

SANTA ROSA POLICE DEPARTMENT



PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE 2013 ANNUAL SUMMARY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
HOURS OF OPERATION.....	3
PERSONNEL.....	3
DUTIES.....	4
TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS.....	6
AUDITS.....	6
EVIDENCE/PROPERTY INVENTORY.....	7
E-TRACE.....	10
WEAPONS AND NARCOTICS DESTRUCTION.....	11
DISCOVERY.....	13
ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	14
GOALS/FUTURE.....	15

INTRODUCTION

The Police Property and Evidence Technician position is responsible for receiving, processing, storing, delivering, releasing, and disposing of police property and evidence; maintaining an inventory of evidence and property submitted to the department; ensuring the safe and careful handling of evidence; protecting the integrity of evidence throughout the judicial process; and performing evidence-related procedures, while working to accomplish the mission of the Santa Rosa Police Department.

Operating within an accredited Law Enforcement Agency, the Police Property and Evidence Technicians work within strict local, state and federal guidelines and must demonstrate compliance with these standards. The personnel assigned are held to the high standard expected of all Santa Rosa Police Department personnel and show their commitment to this through their work everyday.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The property room is staffed Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and closed on weekends. The property room is closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day but open all other holidays to accommodate field personnel and detectives. A call-back procedure is in place should a situation arise where a property technician is required after hours.

PERSONNEL

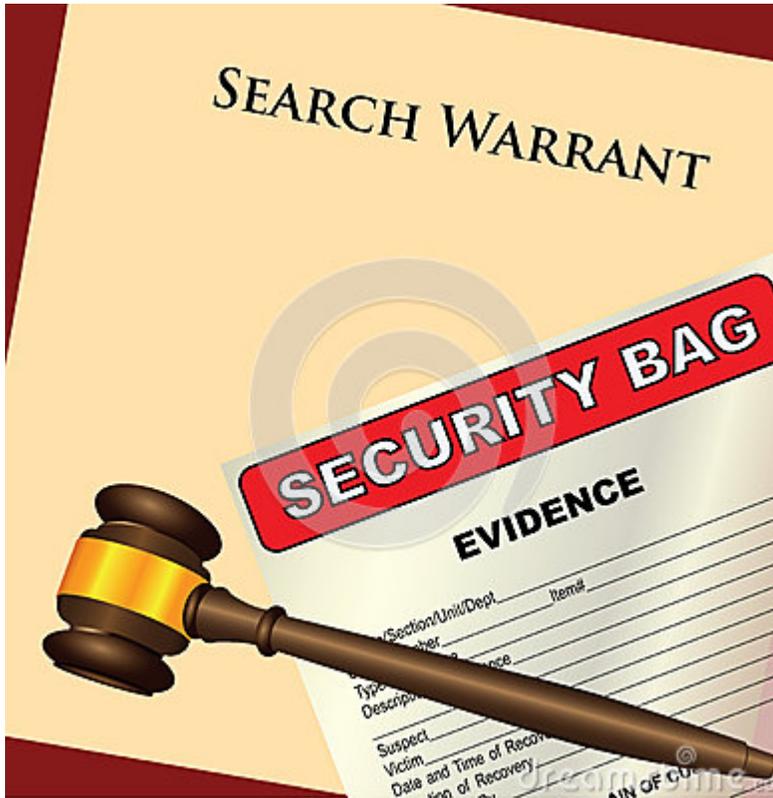
The Property Evidence team is comprised of Police Property and Evidence Technicians Stephanie Walter and Lisa Hansen, Police Records Technician Jennifer Bell, and Records Supervisor Kathy Esch. The team is overseen by Technical Services Division Manager Rhonda McKinnon (not pictured).



Pictured from left to right:
Lisa Hansen, Kathy Esch, Stephanie Walter, Jennifer Bell

DUTIES

The property room staff share the following duties:



Receive, identify, classify, record, store, safeguard, release and dispose of all types of property and evidence.

Effectively account for police property and evidence; organize and maintain control systems, detailed logs, files, and records.

Bar code and verify inventories of evidence and property received and/or confiscated by the department.

Oversee the transport of property and evidence to and from crime labs and other locations.

Answer questions and provide general information to the general public, District Attorney's Office, crime labs, and City staff including requests for information on property and evidence held; provide information regarding Police Department policies and procedures pertaining to the storage and release of evidence and property.

Facilitate evidence viewings with the District Attorney, defense attorneys, police personnel, and private investigators.

Prepare property and evidence for court trials; release property to authorized persons; and track chain of custody of evidence items.

Testify as an evidence custodian expert in any type of court of law and provide credible testimony regarding the handling of evidence.





Understand and interpret criminal laws and codes.

Release or dispose of property and evidence in accordance with applicable laws and court orders.

Apply and explain pertinent laws, rules, regulations, protocols, policies, and procedures related to property and evidence.

Coordinate requests for narcotics analysis.

Handle marijuana and other narcotics; package and prepare them for destruction.

Coordinate weapons and narcotics destruction; maintain inventory and arrange for court order approval of the destruction; transport weapons and narcotics for destruction.



EVIDENCE

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

The Property and Evidence Technicians have been chosen as a result of their experience, attention to detail, willingness to be part of the unit and outstanding work ethic. The guidelines, laws and policies that direct the actions of the property technicians are vast and ever changing. Constant training and updates in industry standards are necessary to keep up with the demands being made on the property room.

The Property and Evidence Technicians are currently members in the following organizations:

- IAPE – International Association of Property and Evidence. Both property technicians attained their Property and Evidence Specialist Certification in 2013.
- CAPE – California Association of Property and Evidence.
- SCAPE – Sonoma County Association of Property and Evidence.

In 2013 Property and Evidence Technicians received training in the following areas:

- Biological Preservation of DNA.
- Guns and weapons legal update.

AUDITS

In order to ensure strict adherence to the chain of custody and to determine if there are any discrepancies in inventory/storage locations, audits are conducted routinely by property room staff and the property room supervisor. The following audits were completed in 2013:

NARCOTICS

- 14 individual audits of booked narcotics by specific location – There are over 75 boxes containing narcotics booked in under separate case numbers. These boxes are each a “location” in the Tracker database. Property room staff conducted audits on 14 of the locations in 2013 in order to determine if the narcotics could be purged/destroyed.
- Complete audit of all narcotics in the property room (24 separate audits) – The property room supervisor conducted an audit of each box of narcotics in order to determine if there were discrepancies. Each box’s barcodes were scanned and compared to the database to make sure the cases were in the proper box or checked out appropriately and that each envelope was sealed. There were no discrepancies found.
- Narcotics for destruction/Pills – It was determined during a separate audit that prescription pills were not being tracked separately from other narcotics if they were part of the same case. A procedure was developed to separate and track the destruction of prescription pills booked in as evidence.

CURRENCY

- Currency stored in the property room safe pending transfer to the bank – The property room staff completed an audit on all currency contained in the safe to determine which cases should be transferred to the bank for deposit/safekeeping. If there was the potential for the money to be returned to an individual, it was transferred into a trust account designed to hold the money pending the return.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RAPE TESTING (SART)

- Number of SART kits stored in property room – This audit took place with the transfer of these kits into the new walk-in freezer. It was determined that there are 267 kits in the property room. In 2011 the Santa Rosa Police Department began the automatic testing of all SART kits.



EVIDENCE/PROPERTY INVENTORY

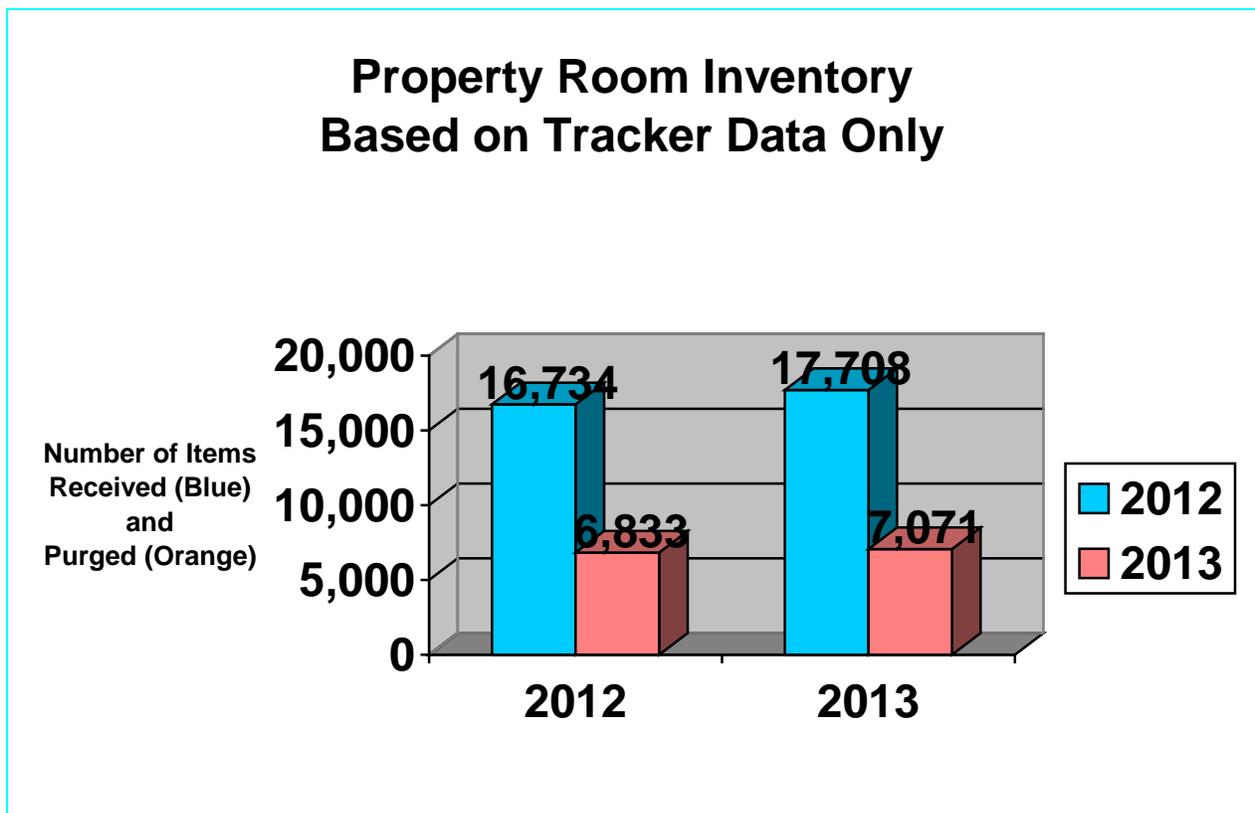
Evidence and Property is submitted to the property technicians on a continual basis. The items submitted into Evidence are entered into the Tracker evidence tracking database before being assigned a location in the property room. The property room took in 17,708 items in 2013 from 5,807 different cases, an increase of 974 items compared to 2012.

The timely and appropriate disposition of evidence is extremely important to the efficient management of evidence, the integrity of evidence security, and the effectiveness of prosecutorial efforts. Overcrowded evidence rooms require more manpower to manage simply because the size of their inventory has a tendency to slow down routine operations involving evidence location and retrieval. The Property and Evidence Technicians routinely purge items from the property room.

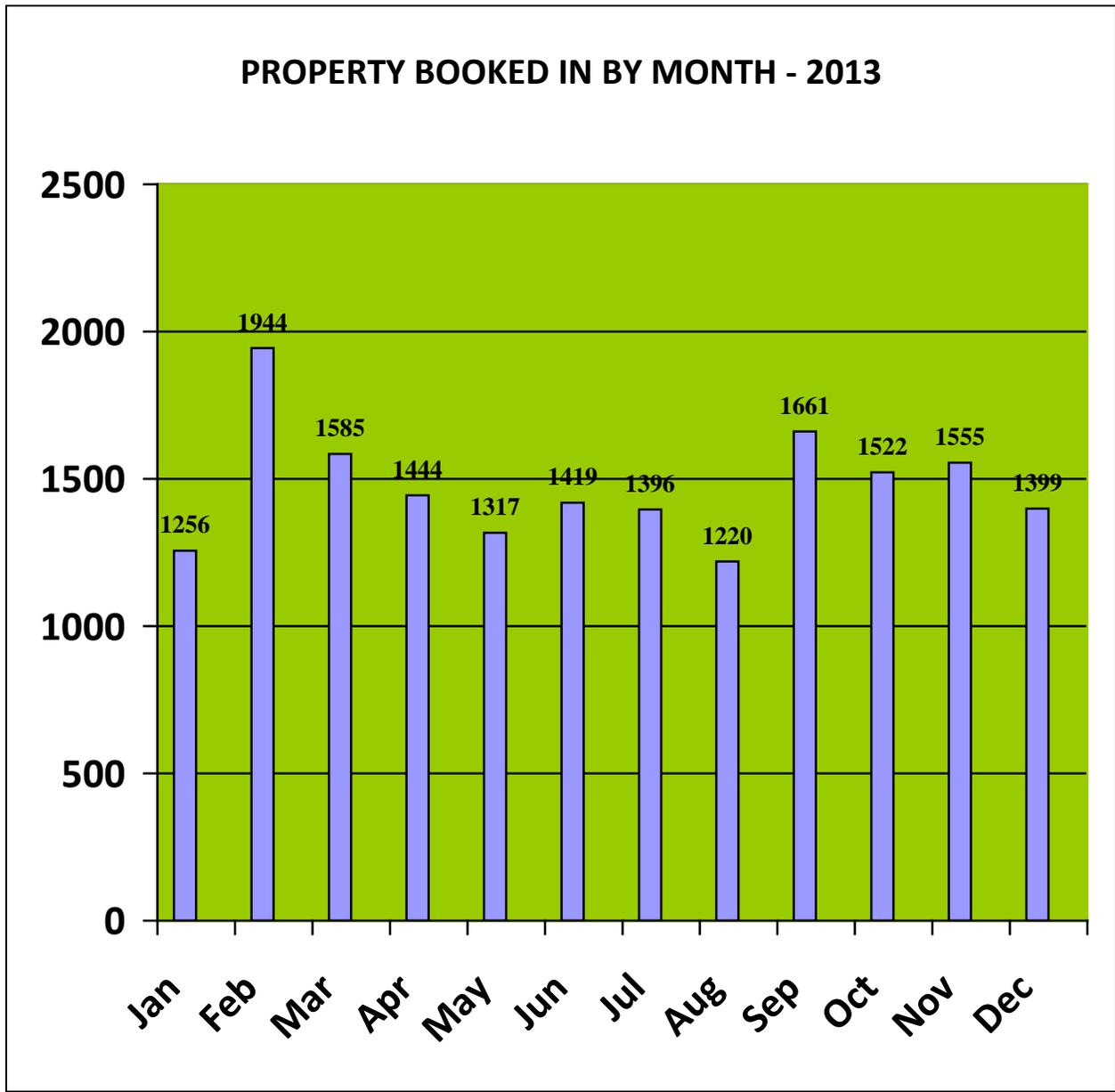
Property technicians purged 7,071 items in 2013, up by 238 items purged in 2012. The number of purged items is based solely on information from the Tracker database which only goes back to its inception in 2007. Ongoing purging of items prior to 2007 resulted in a substantial number of additional items being disposed of from the property room, but not tracked in the database.

The purge is current through 2007, with plans to begin the purging of 2008 evidence as soon as possible. The reduction of inventory (purging) is accomplished based on criteria from federal, state and local law, as well as case dispositions from the District Attorney’s Office, detectives and officers, items returned to owners, destroyed or auctioned. Items associated with retainable cases such as homicides and sexual assaults are infrequently purged and account for a large number of stored items in the property room inventory. Secured off-site storage locations are necessary to house infrequently accessed items, extremely large items, and multiple items from single high profile cases.

The following shows the number of items received into the property room and purged out of the property room for the years 2012 - 2013 based on Tracker statistics.



The following graph shows property booked in each month in 2013.



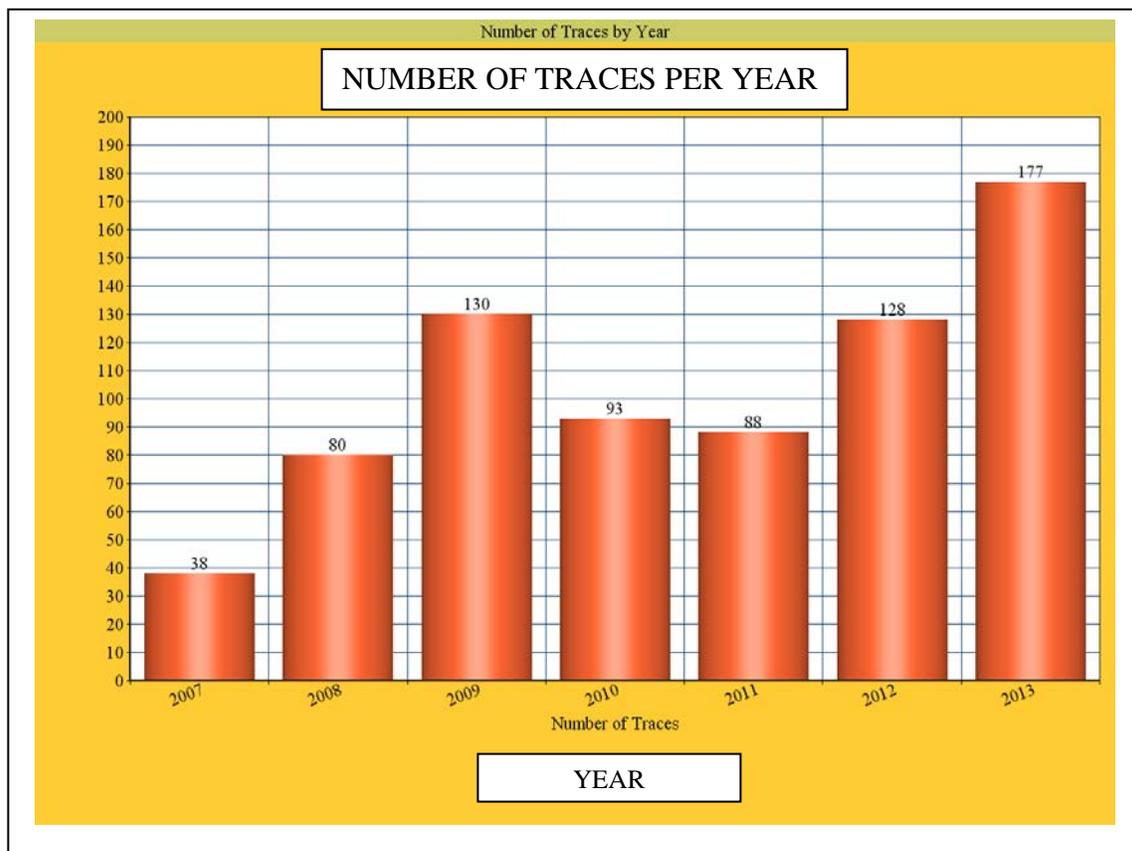
E-TRACE: Internet-Based Firearms Tracing and Analysis.

Purpose

Firearms tracing through e-Trace is the systematic tracking of a recovered firearm from its manufacturer or importer and subsequent introduction into the distribution chain (wholesaler/retailer) to the first retail purchase. A firearms trace is conducted when a law enforcement agency recovers a firearm at a crime scene and requests information regarding its origin to develop investigative leads. That information is used to link a suspect to a firearm in a criminal investigation, identify potential traffickers, and when sufficient comprehensive tracing is undertaken in a given community, to detect interstate, intrastate, and international patterns regarding the sources and types of crime guns.

NUMBER OF TRACES BY YEAR

The property room staff have been using e-Trace since late 2007. The following graph shows the number of e-Trace requests for data that have been completed by them since that time.

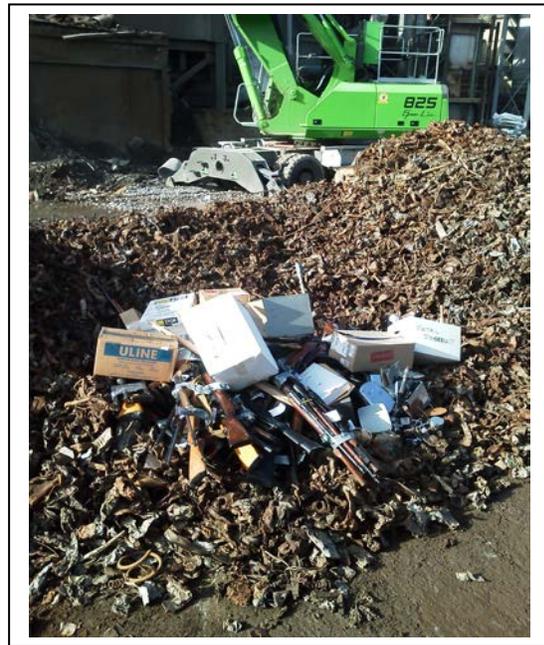


WEAPONS AND NARCOTICS DESTRUCTION

According to standards outlined by the International Association of Property and Evidence, the property room staff destroys both narcotics and firearms annually. In some cases, more than one destruction event for each is planned in a given year based on the number of cases that are purged.



GUNS AT THE DESTRUCTION
FACILITY WAITING TO BE
DESTROYED



In 2013, the property room took in 284 guns from 149 different cases. Guns can be booked into the property room as found property, evidence, or for safekeeping. Many guns are released back to their rightful owners after a rigorous process that includes authorization from the Department of Justice. If a weapon is not returned then it will eventually be destroyed. The property room staff participated in one gun destruction event in 2013. The process requires that the guns be transported to a scrap metal yard where they are lifted by a huge magnet and placed onto a conveyor. The conveyor takes the guns to a large furnace where they are melted. The steel from these guns is used to make such things as manhole covers and pipe fittings. The property room staff destroyed 139 guns from 79 different cases in 2013.

NARCOTICS
SCHEDULED FOR
DESTRUCTION



DESTRUCTION
FACILITY

In 2013, officers and detectives logged 2,226 drug entries involving controlled substances, prescription pills and marijuana into the Tracker database related to 1,257 individual cases.

Upon adjudication of a case or at the expiration of any mandated storage time frames, controlled substances are eventually destroyed at an Energy-from-Waste facility that burns the narcotics, which in turn generate electricity using the most modern technology for environmentally friendly waste disposal.

Prescription pills are secured in a locked container designed specifically for them. They are destroyed on a regular basis using an environmentally approved method.

SECURE STORAGE FOR
NARCOTICS PENDING
DESTRUCTION



SECURE STORAGE FOR
PRESCRIPTION PILLS PENDING
DESTRUCTION

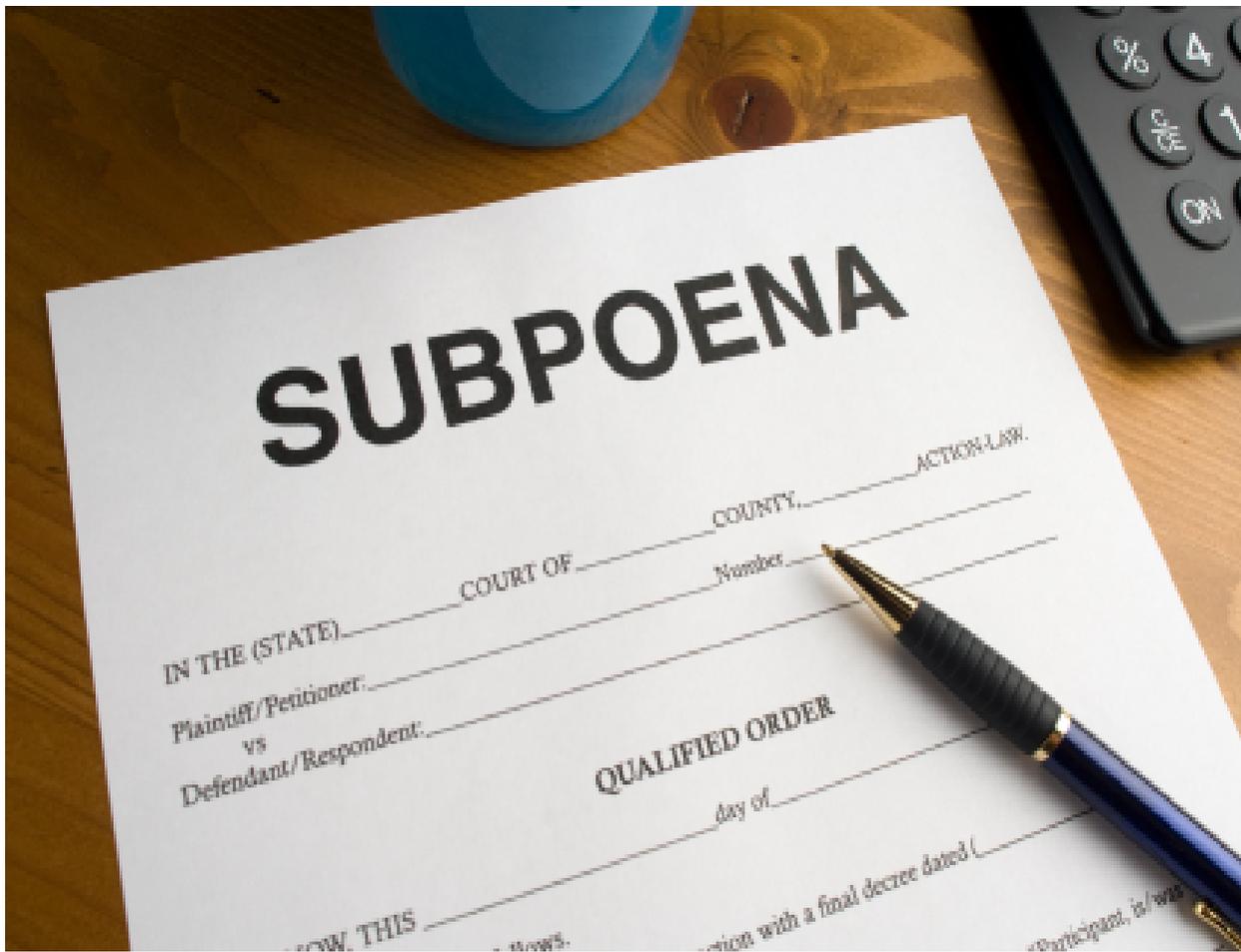
The property room staff planned and participated in several narcotics destruction events in 2013 resulting in the removal/destruction of over 880 pounds of dangerous drugs from the property room and community.

DISCOVERY

The property room staff is responsible for providing copies of evidence items requested via the discovery process. This process is often time consuming and tedious as many times the cases are high profile or have an extensive amount of evidence attached to them. In 2011, with the retirement of both of the department's Forensic Specialists, responsibility for all photograph and fingerprint evidence shifted to the property room staff. In the first few months of 2012, they logged in over 200 hours processing requests for these items.

Many of the requests for discovery involve duplicating photo CDs, audio recordings or other digital media. The property room is equipped to handle these requests, including the use of older technology that will transfer data from cassette tapes, micro cassette tapes and VHS tapes onto more modern data storage solutions.

Discovery requests continue to make up a large part of the workload of the property room. A database is currently being designed to capture the number of discovery requests specifically submitted to Property and Evidence.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the course of 2013, there were many accomplishments in the property room. The creation of two permanent Police Property and Evidence Technician positions was instrumental in bringing the property room up to the standards outlined by the International Association of Property and Evidence. By limiting the rotation of staff through the property room the organization benefited because quality control was enhanced and the margin for error was decreased. Other major accomplishments are listed below:



- Completed installation of a walk-in freezer.
- New procedure for disposing of prescription pills.
- New procedure for transfer of currency out of the property room and into a savings account in the bank.
- New procedure for identifying money that should be kept for potential evidence processing.
- New forms for safekeeping, weapons confiscation for domestic violence/5150 cases, and property receipts.
- Defined roles and responsibilities for newly created permanent Police Property and Evidence Technician position and the Police Technician in the rotating assignment.
- Maximized storage space at the secured off-site facility.
- Removed old homicide cases from the main property room and moved to a secured off-site facility.
- Routine maintenance of the property room: door repair, added key pad device to the main door, and fixed a leak in the main property storage area.
- Developed new evidence labels for identification of specific types of cases.
- Transferred responsibility for the secured outdoor marijuana storage facility to the Narcotics Team.
- Installed a color printer/scanner.
- Created a useable workstation for the supervisor.
- New procedure for filing evidence related documents with original reports.
- Submitted 183 items to auction.

NEW WALK-IN FREEZER
FOR STORAGE OF
BIOLOGICAL/SEXUAL
ASSAULT EVIDENCE



GOALS/FUTURE



The property technicians are always looking ahead for innovative ways to increase the efficiency of the property room. The property technicians met on February 4, 2014, to cover many current topics and discuss goals for 2014, which are listed below:

- ❖ Redesign “drop slot” to be more ergonomic for property technicians.
- ❖ Research photo CD storage options.
- ❖ Remove old Noritsu photo processing equipment from newly acquired space in ID.
- ❖ Complete workspace remodel.
- ❖ Complete storage space remodel.
- ❖ Update and enlarge duplication station.
- ❖ Complete property appropriation standard operating procedure (SOP).
- ❖ Update currency SOP to include what to do with contaminated/mutilated currency.
- ❖ Outline procedure for identifying expensive jewelry, gemstones.
- ❖ Create an SOP Manual.
- ❖ Continue purge of property prior to 2006.
- ❖ Complete 2007 purge.
- ❖ Begin and complete 2008 purge.
- ❖ Complete transfer of all non-evidence cash from past cases into the bank.
- ❖ Incorporate purging items based on the District Attorney’s disposition list.
- ❖ Audit all guns.
- ❖ Audit all currency.
- ❖ Begin scanning of signature documents into Tracker.
- ❖ Replace PDAs.
- ❖ Finish new barcodes on all locations.
- ❖ Enter all previously destroyed guns into AFS.
- ❖ Install Conex Box for outdoor storage of all marijuana.