

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

28 JANUARY 2009

Annual Property and Evidence Audit

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board receives this report for information in accordance with the Collection, Preservation and Control of Evidence and Property guidelines contained within the Policing Standards Manual (2000), the Collection, Preservation and Control of Evidence and Property Board Policy 02/00-22 and York Regional Police Procedure LE-020 Collection and Preservation of Evidence and Property.

SYNOPSIS

Section 5 of LE-020 of the Policing Standards guidelines and York Regional Police Procedure and Board Policy in regards to the Collection, Preservation and Control of Evidence requires York Regional Police to undertake an annual audit of all property and evidence held by our service and report the results to the Board.

The York Regional Police Quality Assurance Bureau conducted a comprehensive annual audit of all property rooms in 2008. This report summarizes the findings of the annual audit and the recommendations put forth.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

BACKGROUND

An annual audit of all York Regional Police property rooms was completed in 2008 in compliance with the Policing Standards Manual, Board Policy and York Regional Police Procedures. York Regional Police has eight property rooms. These property rooms are located within each of the five Operational Districts, Drugs and Vice Enforcement Bureau, Headquarters and at the Seized Property Management facility located in Toronto.

Representative samples of general property were taken in accordance with International Standards on Auditing issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board from all of the property rooms and only a few minor administrative errors were found which were corrected immediately. All of the property stored in safes, all passports, all firearms and all genuine and counterfeit currency was accounted for.

On July 3, 2007, the Versadex Workflow Property Disposal system was implemented. Officers receive an electronic notification in Versadex seeking direction on how to dispose of property they have seized. The officers input their disposition instructions in Versadex which are then routed to the Sergeant in charge of the Property/Evidence Management Unit for approval. This process placed a significant workload on the Sergeant in charge of the Property/Evidence Management Unit and resulted in a reduction in the number of dispositions being issued which meant the volume of property being stored in the property rooms started to increase.

A Staff Sergeant was added to the Property/Evidence Management Unit on January 1, 2008, to assist with the dispositions of property in all York Regional Police property room locations. The 2008 audit revealed a reduction in the volume of property in all property room locations with the exception of Two District and Drugs and Vice Enforcement Bureau. Two District had an increase of 278 articles while Drugs and Vice Enforcement Bureau had an increase of 2056 articles. In both of these property rooms, the increase in the volume of property was as a result of an increase in enforcement by officers assigned to those police facilities.

Recommendations regarding accountability, efficiency and training were made during the 2008 Quality Assurance Bureau Property Audit.

2008 Audit Recommendations include:

1. Three amendments to York Regional Police Procedure LE-020 Collection and Preservation of Evidence and Property requiring members to:
 - Record the general occurrence number on evidence bags;
 - Enter the evidence bag number into Versadex and on the YRP151 Property Receipt; and
 - Update Evidence Continuity screens in Versadex when property is removed from the property room for court or investigative purposes and is not being immediately returned to the property room.

The Executive Command Team has directed that the Property/Evidence Management Unit and the Quality Assurance Bureau incorporate the above three recommendations into York Regional Police Procedure LE-020 Collection and Preservation of Evidence and Property.

2. All supervisors receive additional training on the chain of events which must take place from the time property is taken into the possession of York Regional Police and then disposed of or released back to the owner.

The Executive Command Team has directed that the Property/Evidence Management Unit and the Training and Education Unit create a training video to address this recommendation.

3. A motion activated digital closed circuit television system should be installed in the property room where genuine and counterfeit currency is processed and that the images be recorded to a hard drive server.

The Executive Command Team has directed that the existing videotape recorder and camera system in this property room be replaced with a motion activated digital closed circuit television system connected to the York Regional Police computer server.

Annual audits of property and evidence provide us the opportunity to ensure that we continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner in accordance with Policing Standards, Board Policy and York Regional Police Procedures.

Armand P. La Barge, O.O.M.
Chief of Police

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