

Report Highlights

Long Beach Police Department's Evidence Control Section Performance Audit October 2020



With over 300,000 property and evidence items to maintain, the Long Beach Police Department's Evidence Control Section is charged with the intake, storage, and disposition of these items. They include high-risk items such as guns, drugs, and money. Due to the importance of maintaining the integrity of evidence tied to active criminal cases and returning property to its' rightful owner or finder, the City needs to ensure that proper, clear controls are in place and followed consistently.

Main Audit Takeaway: The Long Beach Police Department's Evidence Control Section needs to improve security over property and evidence items by 1) implementing physical security measures at storage locations, 2) limiting personnel with access to these items, and 3) performing effective inventory management. These overall actions would reduce the risk of theft or tampering, which could result in missing items or impact ongoing investigations and criminal cases. Leaving these risks unaddressed could ultimately lead to a loss of public confidence and possible agency liability.

Process

Key Findings

Examples:



1 Intake

Items are retrieved daily from Patrol Divisions by property clerks and taken to a property warehouse for processing into the electronic inventory system.

Security:

Necessary security measures are not in place to safeguard all property and evidence including high-risk items such as guns, drugs and money.



No security alarm system at the main warehouse.



2 Storage

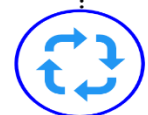
Items are stored in a property warehouse and are moved or checked out as needed for an investigation, testing or court.

Access:

Too many people have access to property and evidence items.



15 individuals with access should not have access and 15 other individuals have more access than is necessary.



3 Disposition

After requirements are met, items undergo disposition, which includes return to an owner/finder, destruction, sale at an auction, or money deposit into the City's bank account.

Inventories:

Inventory counts of property and evidence items do not examine all property warehouse storage areas on a regular basis.



191 high-risk items are not accounted for in inventory.

Dispositions:

Dispositions based on established thresholds are not performed as often as needed.



Only 8 money dispositions were performed a year when they should be performed monthly.

CITY AUDITOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Install and activate a security alarm system at the main warehouse to detect any unauthorized access.
- Remove access to warehouses and evidence rooms at field divisions from personnel who do not work within the Evidence Control Section.
- Create a schedule to perform an inventory of high-risk items on an annual basis.
- Set realistic thresholds, either based on time limitations or quantity of items, by which dispositions should be performed.

THE DEPARTMENT AGREED WITH MOST RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTED IMPLEMENTATION STATUSES:

- A security alarm was installed at the main storage warehouse.
- Access to warehouses and evidence rooms has been limited to appropriate employees and select supervisors.
- The Department is working to ensure all storage areas are examined and that all high-risk items are accounted for in the inventory. They are also seeking to hire a Quality Assurance Manager to maintain inventory.
- A new policy will be implemented to assist with reducing appropriate inventory of items and will set a standard disposition schedule that is consistent with the statute of limitations.



Our Mission

To make Long Beach better through independent audits and fraud investigations

We work to:

- Provide assurance City funds are spent as intended
- Promote transparency and accountability of City operations
- Prevent fraud, waste and abuse of City resources



CONNECT WITH US

@LBCityAuditor



CityAuditorLauraDoud.com



Auditor@longbeach.gov



562-570-6751



Download the
MyAuditor App



Available on the
App Store



Get it on
Google play

Report City Fraud, Waste or Abuse

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse against the City, report your tip anonymously:

- Call 1-888-FRAUD-07
- Visit CityAuditorLauraDoud.com/Report-Fraud
- Use our MyAuditor App

Our investigative team reviews all tips and will take appropriate action.

