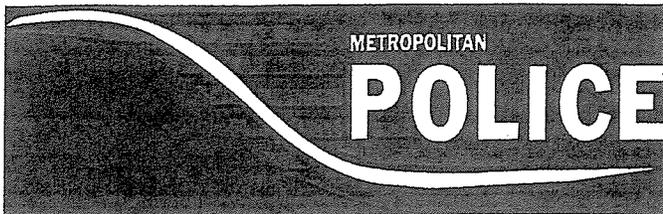


STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Title
Property Viewings

Series / Number
SOP-ECB-02-04

Issue Date
July 22, 2002

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I. PURPOSE:

To establish policy and procedures to be utilized by members of the Evidence Control Branch when scheduling appointments to view property by defense attorneys, United States Attorneys, and members from other law enforcement agencies. In addition, procedures have been established for members to provide for a consistent and orderly method to conduct viewings at the Evidence Control Branch.

II. SCOPE:

This policy applies to the scheduling of appointments to view property and the actual property viewings. In addition to the normal general property viewings that have always been conducted at the Evidence Control Branch, it has become necessary to make provisions to conduct narcotic viewings at the ECB facility due to the relocation of the Drug Enforcement Administration Laboratory. Effective upon the issuance of this order, all property viewings will be done by appointment only. All members assigned to the Evidence Control Branch shall familiarize themselves with the contents of this Standard Operating Procedure and comply with them at all times.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. Scheduling Appointments for Property Viewings.

1. All property viewings, general and narcotic, will be scheduled Monday-Friday from 0830 hours to 1500 hours. (In the past, narcotic viewings were conducted only on Thursdays between the hours of 0900 – 1200).
2. Defense Attorneys, U.S. Attorneys, and members of other law enforcement agencies will forward a viewing letter to the Evidence Control Branch at least seventy-two hours prior to the desired appointment time. Viewing letters will be accepted in person, via fax or mail. The United States Attorneys Office has created a

standardized viewing letter for use by requesting agencies.
(Attachment A)

3. Evidence Control Branch members who receive viewing letters shall check the Property Viewing Appointment Book for open appointment times and place the requester's name, Property Control Number, and type of property being viewed in the book. The appointment book will be kept in the Evidence Control Branch Office at all times. All viewing letters shall then be attached to corresponding PD 81.

B. Scheduling and Preparing for Viewings

1. The Roll Call official shall check the Property Viewing Appointment Book each morning and assign an evidence technician to pull property needed for viewing 3 days in advance.
2. If a narcotic exhibit is needed for viewing, a member assigned to the narcotic team shall pull the property and place it in a temporary storage area located in the rear of the gunroom. This property should be pulled three working days prior to the day of the scheduled viewing. The property will be separated and stored by the day of week of the scheduled viewing.
3. The member assigned to pull narcotics shall check the temporary storage area and return property viewed on the previous day to its permanent storage.
4. If the property needed for viewing is general property, money, or guns, a member assigned to the respective area shall check AEGIS for the location of the property. The location shall then be physically checked to verify that the computer location is correct. This should be done three days prior to the property viewing date. If the property is located, the viewing request letter shall be filled out documenting the location of the property and the date and time it was located. The locating member shall then initial the form as a confirmation that this information is accurate.
5. If the property needed for viewing cannot be located, the evidence technician shall immediately bring it to the attention of the roll call official.
 - a. The roll call official shall determine what lengths to take to locate the property.
 - b. The roll call official shall be responsible for notifying the requestor/ the United States Attorney and the defense

attorney assigned to the case of the missing property within 24 hours.

- c. A report shall be prepared and forwarded through the chain of command to the Manager, Evidence Control documenting the steps taken to locate the missing items. This report shall be accompanied by all database printouts, statements and/or recommendations and shall be completed within 48 hours of the notification of the missing property.
4. Whenever any ECB member relocates property to the temporary viewing storage area, it shall be documented in the AEGIS Database. In addition, when the property is relocated from the temporary storage back to its warehouse location, an indication shall be made in the AEGIS Database.

C. Conducting Viewings

1. When the requester appears at the Evidence Control Branch for the viewing, an ECB member shall verify the requester's identification and photocopy it, escort him/her into the office, sign him/her into the sign in book. The photocopy shall be attached to the original PD 81 (Property Record). Credentials of law enforcement personnel shall be redacted with permanent marker.
2. The Evidence Control Branch member shall locate the requested property and escort the viewer(s) to the dock viewing area for the viewing. The ECB member conducting the viewing shall not leave the viewer for any reason during the viewing. The viewer shall be required to follow the instructions precisely as written in the viewing letter. The viewed property will immediately be returned to the temporary storage area upon completion of the viewing.
3. If the requesting viewer fails to appear for a scheduled appointment, it shall be documented in the appointment book and the property returned to its permanent Warehouse Storage. The Assistant United States Attorney who prepared the viewing letter shall be notified of the failure to appear.



Keith L. Williams
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