a time. Since items have to be transitioned before they can be moved, the transition staff is constantly switching between property classifications due to several factors such as destruction preparation, space needs and compliance with recommendations made within this audit report. In addition, multiple property classifications may be on a single property tag. All items on a tag must be located and transitioned together.

The Department is planning or has taken the following actions:

- A property Transition Team is being established to begin a verified migration of information from the PRIMS system to Evidence Manager. The team will consist of a supervisor, four sworn personnel, and five civilian personnel. The supervisor has been selected and will report to the Property Unit on April 30, 2008. Several other members of the team have also been selected and will report on various dates depending on the needs of their previous assignment. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- Each member of the Transition Team will receive in-depth training on the transition process from an experienced member of the Property Unit. In order to ensure consistency, the Team will work together during this process. **(Training conducted as members selected)**
- The Transition Team supervisor will be responsible for auditing the evidence transitioned to Evidence Manager to ensure the process is done correctly and all information has been included in the transfer. This will be a continual and on-going process. **(Implemented)**
- The Department has previously reported the transition of property will take approximately three years to complete. This will be documented in the Transition Plan. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- The Department will develop an in-depth Transition Plan that outlines the Transition Team training, the process for resolving discrepancies, and a description of the supervisor reviews to be conducted. This plan will also include the method to address all potential items located in inventory that were not found in PRIMS or items not located but reported on location in PRIMS. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**

Note: In order to ensure all items are transitioned, property that has been added to Evidence Manger can not be physically located with current inventory items that have not yet been transitioned. This will create a critical shortage of storage capacity and greatly complicate location management. It is unclear at this time, if the Property Unit will be able to maintain the separation of items recorded in the different inventory management systems due to space limitations.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 11 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Implementation Date:** July 2008

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 5:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures additional functionality of automatic notification and batch processing are added to *Evidence Manager* as soon as possible. Additionally, Property Unit personnel should be provided with detailed training on the additional functionality so that property and evidence is consistently and accurately reflected in the inventory tracking system.

Agree           Disagree           Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with the recommendation to acquire additional functionality for Evidence Manager.

The full implementation of Evidence Manager has been planned over several phases.

- Phase One was the initial implementation which required Evidence Manager to provide the same basic inventory management support as PRIMS. The issues involving PRIMS and the need for its replacement are well documented. PRIMS does not have the ability to perform batch processing or to generate automated final disposition requests. While the importance of these functions were recognized the time and budget constraints in August of 2006 precluded the Department from a single phase development and deployment solution to replace PRIMS. It was determined by the Department, CIS, the Auditor's Office and the product developer (Orion Communications) that a multi-phase development and deployment methodology would provide the best long term tested solution. . **(Implemented)**
- Phase One-A consisted of a significant number of enhancements to Evidence Manager beyond the initial scope of simply replacing PRIMS with its inherent functionality. For example, this phase, which was developed and deployed at the application "Go-Live" event on January 15, 2008, included the Data Transition Plan developed in partnership with both CIS and the Auditor's Office. **(Implemented)**
- Phase Two of implementation includes functionality that has been determined to be a critical need. Both batch process and automated disposition requests are part of the Phase Two implementation. Phase Two also includes improvements to address anticipated future needs to ensure Evidence Manager is a sustainable long-term evidence management application. However, Phase Two only includes improvements where the supporting infrastructure and integration capabilities are currently in place. Phase Two is currently in both the procurement and development stage at this time. **(Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved)**

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 12 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

- Phase Three provides for additions and enhancement that further increase the efficiency in the processing and management of Evidence Manager. Phase Three includes a direct integration with Dallas County’s Southwest Institute of Forensic Science (SWIFS) and integration with Dallas County’s District Attorney’s Office. The integration with SWIFS will allow improved accountability and control of evidence and the integration with the DA’s office will provide timely case resolution status to assist in the scheduled disposition of evidence. **(Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved)**
- Funding was requested for Evidence Manager as part of the Department’s FY 08-09 budget proposal. **(Completed)**

**Implementation Date:** 6 Months after funding approved

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 6:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures routine physical inventories are performed for all classifications (firearms, drugs, money, and property) of items in the Property Unit. The results of the physical inventory should be documented and compared to the inventory tracking system. At a minimum, the documentation should include who performed the inventory, dates the inventory was conducted, discrepancies noted, and associated resolutions.

The results of all physical inventories should be documented and retained at the Property Unit.

Agree  - With Comment      Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees an on-going inventory system should be established. However, the Property Unit is insufficiently staffed to perform on-going inventories. The Department has requested additional staffing in its FY 08-09 budget submission. If this request is not approved, the Department will be required to re-assign personnel from other work groups or use overtime with existing personnel. The re-assignment of personnel from other work groups would negatively effect that groups’ operation and probably result in the need for overtime.

- A staffing model has been developed which would require both an increase in the staffing level of the Property Unit and the upgrade of current civilian classifications. The additional staffing is needed to address several work load issues, including the ability to conduct on-going inventories. The new staffing model would require the addition of two sworn positions and 14 civilian positions. In addition, all current civilian positions would be reclassified or upgraded to Crime Technician -E. This request has been submitted to the Human Resources Department and is included in

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 13 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

the Property Unit FY 08-09 budget proposal. **(Budget Request: Completed; Hiring if Positions Approved – 6 Months)**

- The Department is currently transitioning each item in PRIMS to Evidence Manager. This transition requires a hands-on, visual verification of the information on the package compared to the information in PRIMS before the information is entered into Evidence Manager. This method of transition will be, in effect, an inventory of all items in the Police Property Unit. Once the transition is complete, a review of all items that show not to have been transitioned to Evidence Manager will be conducted. This review will be used to address inventory discrepancies. **(Estimated Completion: Summer 2011)**
- The requirement to conduct an on-going inventory will be added to the new SOP currently in development. The SOP will outline how the inventory will be conducted, who will perform the inventory, and how discrepancies will be resolved. **(Estimated Completion: September 2008 – After SOP completion)**
- Phase Two of the Evidence Manager program includes a complete inventory management module. This method will allow immediate inventory checks of small or large storage areas and will fully document the inventory action, the results and the resolution of any discrepancies. The feature will allow inventory of a single location area, i.e. a box of evidence, or the complete inventory of multiple storage locations. The resulting inventory records will allow the Property Unit to manage inventory actions over time to insure that all areas are appropriately inventoried. The results will be maintained for review by both internal and external auditing agencies. **(Estimated Completion: 6 Months after funding is approved)**

**Implementation Date:** Summer 2011

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 7:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures Property Unit managers schedule and perform inventory audits on a sample basis at least quarterly. Additional unscheduled inventory audits should be conducted at least once a year and as often as deemed necessary by Property Unit management. As inventory audits are more frequent than physical inventories, the shelf-to-system and system-to-shelf audits should include items from each classification of property and evidence.

The results of the inventory audits should be documented and retained at the Property Unit. At a minimum, the documentation for each inventory audit should include who performed the inventory audit, date of the inventory audit, discrepancies noted, and associated resolutions.

Agree

Disagree

Partially Agree

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 14 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with the recommendation that inventory audits should be scheduled and performed on a regular, reoccurring basis and at least one unscheduled audit should occur each year. Also, the results of the audit should contain the information outlined in the recommendation. The following actions will be taken:

- The requirement to conduct periodic audits will be added to the new SOP currently in development. The SOP will outline how the audits will be conducted, who will perform the audits, and how discrepancies will be resolved. **(Estimated Completion: September 2008 – After SOP completion)**
- The performance of periodic audits will be added to the performance plan for each supervisor and Unit Commander. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department’s Inspection Team will conduct an unscheduled, independent audit of each property type at least once a year. Documentation of the results will be maintained by the Property Unit and the Inspection Team. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- Property Unit supervisors are now required to review random samples of property processed by each of their employees for quality control purposes. **(Implemented)**

**Implementation Date:** August 2008

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit and Commander of the Inspections Unit

**Recommendation 8:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the DPD General Orders and Property Unit’s SOP establish proper internal controls over the temporary storage and transfer of property and evidence. The Audit Report also recommends DPD periodically review patrol station transfer logs to ensure property held in temporary storage is consistently transferred to the Property Unit according to the established schedule. Additionally, a formal process to track items that were submitted, but returned for correction, should be developed and implemented.

Agree

Disagree

Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Police Department concurs with the recommendations regarding the internal controls and management of the temporary property storage locations located at the patrol divisions. The following actions are planned or have been implemented:

- A committee has been formed to review standards and procedures for temporary storage locations maintained at patrol divisions. A new General Order will be

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 15 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

established based on committee's recommendations. **(Estimated Completion: September 2008)**

- Officers will no longer be allowed to store firearms at temporary storage locations. All firearms must be brought to the Property Unit prior to the end of the seizing officer's shift. **(Implemented)**
- A funding request has been submitted for the FY 08-09 budget to purchase property storage lockers for Divisions with temporary storage locations. These lockers will allow officers to secure property and evidence separately from items submitted by other officers. **(Budget Request: Completed; Purchase if Funding Approved – 3 months after beginning of FY 08-09),**
- Crime Scene Response Section Personnel are currently being trained to enter evidence they collected in the field directly into Evidence Manager. This will eliminate the delay in entering evidence into the system due to being sent directly to the County's forensics lab prior to coming to the Property Unit. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- New property tags are being designed with an area for station sergeants to sign to indicate they have reviewed the tag to ensure it has been properly completed. This review will be conducted prior to the submitting officer placing an item in a temporary property storage location. This action should reduce the number of errors on property tags and increase personal accountability. The Property Unit will ensure training is provided to patrol supervisors on property tag requirements. **(Estimated Completion: September 2008)**
- The patrol division's Property Transfer Logs are being standardized to ensure all divisions are capturing and reporting required information in the same manner. **(Estimated Completion: September 2008)**
- E-mail notifications are being sent to officers and their supervisors for property tags needing correction. **(Implemented)**
- The Property Unit now requires the original log sheet filled in by officers at the division when a divisional transfer is conducted instead of a copy. **(Implemented)**
- Property Unit personnel have reinforced the importance of maintaining the established transfer schedule of items stored at the patrol division temporary storage locations. This action was taken to eliminate the potential backlog of property at the temporary storage locations and to ensure property is entered into Evidence Manager in timely manner. **(Implemented)**

**Implementation Date:** September 2008 except for purchase of temporary storage lockers which is three months from funding approval

**Responsible Manager:** Patrol Division Commanders, Chairperson of the Property Review Committee, and the Commander of the Property Unit

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 16 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Recommendation 9:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police develop a property and evidence packaging manual, with example photos by classification (firearms, drugs, money, and property) to ensure that DPD personnel package property and evidence consistently and appropriately. This manual should be distributed to each patrol station and be made available in the Property Unit's packaging area as well as on-line through the DPD on-line training system, Breeze, or through the DPD intranet.

Agree           Disagree           Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with this recommendation regarding the creation of a property and evidence packaging manual. The following actions have occurred or are planned:

- A property and evidence packaging manual has been created and will be released in the near future. The manual has not been released at this point due the number and frequency of changes needed based on the audit and internal review. The manual has step by step packaging procedures with color photographs. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- A hard copy of the property and evidence packaging manual be will be placed at each temporary storage location, the Crime Scene Response Section, and the officer work area in the Property Unit. If possible, the manual will also be placed on the DPD intranet. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- Within the last six months, the Department required all sworn personnel to participate in online training on drug packaging procedures and standards. **(Implemented)**
- The Property Unit has created several examples of proper packaging methods which are displayed in the officer work area to demonstrate to officer proper packaging requirements. Packaging examples have also been made for Property Unit staff to display where certain information should be recorded and how tags should be attached. **(Implemented)**

**Implementation Date:** August 2008

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 10:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the critical functionality of automatic notification for *Evidence Manager* is acquired as soon as possible to assist Property Unit personnel by identifying property and evidence in the Property Unit that has met the statute of limitations based on offense and that is a candidate for disposal.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 17 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

The Audit Report also recommends the Chief of Police ensures regular dispositions for all classifications of property and evidence are established and followed to assist in more effectively managing inventory, storage, and the workflow of Property Unit personnel and to reduce unnecessary overtime.

Agree  - With Comment      Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the acquisition of automatic disposition request capabilities for Evidence Manager. The Department also agrees that regular dispositions for all classifications of property and evidence be established. However, additional personnel are needed to physically locate and process items that have been authorized for final disposition. Also, the proper position classification is needed to reflect the knowledge base and decision making skills necessary for Property Unit personnel processing items identified for potential final disposal.

The following actions have been taken or planned:

- The Department is pursuing the purchase of phase two of Evidence Manager. Phase two includes both the automated disposition processing and batch processing.
- The Department conducted drug destructions on December 19, 2007 and April 2, 2008 to reduce the amount of narcotics in the Property Unit. Another destruction is planned for July 2008. **(On-going Process)**
- The Department has conducted eight gun destructions since February 2007. The Property Unit staff is preparing for another gun destruction but a date has not be set yet. **(On-going Process)**
- The Department has recently advertised found money in the Dallas Morning News as required by State Law. Advertisements were run on December 15, 2007 and April 5, 2008. In addition, the new SOP will designate how many times each year an advertisement will be published. This requirement has also been added to the money vault supervisor's performance plan. **(On-going Process)**
- The Property Unit has discontinued the practice of sending final disposition requests in mass. A new method has been developed which involves sending a spreadsheet to the division with investigative follow-up. The division will then coordinate the review and return the spreadsheet once it has been completed. The method is much more effective and efficient since it is easier to track and ensures recommendations are received on all items listed. **(Implemented)**
- Found Property Detectives are in the process of a row by row review of items associated with property crimes in which the statute of limitations has expired. Lists of these items are forwarded along with a final disposition request to the division with investigative follow up responsibility. **(Estimated Completion: November 2009)**

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 18 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

- An additional Found Property Detective and a detective on special assignment have been assigned to speed the identification and final disposition of found property. As a result, more found property is being returned to the owner. In addition, the Found Property Detectives has successfully identified potential suspects based on when the property was recovered and when the property offense occurred. **(Implemented)**
- As mentioned in previous responses, a staffing request has been submitted to address several issues identified in the audit report. Some of the additional positions will be utilized to create a disposition team to facilitate the final disposition process. **(Budget Request: Completed)**
- In an effort to reduce the inventory, Department staff have met with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office about photographing all evidence and maintaining representative samples from certain bulk property types such as drugs, counterfeit clothing and alcoholic beverages and destroying the remainder. The drug request is still under consideration. The request for other types of property was denied. **(Completed)**
- The Narcotics Division has assigned a sergeant to review old narcotics evidence to determine eligibility for destruction. This process is being facilitated through Evidence Manager. **(Implemented)**
- A tenured investigative sergeant has been assigned to the Property Unit on special assignment to develop an evidence disposition process for Found Property Detectives and detectives with investigative follow-up. **(Implemented)**
- Additional temporary staffing has been added to the Property Unit to address various backlogs which slowed the final disposition process. **(Implemented)**
- Members of the Department's Executive Staff met with ATF officials to develop a plan to address the backlog of weapons needing NIBIN testing. As a result, actions to facilitate the firing of weapons are being implemented. **(Completed)**
- Items submitted as found property have been consolidated. These items have been organized in a manner to quickly identify items ready for final disposition. Visual cues have been attached to boxes to signify where the items are within the disposition process and to indicate State mandated requirements have been met. As a result, Property Unit Personnel can easily walk through the area and pull items for final disposition. **(Implemented)**

**Implementation Date:** November 2009

**Responsible Manager:** Multiple managers involved in the creation or reallocation of civilian positions. In addition, a budget Results Team is responsible for the scoring and ranking of the budget request for the additional positions. Commanders over divisions with investigative follow up are responsible for ensuring final disposition requests are completed in a timely manner. The Commander of the Property Unit is responsible for the on-going final disposition process.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 19 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Recommendation 11:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the Property Unit discontinues the use of non-fixed storage locations and organizes and stores like-sized packages in fixed storage locations by classification and by offense type to:

- Maximize the use of shelving space
- Increase efficiency of retrieval
- Better manage property with high evidentiary value

Agree           Disagree           Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department partially concurs with the recommendation on the discontinued use of non-fixed storage locations. The Department agrees non-fixed locations should not be utilized for long term storage. Non-fixed storage locations are used in the destruction processing procedures. For example, multiple guns approved for destruction are pulled from multiple fixed storage locations from within the gun vault. These guns are placed in a single box which is given a name such as “DESTG1”. The location of each gun is changed in the computer system to show their location as “DESTG1”. This box is moved to different locations depending on where it is in the destruction process. However, the guns continue to be shown at location “DESTG1”. The Department does agree non-fixed storage locations should have limited use and only for specific functions such as destruction processing. Processes using non-fixed storage locations will be well documented in the Property Unit’s SOP.

The Property Unit is also using boxes as storage locations in the drug vault. These boxes could be considered non-fixed locations. However, there is insufficient shelving to accommodate all boxes at this time. Although the box has the location written on it, its location in relationship to the other boxes is determined by a defined numbering system. In short, “box 123” comes after “box 122” but before “box 124”. If “box 123” is taken down for items within it to be moved, no other box is placed in the space vacated by “box 123”. The Department is authorized to purchase additional shelving for the drug vault area and the drug vault expansion which will address this issue. A more detailed explanation of the shelving is bullet-pointed below.

The Property Unit is aware of other non-fixed storage locations that should be corrected through either the final disposition of the contents or the return of the contents to fixed locations. However, all of the items are in the PRIMS inventory system. In order to dispose of them or place them in a new location, each item would have to be transitioned to Evidence Manager. This would be a time consuming task and would require the diverting of resources and manpower from initiatives with much higher priority. The Property Unit attempts to keep these items together in a single physical location to help mitigate the use of boxes as non-fixed storage locations.

Page 20 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

The following actions have been taken or are planned:

- A new boxing method was implemented which results in a 30% to 50% increase in storage capacity on shelving units used for property envelopes. **(Implemented)**
- Thirty two pallets of packing supplies, such as bio-hazard bags and property storage boxes, were relocated to temporary storage containers to make more evidence storage space within the warehouse. **(Implemented)**
- The Department worked with EBS to identify and acquire an auxiliary storage facility for low-risk bulk items such as gambling machines, bicycles and golf clubs. Since this building was empty when the Department took possession, items could be organized to maximize space. **(Implemented)**
- The Department is authorized to purchase additional high density shelving for the drug vault, gun vault and warehouse storage area. \$460,000 in equipment notes have been issued for this purchase. This purchase has not been made at this time for the following reasons:
  1. It was decided that purchases should not be made until the audit report was complete. This was to ensure the appropriate shelving was purchased to comply with possible recommendations.
  2. The Department was conducting its own internal review which could also result in changes to current shelving and storage practices.
  3. Some of the shelving is to be placed in the drug vault expansion. The purchase was to be made after the expansion was completed to ensure the shelving didn't hamper construction or have to be moved to allow for the addition of the ventilation system. The drug vault expansion has been delayed due to issues with the selected contractor.
  4. The Department will attempt to purchase all the shelving at one time to ensure it all works together with a comprehensive storage plan, to minimize the disruption caused by installation and to achieve the best purchase price.

**(Estimated Completion: May 2009)**

- The drug vault is being expanded to increase storage space. However, the general contractor was unable to meet certain City requirements to begin the construction. EBS is in the process of selecting another vendor. **(Estimated Completion: January 2009)**
- The Department is considering a new storage method for firearms in order to increase accountability and efficiency in retrieval. However, based on issues recently identified, the storage space required to make this improvement is now needed to place evidence which may require an environmentally controlled storage area. **(On-going Process)**

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 21 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

- The Department continues to make the best use of the limited environmentally controlled area. A request has been submitted to remove a large inoperable refrigeration unit that wastes space in the environmentally controlled area of the Property Unit. **(Budget Request for Removal: Completed)**
- Property Unit personnel continue to identify items that are not stored in a manner to make the best use of available space. There are multiple examples of changes made based on packaging type. Video tapes have been moved from a high density storage unit to static shelving based on the size of the tapes and the size of the shelving. Also, the practice of placing empty sexual assault test kit boxes in plastic bags has been discontinued. The adding of a plastic bag made the item odd shaped therefore the item could no longer be easily stacked and wasted space. Property storage tubes have been consolidated in a single storage area. Previously, the tubes were stored in the same boxes as envelopes which was not the most efficient storage method. The pallet storage area was reorganized to best utilize the available space and renumbered for consistency. **(On-going Process)**
- With the assistance of the Auto Pound staff, a 56 ft. tractor trailer was identified and converted to store bulk items at the Police Auto Pound. The Property Unit is currently utilizing three tractor trailers and 2 connex trailers located at the Auto Pound to store property due to insufficient storage space at the primary facility. This is not the preferred method of storage but is the only option currently available. Due to the use of off-site storage locations, Property Unit personnel are required to spend time away from the primary warehouse. **(Implemented)**
- The Department is in the process of increasing the size of the Property Unit storage area at the Police Auto Pound. This area is used to store certain bulk items and gasoline powered equipment. A request will be submitted to fence the additional area and add roofing in order to increase the security and provide for better internal controls. **(Estimated Completion: May 2009 – Based on construction of roof and fence. Also depends on availability of funds.)**
- Found property has been consolidated into a single area to maximize shelving space and to increase the efficiency of the final disposition process. **(Implemented)**
- The Department has solicited additional shelving from a local business that may have a surplus supply. As a result, some shelving was donated by Kroger and they are attempting to locate additional suitable shelving. A Kroger representative has offered to review some of our storage methods and make recommendations. **(On-going Process)**
- Property Unit personnel have met with a shelving company representative to review shelving and space saving options. **(Completed)**

**Implementation Date:** May 2009

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Support Services Division and the Commander of the Property Unit

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 22 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Recommendation 12:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the Property Unit store all items in an environmentally controlled area.

Agree  - With Comment      Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding the storage of all items in an environmentally controlled area. It is not possible to move all the items currently in inventory to the environmentally controlled area of the Property Unit. However, an attempt is being made to move as many items with potential DNA evidence to the environmentally controlled area.

The following actions have been taken or are planned to address this issue:

- A kitchen area has been closed and will be converted into an environmentally controlled storage area. **(Estimated Completion: November 2008 but depends on extent of possible lead contamination)**
- All incoming items of high evidentiary value and potential DNA are being stored in the environmentally controlled storage area. **(Implemented)**
- The Property Recovery Squad is being relocated to Police Headquarters. This office area will be converted to storage of items with potential DNA evidence. However, there are structural deficiencies that must be addressed prior to this entire area being utilized in this manner. In addition, shelving is needed to best utilize this space. **(Estimated Completion: 6 Months from date the structural deficiencies are addressed)**
- The Property Unit has converted an area of the gun vault to storage for evidence with potential DNA. Evidence is currently being relocated from the general warehouse, which is not climate controlled, to the newly created location. This will be done until this climate controlled area is full. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department has established a committee to review best practices for the packaging and storage of potential DNA evidence. The recommendations and guidelines will be used to help establish the proper storage requirements for various evidence types. The guidelines will be documented in the Property Unit's SOP. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department has requested funding in during the FY 08-09 budget process to convert the entire warehouse into an environmentally controlled area. **(Budget Request: Completed; Construction, if approved: 18 months)**
- There have been many advancements in forensic science as it relates to the processing and storage of crime scene evidence. In addition, there are State Laws establishing storage standards and final disposal requirements for various types of

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 23 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

evidence. The primary civilian position classification in the Property Unit is Storekeeper II – C. This classification describes a position whose primary function involves basic warehouse functions. A proper position classification is needed to reflect the knowledge base and decision making skills necessary for Property Unit personnel. Staff must be able to review incoming evidence to determine the proper packaging methods and storage requirements. Staff should also be able to review police reports in order to verify the information on the report is consistent with the item being identified for potential disposition. The Property Unit has submitted a proposal to upgrade or reclassify all current civilian positions to Evidence Technician – E positions. **(Reclassification Request: Completed)**

**Implementation Date:** November 2009

**Responsible Manager:** Multiple managers are involved in the creation or reallocation of civilian positions. In addition, a budget Results Team is involved in the scoring and ranking of the budget request for the additional positions. Multiple managers are associated with the process to gain approval for significant facility changes. The commanders of the Property Unit and the Crime Scene Response Section are responsible for implementing recommendations made by the Evidence Packaging and Storage Committee.

**Recommendation 13:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures all drug items are properly secured in storage areas that have appropriate ventilation systems. The Audit Report also recommends the Chief of Police ensures the Property Unit conducts regular drug destructions to minimize storage space for these high-risk items.

Agree  - With Comment      Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding the storage and ventilation of the drug storage area. The Department also agrees that regular drug destructions should occur.

It is important to note that from January 2002 until March 2005, the Department did not conduct drug destructions due to the “Fake Drug” investigation. There is still drug evidence which cannot be destroyed due to this investigation. As a result of not being able to destroy drugs for a period of over three years, the drug inventory surpassed the capacity of the drug vault. Several overflow areas were created and security measures installed. These overflow areas were created in both the common work area and in a non-environmentally controlled area of the warehouse. Neither of these areas are equipped with the type ventilation system recommended by the IAPE. Although the Department has resumed drug destructions, there is still insufficient space within the drug vault to house the entire drug inventory.

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 24 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

The following actions have been taken or are planned to reduce the Department's drug inventory and/or increase the amount of properly ventilated space for drug storage:

- The Department has been authorized to expand the current drug vault and add proper ventilation. The construction project was submitted to City Council in December 2007 by EBS. Unfortunately, the selected vendor could not meet all City requirements in order to begin construction. EBS will be taking the project back to City Council to select a new general contractor. **(Estimated Completion: January 2009)**
- The Department specifically reviewed bulk drug seizures to determine if they were eligible for destruction in an effort to create the most storage space. **(Completed)**
- The Department conducted drug destructions on December 19, 2007 and April 2, 2008 to reduce the amount of narcotics in the Property Unit. Another destruction is planned for July 2008. **(On-going Process)**
- Narcotics Division personnel met with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office regarding taking representative samples from certain bulk drug seizures and destroying the remainder before the case is adjudicated. This is allowed by State Law. This is still pending. **(Estimated Completion: November 2008)**
- The successful completion of drug destructions has been added to the Drug Team Sergeant's performance plan and will be part of the new Property Unit SOP. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- A legal opinion has been requested to determine if the Department could destroy drug paraphernalia upon intake under certain circumstances. This practice appears to be authorized by State Law. A response has not been received at this time. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department is implementing a new bulk drug packaging method requiring large items to be sealed in polytubing instead of placed in bio-hazard bags prior to being boxed. This method has several advantages over the current method. Since polytubing is heat sealed on both ends, it will help ensure the contents remain in the bag if they begin to decompose. Polytubing also serves as a secondary container in the event the seal on the main box loses its integrity. This will help in future destruction verification audits. Also, to strengthen the integrity of narcotics evidence, officers will be required to sign and date the interior of the bag prior to being sealed. Since polytubing is purchased in large rolls, it can be cut to the desired size. Often the current bio-hazard bag is much larger than needed. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**
- The Department purchased a portable decontamination shower and also replaced all eye wash stations. In addition all employees have been trained on the use of the decontamination shower. **(Completed)**
- The Department continues to ensure a sufficient number of respirator masks and gloves are available for all employees. **(Completed)**

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 25 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

- The Department has requested an environmental study of the facility to determine if any environmental health hazards currently exist. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**

**Implementation Date:** Various

**Responsible Manager:** EBS Management for construction project, Commander of the Narcotics Division for agreement with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, and the Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 14:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures entry-level Property Unit personnel receive appropriate training for handling, packaging, and storing high-risk items and hazardous materials. The Audit Report also recommends the Chief of Police encourage the attainment of appropriate professional certifications and memberships for property and evidence personnel.

Agree

Disagree

Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department agrees with the recommendation regarding training for entry level personnel. The Department also agrees that Property Unit personnel should be encouraged to attain professional certifications and memberships. The following actions have been taken or are planned to address this issue:

- The new SOP requires appropriate training for all new employees. It specifies the topics to be covered and includes a requirement the training be documented. **(Estimated Completion: July 2008)**
- In January 2008, the Department sent multiple employees to a two-day training conference sponsored by the IAPE on national property unit best practices. The cost of enrollment included a membership to the IAPE. **(Completed)**
- The Property Unit submitted a funding request to renew the IAPE membership of an employee who had previously completed the training. **(Completed)**
- The new civilian Property Unit Commander will be required to complete the IAPE training within a reasonable amount of time from hire. **(Estimated Completion: Within 12 Months of Hire)**
- In June 2008, a Property and Evidence Unit management training class is scheduled to be held in Arlington. Funding has been requested to allow several staff members to attend. **(Estimated Completion: June 2008, if funding approved)**
- In April 2008, the Property Unit Commander and an In-take Supervisor attended a conference that focused on the importance of DNA evidence. **(Completed)**

**Implementation Date:** May 2008 and on-going process

**An Audit Report on –  
Internal Controls at the Dallas Police Department Property Unit**

---

Page 26 of 26  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
May 14, 2008

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Support Services Division and the  
Commander of the Property Unit

**Recommendation 15:**

The Audit Report recommends the Chief of Police ensures the Property Recovery Team is not under the direction of, or reporting to, the Property Unit Commander.

Agree  - With Comment      Disagree       Partially Agree

**Corrective Action Plan:**

The Department concurs with the recommendation regarding the Property Recovery Squad not reporting the Property Unit Commander. The Department is in the process of physically moving the Property Recovery Team to Police Headquarters. The responsibility for the Property Recovery Team will be removed from the commander of the Property Unit once this move is complete. **(Estimated Completion: August 2008)**

For clarification purposes, the IAPE standard on disposition and purging states that generally, property officers should not be making final decisions on the disposition of property and evidence, the disposition should be based on input and signed approval of the investigating officer. The standard further states that some departments, by policy decision, delegate dispositions of found property and property for safekeeping (excluding firearms) to the property unit, but such authority should not extend to the disposition of items held as evidence. The Dallas Police Department, by policy decision, does allow Found Property Detectives, who are assigned to the Property Unit, to review and authorize for disposal found property and items held for safekeeping. This practice is permissible under the standard outlined by the IAPE.

**Implementation Date:** August 2008

**Responsible Manager:** Commander of the Support Services Division

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call me at 214-671-3901.



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cc: Ryan Evans, First Assistant City Manager  
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