



Security, Training, Investigation, and Risk Mitigation & Management

Date: 29 August 2023

Chief [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Police Department
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Chief [REDACTED],

I am writing to summarize my notes and observations from the recent evidence and property (E&P) evaluation that John Bibeau and I conducted on 23 August 2023.

We thoroughly evaluated all aspects of your evidence and property section.

After you have had a chance to review our findings, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss them with you in person. We have identified a solution that can significantly reduce the risk of future evidence accountability issues, mitigating your second-largest liability.

For transparency, I must mention that STIRM Group is the exclusive distributor of the PADtrax Evidence Management System (PEMS). This multi-patented software program, which uses RFID technology, provides real-time tracking of chain of custody evidence and property. PEMS is the only evidence management system that can ensure 100% accountability of your chain of custody evidence in real-time. PADtrax is a sole-sourced, multi-patented product with numerous advantages over its competitors, which I cannot list in this letter due to space constraints.

Here's a teaser. The PEMS can notify you 24/7/365 if it detects an unauthorized movement of a PADtrax-labeled evidence piece, which is impossible using an outdated software program based on barcode technology.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding our evaluation.

Stay Safe,

Lawrence P. Smith CAMS, CFE, CPP, LPI
President / Founder

INTRODUCTION

The STIRM Group was retained to comprehensively evaluate the [REDACTED] Police Department's ([REDACTED]) Evidence & Property Sections (E&P) processing and storage areas. The evaluation focused on three main components.

- Physical security of the evidence.
- Policy & procedures that pertain to evidence & property.
- Inventory evaluation is based on the selection of randomly selected evidence pieces.

This evaluation was conducted by honorably retired law enforcement officials who are Certified Fraud Examiners (CFE), Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists (CAMS), and an international board-Certified Protection Professional (CPP). Collectively, evaluators have over 65 years of law enforcement experience.

*Note: The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) are considered the gold standard of police accreditation in Massachusetts.

Most accreditation agencies focus on a single topic and become subject matter experts in their fields, such as the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), which strictly focuses on fraud-related matters. The American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS) focuses on all things related to physical security.

****Organizations like CALEA and MPAC use a comprehensive approach and are slower to adopt updated best standards and practices than singularly focused organizations. However, the recommendations provided in this report exceed all evidence-related standards that CALEA and MPAC require. We do this by implementing industry-specific best standards and practices that subject matter experts have established.***

STIRM Group is confident in our abilities; we guarantee our evidence & property services and stand behind them by offering the only MONEY BACK GUARANTEE IN THE INDUSTRY. Suppose your organization has a STIRM Group E&P Evaluation, and you implement our recommendations. In that case, we guarantee your organization will pass both the CALEA and MPAC evidence-related portion of either organization's accreditation assessment.

PD EVIDENCE & PROPERTY EVALUATORS

The following professionals performed the P.D. Evidence Evaluation.

- Lawrence P. Smith Retired MSP Sergeant
- John Bibeau Retired MSP Lieutenant

Police Department members who participated in the evaluation

- Detective Evidence Custodian (EC)
- Det. Lt. Evidence Supervisor (ES)

DISCLOSURE

STIRM Group is the exclusive distributor of the PADtrax Evidence Management System (PEMS). We have a financial interest in every PEMS sold in our geographic territory, which consists of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. We publicly disclose this fact, as we recommended the system as part of the solution, which will be a recommended solution and referenced in the capital improvement section.

- This disclosure is relevant to this evaluation as the evaluators found fault with the current CRM that deploys. The evaluators have documented proof of our concerns with the current system. These are not minor issues; they will need to be addressed.

METHODOLOGY

STIRM Evaluation Team (SET) will comprehensively evaluate the entire Evidence & Property Storage section, thoroughly assessing the physical security measures for the structures where evidence is submitted, processed, and stored. This evaluation includes a meticulous examination of all doors, windows, alarm systems, surveillance cameras, and the storage of video footage.

In addition, the SET will thoroughly review existing policies, procedures, rules, regulations, side letters, memorandums of understanding, and any other pertinent documents the department provides. This extensive review will focus on documents related to evidence management and handling.

A spot inventory check was carried out as part of the evaluation process. During this phase, the evaluators selected random pieces from each evidence category. Each piece underwent a detailed assessment, including physical verification of its location, examination of packaging for any signs of tampering, and confirmation of its contents against the electronic records maintained by the Police Department ().

PHYSICAL SECURITY

The evaluation encompasses an in-depth assessment of the CRM platform utilized for tracking and managing every piece of evidence and property (E&P) under the custody of the Police Department (). Furthermore, all aspects of the physical security system were evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

This comprehensive examination encompasses various security components, including doors, windows, hinge locations, alarm systems, motion detectors, surveillance cameras, video storage mechanisms, and the accuracy of record-keeping practices.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

SET will review existing policies and procedures, rules and regulations, side letters, memorandums of understanding, and any other document the department provides the SET to review as it pertains to evidence. The existing policies & procedures (P&P) will be evaluated, and recommendations for additional guidelines and updates will be made.

INVENTORY EVALUATION

The evaluators will conduct a spot inventory of randomly selected items from all categories of evidence chosen by the evaluators. The results will be reported in the report's body and the conclusion. **The evaluators randomly selected 80 pieces of evidence, and the Evidence Custodians (EC) located 72 out of the 80 pieces; the eight missing pieces (10%) were determined to be misplaced / unable to locate.** Two (2.5%) of the items were in the wrong location but found; four (5%) of the items have no documentation to prove that the items were disposed of or returned. A complete list of each noted deficiency is documented and listed in the **Spot Inventory Results on pages 31 & 32**

EVIDENCE & PROPERTY ROOMS

The current E&P storage facility is in the police department's main building at [REDACTED]. The building is a stand-alone facility with a brick façade built in 2000. All evidence storage rooms were measured, and an overhead view of each room was attached. The room dimensions are not to exact scale; measurements are off no more than six (6) inches. The scale is not a concern; the drawings are being used to show existing doors, windows, alarms, cameras, panic alarms, and anything else the evaluators felt necessary to include.

The rooms were evaluated sequentially, coinciding with the intake process of evidence.

1. Room one (1) is the evidence submission and processing room and the ECs office.
2. Room two (2) is the general evidence storage room, located off the evidence submission and processing room and accessed from a single interior door in room one (1).
3. Room three (3) is the gun, drug, and high-value evidence room, accessed from the interior of the general evidence storage area, AKA room two (2).
4. Room four (4) is the overflow gun storage room in the basement.
5. Room five (5) is the general property room (not evidence) in the basement, off the same hallway where room four (4) is. It contains lost and found items, such as credit & cash cards, wallets, sunglasses, phones, a slot machine, and the DEA Prescription Drug Give Back program drugs, that are slated to be destroyed in October.
6. Area six (6) is the outdoor caged-in area that houses the [REDACTED] generator and the lost and found bikes.
7. Safety Officer [REDACTED] Office is adjacent to room two (2) ; the relevancy of this room will be made clear in the recommendation section of the report.

INITIAL WALK THROUGH & ASSESSMENT

Upon commencing the evaluation, the evaluators conducted an initial walkthrough and assessment. Before entering the room referred to as room one (1) or the Evidence Submission & Evidence Custodian (EC) Office, specific observations were made. Notably, while functional, the lock on the door needs to meet the industry's best practices and standards. Access to the room can be achieved through a single-factor authentication key fob or a master key. Several concerns were raised in this regard:

- **Aging Lock and Key Control:** The existing twenty-year-old locks needed key accountability from the initial issuance of keys. Because there were no policies or controls in place, it is now impossible to determine how many keys exist and who has them. The absence of key controls has previously led to significant evidence-related problems for a local department, ultimately leading to the conviction and imprisonment of a local police officer.
- **Lack of Records and Master Key Log:** The absence of key control records poses challenges in determining the number of master keys issued for the door. Furthermore, the master keys lack the "Do Not Copy" imprint. A cost-effective and fast solution is to change the tumblers of each lock, create a master key log, and re-issue the keys to the appropriate personnel.
- **Access of Retired Personnel:** A noteworthy observation was the active status of the key fob belonging to retired [REDACTED] Detective [REDACTED]. This key fob granted him access even though he retired in May, and the evaluation occurred on August 23, 2023.

The absence of Narcan or any safety equipment to address accidental exposure to narcotics is indeed a critical concern, particularly in an environment where law enforcement personnel regularly handle potentially lethal substances. Narcan, as an opioid blocker, is a life-saving tool that can rapidly reverse the effects of a narcotic overdose and prevent fatalities. Importantly, it has no negative side effects if administered unnecessarily.

Given narcotics' potency and potentially lethal, the availability of Narcan and proper safety equipment should be a standard practice in any law enforcement agency's evidence storage facility. The safety and well-being of the evidence custodian/s or other personnel accidentally exposed to these substances should always be a top priority.

Incorporating Narcan and related safety equipment into the department's protocols is a proactive step in preventing accidental overdoses and underscores the department's commitment to the welfare of its staff and the community it serves. It's a critical addition to the safety measures to protect individuals who handle narcotics and evidence containing them.

Another significant concern relates to the need for visitor logs and visitor badges. Industry best practices dictate that only Evidence Custodians should have access to evidence rooms and evidence. Everyone entering these areas, including the Chief, should sign in and out while wearing individually numbered visitor badges. These badges are vital for maintaining accountability and traceability, especially in situations requiring evidence-related investigations.

Evidence storage has reached full capacity, primarily due to a surplus of evidence awaiting destruction, combined with the fact that one of the five shelving units is $\frac{3}{4}$ full of old PD records. Evidence should be stored with evidence; no outside property should be stored in an evidence storage facility.

The overcrowding of evidence is a widespread concern across the state, and this challenge has been exacerbated by the restrictions on the number of pieces allowed for destruction due to the fallout from the DOOKHAN and FARAK drug lab scandals. Within the ██████████ Police Department (██████), around 1,500 pieces could be expeditiously destroyed if the process were streamlined. The imperative to address this issue is underscored by the understanding that evidence no longer required should be promptly destroyed to prevent potential complications such as the loss of old evidence and misplacement of paperwork.

Regrettably, evidence destruction necessitates collaboration among various stakeholders, including the department, district attorney, and the court. I say regrettably because two agencies do not prioritize their role in evidence destruction, causing delays and back-ups. They do not make it a priority of their agencies because if it goes missing, they are not the agency getting crucified in the press. This is apparent in the delays police departments across the Commonwealth experience when attempting to clear items from their E&P inventory. The complicated process, slow responses, and limited number of items allowed to be destroyed during a single destruction and the duration it takes to schedule a second destruction will result in a scandal. It is time for all three entities to prioritize this crucial process.

Regarding the security measures, camera coverage of the EC Office / Evidence Submission entrance door offers a live feed monitored in real-time at the dispatch center. However, security cameras that exclusively provide live feeds have limited utility as they need more capability to provide essential evidentiary value. The absence of recorded security cameras within secured evidence storage areas is a significant shortcoming, constituting a critical deficiency that exposes the department to substantial liability.

A noticeable gap in the security setup is the absence of alarms, panic alarms, security alarms, motion detectors, or glass break sensors in any of the evidence storage or processing areas. This oversight in security protocols raises concerns about maintaining the integrity of the evidence and ensuring the safety of the premises. Integrating the HVAC system with the building's central system poses concerns about the efficacy of emergency evacuations in the event of accidental spills or other emergencies. Using a conventional sprinkler system to combat fires, while serviceable, poses the risk of causing irreversible damage to evidence due to water exposure. Although functional, exploring more advanced fire suppression solutions may offer enhanced protection while minimizing potential damage.

A professionally installed chain-link fence wall subdivides room five into two distinct sections. One section is designated for secure general property storage. In contrast, the other is secured by a locked door, granting access to multiple individuals, including service professionals, as the room contains communication wiring. A critical observation is the absence of a lock on the chain-link gate leading to the secure caged section. This omission raises concerns, mainly as two full, unsecured boxes containing surrendered prescriptions earmarked for destruction under the DEA Prescription Give Back Program are outside the caged area. The absence of video coverage within the room or on that building level further compounds the security issue. Establishing secure storage protocols for these surrendered prescriptions is imperative to prevent misuse. These drug give-back programs have ruined many law enforcement officers' careers. Formulating a comprehensive policy to systematically process and secure these prescriptions until the DEA collection date is essential.

PHYSICAL SECURITY RESULTS

The physical security section will address two types of concerns: general concerns that pertain to cameras, doors, locks, and alarms, among other items. The second type of concern will address room-specific issues that were identified.

ACCESS CONTROLS

Access controls are indeed a pivotal component of a well-structured security system. An adequately implemented access control system should seamlessly synchronize with locks, cameras, door access mechanisms, and alarms and create a permanent audit log. This synchronization ensures that all security elements work together, providing a comprehensive and cohesive security environment.

From an evidentiary chain of custody standpoint, demonstrating that the evidence remains unaltered from the point of seizure while in police custody is crucial. Protecting this integrity demands a clear and defensible explanation of the measures employed, particularly if such actions are questioned. The practices should align with subject matter experts established best practices and standards.

Regrettably, the current configuration at [REDACTED] falls short in this regard. The number of individuals who possess access to the Evidence Custodian (EC) office remains to be determined, as the room remains unmonitored and unrecorded. This inadequacy creates a vulnerability in maintaining the security of the chain of custody. The reliance on a single key or key fob for room access further exacerbates the issue.

To establish a more secure and robust access control system, the following measures are recommended:

1. **Access Control System Integration:** Ensure the access control system is intricately integrated with other security components such as locks, cameras, and alarms. This integration enables a harmonized security network that reinforces each aspect's effectiveness.
2. **Time Synchronization:** Time synchronization among various security elements is pivotal for maintaining consistency and accuracy in the audit trail. This synchronization provides a reliable chronology of events for review if required.
3. **Restricted Access:** Employ a restricted access protocol that limits entry to authorized personnel. This entails granting access based on individual roles and responsibilities minimizing the number of individuals with entry privileges.
4. **Unique User Identifiers:** Implement unique user identifiers for accessing the EC office. This can involve personalized access codes, biometric authentication, or secure keycards. Such identifiers enhance accountability and enable the tracking of specific individuals' actions.

5. **Two-Person Access Requirement:** Introduce a two-person access requirement for specific activities, especially those involving sensitive processes such as the accounting of cash evidence. This practice adds an additional layer of oversight and ensures that critical actions have a corroborating witness.
6. **Audit Logs:** Maintain comprehensive and tamper-proof audit logs that record all access events, including the date, time, individual involved, and the purpose of access. These logs provide a transparent record for auditing and investigation purposes.
7. **Regular Review:** Regularly review access logs to identify any unusual or unauthorized activity. Promptly address any discrepancies or anomalies that arise.

By embracing these access control measures, [REDACTED] can significantly bolster the security of its evidence custody procedures, adhere to industry standards, and uphold the integrity of the chain of custody.

CAMERAS

The evidence storage areas lack any form of live monitoring, and the doors facilitating entry and exit remain unrecorded by security cameras. Only a single door has a live feed camera, which displays real-time footage exclusively within the dispatcher center. This glaring oversight presents a critical concern that warrants immediate attention and resolution.

DOORS

All entry points are furnished with commercial-grade metal doors set within sturdy metal frames, securely affixed to either cement block walls or standard drywall constructions. Each door is equipped with a Yale commercial-grade deadbolt lock, ensuring security. Certain doors are integrated with a key fob entry system, while others require a conventional key. It is important to note that none of these doors incorporate a two-factor authentication requirement or biometric features, nor do they provide the ability to identify individuals accessing the premises. The single exception is a door equipped with a camera that provides a real-time live feed, viewable in dispatch, that is unrecorded.

Notably, in room four (4), the overflow gun storage room diverges from the standard deadbolt locks used on the other evidence storage doors. Although outwardly resembling the others, this lock has a switch on the strike plate located under the latch bolt that disengages the self-locking deadbolt, leaving the door unlocked.

Room four (4) was originally designed to be an office and received a lock appropriate for its intended use. In contrast, the remaining evidence doors utilize fixed deadbolts that require a key to disengage the lock, and upon removal of the key, the deadbolt is engaged.

This arrangement introduces a potential vulnerability; the EC or a visitor can unintentionally or intentionally disengage the lock, leaving the contents vulnerable. Even if an interior camera were in place, capturing footage of the room's interior and entrance, the subtle act of disengaging the switch might go unnoticed on a security feed. By simply closing the door with a hand placed over the strike plate and sliding the button downward, the lock can be disengaged without leaving evidence of being left unlocked.

This intricate setup underscores the importance of enhancing security measures for critical access points and evaluating potential vulnerabilities to ensure the integrity of evidence storage and custodianship.

MOTION DETECTORS

The E&P rooms are equipped solely with motion detectors that trigger motion-activated lighting. However, a crucial element is conspicuously missing from this setup: the integration of motion detector sensors into an alarm monitoring system. Such a system would serve the essential purpose of activating an alarm and triggering notifications when the motion sensor is engaged. Furthermore, this system can emit an audible alarm within the building, effectively alerting both the shift supervisor and the dispatcher to the occurrence of an alarm activation.

In the interest of operational efficiency, it is advisable to position the control panel responsible for arming and disarming the alarms outside rooms one (1), four (4), and five (5). Yet, due to the interconnected layout of the facility, a more streamlined approach could be applied to rooms two (2) and three (3). These rooms could be integrated into room one's (1) control panel, given that the sole method of accessing rooms two (2) and three (3) requires an individual to pass through room one (1).

To ensure a comprehensive security solution, the alarm system should remain actively engaged and vigilant whenever an Evidence Custodian (EC) is not present within the respective room. This proactive measure will substantially enhance the protection of sensitive areas, mitigate unauthorized access, and solidify the overall security framework.

GLASS BREAK SENSORS

Glass break sensors serve a purpose primarily within rooms one and two, as these are the only areas within the facility equipped with exterior windows. These windows, however, are fortified with robust bars and firmly locked using heavy-duty mechanisms. The strategic spacing of these bars is designed to prevent any potential unauthorized access, even by small children.

To optimize the security system's efficiency, it is advisable to consolidate the management of these glass break sensors. This can be achieved by integrating them into the room one (1) alarm activation panel. By centralizing the monitoring and control of these sensors, you create a streamlined approach to enhancing security coverage. This step ensures that any potential breach attempts through the windows are promptly detected and addressed through a unified alarm activation system.

Exterior windows should not be incorporated into an evidence storage facility. Breaking the window and throwing a flammable device into the evidence room could potentially destroy all the evidence on hand.

PANIC ALARMS

Introducing panic alarms represents a recent enhancement to E&P protocols. This measure has been prompted by the escalating potency of designer drugs that have come into the possession of law enforcement agencies. It is observed that on multiple occasions each year, the safety of an Evidence Custodian (EC) is compromised due to accidental exposure. This exposure can occur through direct interaction with narcotics held in their custody or by handling items submitted as evidence. The unpredictable nature of these situations underscores the imperative to fortify safety measures and ensure the well-being of ECs in their critical role of handling sensitive materials.

FLOORS, WALLS, & CEILINGS

The building's structural components consist of cement floors throughout all levels. The walls present a combination of cement block and drywall construction. The exterior walls are primarily made of cement block, while the interior walls incorporate both materials. Ceilings vary between cement and drop ceilings. It is important to note that the walls were extended to the top of the evidence room, ensuring a more secure enclosure. However, a particular location, indicated on the room three (3) diagram, remains open and large enough for an individual of average build to pass through.

Room five (5) serves as the storage space for general property. This room features a professionally installed chain-link fence, dividing the area into two distinct sections. Notably, the chain-link does not extend to the ceiling, potentially allowing individuals to climb over it. It is essential to highlight that while the caged area within this room is intended to store general evidence securely, the chain-link gate lacks a locking mechanism.

In the unsecured section of room five (5), communication wires are routed into the building before proceeding to their respective destinations. Considering this setup, it is reasonable to anticipate that unvetted contractors might need access to this room to address any communication-related issues that may arise. This dynamic introduces an additional aspect to the security considerations within this space. The communication space currently has two unsecured DEA Prescription Take Back Program boxes on the floor. Without a master inventory list for each box's content, there is no way to determine if anything inappropriate occurred. The mishandling of this program has cost many an officer their career. A local department is currently dealing with that situation, as the officer is accused of stealing and selling the take-back drugs. A chief in Michigan recently became a victim as well; it seems a week does not go by that the evaluators do not hear or read about another law enforcement officer's career ruined because of the mishandling of the DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Program.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

There are no decontamination stations in any of the evidence storage areas.

The potency of certain evidence materials handled by ECs can kill everyone in the building, especially in an older building with a single-zone HVAC system. To illustrate, a mere ounce of fentanyl can be fatal for up to fourteen (14) individuals. Given the life-threatening nature of these substances, it is strongly advisable to institute a comprehensive policy and provide training to your staff regarding the proper procedures for managing such situations. One crucial measure involves establishing an emergency response protocol with the necessary equipment. This equipment should be stored in a secured emergency response box outside the main evidence room entrance. This proactive approach ensures that the essential tools are readily available to effectively manage the situation if an EC or visitor requires assistance.

The emergency response box should contain essential items, including at least two full-face masks with magenta filters, rubber gloves, three doses of Narcan per EC, and a clear decontamination protocol. I assure you that encountering a situation where an individual collapses within an evidence room can be deeply unsettling. I experienced

such an incident, although it was unrelated to an accidental exposure. Fortunately, a minor complication from an over-the-counter allergy medication caused my associate to pass out and collapse. It just happened to occur as we were exiting the drug locker section of the evidence facility. By preparing for emergencies with the right tools and training, you are taking proactive steps to safeguard the well-being of your staff and visitors in potentially hazardous environments.

Establishing clear guidelines for recovering a fallen evidence custodian in the event of incapacitation is essential to maintaining the integrity of the evidentiary chain of custody. Here's a proposed set of procedures to address this critical scenario:

Recovery Protocol for Incapacitated Evidence Custodian While Preserving the Evidentiary Chain of Custody

1. Immediate Response Preparation:

- Train all staff on the protocol, emphasizing the urgency and importance.
- Ensure all employees know the location and contents of the emergency response box.
- Designate personnel to carry out the recovery process promptly and efficiently.

2. Notification and Activation:

- Establish a clear communication plan for alerting appropriate personnel and authorities about the incident.
- Activate the recovery process immediately upon learning of the incapacitated custodian.
- Under no circumstances does anyone enter the room where the EC or visitor is located until you have, at a minimum, masked up and gloved up and secured the Narcan to administer if that is determined to be the cause for the incapacitation.

3. Recovery Procedure:

- Approach with Caution: - Prioritize the safety of recovery personnel. Ensure they wear appropriate protective gear, such as full-face masks and gloves. - If

available, use the two-person rule, where two individuals work together to ensure safety and accountability.

- Have responding personnel activate their body cameras for the emergency response.
- Assess the Situation: - Confirm the custodian's condition and administer any necessary medical assistance. - Assess the surroundings to determine potential risks, such as hazardous materials.
- Recover Evidence Custodian: - Gently move the custodian to a safe location, away from potential threats. - Avoid contamination of evidence or the surrounding area. Maintain evidence integrity.
- Secure Evidence and Documentation: - Carefully identify and secure any evidence the custodian was handling or responsible for. - Ensure any documentation related to evidence handling is collected and secured.
- Document the Incident: - Document the time, location, individuals present, and actions taken during the recovery process. - If possible, capture photos or videos of the scene to preserve a record of the incident.

4. Chain of Custody Preservation:

- Isolate the evidence recovered from the incapacitated custodian.
- Ensure that evidence is sealed correctly and documented according to established procedures.

5. Notify Appropriate Authorities:

- Inform the immediate supervisor and appropriate management personnel of the incident.
- Coordinate with legal and administrative departments if required.

6. Follow-up Procedures:

- Conduct a debriefing session to analyze the incident, identify any areas for improvement, and update the recovery protocol as needed.

By establishing these comprehensive guidelines and training your staff accordingly, you are taking proactive measures to address a potentially sensitive and critical situation, ultimately safeguarding the continuity and integrity of the chain of custody even in challenging circumstances.

Failure to establish and implement these essential policies and procedures can expose the [REDACTED] Police Department to significant liability. Rectifying this issue is a straightforward, expeditious, and cost-effective measure that [REDACTED] and the Town should undertake immediately to mitigate potential liabilities.

POLICY & PROCEDURE RESULTS

The [REDACTED] Police Department lacks policies and procedures to provide clear guidelines for handling, packaging, submission, storage, and documentation of various property types, including seized evidence, lost and found items, and property surrendered by citizens.

Furthermore, the department does not possess established policies or procedures to ensure proper accounting for cash that enters its possession. This encompasses all funds, regardless of source, including currency obtained through lost and found, surrendered items, or seizures.

Regarding physical security, the [REDACTED] Police Department also lacks policies or procedures to govern the proper methods for securing evidence, thereby safeguarding the integrity of the department's storage and handling practices.

Moreover, no policies and procedures guide the recovery of an evidence officer in case of incapacitation or unforeseen circumstances. These policies should outline how to maintain the evidentiary chain of custody in the event of a situation where an evidence custodian is unable to continue their duties.

To address these shortcomings and enhance the department's operational efficiency, it is strongly recommended that the [REDACTED] Police Department promptly initiate the implementation of the following policies and procedures:

1. **Evidence Handling and Storage Policies:** Establish comprehensive guidelines for handling, packaging, submission, storage, and documentation of all property types, including seized evidence, lost and found items, and surrendered property.

2. **Cash Handling and Accounting Procedures:** Develop policies and procedures to ensure accurate and transparent accounting of all funds, encompassing various sources such as lost and found, surrendered, or seized currency.
3. **Physical Security Protocols:** Formulate policies and procedures to ensure the physical security of evidence storage areas, minimizing the risk of tampering, theft, or unauthorized access.
4. **Evidence Custodian Recovery & Chain of Custody Preservation:** [REDACTED] needs to establish these policies as soon as possible. We felt so strongly about this that we have provided you with an outline of what that policy should look like and the order in which the steps should be completed. You need to fill in agency-specific materials.

JUSTIFICATION FOR FULL-TIME EVIDENCE CUSTODIAN POSITION

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the loss or misplacement of evidence, it is a requirement to promptly notify the appropriate District Attorney's Office, informing them that you have lost evidence.

The District Attorney's Office must fulfill obligations upon being informed of an evidence issue under *BRADY v Maryland* 373 U.S. 83 (1963).

The role of an evidence custodian encompasses a range of crucial responsibilities, including the intake, verification, documentation, and secure storage of criminal evidence. They are also tasked with preparing evidence for court proceedings, providing it to case officers as needed, and overseeing the transportation of evidence to and from certification laboratories. In addition, evidence custodians must periodically review evidence records to determine if items can be returned to their rightful owners or if proper disposal is necessary.

The Evidence and Property (E&P) management practices within [REDACTED] require significant improvement to align with industry best practices and standards.

Presently, the E&P storage facility is operating at full capacity, resulting in the need for overflow rooms to accommodate specific items such as firearms and general property. An area of concern is the outdated evidence management system that appears to have a glitch in its software. The inability to know how many pieces are at the drug lab, at court, how many guns are in the department's possession, or how much cash is currently in the high-value safe is concerning. The lack of proper tracking mechanisms dampens the EC's ability to accurately account for all the evidence in their possession.

Furthermore, challenges arise in accurately quantifying the total number of evidence pieces due in part to a potential software deficiency in [REDACTED]'s current Evidence Management System (EMS). Additionally, the absence of comprehensive written policies and procedures governing the proper functioning of the E&P section further compounds the issues.

The scope of the challenges, spanning storage limitations, evidence volume, backlog, and the extensive work required to align [REDACTED]'s E&P practices with accreditation standards, underscores the critical need for a permanent, full-time evidence custodian.

Detective [REDACTED], when approached with the proposition of assuming the role of a full-time Evidence Custodian, strongly preferred to continue his responsibilities for firearms licensing and court prosecution. The surge in new firearm license applications and renewals, since Covid, combined with court prosecution commitments, consumes a significant portion of Detective [REDACTED]'s time during each shift. To manage these tasks, he consistently works overtime, leaving limited time to address the identified deficiencies that require attention.

This is no discredit to Det. [REDACTED], who's juggling three important job assignments. Leaving Det. [REDACTED], with his current responsibilities, is not a formula for success. Det. [REDACTED] does not have the time available to dedicate the time needed to the EC position to rectify all the issues identified in this evaluation promptly.

Our professional recommendation is that [REDACTED] posts the EC job and seeks out the most qualified candidate who wants to do the job rather than by seniority. We strongly recommend not forcing an officer into the position, as that has been a recipe for disaster. We recommend that you seek a detail-oriented individual who thrives in an isolated environment, is self-motivated, takes pride in their accomplishments, likes to take on a challenge, and enjoys seeing the benefits of their labor. Most importantly, they must want to do the job for the right reasons, not the weekend schedule.

The E & P section has evidence dating back to the early 1990s, some of which could be returned or disposed of to free up valuable storage space. For instance, there are two hockey equipment bags filled with marijuana from a 2006 case, occupying approximately 12 square feet of E&P storage. With the average construction cost for a police department situated within the Rt. 495 beltway at roughly \$800 per square foot, these hockey bags have effectively tied up \$9,600 worth of storage space for the past 17 years.

To alleviate overcrowding and forestall the potential loss or misplacement of unnecessary evidence, the [REDACTED] must implement a routine and scheduled evidence destruction process. This practice must take precedence within the department's operational procedures.

A PROPOSED EVIDENCE STORAGE AREA SOLUTION

The current configuration of the E&P area can be significantly enhanced and aligned with accreditation standards through the following proposal. This comprehensive solution aims to bolster efficiency security and address the deficiencies concerning the evidentiary chain of custody. Moreover, this proposal seeks to consolidate all evidence within a centralized E&P storage location.

The proposed plan involves repurposing Safety Officer [REDACTED] office, which is conveniently adjacent to room two (2). By doing so, room four (4) becomes available for repurposing, facilitating the transition of all firearms into the newly established comprehensive E&P storage area.

To execute this plan, the hall door granting entry to Safety Officer [REDACTED] office would be sealed. Simultaneously, a doorway would be created between room two (2) and the former Safety Officer's office, transforming it into the new high-value, narcotic, and firearm storage area. The existing gun storage areas in rooms two (2) and four (4) would be relocated to this newly designated storage room. Similarly, drugs and high-value items in room three (3) would be relocated to the new evidence storage area.

A two-way locker system would be implemented in room three (3) with access from the hallway. Various models of this locker system are available, ranging from basic to advanced options. We recommend investing in the highest-quality system that aligns with the available budget. While we do not have affiliations with locker vendors, our recommendation is based on industry best practices. We are prepared to review any chosen locker system before purchasing to ensure it meets your needs.

Incorporating a biometric component into the locker system maximizes efficiency. Pre-loading the lockers with evidence scheduled for court can be done, and officers can retrieve their assigned evidence between 0630 and 0830 on their appointed court date. With biometric identification technology and a two-factor authentication process deployed, it ensures secure access. Suppose evidence is not returned by 1830 hours on the same day. In that case, the system generates notifications that can be sent to the

EC, the EC supervisor, the Deputy Chief, and the Chief, indicating the expected evidence has not been returned.

These lockers offer the advantage of preloading evidence, alleviating concerns when an EC is absent, as officers can be informed of which locker holds their evidence for their court date. This system facilitates an audit trail, with dedicated security cameras providing independent verification. It also empowers ECs to place improperly submitted evidence into a locker for re-packaging by the submitting officer. The EC can specify the days and hours when evidence will be available for repackaging, conveniently aligned with the officer's shift. This eliminates the need to address errors during off-hours.

Moreover, submitting officers gain the ability to properly secure unsealed evidence bags at the point of submission, allowing ECs to verify bag contents before sealing them. This step introduces an additional layer of checks and balances, preventing miscounts due to overcrowding and ensuring accurate bag content assessment.

This proposal embodies a comprehensive solution that addresses the shortcomings in the current E&P practices while enhancing security, streamlining processes, and aligning with industry best practices and accreditation standards.

POLICE DEPARTMENT E&P EVALUATION RESULTS

GREEN

- The location where [REDACTED] evidence is secured is above average. The walls are either cinderblock or standard drywall construction, and the walls go from floor to ceiling for the walls that separate the E&P from common areas. With one exception a 3-foot-wide opening for the hallway wall separating room three.
- Cement floors
- The building was constructed with fire-rated doors. Rooms one, two, and five are configured to be self-closing and are made of sturdy metal. Additionally, they are encased within metal frames, enhancing their structural integrity. Notably, the doors facilitating entry and exit from public spaces into the interior of an E&P storage room are strategically equipped with hinges on the appropriate side of the door. This configuration contributes to the secure containment of items situated behind these doors.

- The biological evidence refrigerator was designed to be a biological refrigerator. What is typically used as a biological refrigerator is commonly found in a college dorm room. The [REDACTED] biological refrigerator includes an external temperature gauge displaying the internal temperature. An internal temperature was taken, and it matched the exterior temperature gauge.

YELLOW

- The inadequate staffing of the evidence custodian position is a primary cause for the current status of the [REDACTED] evidence room. The incumbent Evidence Custodian (EC) manages three responsibilities that demand substantial time and effort. Given the scale of the [REDACTED] and the volume of evidence in their possession, it is evident that a dedicated full-time EC is essential. The prevailing issues about accountability can be traced back to the department's historical challenge in maintaining proper staffing for this role over several decades. Rectifying this staffing deficiency is critical to ensure efficient and secure management of evidentiary assets within the [REDACTED].

RED ATTRIBUTES

- Failure to have Narcan (naloxone) readily available and visible in the E&P areas must be addressed, as exposure to incapacitation can happen in seconds. Narcan is of utmost importance in environments where substances like fentanyl are present. Fentanyl and other potent opioids pose a significant risk due to their potential to cause overdose and respiratory depression. Narcan is a lifesaving medication that can rapidly reverse the effects of opioid overdose, including those caused by fentanyl.

In an environment such as an evidence storage area that houses potentially lethal substances, having Narcan readily accessible is a critical safety measure. This medication can provide immediate intervention in case of accidental exposure or overdose, ensuring the well-being of individuals who may encounter these hazardous substances.

Incorporating Narcan into the safety protocols and emergency response strategies for such environments is vital to safeguard the health and lives of those who work in or interact with these areas. It is a proactive step that reflects a commitment to protecting individuals from the potential risks of exposure to dangerous substances.

- There is no panic alarm if EC becomes disabled due to accidental exposure.

- The state of the Evidence and Property (E&P) storage within the [REDACTED] should be regarded as one of the Town's most pronounced vulnerabilities, potentially presenting a substantial liability. The inability of the [REDACTED] to provide a precise and accurate account of the evidence inventory reflects a significant concern. Equally concerning is the department's failure to furnish an exact count of evidence expected to be in their custody.

A lack of accurate record-keeping and proper management of evidence not only undermines the credibility of law enforcement practices but also poses a potential liability in legal proceedings. The integrity of the evidentiary chain of custody is paramount, and any uncertainties or discrepancies in this process could have far-reaching consequences for the Town.

Addressing these vulnerabilities requires a comprehensive and urgent approach involving the implementation of robust evidence management practices, accurate record-keeping, and adherence to industry best standards. Rectifying these issues will mitigate potential liabilities and uphold the Town's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

- Concerns regarding record-keeping practices have emerged as an area of focus. The transition from the previous evidence management system (EMS) to the current system, the QED EMS system, occurred in 2007. Notably, records preceding this transition are colloquially called the "Dark Side," signifying the pre-QED era. Furthermore, a software glitch has been detected within the current QED system. This glitch intermittently results in the multiplication of evidence entries by a factor of one (1), two (2), or three (3). This erratic behavior has the potential to distort inventory control numbers significantly. The absence of any indication that duplication has occurred in the system further compounds the issue, undermining the integrity of the inventory management process.

Addressing these record-keeping challenges is pivotal for maintaining accurate and reliable records of evidentiary assets within the department. Ensuring the robustness and functionality of the EMS system is crucial for maintaining the credibility and integrity of the evidence management process.

- Reconciliation of financial records, particularly in the asset forfeiture account, is a crucial practice to detect and prevent fraud, ensure accountability, and maintain the integrity of law enforcement operations. The vulnerability that [REDACTED] faces due to the lack of awareness about the last validation of asset forfeiture records is a significant concern.

Asset forfeiture involves the seizure and management of assets connected to criminal activities. Proper documentation and reconciliation of these records are essential for various reasons, including transparency, legal compliance, and preventing potential misuse or fraudulent activities. Accurate records ensure the legitimacy of law enforcement actions and build public trust and confidence in the department.

To mitigate this vulnerability, the [REDACTED] must establish regular, systematic processes for reconciling asset forfeiture records. This involves verifying records' accuracy, confirming the disposition of seized assets, and conducting audits to ensure that the documentation aligns with the actual operations. By doing so, the department can safeguard against potential irregularities, enhance transparency, and reinforce the credibility of its asset forfeiture practices.

- [REDACTED], a retired [REDACTED] detective, retired in May 2023. During his tenure, he held a position that granted him access to the evidence submission area, a restricted access zone requiring a specific limited issue key or key fob for entry. Despite his retirement, [REDACTED]'s status permits him to enter the building due to his continued ability to work details as a police officer in the Town.

[REDACTED]'s key fob access to the evidence submission area was recently tested. Despite his current role in the department, as a retiree capable of performing road construction details, he still gained entry to the EC office using his key fob, as the department still needed to deactivate his access.

- There are no key controls in place, and there are an unknown number of master keys in circulation.
 - Re-key all interior doors. Office doors get a simple deadbolt and sensitive limited access areas get two-factor biometric incorporated locks that create an audit log of when a door was accessed and by whom.
 - Create a Master Key Log, re-issue keys, and be sure to collect the keys during an employee's exit interview.
 - The best practice for a key system is to have the keys stamped with "Do Not Copy." This serves as a deterrent as reputable locksmiths and key makers typically adhere to the restriction and refrain from copying keys labeled as such. While it may not be an infallible solution, it presents a significant improvement

compared to the current scenario, wherein an unknown quantity of keys exists that could unlock doors that should remain inaccessible to specific individuals. This measure adds an extra layer of security to help mitigate unauthorized access concerns.

This incident highlights a significant security lapse within the access control system. The continued validity of [REDACTED]'s access, even after retirement, underscores the necessity for a thorough review and enhancement of the access control protocols. Such measures are critical for maintaining the integrity of the restricted areas and safeguarding sensitive evidence within the department.

Strengthening access control mechanisms is essential to mitigate these vulnerabilities. A more robust and intricate system encompassing multifactor authentication and aligning with industry best practices will bolster the overall security framework. Ensuring that only authorized personnel are granted access to sensitive areas is pivotal for safeguarding evidentiary integrity and maintaining the highest standards of security.

- Deactivate retired Det. [REDACTED]'s key fob access to the EC office.
- Upgrade the lock system to a two-factor authentication with a biometric component, allowing for identification of who entered the room. This should be done on all E&P doors that lead to or from an evidence storage room.
- There are vulnerabilities in the number and quality of cameras in and around the areas where evidence is processed and stored; in fact, there is just one; it is a live feed and not recorded, making it virtually useless as a security camera.
 - Add 4K HD night vision, color video camera capable of recording and generating still photos and video clips of recorded footage as needed.
 - A year's worth of storage for each camera. Evidence issues are seldom discovered quickly. If you only have a month's worth of footage, chances are the system overwrote the footage that could have been helpful in your investigation.
 - Two camera accessories worth the expense are the ability to slow frame rate or motion activation. Both provide five seconds of video that lead up to the activation event that triggered the camera. The added cost for the accessory will be offset through the video storage savings they provide when in passive mode.

- Remember, the E&P storage area is typically empty for 128 hours weekly. You will see your ROI in under six months from the video storage savings.
- The camera footage should be saved on the police department's server, not the Town's. No one outside the department should have access to the video footage until it has been reviewed and approved for public release.
- The video should only be viewable by a limited number of people on an as-needed basis.
- Implementing a two-person requirement for accessing the video system, especially for capturing images or videos, is an effective security measure. This requirement ensures an added layer of accountability and oversight during the process. Maintaining a detailed log of all media generated, including who created it, who witnessed it, and what content was captured, further enhances transparency and credibility. This approach not only discourages unauthorized access but also establishes a solid audit trail for any actions taken within the system.
- The system should have no delete ability, meaning footage cannot be deleted and only falls off when the storage system starts to write over the disk once it is full. We recommend a year per camera for any camera that covers any part of the evidence process.
- Evidence Storage Access – The issue of evidence storage access raises significant concerns, mainly due to the absence of well-defined policies governing who can access the E&P storage areas. A comprehensive visitor sign-in log enhances security and accountability within the E&P storage areas. This log should capture essential information, including the date, time of entry and exit, visitor's badge number, and a person's full name. Such a log serves as a vital paper trail, especially when issues or incidents arise.

The visitor sign-in log is pivotal in creating a transparent and traceable record of individuals who have accessed the storage areas at specific times. In the event of discrepancies, incidents, or security breaches, this log becomes an invaluable resource for investigating and understanding the sequence of events. It not only aids in maintaining the integrity of the chain of custody but also contributes to transparency, accountability, and the overall security of the evidence management process.

By enforcing a standardized and detailed visitor sign-in process, the department can establish a higher level of control and oversight over who enters the storage areas. This proactive measure reinforces security measures, minimizes potential risks, and strengthens the credibility of the department's evidence custodianship practices.

- Bike storage is outside, and the bikes are exposed to the elements. The property tags have faded/washed away and can no longer provide meaningful data needed to track and possibly return the bike.
- [REDACTED] could not tell the evaluators with certainty how many pieces of evidence were currently in possession of outside agencies, such as court, lab, or ballistics.
- No panic alarm if EC becomes disabled because of an accidental exposure.
- Failure to reconcile cash accounts for seized, found, or abandoned cash.
- State caused - Inability to destroy backlogged evidence authorized for destruction.
- State culpability - Evidence overcrowding is partially caused by the current state requirements about the number of evidence pieces that can be destroyed during scheduled destruction.
 - ***Addressing the problem of evidence destruction requires a multifaceted approach that cannot be resolved solely through the complaint of a single police chief. We suggest coordinating and mobilizing all police chief associations to exert political pressure on lawmakers to reform the laws governing the prompt return or destruction of evidence.***
- No emergency venting was noted to assist with accidental spills.

POLICY & PROCEDURES CONCERNS

In the climate of heightened accountability and emphasis on civil rights, having well-defined policies and procedures for the handling and managing criminal evidence used in the incarceration of individuals is not just necessary—it is an imperative civil rights requirement.

A robust and transparent evidence management process is vital to uphold the rights of individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Properly documented and handled

evidence ensures that the integrity of the evidence chain of custody is maintained, which safeguards the due process rights of the accused. It helps prevent the potential for evidence tampering, contamination, or mishandling that could compromise a fair and just legal process.

By adhering to rigorous evidence management policies and procedures, law enforcement agencies demonstrate their commitment to upholding civil rights, ensuring a fair trial, and preserving the justice system's credibility. These practices help protect individuals' rights, prevent wrongful convictions, and foster public trust in law enforcement and the criminal justice process.

MISSING & SUGGESTED

EVIDENCE OFFICER RECOVERY & HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE

Establish a policy dictating the emergency response and retrieval protocols necessary to retrieve a stricken evidence officer from the secured storage area. Care and consideration must be taken before entering the area to retrieve the unresponsive EC or risk exposing the responding officers to a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl. Rule of thumb: if the cause is unknown, it is best to treat it as a hazardous materials spill until proven otherwise.

- Suggest creating and storing an emergency response box outside the evidence process and storage areas.
- Create a secure way for any responding officer to access the evidence storage area in an emergency. The commercial-grade doors with metal frames will not be opened using a standard police battering ram. The [REDACTED] will be needed to respond with the jaws of life to pry the doors open.

CRYPTOCURRENCY

The time to learn how to seize a cryptocurrency account properly is not when you need to. It is only possible for your agency to take a crypto asset if you have completed the necessary prep work of establishing a cold wallet to transfer and store the seized proceeds offline. There are two ways to prevent the person the asset was taken from using their Mnemonic Key to retrieve their coins: by moving them from the wallet they had it stored into another wallet they control.

- Transfer the funds to a pre-established cold wallet that the department maintains.
- This will require department-wide training and is the preferred and current best-practice method for seizing crypto assets.
 - If training the entire department is too burdensome or costly, train 5-10 officers so you always have someone available to be called in when a crypto matter arises.
 - Crypto is here to stay; blockchain technology and encryption are the primary reasons.
- Or convert the wallet's value back into cash and put it into the system as you would typically process any other cash seizure.
- We do not recommend cash conversion, as there remain too many legal issues to be resolved concerning cryptocurrencies. Primarily, what happens if the crypto experiences a spike? For example, the coin is worth \$1,000 today, and it grew to \$20,000 when the court ordered the return of the proceeds.

CASH MANAGEMENT

Many police departments accumulate significant amounts of cash related to lost and found items, seized assets, asset forfeiture, or funds related to abandoned prisoner cash. While police departments are not banks, they are responsible for securing these assets.

The principle that only cash with physical evidence, such as DNA or narcotic particulate, should remain in evidence is sound. This ensures that money directly tied to a criminal case or investigation is preserved as evidence while other funds are appropriately deposited. Managing money in this manner reduces the risk of loss or misplacement and facilitates financial transparency and accountability within the department.

By implementing policies and procedures that clearly define how cash should be handled, recorded, and deposited, police departments can enhance their financial management practices, reduce the potential for mishandling funds, and align their operations with established standards and best practices. It's a prudent step towards ensuring cash assets' efficient and responsible management.

Police departments historically have not addressed cash related to lost & found, seized, asset forfeiture, or abandoned prisoner cash. Police departments are not banks; some departments have more money in their evidence rooms than many local banks have on hand to conduct their daily business.

- Recommend establishing an interest-free checking account with a local bank, that all cash that does not belong to the police department be deposited into the account.
 - The bank maintains an accurate accounting of funds and provides a monthly statement of balances and transactions.
 - The account should be in the police department name, with only two department members having the authority to sign the checkbook. One member should be the chief, the other a senior department member with no role in E&P.
 - All withdrawals should go through the EC. The EC would submit a withdrawal request in writing with documentation to support the withdrawal request and then submit the request through proper channels.

Other Recommendations as They Pertain to E&P Policy & Procedures:

- Court – process transferring evidence to the court's possession.
- Evidence collection and packaging
- Evidence transportation
- Evidence Destruction
- E&P audit and inventory
- E&P lost/misplaced procedures
- E&P physical security
- E&P submission
- E&P return policy
- Lab/certification submission process
- Transfer of E&P process
- Sexual assault evidence handling and processing

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PD SPOT INVENTORY VERIFICATION

On 23 August 2023, the STIRM Evaluation Team (SET) performed an evidence evaluation on the Police Department E&P processing and storage areas. The SET randomly selected 80 pieces of property from the QED program to perform a spot inventory.

The EC would retrieve the requested item for inspection. Each item's documentation was inspected, package integrity was checked, and contents matched the official record.

Of the 80 items the evaluator requested, eight (8) of those eighty (80) items could not be located and need to be found. Two (2) items were found after a search, as they were not stored where the electronic record indicated. There were an additional four (4) items that had no supporting documentation showing what the final disposition was. The items listed below are the deficient items identified earlier in this paragraph.

Misplaced, Unaccounted – items are only deemed lost upon submission of a final audit report; until then, they will remain misplaced or unaccounted until supporting documentation or the object itself is located.

PD SPOT INVENTORY RESULTS**MISPLACED/ UNACCOUNTED – 8 ITEMS**

Case Number	Description	Updated Last
1. 2010557	1 Sexual assault kit,	02/05/2022
2. 801578	16 Klonopin (lime color pills)	02/20/2008
3. 701784	Two knives	03/21/2007
4. 704909	Beer cans	06/13/2007
5. 902102	\$272.00 cash	03/20/2009
6. 1101722	Vehicle title	02/11/2011
7. 1803721	1 Gold fifty-dollar coin	03/18/2018
	1 Half dollar coin	03/18/2018
	1 Foxwoods silver	03/18/2018
8. 1609848	1 lower receiver CMMG Serial # SA31451	06/07/2018

DOCUMENTATION PROBLEMS – 4 items

Case Number	Description	Updated Last
1. 702340	GMC Yukon (indicates auctioned)	04/13/2007
2. 702340	\$6372.00 Cash (indicates forfeited)	04/13/2007
3. 702340	Keys to seized vehicle	04/13/2007
4. 707904	Ornate sword (<i>since located</i>)	09/06/2007

WRONG LOCATION – 2 items

Case Number	Description	Updated Last
1. ??????	Sexual assault kit	08/02/2010
2. 1011041	\$695 Cash and \$1.25 in change	09/27/2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Only \$200 has been located; the database indicates \$496.25 returned with no supporting documentation.	

THREE YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The SET team strongly encourages your agency to address these issues in the most expeditious manner possible. Our years of experience and education in the field provide valuable insights intended to help your organization identify areas needing attention and improvement.

Our observations reflect a commitment to ensuring the highest standards of evidence management, security, transparency, and accountability. Our recommendations are rooted in best practices and a dedication to upholding the integrity of the criminal justice process.

Taking this proactive approach to identifying these issues and providing recommendations for improvement demonstrates a commitment to the field and the safety and fair treatment of all individuals involved in the criminal justice system. It is a testament to the importance of continuous improvement and ensuring that evidence management aligns with evolving industry standards and the principles of justice.

Typically, we distribute the CIP cost across three years. Unfortunately, in this case, that is not going to be possible. Too many serious issues must be addressed to create a plan that evenly splits costs.

YEAR ONE CIP RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish E&P policies as soon as possible.
 - The success of the policies is tied to the training and enforcement of the newly crafted policies.
2. Contract with an outside auditing company to complete a 100% hands-on audit for the entire E&P process. Include a complete forensic accounting of all cash assets.
3. Replace the outdated and malfunctioning evidence management system.
4. Install an integrated access control system.
5. Security cameras on all exterior doors, all E&P-related doors, the front and back of the two-way locker system, and every E&P processing or storage room. All the E&P cameras should have one year of video storage.

If [REDACTED] PD implements those five recommendations, the SET professional estimation is that [REDACTED]'s liability will be reduced significantly. The rest of the suggestions are more cost-affordable and less critical than the first year's recommendations.

STIRM GROUP AUDITS

An accurate quote to remember when talking about audits.

***"We offer three kinds of services: good, cheap, and fast, but you can only pick two:
Good & Cheap won't be Fast
Fast & Good won't be Cheap
Cheap & Fast won't be Good."***

Fast, good, and cheap is impossible, and if someone tells you otherwise, they are one of two things: a liar or a fool, neither of which you want anywhere near your audit.

Undoubtedly, conducting a comprehensive 100% Evidence & Property Audit is a pivotal step for your agency, particularly during the leadership transition. As the new Chief, replacing the recently retired Chief [REDACTED], initiating an audit aligns perfectly with industry best practices, standards, and the recommendations set forth by organizations such as CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies), MPAC (Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission), and the Association of Certified

Fraud Examiners (ACFE). We strongly suggest the addition of an audit policy outlining the times and events that trigger a mandated audit, as well as guidelines for random and spot inventory checks that are to be performed throughout the year.

By embarking on this audit process, your agency demonstrates a proactive commitment to accountability, transparency, and the highest standards of evidence management. An audit during a change in leadership is a pivotal opportunity to assess, validate, and ensure the accuracy of the department's evidence records and procedures.

Incorporating these industry best practices into your approach not only safeguards the integrity of evidence but also reinforces the agency's dedication to continuous improvement. By adhering to these recommendations, you position your agency to achieve and maintain the highest levels of professionalism and compliance with nationally recognized standards.

The audit will provide a comprehensive overview of the Evidence & Property section's operations, rectify any discrepancies, and establish a solid foundation for the Chief and the entire department to build upon. Such a proactive measure sets a positive tone for the new leadership and underscores the agency's commitment to maintaining its community's trust.

The list below can help compare proposals from different vendors equally, ensuring you get the best value and a comprehensive assessment of your Evidence & Property section. Not all audits are equal.

1. SG will perform a physical security evaluation of all the security features and protocols. Alarms, motion detectors, glass break sensors, access controls, and barriers will be tested.
2. The security camera coverage of the facility will be reviewed. Video storage will be checked to ensure proper performance, and the requisite number of days of video storage for each camera must be preserved according to existing policies. Camera coverage will be reviewed to ensure maximum coverage is maintained.
3. Review access logs.
4. Review the visitor logs.
5. Examine the overnight storage area.

6. Observe the intake process.
7. Observe the intake area to ensure all items for packaging property and evidence are in stock and easily accessible.
8. Observe the transfer of evidence from the evidence custodian to the officer for a court appearance.
9. Selected property and evidence submitted by officers during non-work hours or after work hours and during work hours: a) Verified packing compliance (items placed in the correct packages); b) Verified the accuracy of property records by comparing the label on the package to the item description on the attached property.
10. Review the training provided to officers to ensure the property and evidence packaging follow the existing SOPs.
11. Review controls over the disposal of property and evidence.
12. Select a sample of disposed items and verify that SOPs were followed when performing the destruction and that adequate documentation exists to support the destruction.
13. Select a sample of items returned to the rightful owners; verify compliance with SOPs and that documentation exists to support that the property was returned to the rightful owner.
14. Randomly select individuals with personal property returned and send them a questionnaire asking them to verify that their property was returned; they will get a postage-paid return envelope to forward their questionnaire.
15. Review property storage and evidence by type and determine if the storage was adequate (perishable items, guns, DNA, cash, drugs).
16. Tour the facility and observe and note the conditions of the storage rooms.
17. Review gun storage.
18. Review sexual assault kit storage.
19. Review the property and evidence room's emergency and disaster recovery plan.

20. Observe the process of preparing cash for deposits by the Evidence Custodian staff.
21. Observe the process of cash deposits, where the bank staff performs the package count before depositing.
22. Accompany the evidence custodian staff when they transport evidence to be dropped off and picked up at a crime lab for processing. We observe the drop-off and pick-up process to identify policy violations or security issues.
23. Review the controls about the security of the property and evidence inventory and access to the property and evidence inventory.
24. SGAT will select a sample of narcotics from closed cases approved to be destroyed. Drugs approved for destruction have a higher propensity to be tampered with. SG will request that the hiring organization resubmit the selected samples for re-testing to verify that the contents still match the narcotic certifications generated when the item was initially tested.
25. SG selects a sample of disposed property and evidence and verifies that a continuous chain of custody was maintained from collection to final disposition.
26. During the audit, SGAT staff are aware of the potential existence of fraud and are vigilant while conducting their inspections to detect any indications of fraud.
27. SG provides a comprehensive written report.

Respectfully submitted,

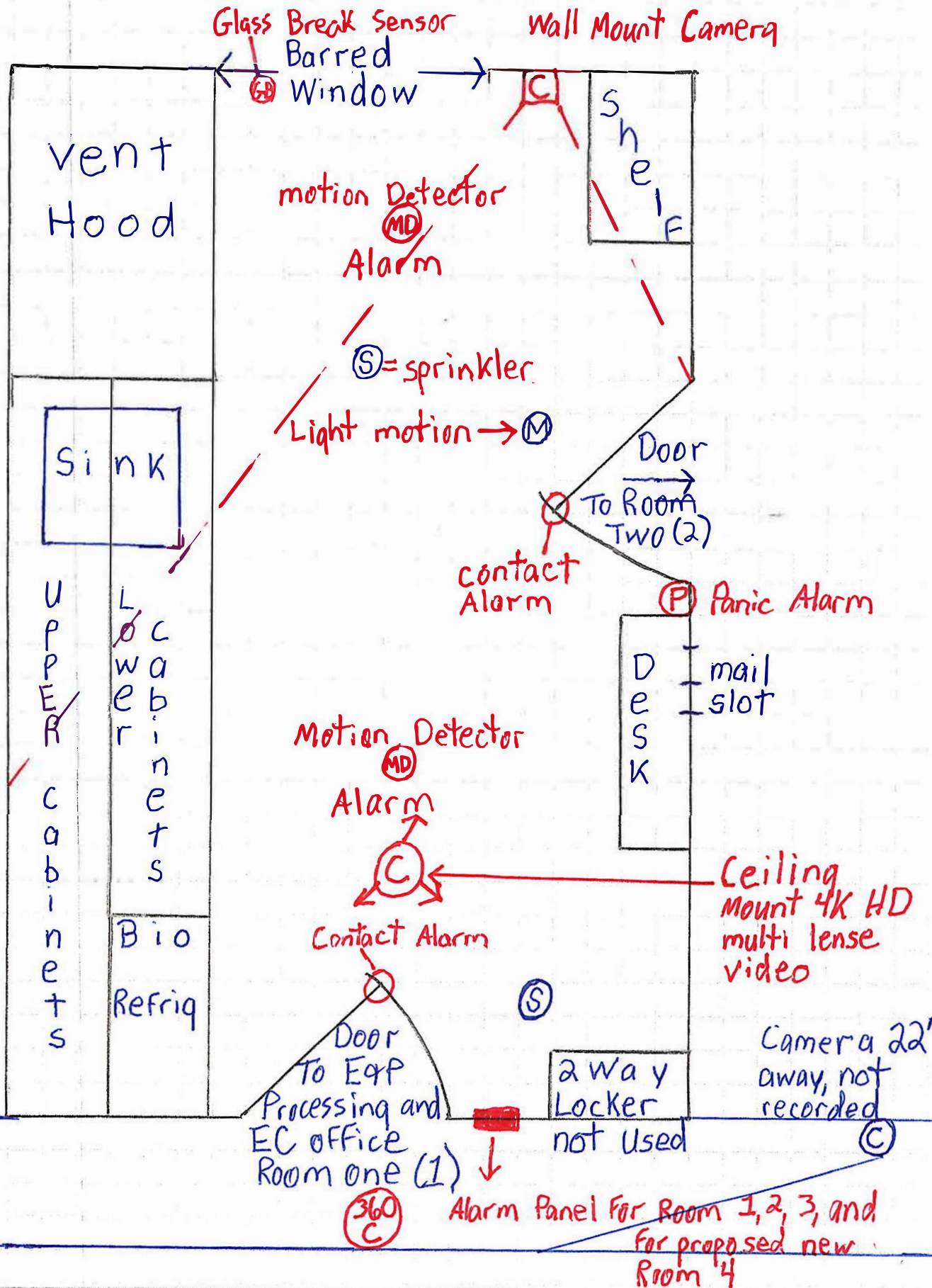


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□ = 1 foot

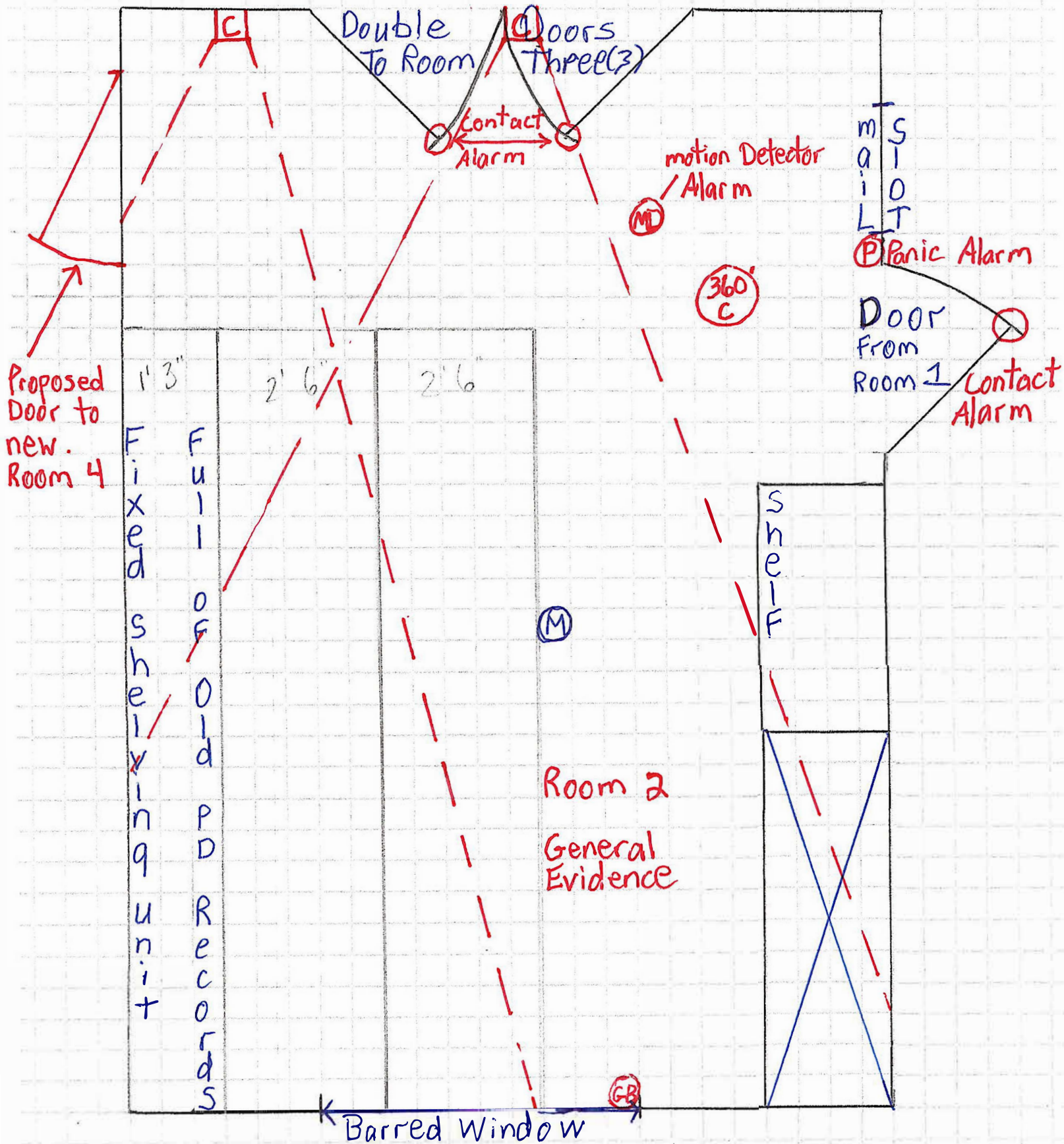
Room #1 EC Office / Submission Area



Room 2 General Evidence

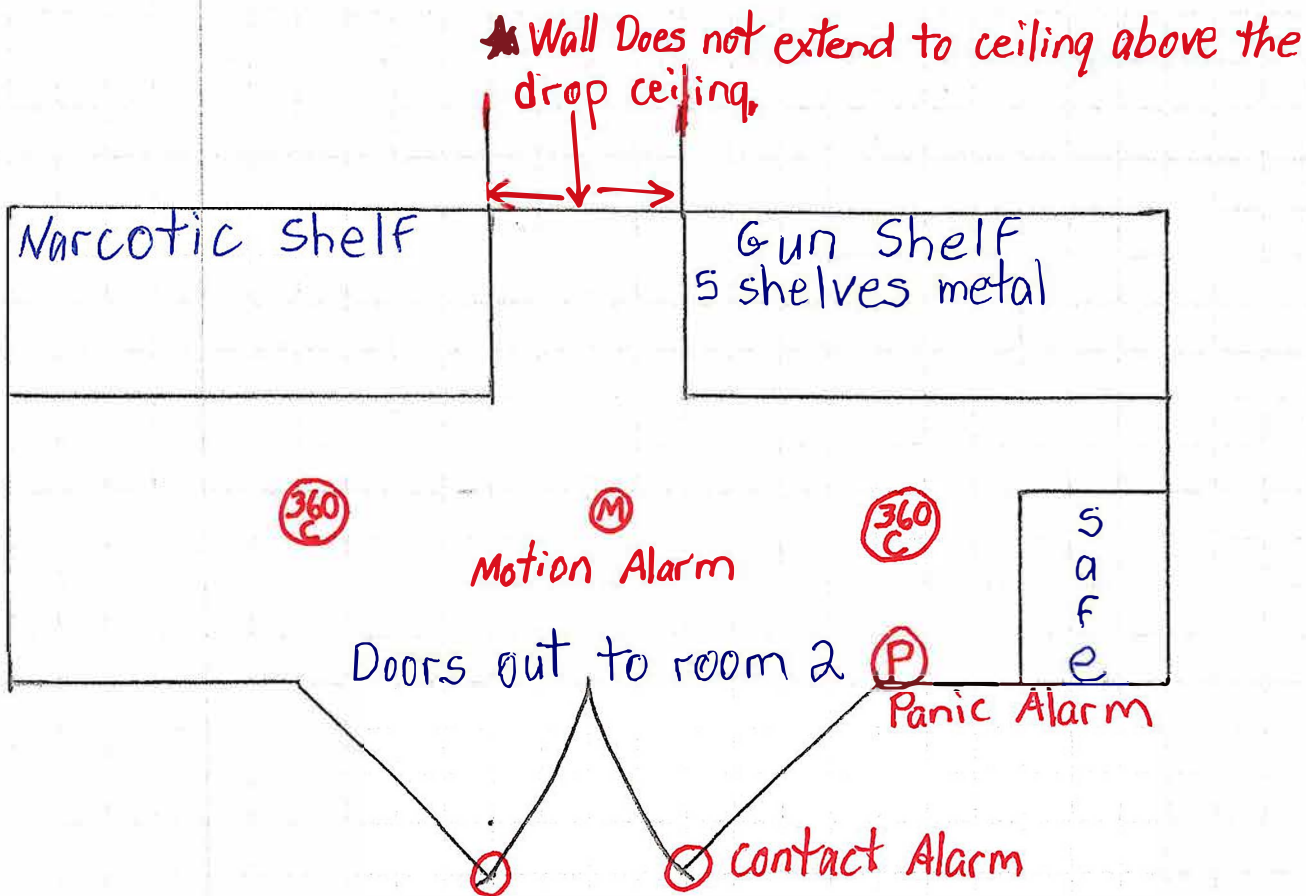
[] = 1 foot approximately not to scale

Guns, Drugs, & Cash



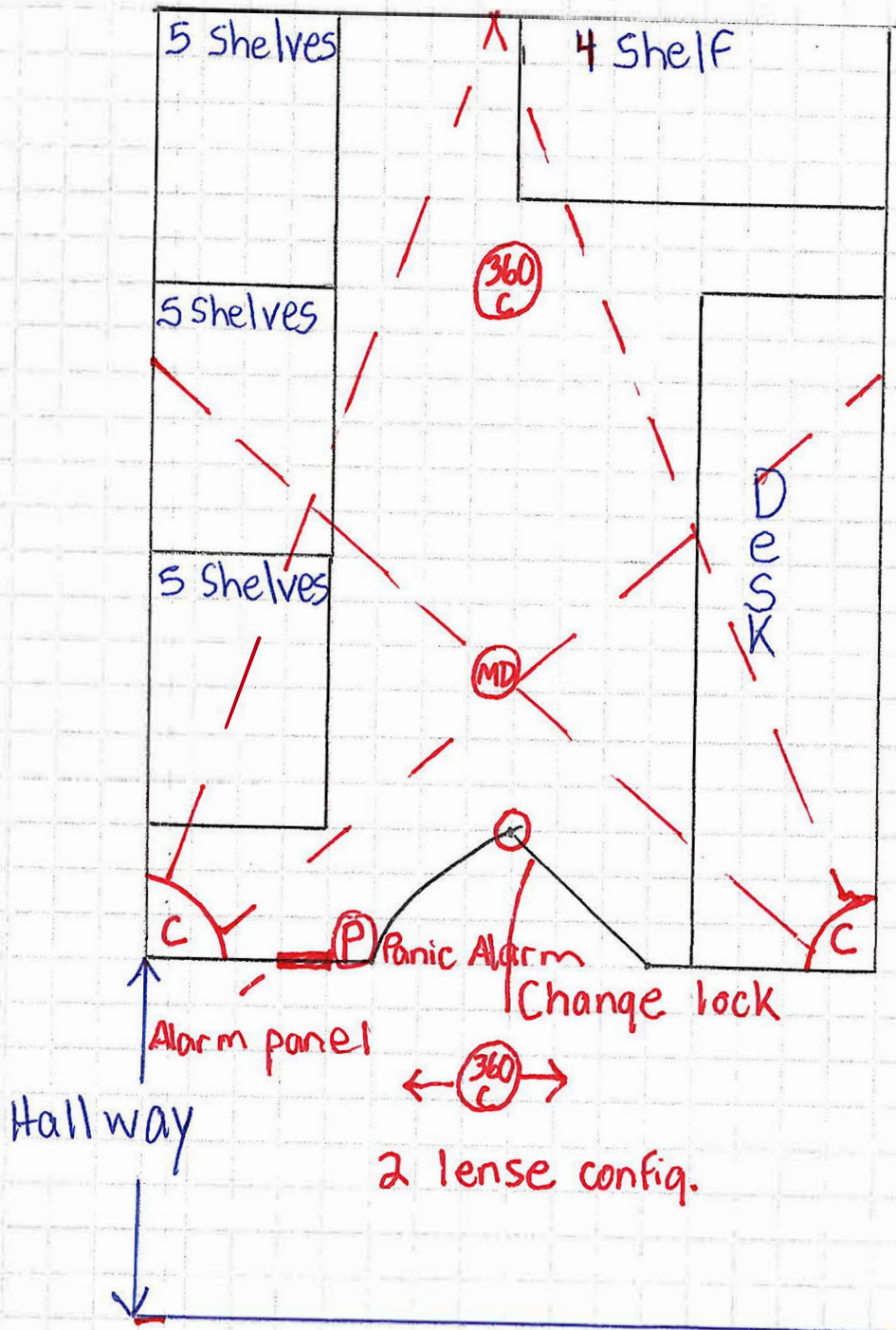
Room 3 Guns, Drugs, & Cash

 = 1 foot




■ = 1 foot

Gun Overflow Room 4



Room 5 General Property

 = 1 foot

16" x 6' (rough)

