

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE DIRECTIVE

OPS-203, EVIDENCE – INSPECTION, INVENTORY, RETENTION, AND DISPOSAL

RESCINDS: OPS-203, 2024-039, revised 11-12-2024	REVISED: 01-28-2026 2026-008
RELATED DOCUMENTS: ADM-137, ADM-140, ENF-037, EQP-015, EQP-016, OPS-200, OPS-201, OPS-202, ORD-006, Evidence Custodian's Manual	RELATED CALEA STANDARDS (6th Edition): 42.1.3, 42.1.6, 42.2.1, 42.2.2, 55.2.4, 61.2.2, 82.2.4, 82.3.6, 83.2.1, 83.2.2, 83.2.3, 83.2.4, 83.2.5, 83.2.6, 83.3.2, 84.1.1, 84.1.2 through 84.1.8

I. POLICY

The Illinois State Police (ISP) will establish procedures for inspecting, inventorying, retaining, and disposing of evidence within the Department's evidence vaults.

NOTE: The Forensic Sciences Command (FSC) laboratory evidence vaults are exempt from this directive and are instead covered by the FSC evidence handling policies that adhere to forensic accreditation standards.

II. DEFINITIONS

Refer to ISP Directive OPS-200, "Evidence – Definitions and Responsibilities."

III. PROCEDURES

NOTE: At locations in which Barcoded Evidence Analysis Statistics and Tracking (BEAST) is available, use of the system is mandatory.

III.A. Inspection and Inventory Requirements:

NOTE: When exigent circumstances exist, such as a disaster or a pandemic, the Division of Forensic Services (DFS) Deputy Director may exempt or modify policy requirements related to required inspections and inventories.

III.A.1. Change of Custodian Inventories

- III.A.1.a. Inventories will be conducted when there is a change in Evidence Custodian (EC), Statewide Evidence Custodian (SEC), or appropriate alternate custodian.
- III.A.1.b. When an inventory is conducted due to a change of personnel, the newly appointed custodian/alternate and the outgoing custodian/alternate will conduct the inventory to ensure the integrity of material and records.
- III.A.1.c. The signatures of both the incoming and outgoing custodian/alternate will be documented on the inventory report, noting that an inventory was conducted.
- III.A.1.d. An inventory conducted due to a change in the EC or SEC will consist of the following:

III.A.1.d.1)a) An inventory of 100 percent of all drugs, guns, and securities held in storage will be conducted using BEAST.

III.A.1.d.1)b) An inventory of ten percent of all other items held in storage will also be conducted using BEAST.

III.A.1.d.1)c) The EC will generate a report from BEAST that will provide the total number of items to be inventoried.

III.A.1.d.1)d) The report from BEAST will list the total numbers of the following by category:

- III.A.1.d.1)d.(1) Guns
- III.A.1.d.1)d.(2) Drugs
- III.A.1.d.1)d.(3) Securities
- III.A.1.d.1)d.(4) Other items

- III.A.1.d.2) Command personnel must be present during the inventory. At the request of Command, the SEC/Assistant SEC may substitute for Command personnel during the inventory.
- III.A.1.e. An inventory conducted due to a change in the alternate EC or assistant SEC requires the following:
 - III.A.1.e.1) At Troop/Zone/Metropolitan Enforcement Group (MEG)/Task Force (TF) Evidence Vaults or the Statewide Evidence Vault (SEV), an inventory of 100 percent of guns, drugs, and securities held in storage should be conducted using BEAST.
 - III.A.1.e.2) The EC will generate a report from BEAST that will provide the total number of items to be inventoried.
 - III.A.1.e.3) The report from BEAST will list the total numbers of the following by category:
 - III.A.1.e.3)a) Guns
 - III.A.1.e.3)b) Drugs
 - III.A.1.e.3)c) Securities
 - III.A.1.e.4) The EC or SEC in charge of the vault inventoried will be present for change of alternate/assistant EC inventories.
- III.A.2. Quarterly Inspections
 - III.A.2.a. Command personnel will conduct an inspection of the evidence vaults under their command at least once each quarter (quarters will begin at the start of each calendar-year). Each inspection must meet the following minimum requirements:
 - III.A.2.a.1) Troop/Zone/MEG/TF Evidence Vaults will conduct inspections of at least 20 percent of guns, ten percent of drugs, 100 percent of securities, and five percent of all other items using BEAST.
 - III.A.2.a.1)a) The EC will generate a report from BEAST that will provide the percentages stated above as well as the total number of items being inspected in each category.
 - III.A.2.a.1)b) The report from BEAST will list the total numbers of the following by category:
 - III.A.2.a.1)b)(1) Guns
 - III.A.2.a.1)b)(2) Drugs
 - III.A.2.a.1)b)(3) Securities
 - III.A.2.a.1)b)(4) Other items
 - III.A.2.a.2) The SEV will conduct inspections of at least ten percent of guns, five percent of drugs, 100 percent of securities, and five percent of all other items using BEAST.
 - III.A.2.a.2)a) The EC will generate a report from BEAST that will provide the percentages stated above as well as the total number of items being inspected in each category.
 - III.A.2.a.2)b) The report from BEAST will list the total numbers of the following by category:
 - III.A.2.a.2)b)(1) Guns
 - III.A.2.a.2)b)(2) Drugs
 - III.A.2.a.2)b)(3) Securities
 - III.A.2.a.2)b)(4) Other items

- III.A.2.a.3) Digital Crimes Unit will inspect a minimum of five items or ten percent of all items, whichever is larger.
- III.A.2.b. Two of the quarterly inspections will be conducted by command personnel not in the chain-of-command of the respective Troop/Zone Commander or MEG/TF Director (i.e., Troop 1 personnel may not conduct the inspection of the Troop 1 Evidence Vault. However, they may conduct the inspection of the Troop 2 Evidence Vault.).
- III.A.2.c. One quarterly inspection each year must be designated as an “annual audit” and must be conducted by command personnel not in the vault’s chain-of-command.
- III.A.2.d. Division of Patrol Operations (DOP) and Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Regional Commanders will ensure that required inspections are properly completed for evidence vaults under their command.
- III.A.2.e. The DFS Deputy Director will ensure that required inspections of the evidence, handling procedures, records, disposition, and facilities related to the SEV are completed on a quarterly basis each year.
- III.A.2.f. Quarterly inspections will be stored in BEAST and recorded on the form ISP 4-162, Evidence Vault Annual Checklist.
- III.A.2.g. Digital files stored in a department approved digital evidence storage system will be hashed upon storage. Ten percent of digital files will have hashes verified quarterly.

NOTE: At the request of Command, the SEC/Assistant SEC may substitute for Command personnel in paragraphs III.A.2.a. through III.A.2.d of this directive.

NOTE: If a change of custodian inventory is completed, it may also serve as the quarterly inspection. This provision can only be used once per calendar-year.

III.A.3. Unannounced Audits

An unannounced inspection of property and evidence storage areas will be conducted as directed by the agency’s Director, or their designee, at least once a year.

NOTE: The unannounced inspection is not meant to be a time-consuming task. It can be as simple as the Director, or their designee, entering the property and evidence areas and inspecting for cleanliness, orderliness, and tracing a few pieces of property and evidence to ensure they are in the proper place as stated in the area’s records.

NOTE: If necessary, due to operational need or to facilitate work unit scheduling, a minimum amount of notice may be provided to the SEC in advance of the declared unannounced inspection of the SEV.

III.A.4. Additional Provisions

- III.A.4.a. The Office of Inspection and Audits may periodically conduct inspections or inventories of evidence vaults, handling procedures, records, and evidence disposition.
- III.A.4.b. The Director, DCI Deputy Director, Regional Commander, Troop/Zone Commander, or MEG/TF Director may direct, request, and/or conduct an inspection or inventory at any time.
- III.A.4.c. The Director or DFS Deputy Director may direct and/or conduct an inspection or inventory of the SEV.
- III.A.4.d. In addition to the Change of Custodian Inventories and the Quarterly Inspections, the SEC/Assistant SEC may conduct a no-notice spot inspection or inventory of material, handling procedures, and records of any storage facility.
- III.A.4.e. Inspections, other than those specifically required, may suffice for a quarterly inspection provided the minimum requirements of the quarterly inspection are satisfied, i.e., audit or Office of Inspection and Audits review.
- III.A.4.f. A 100 percent inventory will be conducted any time there is a change of storage facilities.

- III.A.4.f.1) Change of facility inventories will be conducted utilizing BEAST and recorded on the form ISP 4-162.
- III.A.4.f.2) ECs will maintain change of facility inventory records at the new vault location.

- III.A.4.g. Additional provisions may be included in the Evidence Custodian's Manual.

NOTE: Exhibits secured in an integrity package are exempt from inspection if integrity packaging requirements, e.g., the evidence label and seal on the exterior of the integrity package is inspected without opening the integrity package, are met. (Refer to ISP Directive OPS-200, "Evidence – Definitions and Responsibilities.")

III.A.5. Inspectors

- III.A.5.a. The appropriate EC will accompany all persons conducting authorized inspections or inventories.
- III.A.5.b. An ISP Command Officer (hard rank of Master Sergeant or above) will complete all required inspections of evidence vaults, except those conducted by the Office of Inspection and Audits and/or the SEC/Assistant SECs.

NOTE: An ISP Command Officer who is designated as an EC or an alternate EC is not authorized to serve as an inspector for their respective evidence vault.

- III.A.5.c. The Command Officer conducting the inspection will be familiar with the requirements of ISP Directives OPS-200, OPS-201, OPS-202, and OPS-203 and apply all requirements to the items of evidence and storage facility under their review.
- III.A.5.d. Persons conducting inspections will complete and sign an inspection report generated by BEAST.

III.A.6. Documentation

- III.A.6.a. Detailed documentation, as generated by BEAST, of all inspections, inventories, findings, and corrective action recommended/taken will be maintained at each facility for five years. A BEAST report will be generated and completed for each completed inspection or inventory and include the following minimum information:

- III.A.6.a.1) Date of inspection or inventory
- III.A.6.a.2) Storage facility inspected or inventoried
- III.A.6.a.3) Type of inspection or inventory completed
- III.A.6.a.4) Identity and signature of EC(s) present
- III.A.6.a.5) Identity and signature of inspector(s) present
- III.A.6.a.6) Amount and type of evidence and/or records inspected or inventoried
- III.A.6.a.7) Findings
- III.A.6.a.8) Corrective action taken and/or recommended will be documented in the directions/notes portion of the inspection report

- III.A.6.b. An error, which by its nature can never be corrected, will be documented on the inspection/inventory report, unless it has already been documented on a previous report. If the error must be documented, the appropriate work unit Commander or designee will be notified of the error so corrective action can be taken to prevent the error in the future.

- III.A.6.c. Due to changes in procedures over time, exhibits in cases opened prior to 2004 will only be inspected for exhibit integrity, packaging, and proper shelving location. In addition, the following errors are exempt from inspection reporting requirements and will not be documented on an inspection or inventory report:

- III.A.6.c.1) For exhibits created prior to 2007, "No cash inventory record with cash exhibit."
- III.A.6.c.2) For exhibits created prior to 07/01/2008, "County of collection not indicated on package."
- III.A.6.c.3) For exhibits created prior to 07/01/2008, "No offense noted on package."
- III.A.6.d. The EC/SEC will generate report forms for inventories utilizing BEAST. Vaults without a functioning BEAST system will note this on a written report.
- III.A.6.e. The EC/SEC will forward the entire report to the respective Troop/Zone Commander, MEG/TF Director, or their designee, for review and signature.
 - III.A.6.e.1) The DFS Deputy Director will be responsible for reviewing and signing reports of the SEV.
 - III.A.6.e.2) The signed inspection report will be returned to the respective evidence vault for retention.
 - III.A.6.e.3) The report must be accessible for inspection for a period of five years.
- III.A.6.f. A copy of the report's signature page will be forwarded to the SEV within five working-days. The entire report will be accessible to the SEV in BEAST.
- III.A.6.g. The EC or SEC will ensure each inspection/inventory that was conducted and maintained at their storage facility is documented on the Evidence Vault Annual Checklist, form ISP 4-162.

III.B. Retention

III.B.1. Retention locations

- III.B.1.a. The SEV will provide storage for:

- III.B.1.a.1) Evidence that must be retained for an extended period of time
- III.B.1.a.2) Evidence requiring enhanced security over that normally available at Troop/Zone/MEG/TF Evidence Vaults
- III.B.1.a.3) Bulky items of evidence
- III.B.1.a.4) Evidence requiring special handling

NOTE: The SEV will serve as the designated evidence vault for ISP work units in the Springfield, Illinois, area.

- III.B.1.b. Vehicles, boats, and other large items that, due to their size, cannot be stored in an evidence vault may be stored in parking areas that are locked or may be parked at a Troop headquarters that is occupied 24 hours a day.
- III.B.1.c. Upon receipt from an officer, the EC will place evidence, property, high value items, audio and video recordings having probative value, and negatives of photographs having probative value into an approved evidence vault.
- III.B.1.d. Related items will be stored in a secured location.

III.B.2. Retention periods

III.B.2.a. Evidence

Evidence obtained during the course of an investigation will be retained at least until final adjudication of all litigation stemming from such investigation or until the investigation is otherwise closed.

III.B.2.b. Forensic evidence

- III.B.2.b.1) Before or after the trial in a homicide, attempt (homicide), sex offense, or attempted sex offense prosecution, forensic evidence

will be retained along with sufficient documentation to locate that evidence.

III.B.2.b.2) After a judgment of conviction is entered for a homicide offense, attempt (homicide) offense, sex offense, or attempt (sex offense), forensic evidence will be retained:

III.B.2.b.2)a) Permanently, if a sentence of death was imposed.

III.B.2.b.2)b) Until the completion of the sentence, including the period of mandatory supervised release for the offense.

III.B.2.b.3) After a judgment of conviction for any other felony for which the defendant's genetic profile may be taken by a law enforcement agency and submitted for comparison in a forensic DNA database for unsolved crimes, forensic evidence will be retained for a period of seven years.

III.B.2.b.4) If a judgment of conviction is not entered for a homicide offense, attempt (homicide) offense, sex offense, or attempt (sex offense), all evidence will be retained indefinitely.

III.B.2.c. Overhear tapes

Court ordered recordings of conversations resulting from the use of eavesdropping devices shall be retained for a period of ten years from the date the recording was made unless otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.

III.B.2.d. Lost/Found/Personal property

Found property shall be retained in a secure location until the person entitled to possession is located and claims or relinquishes the property, or for a period of six months, whichever is shorter.

III.B.2.e. Related items

Related items shall be retained in a secure location until the completion of the investigation and a final decision on whether to bring charges has been issued or until final adjudication of all related criminal litigation. (Refer to ISP Directive OPS-200, "Evidence – Definitions and Responsibilities," for definitions of "secure location," and "related items.")

III.B.2.f. In-car video recordings

In-car video camera media will be retained in accordance with ISP Directive EQP-015, "Law Enforcement Mobile Recording Equipment (LEMRE)."

III.B.2.g. Digital evidence

III.B.2.g.1) If a judgement of conviction is not entered for a homicide offense, attempt (homicide) offense, sex offense, or attempt (sex offense), all digital evidence will be retained indefinitely.

III.B.2.g.2) Recordings of interviews or interrogations of suspects or victims in sex offenses or certain domestic battery offenses, which can be utilized as other crimes evidence pursuant to 725 ILCS 5/115-7.3 or 725 ILCS 5/115-7.4, shall be retained indefinitely regardless of prosecution status.

III.B.2.g.3) Other items of digital media such as cellular phone data extractions, child pornography files, and surveillance video will be subject to the same retention period as physical evidence as long as they are no longer needed for trial purposes.

III.C. Disposition methods

III.C.1. Evidence

III.C.1.a. It is the investigating officer's responsibility to obtain court orders to dispose of articles seized pursuant to a warrant regardless of whether the articles were used during any litigation.

III.C.1.a.1)

If after reasonable and diligent efforts have been made to obtain a court order, the appropriate court declines to issue an order disposing of the evidence, such declination shall indicate a lack of jurisdiction and such evidence may be disposed of pursuant to paragraph III.C.4. of this directive. Documentation demonstrating such efforts toward securing the court order is required and must be attached to the form ISP 4-009.

Exception: If the person arrested is released without charges being brought against him or her, all items seized from that person, other than contraband, will be returned to such person upon his or her release.

III.C.1.b. The EC will:

III.C.1.b.1) Obtain the completed Evidence Disposal Report, form ISP 4-009, from the investigating officer.

III.C.1.b.2) Contact the SEC and schedule a delivery to the SEV for evidence destruction, request the evidence be picked up for destruction, or request permission to destroy the evidence locally. The decision as to how to proceed under this paragraph rests with the SEC.

III.C.1.b.3) Place evidence in the appropriate destruction area only after a delivery or pick-up date has been scheduled with the SEV.

III.C.1.c. The SEC will:

III.C.1.c.1) Receive the completed ISP 4-009 and the evidence scheduled for destruction from the EC.

III.C.1.c.2) Ensure proper destruction of the evidence.

III.C.1.c.3) Return signed copies of the completed form ISP 4-009 to the Patrol and Investigative Records Section (PIRS) and EC after the evidence has been destroyed. (A form ISP 4-009, submitted for civil violations, will be destroyed, and not returned).

III.C.2. Forensic evidence

III.C.2.a. Articles, items, or objects that contain forensic evidence shall be disposed of in the following manner:

III.C.2.a.1) After a case has been adjudicated, the case agent will prepare a form ISP 4-009 identifying the forensic evidence as Code 14 (long-term storage).

III.C.2.a.2) For convictions where a sentence of death has been imposed, the words "permanent - death penalty" shall be inserted in the remarks section of the form ISP 4-009. The destruction date blank on the form ISP 4-009 will be marked 12-31-9999.

III.C.2.a.3) For convictions of homicide offenses, sex offenses, or attempt of these offenses, the appropriate date, as determined pursuant to paragraph III.B.2.b.2) of this directive, shall be inserted in the destruction date blank of the form ISP 4-009.

III.C.2.a.4) For convictions of other felonies for which the defendant's genetic profile may be taken by a law enforcement agency and submitted

for comparison in a forensic DNA database for unsolved crimes, the appropriate date, as determined pursuant to III.B.2.b.3) of this directive, shall be inserted in the destruction date blank of the form ISP 4-009.

III.C.2.a.5) For cases requiring long-term storage due to a fugitive status, cases under appeal, unsolved cases, or evidence that is too large to store in field vaults, a form ISP 4-009 will be submitted as Code 14 with a destruction date of 12-31-9999. This date will be changed upon the case being adjudicated.

III.C.2.a.5)a) The evidence will be forwarded to the SEV.
III.C.2.a.5)b) The Troop/Zone/MEG/TF EC will ensure the correct Code 14 date is entered in BEAST prior to this transfer.

III.C.2.a.6) SEV personnel will stamp the form ISP 4-009 as received and return a photocopy to the case officer so the case can be closed, if applicable.

III.C.2.a.7) The original form ISP 4-009 will be retained at a SEV until the destruction date.

III.C.2.a.8) After the evidence has been destroyed, the SEV personnel who witnessed the destruction will sign the form ISP 4-009 and forward the original to the RMS and a photocopy to the appropriate custodian for filing.

III.C.3. Overhear tapes

III.C.3.a. Overhear tapes and recordings shall be retained for a period of ten years from the date the recordings were made unless determined otherwise by court order.

III.C.3.a.1) When the case is ready to close, the officer will prepare a form ISP 4-009 identifying the overhear tapes as Code 13 (ten-year retention). The case agent will enter the destruction date. If recordings were made on different dates, the destruction date for all recordings will be ten years from the date the last recording was made.

III.C.3.a.2) The overhear tapes, along with the form ISP 4-009, will be forwarded to the SEV for storage.

III.C.3.a.3) SEV personnel will stamp the form ISP 4-009 as received and return a photocopy to the case agent so the case can be closed.

III.C.3.a.4) The original form ISP 4-009 will be retained at the SEV until the destruction date.

III.C.3.a.5) After the overhear tapes are destroyed, the SEV personnel who witnessed the destruction will sign the form ISP 4-009 and forward the original to the RMS and a photocopy to the appropriate custodian for filing.

III.C.4. Found property

III.C.4.a. An Evidence Inventory and Receipt, form ISP 1-010, will be used to inventory and record receipt of property found by or surrendered to department employees.

III.C.4.b. The ISP officer receiving the property shall make reasonable inquiry and efforts to identify and notify the last known owner or other person entitled to possession of the property. Reasonable efforts may include, but are not limited to, notification by certified mail, return receipt requested, newspaper publication or public posting.

III.C.4.c. The EC/SEC/officer who submitted the property shall return the property after a person provides reasonable and satisfactory proof of ownership and/or right to possession.

III.C.4.d. If the identity of the owner or other person entitled to possession of property has not been ascertained within six months of the property coming into the

Department's possession or if the owner or person entitled to possession relinquishes his or her right to the property:

- III.C.4.d.1) Property, other than weapons, shall be turned over to the SEC who shall transfer the property to the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) for public auction.
- III.C.4.d.2) Property having monetary value of less than \$50 need not be transferred to CMS but may be destroyed by the SEC.
- III.C.4.d.3) Weapons shall be disposed of or, if suitable, transferred to the Department for use by the Department's crime laboratory system for training purposes or for any other application deemed appropriate by the Director. Weapons being used by the Department will be recorded on the work location inventory.
- III.C.4.d.4) Money shall be transferred to the ISP Office of Finance (OOF), Budget Section, for deposit into the State's General Revenue Fund.

- III.C.4.e. The EC disposing of property in accordance with this section shall complete a form ISP 4-009 and retain a copy of the form for a minimum of two years.

III.C.5. Related items

- III.C.5.a. The EC will make reasonable efforts to return related items to the person from whom they were taken.
- III.C.5.b. If the person from whom the related items were taken cannot be located or indicates no desire for return of the related items, such items shall be turned over to the SEC who shall transfer the property to the CMS for public auction when appropriate.
- III.C.5.c. Related items having monetary value of less than \$50 need not be transferred to CMS but may be destroyed by the SEC.
- III.C.5.d. The EC disposing of related items in accordance with this section will complete a form ISP 4-009 that will be retained for a minimum of two years.

III.D. Employees will not solicit, accept, or retain for their personal use, any evidence, property, or related items. Evidence or property that is to be used for department purposes must first be transferred to the Department through court order or other legal means.

III.E. In the event of a conflict between the terms of this directive and any statutory provision or case law, such statute or case law shall be controlling.

| Indicates new or revised items.

-End of Directive-