



# Evidence and Property Management (Policy & Procedure)

**OFFICIAL**

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## Contents

Evidence and Property Management (Policy & Procedure).....	0
Publication Scheme Y/N.....	0
Department of Origin .....	0
Policy Holder .....	0
Author .....	0
Date First Approved at BMG .....	0
This Version.....	0
Date of Next Review .....	0
<b>Policy</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Statement .....	3
Aims.....	3
Objectives .....	3
Outcomes .....	3
Legal Basis .....	3
Human Rights Considerations/Articles Engaged .....	4
Application & Scope .....	4
<b>Procedure</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1. Responsibilities .....	9
1.1 The Evidence Manager is responsible for:.....	9
1.2 All EMU Staff.....	9
1.3 Seizing Officer .....	9
1.5 Local Policing Enquiry Officers .....	11
1.6 Contact Resolution Officers .....	11
1.7 Building Managers and Deputies .....	11
1.8 Health & Safety Officer Advisors.....	11
2. General Information.....	11
2.1 Safe Security .....	11
2.2 Religious/Cultural Items .....	11
2.3 Found Property.....	12
2.4 Prisoners Property Recording .....	12
2.5 Lost Property Recording .....	12
2.6 Cash cabinets.....	12
3. Evidence/Property Storage – Location/Duration.....	12
3.4 Money.....	12
3.5 Accelerants and fuels.....	14
4. Evidence/Property Movement.....	14
4.1 Temporary Removal of Evidence/Property (other than transit to another EMU store) .....	14
4.2 Crime Exhibit Evidence – Production for Court.....	14
4.3 Drugs.....	14
4.4 Submission for Forensic Analysis .....	15
5. Evidence/Property Retention and Timescales .....	15
5.1 Found Property.....	15
5.2 Crime Exhibit Property .....	15
6. Evidence/Property Disposal .....	15
6.4 Police (Property) Act 1897 and Police (Property) Regulations 1997 .....	15
6.5 Disposal - in pursuant to the Acts .....	16
6.6 Disposal - Exception to in pursuant to the Acts .....	16
6.7 Application for Disposal / Destruction .....	16
6.8 Forfeiture Orders .....	16
6.9 Out of Court Disposal.....	17
6.10 Methods of Disposal.....	17
6.11 Evidence/Property for Auction.....	17
6.12 Evidence/Property for Destruction .....	17
6.13 Evidence/Property for sale as scrap .....	17
6.14 Worthless property .....	18

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6.15	Charitable donation .....	18
6.16	Disposal of Firearms .....	18
6.17	Disposal of data storage devices .....	18
6.18	Official Documents .....	19
6.19	Drugs .....	19
6.20	Unclaimed Evidence/Property brought into use by Merseyside Police.....	19
6.21	Identifiable Found Property .....	19
6.22	Indemnity and receipt for evidence/property .....	20
6.23	Unidentifiable Found Property.....	20
6.24	Crime Exhibit Property .....	20
6.25	Seized Money.....	21
6.26	Disputed Ownership Procedures .....	21
7.	Animals.....	21
8.	Property arising from a Sudden Death.....	21
8.1	Recording Deceased Property .....	21
8.2	Cash for Safekeeping.....	22
8.3	Social Services responsibilities – property of the deceased.....	22
8.4	Death - unnatural/unexplained .....	23
9.	Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Pyrotechnics (Fireworks) .....	23

# Policy

## Statement

Merseyside Police is committed to dealing professionally with all evidence and property, safeguarding its integrity to support the prevention and detection of crime. It will provide an effective property handling system that ensures property is secured appropriately, correctly identified and movement tracked, treating religious and cultural items with appropriate sensitivity. Compliance with this will ensure public satisfaction and confidence.

## Aims

- To ensure that Merseyside Police meets its legal obligations when dealing with evidence/property that comes into its possession
- To ensure that Merseyside Police does not deprive others of the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law
- To ensure that all Officers and Police Staff who are involved with evidence/property follow the same principles, deal with it in a corporate manner, treat people fairly and are transparent in our processes
- To ensure all evidence/property is handled, recorded and stored in a professional, safe, and timely manner
- To ensure retention of all evidence/property is critically reviewed
- To ensure proper and timely return or disposal of evidence/property

## Objectives

- To ensure all staff are aware of their personal accountability and responsibility for evidence/property
- To prevent the unnecessary retention of evidence/property
- To support the Force 'Community First' philosophy

## Outcomes

- Improved handling, recording, storage, return and disposal of evidence/property
- Improved public interface and increased public satisfaction around evidence/property issues
- Reduced requirement for storage space
- Reduced Health & Safety risks

## Legal Basis

This policy is necessary to ensure compliance with: -

- NPCC National Digital and Physical Evidence Retention Guidance
- Sections 19 to 22 of the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- Section B7 of the PACE Codes of Practice
- The Police (Property) Act 1897 & 1997
- Home Office Circular 42/1997 – New Regulations Providing for the Disposal or Retention of Property in the Possession of the Police
- Data Protection Act 2018

## Human Rights Considerations/Articles Engaged

- Convention 9.18, Protocol 1, Article 1: Protection of Property

## Application & Scope

This policy document sets out principles to outline responsibilities and help guide decision making however it will not cover all circumstances.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk-based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non-statutory policies, including College of Policing APP, provide guidance only. They are 'living documents' and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly, if staff depart from a policy but are able to give a good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph inserted 16/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion. Version number remains unchanged.

# Procedure

## Version History

15/11/2011	<p>V 2.3 – Amendments made to reflect recommendations arising from recent MPA audit with subsequent input by BCUs and Firearms at CJ Practitioners meeting.</p> <p>Changes made: Section 5.6, Paragraphs 7.3.3 &amp; 7.3.4, Paragraphs 12.4.6 – 12.4.13 and 12.5.3 –12.5.10.</p>
12/12/2011	<p>V2.4 – All old references to decommissioned policies removed. References to specific firearms/drugs procedures inserted.</p>
10/04/2013	<p>V3.0 – Amendments made to cater for the new Force procedures utilising the Niche RMS property module and also the use of bar coding equipment.</p> <p>Removal of all sections relating to lost, found and crime exhibit books</p> <p>All reference to 'property staff' amended to read 'EMU staff'</p> <p>All reference to 'Property Manager' amended to read 'Admin Manager'</p> <p>All reference to CPO amended to read Central EMU</p> <p>All reference to CPO Manager amended to read Central EMU Manager</p> <p>Instructions on seizure of counterfeit currency have been amended in line with NCO guidance that stipulates that suspect notes should not have the word 'Counterfeit' written on them</p>
06/05/2015	<p>V4.0 – Amendments made to authorise EMU staff to review and dispose/return to owner (RTO) property/evidence, in the absence of any instructions from the OIC in cases that have been concluded or discontinued. This only relates to cases that are NOT Major or Serious Crime cases. However, if the EMU staff make a mistake in so doing, the OIC will be deemed to be responsible for any consequences. This is on the basis that it was the lack of instruction from the OIC in the first place that resulted in action being taken by the EMU staff.</p> <p>Include responsibilities for the Records and Property Manager</p> <p>Amend 'property' to read 'property/evidence' where appropriate as 'evidence' is the preferred term for property seized in relation to a crime investigation</p> <p>Amend the frequency of firearms audits from monthly to annual. Firearms and ammunition are now only stored at the LCH with access limited to authorised officers and staff so the necessity for monthly audits has been removed.</p> <p>Transfer responsibility for health and safety of the interim property stores to the Building managers and their deputies</p>
1/10/18	V5.0

	<p>Change to new force Community First logo and remove any references to previous policing philosophies and replace with 'Community First'.</p> <p>All reference to 'CCJ' replaced by 'Criminal Justice' or 'CJ'.</p> <p>All reference to 'BCU' replace by appropriate term in functional model.</p> <p>Revise initial statement, aims.</p> <p>Remove 'Measurement' section.</p> <p>Remove following sections relating to 'BCU' bases responsibilities. 'Area Commander', 'Chief Inspector, Operations Support', 'Inspectors' 'Police Officers/Special Constables/Police Staff/Volunteers'</p> <p>Building Managers amended to remove responsibility for Gun Cabinet (this section now covered in expansion of 'seizing officer')</p> <p>'Seizing Officer' section expanded to include sections previously in 'Police Officers/Special Constables/Police Staff/Volunteers' regarding packaging of exhibits.</p> <p>Officer in the Case/Responsible Officer expanded.</p> <p>'BCU Admin Managers' amended to 'Local Policing Enquiry Officers'.</p> <p>Section inserted to include Contact Resolution Officers directing members of the public to the Merseyside Police website regarding enquiries about lost or found property</p> <p>Records and Property Manager amended to Evidence and Property Manager. Responsibilities amended.</p> <p>All EMU Staff responsibilities amended to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Checking packaging</li><li>• Disposing of perishable items</li><li>• Audit of interim store at each visit</li><li>• Health and safety considerations in relation to hazardous substances</li></ul> <p>Section 1.8.2 removed Section 1.8.3 removed Section 1.10 removed Section 1.11 removed 1.12 Audit and Inspection removed</p> <p>Section 1 Responsibilities reordered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence &amp; Property Manager</li><li>• All EMU Staff</li><li>• Seizing Officer</li><li>• Officer in the Case/Responsible Officer</li><li>• Local Policing Enquiry Officer</li><li>• Contact Resolution Officers</li><li>• Building Managers and Deputies</li><li>• Health and Safety Advisors</li></ul> <p>Section 2 renamed General Information from General Issues</p> <p>Section 2.2.1 removed</p>
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	<p>Section 2.22 removed  Section 2.23 removed  Section 2.3 removed  Section 2.4.1 removed  Section 2.5 removed (included in Section 10)  Section 2.6 removed (included in Section 11)  Section 2.7 removed, (included in Section 12)  Section 2.8 removed (included in Section 13)  Section 2.9 removed (included in Section 9)  Section 2.10 removed (included in Vehicle Recovery Retention Policy)  Section 2.12 Crime Exhibit Recording removed  Section 3. removed (Included in 'Seizing Officer' responsibilities)  Section 4 removed (Included in EMU responsibilities)  Section 5.1 removed (Included in BCU responsibilities)  Section 5.2 removed (Included in 2.11)  Section 5.3.1 removed  Section 5.3.2 removed  Section 5.4.1 removed  Section 5.4.2 removed (Included in 'Money')  Section 5.4.5  Section 5.6 removed (Included in Responsibilities 'Seizing Officer')  Section 6 removed except 'Accelerants and Fuels' moved to Section 3.  Section 6.1 and 6.4 included in 3.3  Section 6.2 will be included in EMU Warehouse Standard Operating Procedure  Section 6.3 included in 1.3 Responsibilities 'Seizing Officer'  Section 6.5 Cash Cabinets moved to Section 2 'General Information'  Section 6.6 and 6.7 removed  Section 7 'Property/Evidence Movement' amended to Section 4  Section 4.5 removed  Section 8 amended to Section 5  Section 9 amended to Section 6  Section 6.20 removed  Section 6.26 amended  Section 6.28 Counterfeit Money removed, duplicate of 3.4  Section 6.29 Crime Scene Exhibits removed  Reference to 'Firearms 'Make Safe' Standard Operating Procedure removed</p> <p>Section 10 Animals removed, new Section 7 Animals inserted.  Section 11 Property Arising from Sudden Death now Section 8  Section 12 Firearms, Ammunition, Explosive and Pyrotechnics (Fireworks) now Section 9.  Section 9.3 removed  Section 12.7 Police National Computer removed  Section 12.8 Voluntary Surrender of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Pyrotechnics removed  Section 13 Counterfeit Currency included in Section 3.4.3  Section 14 Confiscation of Alcohol or Tobacco included in Section 1.3  Section 15 'Property Marking' removed  Section 16 'Definitions' removed</p>
1/12/22	<p>V6.0</p> <p>Policy name changed from Property &amp; Evidence Management  Addition of NPCC National Digital and Physical Evidence Retention Guidance under legal basis page 1  All reference to Property/Evidence amended to read Evidence/Property  All reference to Evidence and Property Manager amended to read Evidence Manager  1.1d added  1.2d removed</p>



<p>1.7 additional building manager duties  2.2 insert email address  3.1 amend EMU local clearing house to gun cabinets in Edge Lane interim store  3.4.1 cash limits for amended with addition of Edge Lane drop safe  3.4.2 amend ECT to FIU  4.2 amended from 2 working days  4.3 a) removed  4.3 b) amended to include high value items and interim stores  4.3 amended from EMU officer will examine items in the presence of the officer and duty inspector removed  5.1 amended from evidence &amp; property manager must be satisfied that reasonable enquiries to trace owner have been made  5.2 amended to rationale  5.3 amended from officer in charge of the case  6.2 amended from 7 years  6.17 mobile phones and computers to be covered under data storage devices  6.17 a) amended to read disposal via reputable firm  6.17 b) devices to be wiped by DFU when TIU  6.18 removed and covered in 6.17  6.19 independent observer changed to auditor. Evidence manager or officer not below inspector doesn't have to be the same person  6.22 d) removed  8.1.3 amended  9.3.2 add list of authorised officers  9.3.4 add red tag number to Niche  9.3.6 amend location to Edge Lane FEU  9.3.8 amend location to secure cabinets Edge Lane  9.5.2 &amp; 9.5.3 amalgamated  9.5.4 amend location to Edge Lane  9.5.5 removed  9.5.10 added  9.6 amended to read disposal by FEU and EMU officer. Added ammunition to be disposed by EOD and Niche to be updated. Firearms registry responsible for RTO, testing by FEU  10 added</p>
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## Glossary of terms

<b>BMG</b>	Business Management Group
<b>EMU</b>	Evidence Management Unit
<b>POCA</b>	Proceeds of Crime Act
<b>FIM</b>	Force Incident Manager
<b>ECT</b>	Economic Crime Team
<b>FIU</b>	Financial Investigation Unit
<b>FEU</b>	Firearm Examination Unit
<b>ARV</b>	Armed Response Vehicle

## 1. Responsibilities

### 1.1 The Evidence Manager is responsible for:

- a) Developing, implementing and reviewing evidence and property management systems and processes to ensure that they are delivered in the most efficient and effective way.
- b) Ensuring all police officers and police staff are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate knowledge and guidance to carry them out.
- c) Providing leadership and expertise to Evidence Management staff and the organisation to ensure compliance with legislation.
- d) The EMU have no responsibility for animals, motor vehicles including e-scooters, assets and large quantities of hazardous liquids.

### 1.2 All EMU Staff

Each individual is responsible for:

- a) The safe keeping and handling of all evidence/property which has been packaged correctly tagged and linked to an occurrence. Where perishable items have been placed in the interim store, they should be disposed of and not transported to the main storage site due to the risk posed.
- b) Maintaining accurate records of items in the Niche property system, including current location and movement of items.
- c) Reviewing evidence held in the EMU stores that has not been authorised for disposal/Return to Owner, even though the case has been concluded/discontinued. This will only apply to crimes that are **NOT** Major or Serious crimes.
- d) Returning or disposing of evidence/property in accordance with current evidence/property guidelines.
- e) Audit of the interim store at each visit and tasking the seizing or requesting officer if the item is missing.
- f) Health and safety of other EMU staff who may need to handle the item during transit and storage. Particular care should be given in relation to hazardous substances, i.e. that they are stored in appropriate locations and that working methods take cognisance of potential contamination. Disposal should be in accordance with Health and Safety guidelines.

### 1.3 Seizing Officer

Each individual has overall responsibility for any evidence/property they receive or seize, ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and:

- a) An accurate property record is created within Niche RMS and linked to the owner
- b) The integrity of evidence is maintained.
- c) It is packaged and labelled correctly. This means:
  - o Appropriate containers or packaging must be employed where necessary (e.g. knife tubes).
  - o The use of appropriate hazard warning tape (e.g. biohazard, irritant) when necessary. Appropriate measures are taken in relation to cash cabinets which pose

a potential risk as (where unexploded) they may be primed with exploding dyes and timer switches. If this is suspected, then they must be treated as a fire / bomb hazard.

- Unless forensic examination is required, drugs and cash **MUST** be separated from any container (e.g. bag, purse, wallet, tin) Consideration should be given to the necessity to actually seize the container.

This is to ensure:

- The maintenance of integrity
  - The prevention of cross contamination
  - Prevention of loss or damage
  - Health and safety of anyone who may need to handle the item during transit and storage
- d) It is stored securely and safely in an interim store and its storage location accurately reflected in Niche RMS before the end of your duty. If necessary, in a safe or locked cabinet.
- e) When multiple exhibits have been recovered for the same investigation then once packaged securely, they should be grouped in open bags for ease of transit and processing.
- f) All evidence/property must be barcoded using Niche. The barcode label should either be stuck onto the packaging, ensuring that it does not obscure any other labels or annotations or if this is not possible, attached to a plastic cable tie that can be secured to the item.
- g) Perishable items **MUST** not be seized.
- h) Exhibits that are damp or wet **MUST** be disposed of unless retention is absolutely necessary. In which case, they must be double bagged and advice sought from CSI.
- i) Where any firearms or ammunition are seized, the officer should create a Storm log to ensure an Armed Response Officer attends to 'make safe' the firearm.

#### 1.4 **Officer in the Case/Responsible Officer**

Each individual has ongoing responsibility for any evidence/property related to a case they are investigating, they must ensure:

- a) It is continuously reviewed, throughout the investigation to ensure disposal in compliance with legislation
- b) Tasks received via Niche in relation to the management and disposal of property / evidence are actioned promptly and appropriately. **PLEASE NOTE: Where the crime is not a major or serious crime and EMU staff are not notified with 120 days of the case being concluded or discontinued as to what action needs to be taken for any outstanding evidence), they will make their own decisions based on their review of the case. However, if the EMU staff make a mistake, it is the officer who will be held responsible on the basis that they did not inform the EMU staff in a timely manner.**

- c) Initial enquiries to trace the owner (when appropriate) are carried out in a timely manner.
- d) Evidence/property received into the store is subjected to examination for Smart/Water, Ultraviolet markers and any other form of marking as practicable and appropriate.
- e) It is returned to the owner (if known and appropriate) without undue delay.

### 1.5 **Local Policing Enquiry Officers**

Local Policing Enquiry Officers have specific responsibility to monitor and implement the current procedures for management of Found property which can be found on the force website. Consideration should be given to accepting items which may hold some sentimental value to the owner in case of any enquiries.

### 1.6 **Contact Resolution Officers**

Contact Resolution Officers should direct members of the public to the force website in relation to enquiries about lost or found property.

### 1.7 **Building Managers and Deputies**

Building managers and their deputies are responsible for ensuring regular Health and Safety inspections of interim property stores are undertaken, all resulting recommendations are actioned and where appropriate, risk assessments are carried out.

### 1.8 **Health & Safety Officer Advisors**

In order to encourage and maintain best practice in relation to the receipt, storage and disposal of hazardous substances which are brought into police custody, the advisors must provide upon request by an EMU manager, Health and Safety guidelines for the storage and handling of potentially hazardous and heavy items in any EMU store or interim property storage facility within their sphere of responsibility. They also have the responsibility to provide advice / guidance / assistance to local management for the conducting of Health & Safety inspections within said EMU or interim property storage facilities on a regular basis.

## 2. **General Information**

### 2.1 **Safe Security**

The keys to all property interim stores should be placed on the TRAKKA system, with Chief Inspectors ensuring that keys are booked in and out appropriately. This will reinforce access controls, facilitate a more robust audit trail and make officers more accountable for property /evidence that is committed or removed from the interim property stores.

### 2.2 **Religious/Cultural Items**

Anyone coming into the possession of any religious or cultural items should treat them with appropriate respect and if necessary seek advice from:

The Force Chaplaincy [Rosalind.Deyes@merseyside.police.uk](mailto:Rosalind.Deyes@merseyside.police.uk) or [Diversity.Equality.and.Inclusion.Team@merseyside.police.uk](mailto:Diversity.Equality.and.Inclusion.Team@merseyside.police.uk)

Regarding the handling, packaging, storage and disposal of these items. This could include holy books such as The Bible or Qur'an, religious clothing or artefacts.

**2.3 Found Property**

Please refer to the Merseyside Police Website for guidance.

**2.4 Prisoners Property Recording**

Reference should be made to the Authorised Professional Practice, Detention and Custody

**2.5 Lost Property Recording**

Please refer to the Merseyside Police Website for guidance.

**2.6 Cash cabinets**

Some cash cabinets are primed with exploding dyes and timer switches. If this is suspected then they must be treated as a fire / bomb hazard.

The cash cabinet is required to be booked into the EMU store in the normal way. However, if suspected to be a hazard it must be clearly marked to identify the suspected hazard and stored securely (with due regard to its believed / suspected cash contents) in a safe location until deactivated. Advice should be sought from the loser (if known), the manufacturer or the cash transit agency for advice upon how to make it safe / deactivate it. If believed dangerous then consideration must be given to treating it as an explosive device.

**3. Evidence/Property Storage – Location/Duration**

3.1 Firearms, once made safe and red tagged, must be transferred as soon as practicable to the gun cabinets in Edge Lane interim store by ARV officers.

3.2 Any medication recovered from the scene of a sudden death (not required for legal proceedings) should be forwarded to the EMU as soon as practicable.

3.3 For bulky, hazardous or high value items, contact the FIM out of hours, or EMU during business hours for advice.

If property is believed to be a harmful substance and is deemed to be 'found property' with no suspicion that it may be required as evidence of an offence then consideration should be given to contacting the Local Environmental Health Department as they have a duty (under the Public Health Act) to examine and dispose of found hazardous substances. If this approach is undertaken then all action should be recorded within the associated STORM log and the property should not be booked in as per found property procedures. The STORM log should record the fact that the substance was immediately disposed of by the Local Environmental Health Department. Note that the Local Environmental Health Department will only deal with property in the streets. Once an item has been brought onto Police Premises it becomes a responsibility of the Police to safely dispose of the item. Accordingly, consideration must be given to requesting that the Local Environmental Health Department attend the scene of any recovery.

In respect of substances recovered from any suspected Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear attack (CBRN), they will not be taken to police premises without the prior authority of the CBRN Silver Commander.

**3.4 Money**

3.4.1 Cash MUST be stored in a safe in the interim store.

Cash limits for the interim store are £3,000. Edge Lane interim store drop safe limit is £10,000.

Where an amount greater than £10,000 (or suspected to be greater than £10,000) has been seized or found:

- During business hours contact the EMU
- Out of hours, contact the FIM to authorise call of an Evidence Management Officer

### 3.4.2 Cash falls into 2 categories, COUNTED and UNCOUNTED cash.

Cash should always be counted unless:

- It will form part of a 'cash seizure' POCA investigation and is strongly suspected to be over £1000.
- The actual notes or coins are known to have physical evidence on them

Cash should be counted in all other circumstances and correctly recorded on Niche. The process for counted cash should be as follows:

Two officers should be present.

- The count should be recorded, ideally on body worn video or in the custody suite.
- Gloves should be worn.
- The money must be bagged separately to other exhibits and have its own tag number.
- The cash should be in a sealed bag with the seal number recorded on Niche.
- The total value should be entered into the relevant field on Niche.
- Cash from a sudden death should always be counted.

The process for uncounted cash is as follows:

- It should be bagged separately to other items, e.g. tins, tubs
- Cash should be double bagged in the presence of the person (if possible) and the bag numbers recorded on Niche.
- An estimated amount should be recorded on Niche, with clear wording to indicate estimate
- The value field should be left empty
- A Form A must be completed and submitted to the Financial Investigation Unit
- A financial investigator must be notified to make an application to the court within 48 hours

Banking of cash will take place as soon as possible unless there is clear instruction that it is required for forensic purposes. The OIC will have 28 days from the date of recovery to undertake the forensic element of the process. EMU will perform the cash count unless the financial investigator or OIC request otherwise via Niche task to 'Central EMU Cash Enquiries'.

Cash cabinets pose a potential risk as (where unexploded) they may be primed with exploding dyes and timer switches. If this is suspected then they must be treated as a fire/bomb hazard.

### 3.4.3 Where the cash is suspected to be counterfeit currency, the process is as follows:

- Seize the cash, but handled as little as possible
- Create a Niche occurrence and create a tag number
- Seal in a transparent plastic bag
- Attach a crime exhibit label and Niche property bar code label
- Complete a NCO1 form
- Send by special delivery to UK NCO
- Update Niche to show out of store, marked sent to UK NCO

### 3.5 Accelerants and fuels

Accelerant must only be stored in containers designed for that purpose. Where the accelerant is being stored for the purposes of a sample to match traces found on a suspects clothing, etc. consideration should be given to storing only sufficient accelerant for that purpose. In these cases advice should first be sought from both the officer in charge and the Crime Scene Investigation Unit.

## 4. Evidence/Property Movement

### 4.1 Temporary Removal of Evidence/Property (other than transit to another EMU store)

Any movement of crime evidence from an EMU store must be recorded on Niche RMS, with details and electronic signature of the person removing it, reason and date.

The person taking possession of the evidence must always electronically sign the Niche entry as an audit trail and for continuity. The reason for handling the evidence must also be recorded (e.g. chemical fingerprint enhancement taken to .....)

When the evidence is returned to the EMU store, Niche should be updated by the returning officer and electronically signed for return. The reason for continued retention should also be recorded.

### 4.2 Crime Exhibit Evidence – Production for Court

Police officers must always notify the EMU at least 72 hours in advance if they require crime exhibit evidence for court. The actual notice provided should be supplied taking into consideration the volume of evidence required and necessary security and transportation arrangements.

The Officer removing evidence from the EMU store, whether for further investigation or production at court, is responsible for returning the property to an interim store.

### 4.3 Drugs

If there is a need to remove an item from a secure drug storage area in the EMU store, other than for destruction; the following procedure will be used:

- a) The person requiring its release from storage must electronically sign for it. They are then responsible for its safety until it is returned to an interim store unless high value or risk where it will be returned directly to the EMU store.
- b) The EMU officer is responsible for ensuring the evidence record(s) are updated within Niche RMS.

When returned to the EMU store an EMU officer will put it in a secure drug storage area. If any discrepancies are found the EMU Manager must be informed without delay.

EMU staff are responsible for ensuring that the current location and status of every item of drug evidence stored within the EMU facility is accurate and up to date within Niche.

The Evidence Manager should ensure that the drugs disposed of are correctly recorded on Niche and in a timely manner.

#### 4.4 **Submission for Forensic Analysis**

From late 2021 all exhibits required for forensic submission will be sent direct to the forensic providers by the EMU.

Forensic submission officers will send authorised MG21 and strategy forms to the Officer in Case. These will be added to the Niche reports tab and the officer will generate a task to the EMU detailing which exhibits are for submission. The EMU will quality assure the MG21 with the exhibits prior to release to the forensic providers.

Exhibits will return to the EMU after forensic analysis and Niche will be updated to reflect the items movements in all cases.

### 5. **Evidence/Property Retention and Timescales**

#### 5.1 **Found Property**

As a general principal found property will be disposed of six weeks after entering the Niche property system.

The receiving Officer must make all reasonable enquiries to trace the owner prior to disposal.

#### 5.2 **Crime Exhibit Property**

Crime Exhibits will be disposed of when there is no further practical or legal requirement for their retention. The officer in charge must provide the EMU with a rationale as to any further required retention period.

#### 5.3 **Sudden Death Property - Medication**

Medication recovered from a reported sudden death must be retained until at least the conclusion of any inquest proceedings and authority to dispose has been received from the Coroner's Investigation Officer and where necessary the OIC.

### 6. **Evidence/Property Disposal**

6.1 Disposal of evidence/property must be carried out in accordance with the Police Property Act 1897 (amended 1997) and Police Property Regulations 1997.

6.2 The owner of any lost property may reclaim possession of it (or the proceeds of its sale) at any time. This applies to both property in police custody and that retained by the finder. However, the Force will only retain records of the sale or disposal for 6 years in accordance with Financial Regulations.

6.3 All proceeds from the sale or disposal of evidence/property are paid into the Police Property Act Fund for distribution to local community groups or charitable causes by the Police & Crime Commissioner.

#### 6.4 **Police (Property) Act 1897 and Police (Property) Regulations 1997**

The Police (Property) Act 1997 came into force on the 17th May 1997. It amends the Police (Property) Act 1897, introducing changes such as allowing the police authority to retain unclaimed property that previously had to be disposed of - to be used for police purposes.

The Police (Disposal of Property) Regulations have been replaced by the Police (Property) Regulations 1997. These set out the procedure to be followed for any unclaimed property.



**6.5 Disposal - in pursuant to the Acts**

Where evidence/property has come into the possession of Merseyside Police in connection with their investigation of a suspected offence, it can be disposed of pursuant to the above legislation. In order to assess whether the Police (Property) Act procedure is appropriate, first consider:

- a) Are there two or more claimants? If so seek advice from the Force Solicitors Office.
- b) If there is only one claimant, can they prove that they are the true owner?
- c) Is the claimant the true owner of the evidence/property, (not merely the person who has possessory title)? If unable to determine ownership it will be necessary to issue a Police (Property) Act application for disposal of the property /evidence.

**6.6 Disposal - Exception to in pursuant to the Acts**

S.2 (2) & (3) of the act allow for the disposal of evidence/property at any time in cases where the evidence/property is a perishable article or its custody involves unreasonable expense or inconvenience. Proceeds from sale may be applied to the expenses of executing the regulations, and the police shall retain any remainder for a period of one year.

**6.7 Application for Disposal / Destruction**

If an application is made under this Act for an order of disposal or destruction of property /evidence, this Force will retain such items:

- a) Pending any hearing at the magistrates' court; and
- b) For a further six months after an order has been granted, to allow sufficient time for any appeal to be lodged pursuant to the Act.

The property /evidence should be deposited in a suitable EMU store, or in the case of vehicles utilise current policy and procedure on the removal and storage of vehicles.

Any letters requesting property /evidence be returned to the owner must be forwarded to officer in charge of the property /evidence concerned.

For advice in relation to any Police (Property) Act matter Force Solicitors Office should be contacted.

Formal authority to dispose of the property /evidence must be received before undertaking disposal / destruction, to prevent the Force being left open to civil claims in respect of conversion and trespass to property.

**6.8 Forfeiture Orders**

The officer in charge should authorise EMU to dispose of items via Niche task which are subject to a forfeiture order or similar.

If case material is subject to a court forfeiture order or similar, the order takes priority over the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act, 1996 requirement for material to be retained by the police.

The officer in charge must ensure the forfeiture order is placed in the relevant copy prosecution file and that the file is retained for:

- a) Two years, or
- b) The length of the sentence whichever is the longer.

#### 6.9 **Out of Court Disposal**

Where an offender receives an out of court disposal and evidence has been seized, if possible the officer should obtain a disclaimer for the evidence in the form of a signed entry within your pocket notebook/handheld device. The property record should be marked to that effect if the offender relinquishes ownership.

If any evidence seized, as part of the enquiry is not returned or disposed of immediately after out of court disposal, enter it into the Niche property system but clearly endorse the property record with reasons for retention.

#### 6.10 **Methods of Disposal**

Where (for whatever reason) property has not been returned to its owner it will be disposed of via the EMU. The approved methods of disposal are by:

- a) Auction
- b) Destruction
- c) Sale for scrap value
- d) Deemed worthless
- e) Charitable donation
- f) Kept for use by this Force

#### 6.11 **Evidence/Property for Auction**

The Evidence Manager will send items for disposal by auction to an approved auction house. At the Evidence Manager's discretion evidence/property may be allowed to accumulate to make up a consignment for auction, or it may be disposed of at any time after the period of retention as defined within these guidelines.

Sending items for auction will transfer any perceived risk (e.g. pedal cycles, electrical goods etc.).

#### 6.12 **Evidence/Property for Destruction**

Unless with a clear reason to the contrary destroy any evidence/property such as:

- a) Alcohol
- b) Car radio parts
- c) Two-way radios
- d) Scanners, if misuse is likely
- e) Baseball bats
- f) Knives
- g) Items whose retention is not in the public interest
- h) Any item adapted / designed for use in crime

#### 6.13 **Evidence/Property for sale as scrap**

Evidence/property of scrap value will be disposed of via the EMU.

**6.14 Worthless property**

Property deemed worthless will be disposed of by the EMU. The Evidence Manager will ensure any property deemed worthless is rendered unsuitable for use before disposal.

**6.15 Charitable donation**

Under Police (Property) Regulations 1997, the Chief Constable (authority delegated to the EMU manager) may allow items to be disposed of by way of donation to a registered charity or a community cause (if deemed so by the Chief Constable or their nominated representative).

Any items (e.g. pedal cycles, electrical equipment) which could render Merseyside Police liable to criminal proceedings under consumer protection legislation if someone suffers injury because of a defect in the item **will not** be donated unless the charity/community venture/not-for-profit organisation **is a bona fide repairer**.

Suitable items of evidence/property may be donated to a charitable cause or community venture after approval by the Evidence Manager (on behalf of the Chief Constable). Approval is subject to the following conditions being met:

- a) The evidence/property may now be disposed of under current evidence/property guidelines.
- b) The recipient body is a bona fide charitable or community organisation and the request is sincere and not for a commercial motive.
- c) Merseyside Police Authority can justify disposal by showing that the benefit (i.e. opportunity cost) from disposal of the item exceeds the money it would raise if auctioned and the money received was applied through existing charitable channels.

When disposing of evidence/property to a charitable cause, the representative of that charity taking ownership must sign a receipt for the property /evidence.

**6.16 Disposal of Firearms**

This must be undertaken by a Firearms Examiner.

**6.17 Disposal of data storage devices**

The disposal of data storage devices must be undertaken by the EMU.

Mobile phones, smart TVs, satellite navigation systems, drones, tablets and computers may contain personal data e.g. names, telephone numbers, etc. Merseyside Police has a duty under data protection legislation to prevent unauthorised disclosure of this information when disposing of data bearing devices. Therefore, when arrangements are made to dispose of or retain for use data bearing devices, Merseyside Police must take reasonable steps to ensure that all personal data is protected and that the device is disposed of or used in a secure manner.

The following methods of dealing with data bearing devices are available:

- a) Disposal – Except where being returned to an owner any item capable of holding personal data is to be disposed of via a reputable firm and certification of the destruction of any data/hard drive obtained.
- b) Use for police purposes e.g. informants or vulnerable witnesses. Any information stored in a data bearing device must be deleted beyond recovery by the Digital Forensics Unit.

Where applicable the sim card must first be removed and destroyed. When a device is reclaimed from an informant or vulnerable witness and is to be used again for a similar purpose the procedure for removing the data/memory must be repeated.

For guidance on retention/disposal guidelines with regards to digital forensic data refer to the NPCC Guidance on Digital Forensics Data Management.

#### 6.18 Official Documents

Where possible, recorded delivery should be used to return any official documents to the relevant authority where owners cannot be traced.

Such documents include:

- a) Passports
- b) Birth certificates
- c) Death certificates
- d) Bankbooks; and
- e) Social security documents.

#### 6.19 Drugs

The Evidence Manager should arrange destruction of drugs stored in the EMU stores when authorised by either these guidelines or Court order or when notified to do so by the officer in charge of the case.

When destruction of drugs is to occur the Evidence Manager will request an officer not below the rank of Inspector with no involvement in the seizure, investigation or storage of the drug(s), to act as an 'independent auditor' to ensure the items authorised for destruction are correct.

Either the Evidence Manager or an officer not below the rank of Inspector should accompany the drugs to an authorised premise and witness their destruction.

#### 6.20 Unclaimed Evidence/Property brought into use by Merseyside Police

Unclaimed evidence/property (other than money) may be retained for use by this Force pursuant to Section 2 Police (Property) Act 1897 as amended by the Police (Property) Act 1997. The Act provides that the Police Commissioner (authority delegated to the EMU Manager) may assume ownership of any evidence/property providing the following criteria are met:

- a) The evidence/property has remained in the possession of the police for a year
- b) The police would under the regulations have the power to sell the evidence/property
- c) In the opinion of the Police Commissioner, the evidence/property can be used for police purposes and
- d) The Police Commissioner determines, in such manner as may be prescribed by the regulations, that the evidence/property is to be retained.

If a member of Merseyside Police determines that an item of evidence/property (other than money) which is held within the Niche property system can be used for a policing purpose they should forward a report to the Evidence Manager for consideration of authorisation on behalf of the Police Commissioner.

#### 6.21 Identifiable Found Property

Items should be returned to the owner, providing there is only one known owner, and no other claimants.

When found property is to be returned, and the owner is to collect it personally, the officer in charge must inform the EMU in advance so arrangements may be made. The officer in charge must also ensure the relevant details are added to the property record.

Once an owner has been identified the EMU officer must send the owner:

- a) A notice (Form 50a, Initial) under Schedule 1, Part I, of the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977, informing the owner that the property can be collected;
- b) A disclaimer form (in case the owner does not want the property back); and

The notice will be sent to the owner's address and will contain sufficient information to give the owner the opportunity to claim the property such as:

- a) The description and location of the property
- b) The times between which it is possible to collect it
- c) The notice will also tell the owner Merseyside Police does not charge for the collection of the property

If after 28 days the owner has not responded to the notice, the property shall be disposed of by the EMU in accordance with current procedures.

#### 6.22 **Indemnity and receipt for evidence/property**

If you are returning evidence/property that has been in police possession:

- a) Fill in a form of indemnity and receipt for evidence/property (Form 40)
- b) Ask the person receiving the evidence/property to sign the form
- c) Endorse the property entry on Niche with the type of identity used by the claimant
- d) Scan and attach the police copy to the corresponding property record
- e) Update the property record on Niche to show as 'disposed'

#### 6.23 **Unidentifiable Found Property**

If the owner cannot be identified the property will normally be kept for six weeks before disposal, unless keeping it involves unreasonable expense or inconvenience, in which case the Evidence Manager may authorise immediate disposal.

If the owner claims the property after it has been disposed of, they are entitled to claim any proceeds obtained, less a reasonable sum to cover the costs of the disposal.

#### 6.24 **Crime Exhibit Property**

Crime Exhibit items must be returned to the owner (unless possession would constitute an offence or would be prejudicial to public interest), providing the officer in charge authorises their release and the following conditions are met:

- a) There is only one owner, and no other claimants, **and**
- b) A photograph or copy will suffice for evidential purposes **or**
- c) The requirement for crime exhibit purposes has ceased **and**
- d) Returning the property does not contravene the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA) 1996.

The procedure for returning / disposing of the Crime Exhibits will be as for 'Found' property.

### 6.25 **Seized Money**

Money seized as part of a Proceeds of Crime investigation will be dealt with by Economic Interventions, who should be contacted regarding specific cases.

Cash seized under PACE 1984 will be banked within 7 days of seizure and will be returned to the original owner, if identified, in cases where no further action is taken. Where there is a conviction and appropriate confiscation/forfeiture order, the officer in the case should inform EMU via Niche task so the appropriate transfer to HMCTS can take place.

### 6.26 **Disputed Ownership Procedures**

When property is in the custody of Merseyside Police and a dispute arises as to rightful ownership, advice and guidance upon how to proceed should be sought from the Force Solicitors Office.

Before this stage is reached the property must be available for release / disposal in line with current property /evidence procedures.

## **7. Animals**

Merseyside Police does not have any facilities for impounding animals, birds, reptiles or fish. Any report of found animals will be treated on an individual basis. Suggested contacts are the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, local zoos, safari parks etc.

## **8. Property arising from a Sudden Death**

### **8.1 Recording Deceased Property**

8.1.1 All property taken as a result of any sudden death must be entered into the Niche property recording system, within a Sudden Death occurrence type. A full description of the property must be recorded, together with a brief clear summary of the nature of the incident so EMU staff understand why the seizure has taken place. The Force Incident Number should be recorded (if relevant) and the name and address of the next of kin where possible.

8.1.2 Details of the property must also be endorsed on a Form 97 (Report of sudden death), with the Niche occurrence number recorded at top right-hand corner of Form 97.

8.1.3 Evidential Property connected with the death, such as medication, ligatures, suicide notes, etc. should be recorded on the Form 97, for the information of H.M. Coroner/Coroners Investigation Officers. Ligatures should accompany the body to the mortuary for the attention of the Pathologist. It should also be noted that drugs & associated paraphernalia; prescribed medication etc may also be requested by the pathologist. (This property is normally disposed of by the Pathologist/Analyst in accordance with HM Coroners directions but should it be returned then book any such item into the Niche property system in the normal way). Notes of any description must also accompany the Form 97 for the attention of the Coroner/Coroners Investigation Officer. The officer in charge must also ensure any medication prescribed to the deceased should be noted on the Form 97 (include name of drug, date dispensed & pharmacy supplying). Any medication available to the deceased but intended for anyone else living with the deceased should be recorded but not seized if required by any other occupant. Prescribed medication (not believed directly connected to the death) should be booked into the Niche property system as found property and linked to the Sudden Death occurrence on Niche, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

8.1.4 Deceased property may present a health and safety risk, therefore, if appropriate endorse the packaging with health hazard warnings.

- 8.1.5 If there is reason to take a deceased person's property into police possession it cannot be released until somebody shows they are entitled to it. This will normally be via a Letter of Administration or Grant of Probate from the Probate Office or other form of suitable identification/reference.
- 8.1.6 Where persons die intestate (without known will) advice on disposal should be sought from the Force Solicitors' Office. Information is also available from the Treasury Solicitor's Department, Bona Vacantia Division on [www.bonavacantia.gov.uk](http://www.bonavacantia.gov.uk).
- 8.1.7 Further advice regarding the property of the deceased should be sought from the Force Coroner's Department Manager.

## 8.2 Cash for Safekeeping

- 8.2.1 One of the most common occurrences of seizure of money for security is at the scene of a sudden death. If there is someone present who is evidently legally and practically able to act in the situation, then the money can be left in their care
- 8.2.2 If an officer has any reason to take a deceased person's money into police possession it cannot be released until somebody shows they are entitled to it. This will usually be a Letter of Administration or Grant of Probate from a Probate Office. The money taken should be entered on Niche as found property and linked to the Sudden Death occurrence.
- 8.2.3 If the deceased leaves a will, executors will have been appointed:
- a) When the estate is small and there is a will with executors (who do not renounce or have not predeceased the deceased) then it is easy to establish whom the money should be paid out to. Merseyside Police would need sight of the original will and proof of identity of the executors to release any money. Copies should be obtained of any such documents.
  - b) In larger estates where a will is being executed, a Grant of Probate is usually applied for; a copy of this must be requested in addition to the original will and proof of identity before the money is released.
- 8.2.4 If there is no will and no Grant of Probate a 'Next of Kin' needs to be established. If there is a dispute over who is the 'Next of Kin' a grant of 'Letters of Administration' will need to be sought. For assets over £5,000, a court will appoint administrators and an application made for a grant of 'Letters of Administration'.
- 8.2.5 When the Social Services accept responsibility for disposing of the deceased's property, Merseyside Police must give them any money in our possession. If Social Services state they are dealing with the deceased's estate, the money may be given to an officer of that authority who can show identification and produce documentation to support that responsibility.

## 8.3 Social Services responsibilities – property of the deceased.

- 8.3.1 It is the duty of the local Social Services Department to bury or cremate the body of any person if no suitable arrangements have been made.
- 8.3.2 When the Social Services accept responsibility for disposing of the deceased's body and property, Merseyside Police must give them any property (including money, documents, etc.) in our possession. If Social Services state they are dealing with the deceased's estate, the property may be given to an officer of that authority who can show identification and produce documentation to support that responsibility.

#### 8.4 **Death - unnatural/unexplained**

- 8.4.1 When a person has died an unnatural/unexplained death an officer must keep their clothing and footwear in case it is needed at the inquest and any future trial. Consideration should also be given to whether photographs would be adequate for purpose.
- 8.4.2 A forensic drying cabinet should be used if the clothing is wet, blood stained, vomit stained, urine stained, etc. Deceased clothing and footwear may present a health and safety risk, therefore, the packaging should be endorsed with health hazard warnings.
- 8.4.3 At the conclusion of the inquest unless there are reasons to the contrary the clothing should be returned to a relative or authorised person unless they indicate otherwise. If the clothing is required to be returned, consideration should be given to consulting with the intended recipient should the clothing appear to require cleaning.

### 9. **Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Pyrotechnics (Fireworks)**

9.1 For the purposes of these guidelines the following are included:

- a) Section 1 Firearms
- b) Shotguns
- c) Section 5 Firearms (including CS Spray)
- d) Air weapons
- e) Imitation firearms
- f) Component parts of a firearm
- g) Articles which fire blank cartridges
- h) Ammunition and other ordnance
- i) Any explosive device
- j) Pyrotechnics
- k) Any item capable of firing any projectile (erg, nail guns, captive bolt guns)

9.2 General safety rules:

- a) Never, under any circumstances, should a firearm be pointed at anyone.
- b) Any firearm suspected explosive device, ordnance or pyrotechnics must not be handled unless absolutely necessary.

#### 9.3 **Recovery Procedures**

- 9.3.1 The Force's Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) are available to assist and give advice when encountering firearms or ammunition. They will make weapons and ammunition safe and advise on their initial safe handling and storage.
- 9.3.2 Only current Authorised Firearms Officers (ARVs, Firearms Enquiry Officers or Firearms Examination Officers) are authorised to make firearms and ammunition safe.
- 9.3.3 When attending the scene of reported found explosives or pyrotechnics (if converted into an improvised explosive device or believed industrial or unstable), the Force Incident Manager must be contacted immediately.
- 9.3.4 On attending a scene of a recovery of a firearm or ammunition (including when such items are handed in to a police station), it is the responsibility of the ARV officer dealing to complete the necessary 'made safe' documentation and to attach the 'made safe' tag to the firearm or ammunition. The tag number should be recorded on Niche when creating the barcode label. To



ensure the safety of police staff and others, the weapon should not be dealt with if the ARV is delayed.

- 9.3.5 If the firearm or ammunition is handed in at a police station, then handling must be kept to a minimum and the firearm/ammunition placed in the secure gun cabinet without delay. A Storm Log must be created immediately requiring attendance of an ARV Officer to complete 'make safe' procedures.
- 9.3.6 If the ARV officer cannot make a weapon safe, they will take immediate custody of it. The weapon will be transported immediately to the Firearms Examination Unit at Edge Lane. If out of hours the weapon should be placed in the firearms cabinet in the interim store at Edge Lane with a warning placed on the door.
- 9.3.7 Dedicated secure gun cabinets located within specified police stations. Each of these specified stations has two gun cabinets; one for holding firearms and ammunition that has been 'made safe' by an ARV, and one for firearms and ammunition 'awaiting the arrival of an ARV to make safe'. These cabinets have separate lockable compartments within them for the separate and secure deposit of ammunition. The key to these cabinets will be securely located within the station's TRAKKA cabinet.
- 9.3.8 In the case of both firearms and ammunition, once the items have been made safe and 'red tagged' as appropriate by the ARV, the ARV dealing must deliver the item/s as soon as possible into the secure storage cabinets in the interim store at Edge Lane.
- 9.3.9 The fact that a firearm or ammunition has come into the possession of Merseyside Police **MUST** immediately be recorded on Niche. Where the item is evidence in a case already recorded within Niche, the original occurrence property tab must be updated. In all other cases, a 'Found Property' occurrence must be generated, and the property tab updated with details of the item/s. The Niche property bar code label must be attached to the item or its packaging.
- 9.3.10 Where firearms and ammunition are recovered together, they should be packaged and made safe as separate items. This enables appropriate, separate storage. In cases where a crime involving the firearm or ammunition is suspected, advice from the CSI should be obtained before this separation takes place in order to minimise the loss of any potential evidence source.
- 9.3.11 All firearms and ammunition will be transported between locations by an ARV. Contact Matrix Armed Policing for further guidance.

#### **EMU Office Procedures**

- 9.5.1 Firearms, ammunition, **single/small** amounts of fireworks and pyrotechnics (NOT converted into an improvised explosive device or believed industrial or unstable) are subject to the same administrative procedures as other property. The only difference being they must be treated with a much higher level of security during storage and always handled with care. If appropriate, reference should be made to guidance on [iForce](#).
- 9.5.2 Explosives, unstable ordnance, **large** amounts of fireworks or fireworks that are believed to be in dangerous condition and pyrotechnics (converted into an improvised explosive device or believed industrial or unstable) must not be stored on Police premises. The FIM should be contacted immediately who will liaise with an external service provider (such as Locards 07711 382438, alan.shaw@locards.co.uk) to organise collection.
- 9.5.3 There are designated explosives cabinets at various locations throughout the force area. These cabinets are outside police stations and are painted red and marked up 'Explosives'. Small amounts of seized fireworks should be stored in these cabinets and the location updated on Niche. Each cabinet is a Niche location. The EMU will arrange disposals for small amounts..

- 9.5.4 If a firearm or ammunition has been lodged temporarily in an interim gun cabinet, the EMU officer must ensure the firearms and ammunition are collected by an ARV and transported by them to the EMU at Edge Lane without delay, and ordinarily **no later than the next day**. The EMU officer must ensure that the appropriate 'made safe' tag is attached together with the Niche property bar code label. The EMU officer is responsible for ensuring the Niche property record(s) are updated as to the movement and current location of each item.
- 9.5.5 No firearms or ammunition should be transferred from an Interim Evidence Store to the EMU by EMU staff engaged in the collection and movement of general found property and crime exhibits.
- 9.5.7 If encountering any firearm/ammunition within the Niche property system which does not have a 'made safe' tag, the EMU staff **MUST** call out an ARV via the Force Contact Centre (FCC) at the earliest opportunity. If the officer requesting has access to the Force incident system (STORM), the request should be via an incident log to the FCC. In all other cases an incident log will be created within the FCC.
- 9.5.8 EMU will undertake a periodic review of firearms and a report will be produced containing a complete inventory of firearms and ammunition held and disposed of and, where items continue to be retained, the reason for retention and likely timescale for disposal. Once concluded, this report must be forwarded to the Chief Superintendent, Criminal Justice.
- 9.5.9 If at any time a firearm or ammunition is found to be missing from any of the EMU offices, or cannot be traced, the Evidence Management Officer must immediately notify the Evidence Manager who will then determine whether to escalate to Criminal Justice Command Team.
- 9.5.10 Where black powder is seized by the Firearms Registry it is normal procedure to ask the owner to nominate another certificate holder to take possession of such powder. In the event that this is not possible, and the black powder needs to be retained, the EMU will take possession of such powder. It will be stored externally in the flame guard cabinet.

## 9.6 Disposal

The Niche system will record the movement and current location of every firearm or ammunition that has been brought into the possession of Merseyside Police.

Officers should utilise the Niche tasking system to inform EMU of the continued retention or disposal of a firearm.

EMU will arrange appropriate disposal of firearms and ammunition. The disposal of any firearm or ammunition must be undertaken by a member of the Firearms Examination Unit and witnessed by a member of staff from the EMU. Niche property records should be updated to reflect that the disposal has taken place and record the details of the EMU witness and FEU officer within the disposal remarks on Niche. Ammunition is removed and disposed of by the EOD. Certain powders will be destroyed on site by the EOD in a controlled manner. In both instances Niche will be updated to reflect the status of these items.

The Firearms Registry is responsible for the return of legally held firearms and ammunition. Merseyside Police will not return a certified firearm or ammunition to an owner unless they hold a valid firearms certificate or licence. Where appropriate certain weapons will be tested by the FEU prior to returning to an owner. Consideration should also be made regarding the best interests of the public.

## 10. Frozen exhibits

- 10.1 The EMU now have responsibility for frozen exhibits. The EMU will review, retain, store and dispose of all frozen evidence within Edge Lane.

## 10.2 Recovery procedures

10.2.1 The seizing officer must record all bag/seal numbers onto Niche as these are significant for forensic submission.

10.2.2 The seizing officer should package wet blood-stained exhibits in breathable evidence bags. If the exhibit is soaked, then it should be double bagged ensuring the continuity on the outer bag has been completed. Further advice can be provided by the duty senior CSI.

10.2.3 When recovering human tissue, the seizing officer must record the exhibit on Niche as a medical sample. The narrative field must be endorsed as human tissue and categorised CAT 1, 2 or 3. Please refer to the Human Tissue (seizure & disposal) Policy and Procedure guidance available on iForce.

- Category 1 - Material taken at the post-mortem examination which would not generally be considered part of the body (e.g. scrapings, fingernails, hair, stomach contents.)
- Category 2 - Samples of human tissue which are not a significant part of the body (e.g. small tissue samples, blocks slides etc.)
- Category 3 - Samples of human tissue that incorporate a significant part of the body (e.g. organs, limbs etc.)

The screenshot shows a web-based form with the following fields and values:

- Property: Pictures Stores management
- Type: Medical samples (circled in red)
- Description: [Empty]
- Orig colours: [Empty]
- Common name: [Empty]
- Value (orig): [Empty] (current) [Empty]
- Quantity: [Empty]
- Remarks: Human Tissue - Cat 1 - (Ref: JEM/3), LEFT FINGERNAIL CLIPPINGS AND SCISSORS, BAG NO. M21884504
- Agency: Merseyside
- Intel reports: 0/0

Further information can be located on iForce along with governance procedure.

10.2.4 The seizing officer should book **each individual exhibit** within the Early Evidence Kit (EEK) on to Niche. All items should be retained in the box with the consent form recording the URN on it.

