

## Consolidation Property and Evidence Room Report and Proposal

### **Current Facilities:**

DuBois City

Room : 12' x 12' approx.

Separate storage for guns, money and drugs

Evidence stored by officer (except guns, money and drugs)

Standalone lockers, no pass through

No ventilation

No humidity control

Limited HVAC control (heat only)

Overcrowded

No room for bulk items (bikes, grow lamps ect.)

The current property/evidence room of the DuBois City Police is formerly two holding cells that were converted to one room. It measures approximately 12 feet by 12 feet. The walls are cement block, the roof is steel and access is limited to one lightweight aluminum. The door is secured with two deadbolts keyed alike. The conversion of the room from holding cells was ideal due to the solid and hardened structure. There is no ventilation to allow for the circulation of air and to remove odors of drug evidence and biological evidence. Lighting is a minimum. HVAC is limited to an electric space heater mounted on the wall. There is a separate partition within the evidence room, approximately 5 feet by 5 feet, to provide an additional layer of security for guns, money and drugs. It is wood studded construction with 1/2" plywood and a metal gate with a pad lock.

The evidence room has two evidence custodians, one is a supervisor and one is an officer. No other access is permitted or available. The room is not tied into the department's security system.

It is estimated there are more than 3,000 pieces of evidence currently secured. Items range from small amounts of controlled substances (drugs) to TV's and grow lights. The current facility cannot accommodate bicycles, furniture or similar bulk items.

With the exception of guns, money and drugs, evidence is organized by officer. This is not the preferred method, but changing over would require a great deal of time (perhaps at the time of consolidation).

Evidence tracking (chain of custody) is maintained via Visual Alert and a bar code system. There are no paper records kept for evidence after 2013.

Currently, the supervising evidence custodian periodically reviews evidence (as time permits) for destruction. The evidence must be identified, the case researched for charges, disposition, statute of limitations and other limitations. For evidence to be eligible for destruction, there must not be any pending charges and at least a year after conviction must have past.

#### Sandy Township Police

Room : 15' x 12' approx.  
Separate storage for guns, money and drugs  
Evidence stored by control number  
Shelving and bins  
No ventilation  
No humidity control  
Limited HVAC control  
Overcrowded  
No room for bulk items (bikes, grow lamps ect.)  
No evidence packaging or processing room

#### **Requested Facilities:**

- 24' x 24' Facility as well as a temporary evidence and processing area
- 12'x12' Temporary evidence room and processing area
- A partitioned area for large item/evidence storage in the sally port area
- Proper HVAC
- Partition for guns, money, drugs
- Area for bulk items
- Heavy duty steel door
- Alarmed
- Pass through lockers
- Drug incinerator
- Computer in room for logging in evidence
- Fans/Heat lamp for drying evidence
- Refrigerators in both temporary evidence and evidence
- Fenced impound lot

The new property and evidence room should be large enough to contain the evidence from both departments. This would allow for easier access to evidence as well as better organization. Proper HVAC will allow for ventilation from drug and biological evidence and allow for

temperature and humidity control for DNA evidence storage. A separate partition for guns, money and drugs is an industry standard for additional security.

One area that can be improved upon is how evidence is stored. Instead of organizing by officer, as the City does now, evidence should be stored by control number. This number is generated by Visual Alert and allows for quick reference. Also, this is a security measure that can quickly identify lost or misplaced evidence (id. a gap in control numbers on the shelf). This would also aid in identifying items that may be eligible for destruction.

Another area of improvement would be to assign more officers as evidence custodians. One supervisor, and three officers. This is for several reasons. One. With additional personnel, evidence categories can be assigned and that officer is responsible for researching those cases for destruction. This would allow for less work per officer with more productivity resulting in more evidence turn over. Two. With more evidence being turned over and on a more regular basis, the need for additional space declines. The evidence room is less crowded, more organized and more efficient. Three. More officers assigned would mean different shifts would have a custodian on duty to access evidence for trial, case review and lab submission.

Pass through lockers provide for increased security and efficiency. This eliminates keys that can be lost, stolen, duplicated or broken off in the lock, ect. Keys can be a potential gap in security. Efficiency is increased because the rear of the lockers are inside the property/evidence room. Adding computer access inside the evidence room further increases efficiency, accuracy and the ease of logging in evidence for the custodians.

There is a large amount of drugs seized, turned in and found that are entered into the property and evidence room. The unwanted pharmaceuticals collected are turned over to the National Guard two to three times a year. Currently, there are no good methods of properly disposing of these items ourselves. Currently, the City alone collects nearly 200 pounds between collections that must be securely held, taking up much needed space. One method would be to purchase a drug incinerator. This is a commercial made product that produces intense heat in order to safely destroy drugs and unwanted pharmaceuticals, as well as render paraphernalia decontaminated for destruction and is environmentally friendly.

Additional information and resources can be gleaned from the International Association for Property and Evidence (IAPE) at <https://home.iape.org/>. This is a professional association providing training, consultation and widely accepted standards for the control of property and evidence.

The temporary evidence room/evidence processing room is necessary for the transition of evidence, either to the lab, court, testing, return to owner or to the department's main evidence. This room will be utilized to process and package certain types of evidence before it is placed into the main evidence for storage. This room will be utilized for drying and any other types of evidence preparation for proper evidence storage. A refrigerator is necessary in both this room



as well as the main evidence to keep certain types of evidence so that they are not damaged. The temporary evidence will also house the pass through evidence lockers, which is a secure transition for evidence to be transferred from temporary evidence to the evidence room, which has limited access.

The partitioned area in the sally port is necessary for evidence that is too large, extremely heavy or takes up too much space in the evidence room (i.e.: bicycles, large safes, vehicle parts which may be large in size or heavy, etc.)

The impound lot is also used for securing and storing evidence. Mostly motor vehicles, overflow of bicycles, and any large or heavy evidence that could withstand the elements will be kept in this area. A separate garage would be ideal but a fenced lot would do as well. This area should be locked and monitored by video surveillance.

### **Transition Plan**

Evidence held by Sandy Township Police and DuBois City Police needs to be accounted for both before and after Consolidation. Maintaining Chain of Custody and having it properly documented is a paramount basic function of a police department. Transitioning to one department can be completed in three steps; Pre-Consolidation, Transfer and Post-Consolidation.

#### **Pre-Consolidation**

##### **Inventory**

A full inventory will be completed of the property and evidence room of both departments. Each piece of evidence should be accounted for.

All evidence would be reported as follows:

- *Located* – Evidence is located and accounted for in evidence
- *Out to Lab* – Evidence has been sent to a lab for analysis
- *Out to Court* – evidence has been submitted to court and will not return
- *Destroyed/Returned* – Final disposition of evidence and is no longer held
- *Lost / Misplaced* – Items listed as being in evidence, but cannot be located
- *Unknown* – Evidence located but no report of documentation can be found

The Chiefs of Police, or their designee, will determine what manor in which the inventory will be completed. Additionally, they will also assign an officer not detailed to evidence to oversee the inventory.

The supervising evidence custodians shall compile a report to the respective Chiefs of Police or their designee. The report will outline the results of the inventory. All items listed as "Lost / Misplaced" will be documented in the report. The report shall require the approval of the Chief of Police or their designee.

### **Transfer**

Supervising Evidence Custodians will develop a plan for transferring the evidence and property in an organized manner. Items will then be transported to the designated Property and Evidence room by police officers supervised by Evidence Custodians in order to maintain the Chain of Custody. Civilian employees should not be used in the transfer or transportation of evidence. The evidence will be organized according to established policies and standards of the new police department.

### **Post- Consolidation**

After the transfer is complete, another inventory, as exemplified above, shall be completed. The results will be provided to the Chief of Police or his designee for approval. The report will remain on file as documentation of the Chain of Custody.