5-04/010.60 - Packaging of Evidence

Only clean containers or paper shall be used to package evidence. Small articles should be placed in paper packets, envelopes, boxes, bottles, glass vials, or packages and containers specifically designed for the evidence item.

For property placed in an envelope, use a clasp-type, paper envelope.

Items shall be packaged by item type. Each package shall contain items of a single item type. Different item types (e.g., clothing and a firearm) shall not be packaged together.

All packaged evidence shall be marked or tagged. Whenever practical, deputy, detective, criminalist, or other specialist personnel sealing the package shall write his/her name or initials on the seal. The name or initials shall extend across the edge of the seal onto the package.

The application of cellophane tape directly on property should be kept to a minimum.

When similar items (i.e., same item type) are found adjacent to each other, they may be packaged together provided no chance of cross-contamination or alteration exists. Contaminable items, articles for comparison tests, and the same kind of physical evidence found at different locations shall be packaged separately.

Packaging instructions for some specialized items are as follows:

Alcoholic Beverages – Contents of opened containers should be placed in a clear glass or plastic container. A minimum of 2 ounces should be collected for submission to Scientific Services Bureau. The balance of liquid in the opened container may be destroyed but the container itself shall be retained as evidence.

Firearms – Unloaded firearms should be packaged in cardboard boxes designed for this purpose. If a cardboard box is not available, a manila-type envelope or other form of paper packaging may be used. If the firearm was loaded when recovered and subsequently unloaded, the ammunition removed from the firearms should be placed in an appropriately sized manila-type envelope and included within the same package as the firearm. If a magazine was present in the firearm when recovered, that magazine should be included within the same package as the firearm.

Latent Fingerprints - Objects suspected of bearing or containing latent fingerprints which may be of value in an investigation should be packaged so that possible impressions will be protected. (This applies when a fingerprint specialist is not called to the scene.)

Narcotics shall be separated from other evidence for packaging and sealing. The deputy shall generate a property label through PRELIMS and affix it to the transparent evidence bag. The deputy shall seal the bag by removing the protective adhesive strip, folding over the bag flap onto the pouch, and pressing along the adhesive strip to complete the seal. The deputy shall remove the completed plastic flap receipt and submit it with his report. The sequential number on the transparent evidence bag shall be recorded in PRELIMS and in the area of the report describing the seized or found narcotic evidence (see section 5-04/110.50 Narcotic Evidence Special Handling).

Phencyclidine (PCP) - hazardous substances, whether PCP or any other chemical, shall never be processed

within a station/unit. Such hazardous substances shall be stored in an area which is outside the main facility. The following procedures shall be employed when packaging PCP:

- Only package PCP evidence in a KAPAK® plastic evidence pouch;
- Do not cut the KAPAK® pouch into smaller sections to accommodate smaller items - use as many as necessary. For disposition of large quantities of PCP which cannot be sealed in a KAPAK® pouch, contact Narcotics Bureau at (562) 946-7125 during normal business hours. After normal business hours, contact the on-call narcotics investigator through Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau. Narcotics Bureau personnel will be responsible for notifying the disposal company who will be responsible for taking samples and destroying large quantities of PCP;
- Heat-seal the KAPAK® pouch carefully and thoroughly, using only a "Scotch KAPAK® Sealer;"
- Do not staple through the KAPAK® pouch;
- Place the KAPAK® pouch in a sufficiently large transparent narcotic evidence bag; and
- Conspicuously label PCP evidence envelopes and paper bags, "Contains PCP."

Poisons shall be placed in glass containers. (Foodstuffs involved in cases of animal poisoning shall not be submitted for examination unless an eyewitness can identify the person who placed the foodstuff where it was found).

Any deviation from the above policy must receive prior approval from personnel with the appropriate evidence handling expertise.