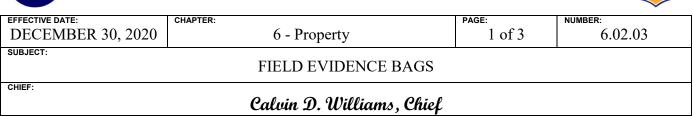


CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



Substantive changes are italicized

- **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for the use of field evidence bags (drug bags) to secure, package and preserve controlled substances in order to provide accountability and a legal chain of evidence in the Division of Police.
- **POLICY:** *It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police* to ensure that controlled substances seized as contraband and evidence are packaged and preserved in field evidence bags.

PROCEDURES:

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

- e. *DEFENDANT'S NAME* the full first and last name. When there is more than one defendant, members may use the REMARKS section for writing more names.
- f. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECTED DRUGS a description of the controlled substance (e.g. small plastic bag containing four (4) rocks suspected crack cocaine).
- 2. Place the evidence inside the bag and seal; write their initials, date and badge number across the seal.
- 3. Complete a CCRFSL Evidence Submission Form and attach it to the field evidence bag.
- 4. Log the evidence into the drug evidence book including the field evidence bag number.
- 5. Submit the completed field evidence bag, CCRFSL Form, and drug book to their Officer-in-Charge (OIC) for review and approval.
- B. *The OIC shall:*
 - 1. *Review the completed field evidence bag, CCRFSL Form, and drug book entry for proper completion.*
 - a. Sign a properly completed field evidence bag.
 - b. *Initial the drug book entry to maintain the chain of custody.*
 - 2. Store the evidence in a secure locker.
 - 3. Complete the CCRFSL Evidence Transfer Form listing each item to be conveyed to the CCRFSL for testing.
 - 4. Place all evidence in the courier bag and seal with the tamper evident device provided by the CCRFSL.
 - 5. *Assign a member to convey the courier bag to the CCRFSL for evidence testing.*
- III. Field Evidence Bag Discrepancies
 - A. Field evidence bags will not be accepted if:
 - 1. The bag has been opened or there is apparent tampering.
 - 2. The number on the bag does not match the number recorded in the drug evidence book.

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

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

CDW/lms Policy Unit