5-04/010.00 - Property/Evidence Handling

All articles of possible evidentiary value shall be carefully handled and booked as evidence in PRELIMS without unnecessary delay. The booking shall be handled by the field deputy, the investigating deputy, or the specialist called to the scene.

Emphasis on the proper care of evidence cannot be over stressed. The best evidence is useless if improperly handled. The process can be divided into four stages:

- Gathering of potential evidence;
- Marking evidence correctly;
- Maintaining the chain of custody; and
- Preventing contamination.

Each phase is equally important. Dereliction during any phase, regardless of the care taken during the other phases, may render the evidence worthless.

Deputy personnel shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the rules of admissibility of evidence, its collection and preservation, and the initial processing procedures.