



# CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

## GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: DECEMBER 30, 2020	CHAPTER: 6 - Property	PAGE: 1 of 3	NUMBER: 6.02.03
SUBJECT: FIELD EVIDENCE BAGS			
CHIEF: <i>Calvin D. Williams, Chief</i>			

*Substantive changes are italicized*

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for the use of field evidence bags (drug bags) to secure, package and preserve controlled substances in order to provide accountability and a legal chain of evidence in the Division of Police.

**POLICY:** *It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police* to ensure that controlled substances seized as contraband and evidence are packaged and preserved in field evidence bags.

**PROCEDURES:**

- I. Controlled Substances Seized as Contraband
  - A. Members shall package suspected controlled substances in field evidence bags.
    - 1. Sealed bags shall be stored in a secure evidence locker prior to forwarding.
    - 2. Sealed bags shall be conveyed to the Cuyahoga County Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (CCRFSL) for testing by Division property transport personnel.
  - B. *Members shall document the complete number of the field evidence bag, including all zeroes, in the narrative of their incident report.*
  - C. Drug paraphernalia not subject to scientific examination shall be forwarded in an evidence envelope – Property Held in Evidence for Owner - C of C 71-68 to the Property Unit.
  
- II. Proper Completion and Submission of the Field Evidence Bag
  - A. Officers shall:
    - 1. Complete all required fields on the Field Evidence Bag in blue or black ink; red ink shall be used for juveniles.
      - a. *DIST/BUREAU/UNIT* – the assignment of the member entering the suspected drugs.
      - b. *DATE* – the date the suspected drugs were confiscated or found.
      - c. *OFFICER* – the name and badge number(s) of the officer(s) handling the assignment.
      - d. *COMPLAINT#* – the incident number of the assignment or Law Enforcement Record Management (LERMS) number.

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- e. *DEFENDANT'S NAME* – the full first and last name. When there is more than one defendant, members may use the REMARKS section for writing more names.
  - f. *BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECTED DRUGS* – a description of the controlled substance (e.g. small plastic bag containing four (4) rocks suspected crack cocaine).
2. Place the evidence inside the bag and seal; write their initials, date and badge number across the seal.
  3. Complete a CCRFSL Evidence Submission Form and attach it to the field evidence bag.
  4. Log the evidence into the drug evidence book including the field evidence bag number.
  5. Submit the completed field evidence bag, CCRFSL Form, and drug book to their Officer-in-Charge (OIC) for review and approval.

B. *The OIC shall:*

1. Review the completed field evidence bag, CCRFSL Form, and drug book entry for proper completion.
  - a. Sign a properly completed field evidence bag.
  - b. Initial the drug book entry to maintain the chain of custody.
2. Store the evidence in a secure locker.
3. Complete the CCRFSL Evidence Transfer Form listing each item to be conveyed to the CCRFSL for testing.
4. Place all evidence in the courier bag and seal with the tamper evident device provided by the CCRFSL.
5. Assign a member to convey the courier bag to the CCRFSL for evidence testing.

III. Field Evidence Bag Discrepancies

A. Field evidence bags will not be accepted if:

1. The bag has been opened or there is apparent tampering.
2. The number on the bag does not match the number recorded in the drug evidence book.

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3. The return weight of the bag does not correspond with the original weight.
  4. Any other irregularity in the chain of custody.
- B. Supervisors shall conduct a complete investigation of the discrepancy and forward the report through the chain of command to the Internal Affairs Unit.
- C. *Drug evidence being returned from court after hours shall be secured at the member's district/unit.*

**THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.**