

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

September 11, 2024  
14.2

**TO:** The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DIVISION AUDIT  
(AD NO. 24-006)

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Evidence and Property Management Division Audit.

### DISCUSSION

Audit Division conducted the Evidence and Property Management Division Audit to evaluate compliance with Department policies and procedures.

If additional information is required, please contact Police Administrator Sharon Sargent, Commanding Officer, Audit Division, at (213) 486-8480.

Respectfully,



DOMINIC H. CHOI  
Chief of Police

Attachment

**EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DIVISION AUDIT**  
**Conducted by Audit Division**  
**2024**

**OVERVIEW**

In accordance with the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) 2024 Annual Audit Plan, Audit Division (AD) conducted the Evidence and Property Management Audit. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate if the Department followed policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and security, chain of custody, accountability, and documentation of booked evidence and property.

**BACKGROUND**

The Evidence and Property Management Division (EPMD) ensures safeguarding and security, maintains the chain of custody, and ensures accountability and detailed documentation for booked evidence and property from booking until release or disposal. They review, correct, and approve related reports for acceptance and processing. They receive, analyze, and assess evidence and property to ensure proper containment and secure physical storage. Additionally, they address the specific needs for the handling of narcotics, currency, firearms, hazardous materials, biological evidence, high-value articles, and related evidence.

**Facilities**

Evidence and Property Management Division provides staff at all 21 Geographic Areas to handle property and evidence. Additionally, EPMD staffs the Forensic Science Center on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles, where they receive, book, store, and release items such as analyzed evidence. They also staff the Evidence Control Section at the Piper Technical Facility, which is used for narcotics and deoxyribonucleic acid storage and testing, and the Warehouse, which serves as the receiving area for large or unusual bookings.

**Computer System**

The current inventory management system, Automated Property Information Management System (APIMS), was implemented in 1992, and is administered by Information Technology Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

**PRIOR AUDITS**

Audit Division conducted the last Property and Evidence Audit in 2019, at which time the Department showed an overall compliance rate of 91 percent. Recommendations resulting from the audit pertained to revisions to the Los Angeles Police Department Visitor Roster, Form 06.61.00, and increasing camera and panic alarm installation and training. Several recommendations were implemented to the extent possible due to budgetary constraints.

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<sup>1</sup> As of May 14, 2024, APIMS was transferred to the "File On-Q" System. The File On-Q System was not assessed or utilized for this audit.

**SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

This audit assessed both high value and general (low value) property. Auditors evaluated the Department’s security systems in place to safeguard EMPD facilities. The overall audit period was October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, however, the scope varied for each objective.

Auditors established four objectives and five sub-objectives to determine if the Department followed policies and procedures. They selected the four objectives based on risks associated with evidence and property maintenance: facility security, proper chain of custody documentation, Department of Justice (DOJ) compliance regarding Sexual Assault Evidence Kits, and narcotics check-out procedures.

Table No. 1 summarizes the audit findings by objective and compares the findings for 2019 and 2024.

**Table No. 1 - Findings by Objective**

Objective No.	Description of Objectives	2019		2024	
		Number Meeting Standard/ Evaluated	Percent Meeting Standard	Number Meeting Standard/ Evaluated	Percent Meeting Standard
<b>1</b>	<b>Objective No. 1 - Safeguarding of Property/Property Rooms</b>				
1(a)	Visitor Roster Logs – Visitors Signed In and Out Properly	1,621/1,695	96%	1,568/1,580	99%
1(b)	Video Surveillance/Panic Alarms Functioning	5/9	56%	11/24	46%
1(c)	Authorized Access Granted Properly	N/A	N/A	164/165	99%
<b>2</b>	<b>Evaluation of Chain of Custody</b>				
2(a)	Records for Property and Evidence Match Storage Location (system-to-shelf)	298/298	100%	285/285	100%
2(b)	Records for Property and Evidence Match Storage Location (shelf-to-system)	203/203	100%	285/285	100%
<b>3</b>	<b>Sexual Assault Evidence Number Included in Report</b>	N/A	N/A	169/179	94%
<b>4</b>	<b>Narcotics Check-Out Procedures Followed</b>	N/A	N/A	60/60	100%

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

**Objective No. 1 – Safeguarding of Property/Property Rooms**

For the purposes of this objective, auditors performed tests for the following sub-objectives:

- Visitor Roster Logs;

- Video Surveillance/Panic Alarms; and,
- Authorized Access.

### **Objective No. 1(a) – Visitor Roster Logs – Visitors Signed In and Out Properly**

#### **Criteria**

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Evidence and Property Management Guide, Guideline 3.17, states:

*“EPMD facilities are operated with a high level of security. Evidence and Property Management Division is tasked with ensuring the following:*

- *Maintain a Visitor’s Log at every EPMD facility;*
- *Visitors shall sign-in at the time of their arrival...*
- *Visitors shall sign-out when they depart...”*

#### **Audit Procedures**

Auditors examined six months of visitor rosters for all 24 EPMD facilities for the period of October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, to determine if the rosters were properly filled out and maintained. There were 1,580 individual entries for review.<sup>2</sup>

Auditors reviewed each roster to determine if each visitor signed in and out. If each entry indicated the visitor signed in and out, the Department met the standard for this objective.

#### **Findings**

Of the 1,580 entries reviewed, 1,568 (99 percent) met the standard for this objective. The 12 that did not meet the standard were due to visitors not signing out when they left the facility. (See Table No. 2 in the Addendum for the findings and Table No. 3 for Other Related Matters).

### **Objective No. 1(b) – Video Surveillance/Panic Alarms Functioning**

#### **Criteria**

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Evidence and Property Management Guide, Guideline 3.17, states:

*“...Consideration should be given to the location of the evidence/property storage area(s), offices/workstations, and site security, to include, at a minimum, the following:*

- *Facility should be equipped with video surveillance and duress alarm...”*

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<sup>2</sup> Auditors reviewed the Visitor Roster referred to in the Evidence and Property Management Guide as a “Visitor Log.”

The Los Angeles Police Department Evidence and Property Management Division Policies and Procedures Manual, Volume 7, *Safety and Security*, states:

*“EPMD facilities are operated with a high level of security. EPMD is tasked with the following:*

- *Be familiar with any panic alarms/buzzers that will alert LAPD officers to respond to the respective work area...”*

### **Audit Procedures**

Auditors visited each EPMD facility to determine if there was a functioning video surveillance system and panic alarm. Auditors also checked to verify if the EPMD employee on duty was familiar with the systems. If each facility had functioning video surveillance system and a panic alarm, along with each employee being familiar with the systems, the Department met the standard for this objective.

### **Findings**

Of the 24 EPMD facilities visited, 11 (46 percent) met the standard for this objective. The 13 that did not meet the standard did not have functioning video surveillance and/or panic alarm systems as required (12 of the 13 facilities), or an employee was not aware of the functionalities (3 of the 13 facilities).<sup>3</sup> (See Recommendation.)

### **Objective No. 1(c) – Authorized Access Granted Properly**

#### **Criteria**

The Los Angeles Police Department Evidence and Property Management Division Policies and Procedures Manual, Volume 7, *Safety and Security*, states:

*“EPMD facilities are operated with a high level of security. EPMD is tasked with: ...*

- *Ensuring access is limited to persons conducting business that requires entry...*

#### *c. Instructions*

*The security systems that are programmed with the LAPD Department Identification Card, are programmed by personnel in the respective Geographic Areas; contact the Front Office. Access to the newer Property Rooms at the Geographic Areas with the Department Identification card are restricted to personnel assigned to work the Property Room and the EPMD supervisors only.”*

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<sup>3</sup> For security purposes, the exact facilities that did not meet the standard for this objective are not included in the audit report; however, this information will be made available to EPMD and the Board of Police Commissioners upon request.

## **Audit Procedures**

Auditors obtained a list of 165 EPMD employees who were granted access to each facility between March 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024.<sup>4</sup> The list was compared to the History Activity Report obtained from Facilities Management Division (FMD) which indicated which employees accessed each facility during the same period.<sup>5</sup> If an employee who accessed the facilities was authorized by EPMD, the Department met the standard for this objective.

## **Findings**

Of the 165 employees who were granted access to EPMD facilities, 164 (99 percent) met the standard for this objective. One location, the Hollywood Area property room, had one unauthorized employee access the property room between March 1, 2024, through March 31, 2024.

## **Objective No. 2 – Evaluation of Chain of Custody**

For the purposes of this audit, chain of custody refers to the chronological documentation of the seizure, custody, control, transfer, and disposition of property and evidence booked into EPMD. The property/evidence must be stored and examined in a manner which protects it from loss, contamination, or destruction. To test the existence of the property/evidence and the accuracy of records for chain of custody, auditors performed two tests. The first test was a system-to-shelf test and the second was a shelf-to-system test.

## **Criteria**

The following criteria applies to Objectives 2(a) and 2(b).

The Los Angeles Police Department Evidence and Property Management Division Policies and Procedures Manual, Volume 12, *Automated Property Information System (APIMS)* states:

*“The Automated Property Information Management System (APIMS) is a customized software system used for booking, storing, tracking, and documenting the intake, storage, and disposal of evidence.*

- *It provides complete chain-of-custody, release and history records...”*

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the large number of entries during the audit period, auditors selected only one month of entries to review.

<sup>5</sup> The History Activity Report indicates if access to the property room was granted for each employee.

**Objective No. 2(a) – Records for Property and Evidence Match Storage Location (System-to-Shelf)**

**Audit Procedures**

For the system-to-shelf test, auditors obtained an APIMS data run of all property items from October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, at each of the 24 EPMD facility locations, resulting in a total of 78,482 items. Auditors selected a statistically valid random sample of 285 items, stratifying them to include each property facility. They examined the items to verify their status in APIMS and traced them to their location on the shelf. If the items physically existed on the shelves (lockers, cages, safes, cabinets, etc.) of the property facility, the Department met the standard for this objective.

**Findings**

All 24 property facilities met the standard for this objective.

**Objective No. 2(b) – Records for Property and Evidence Match Storage Location (Shelf-to-System)**

**Audit Procedures**

For the shelf-to-system test, auditors used the same sample size as in Objective No. 2(a) but selected a different sample. Auditors selected 285 items from the shelves (lockers, cages, safes, cabinets, etc.) of each property facility and traced each one back to APIMS. The information obtained from the items on the shelves included the package identification number and the item description. If the items were in APIMS, the Department met the standard for this objective.

**Findings**

All 24 property facilities met the standard for this objective.

**Objective No. 3 – Sexual Assault Evidence Number Included in Report**

**Criteria**

Chief of Detectives Notice, *Sexual Assault Evidence Kits – Identifying Number Tracking System*, dated May 9, 2023, states:

*“In 2022, the California State Legislature enacted Penal Code Section 680.1 instructing the California Department of Justice (DOJ) to establish a process allowing survivors of sexual assault crimes to track and receive updates privately, securely, and electronically regarding the status, location and information pertaining to their Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) in the California DOJ Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Tracking (SAFE-T) database...”*

*In order to ensure compliance, the Department has implemented new SAEKs that display a bar code and unique identifying Sexual Assault Evidence (SAE) number...*

*Property officers shall verify the kit's SAE number is included on the property report when the kit is booked into evidence."*

## **Audit Procedures**

Auditors obtained a list of 519 SAEKs from APIMS for a six-month period between October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. A statistically valid random sample was obtained, which resulted in a total of 179 SAEKs.<sup>6</sup> The SAEKs were compared to each corresponding Property Report to ensure that the SAE number was listed on the Property Report, Form 10.10.00, and/or the Follow-Up Investigation, Form 03.14.00. If the Property Report and/or the Follow-Up Investigation listed the SAE number, the Department met the standard for this objective.

## **Findings**

Out of the 179 SAEKs reviewed, 169 (94 percent) met the standard for this objective. The 10 that did not meet the standard are due to them not containing a unique identifying SAE number.<sup>7</sup>

## **Objective No. 4 – Narcotics Check-Out Procedures Followed**

### **Criteria**

The Department Manual, Section 4/543.10, *Withdrawal of Narcotics Evidence from Evidence and Property Management Division*, dated Quarter 3, 2023, states:

*"...Employees shall only withdraw narcotics evidence from Evidence and Property Management Division storage when required for:*

- *Court;*
- *Court-ordered destruction;*
- *Administrative or other official hearing to which the officer has been subpoenaed; or,*
- *Special purposes for which the approval of the Chief of Detectives has been obtained.*

*Department employees...who withdraw and return property, or who request the transfer or release of property for any authorized purpose, **shall** provide the appropriate Department **picture** identification for verification of identity and provide a right thumbprint and signature on the Evidence and Property Management Division Record."*

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<sup>6</sup> Audit Division applied a one-tail test with a 95 percent confidence level and an error rate of five percent for the sample selection.

<sup>7</sup> Due to confidentiality, auditors did not include any identifying numbers under the findings.

### **Audit Procedures**

Auditors obtained a list of narcotics from APIMS that had been checked out by Department employees during the months of October 2023, December 2023, and March 2024, which resulted in 1,173 checkout transactions.<sup>8</sup> Auditors reviewed a randomized sample of 20 transactions for each of the three months listed above, for a total of 60 transactions.

Each of the items were compared to its corresponding EPMD checkout record. If the corresponding EPMD checkout record contained the signature and right thumbprint of the employee who checked out the item, the Department met the standard for this objective.

### **Findings**

All 60 transactions met the standard for this objective.

### **OTHER RELATED MATTER:**

While reviewing the Visitor Roster Logs for Objective No. 1(a), auditors noted non-findings that can be viewed in Table No. 3 in the Addendum.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Evidence and Property Management Division identify funding to equip all property facilities with functioning surveillance cameras and panic alarms as required, and ensure that all EPMD employees are trained and properly familiarized with their use. [See Objective No. 1(b)].

### **ACTIONS TAKEN/MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Evidence and Property Management Division is in general agreement with the findings and submitted a 15.2 response, which is attached as an addendum to this report.

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<sup>8</sup> Due to the large number of transactions, auditors selected three months from the six-month audit period. A randomized sample of 20 transactions per month were selected.

**EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DIVISION AUDIT  
ADDENDUM**

**Table No. 2 – Objective No. 1(a) Visitor Roster Findings**

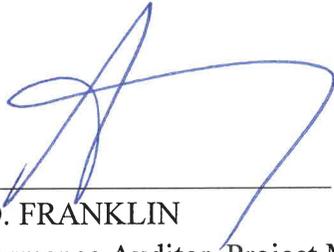
<b>Property Room Location</b>	<b>Finding Description</b>
Central Property Section	The visitor did not sign out on 10/01/23.
Evidence Control Section	Visitors did not sign out on 10/05/23; 12/28/23; 02/28/24; 03/17/24; and 03/27/24.
Warehouse Unit	The visitor did not sign out on 02/20/24.
Hollenbeck Area	Visitors did not sign out on 10/06/23; 11/03/23; 12/01/23; and 03/01/24.
Newton Area	The visitor did not sign out on 01/16/24.

**Table No. 3 – Objective No. 1(a) Visitor Roster Other Related Matters**

<b>Property Room Location</b>	<b>Visitor Roster Matters</b>
Valley Property Section	There was no reviewer number documented on 12/28/23.
	No ID numbers documented for 94 visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.
Evidence Control Section	No ID numbers documented for two visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.
Forensic Science Division	An old version of the Visitor Roster was used. The roster was updated in April 2019.
Warehouse Unit	No ID number was documented for one visitor on 02/08/24.
Rampart Area	No ID numbers documented for 20 visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.
Hollenbeck Area	No ID numbers documented for 13 visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.
Northeast Area	No ID numbers documented for four visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.
Newton Area	No ID numbers documented for 13 visitors during the period of 09/01/23 - 03/31/24.

## APPENDIX I

**Audit Division Contact:** Police Performance Auditor Adama D Franklin, (213) 486-8374 or N5815@LAPD.Online



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ADAMA D. FRANKLIN  
Police Performance Auditor, Project Manager  
Audit Division



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WENDY GAMBLE  
Officer-In-Charge, Section-A  
Audit Division



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SHARON SARGENT  
Commanding Officer  
Audit Division

## INTRADPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

August 13, 2024  
18.2.3

**TO:** Commanding Officer, Audit Division

**FROM:** Commanding Officer, Evidence and Property Management Division

**SUBJECT:** EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DIVISION AUDIT

We are in receipt of the Evidence and Property Management Division (EPMD) Audit for 2024 conducted by Audit Division. The purpose of this Intradepartmental Correspondence is to address the findings noted in the audit. The audit objectives/sub-objectives assessed compliance with Department policies and procedures as they relate to the evaluation, review, and oversight of EPMD.

EPMD is in general agreement with the audit findings and has reviewed each objective that did not meet the 100 percent standard. The Commanding Officer (CO), EPMD notes that in the Evaluation of Chain of Custody, Records for Property and Evidence Match Storage Location (System to Shelf) and (Shelf to System) were 100 percent. The Narcotics Check out Procedures Followed finding was also at 100%, and the Visitor Logs and Authorized Access/Granted Property were at 99%. These findings demonstrate the quality of work and dedication by the employees of this division and the mission of EPMD of maintaining physical chain of custody, accountability, and detailed documentation for booked evidence and property from the time of booking until adjudication of the case when articles are released or disposed.

After reviewing the document, the following responses have been prepared to address the findings.

### **Objective No. 1(a) – Visitor Roster Logs – Visitors Signed In and Out Properly**

#### **Audit Division Findings:**

1568 of 1580 entries that were reviewed met the standard for this objective (99%). Of the 12 entries that did not, 11 were due to visitors not signing out when leaving the facility and 1 of 12 was due to an EPMD employee signing in on the visitor's log. It should be noted that this is a large improvement from the prior audit, which demonstrated a 96% rate of meeting standard.

#### **Evidence and Property Management Division's Response:**

- Property Officers have been directed to accompany visitors throughout the entire visit, ensuring they sign in correctly and sign out when leaving. Supervising Property Officers have been directed to ensure all entries are complete when reviewing the Visitor Roster Logs.

### **Objective No. 1(b) – Video Surveillance/Panic Alarms Functioning**

#### **Audit Division Findings:**

11 (46%) of 24 Property Rooms met the standards. 13 Property Rooms did not meet the standard for this objective due to a non-functional panic alarm or lack of video surveillance on the Property Room.

EPMD employees interact daily with persons who have either been arrested or who have lost property. A panic alarm is a basic safety measure for the Department's Property Officers to communicate that assistance is needed to surrounding personnel, so that they may take the necessary action. A Property Officer is at a potential risk when the panic alarm does not work because the officer would not be able to make notification for someone to respond to his or her workstation.

#### **Evidence and Property Management Division's Response:**

- The Department has Property Rooms at 19 Geographic Area Stations and there are service counters at the Metro Detention Center for Central Area and Van Nuys Area Stations.
- All 19 Property Rooms at the Geographic Areas have panic alarms installed. However, 13 of the Property Rooms have panic alarms that are not active.

### **Objective No. 1(c) – Authorized Access**

#### **Audit Division Findings:**

164 (99%) of 165 instances met the standards of this objective. 1 instance that occurred at Hollywood Area did not meet the standard.

#### **Evidence and Property Management Division's Response:**

- The access was made by a Property Officer covering the Hollywood Area Property Room who is not usually assigned to that location. As a result, the security system that controls access to the room did not allow the Property Officer access, necessitating use of the emergency key at the station.

### **Objective No. 3 – Sexual Assault Evidence Number Included in Report**

#### **Audit Division Findings:**

Out of 179 Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEK) reviewed 169 (94%) met the standard for this objective. The 10 that did not are due to them not containing a unique identifying SAEK number.

#### **Evidence and Property Management Division's Response:**

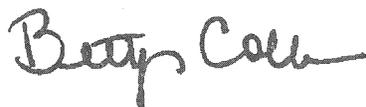
The Acting Principal Property Officer (APPO) at the Evidence Control Section (ECS) has been directed to have Property Officers complete corrections to the deficient reports and

corresponding evidence. The APPO also has been directed to ensure Property Officers assigned to ECS are verifying that reports and the SAEK's have a corresponding SAEK number

The following actions will be implemented to support the recommendations within the audit:

1. The Commanding Officer, EPMD, will coordinate with the Commanding Officer, Facilities Management Division, and the Commanding Officer, Information Technology Division to assess and test the panic alarms in the Property Rooms city-wide.
2. The Commanding Officer, EPMD will consult with the Commanding Officer, Facilities Management Division, to identify and request funding and installation in the Property Rooms that are deficient in video surveillance.

If you have any additional questions, please have a member of your staff contact Senior Management Analyst II John Galitzen, Assistant CO, EPMD at 213-356-3710.



BETTY COLLINS, Police Administrator  
Commanding Officer  
Evidence and Property Management Division