5-04/110.50 - Narcotic Evidence Special Handling

Cannabis

Dried plant material - Large quantities of dried plant material seized in individual packages shall be counted, and a representative number shall be initialed. Packages shall be consolidated into suitable containers, e.g., cardboard boxes, burlap bags, etc., and the containers shall be sealed. A property label shall be generated in PRELIMS and secured to each container enumerating the number of individual packages contained therein.

Small quantities of dried plant material shall be placed in a transparent evidence bag and sealed. The evidence shall be described in PRELIMS and on the property label generated from PRELIMS.

Undried plants - Large quantities of plants shall be packaged in containers such as cardboard boxes or burlap bags. Small quantities of small plants may be packaged in paper envelopes or paper bags. Undried plants of any size or quantity shall not be packaged in plastic bags or plastic containers of any type.

A property/evidence label generated in PRELIMS shall be attached to the container listing the approximate number of plants and the range in height of the plants contained therein.

Other plant material

Deputies may find mint leaves, tea leaves, or other herbs in the possession of a suspect. These items may be impregnated with PCP, THC, or other hallucinogens. Plant materials suspected of being contaminated with chemicals shall be handled with disposable latex or nitrile gloves. Leather gloves shall not be used as the leather may absorb the chemicals and contaminate the wearer at a later time.

These items shall be packaged and stored as described in section 5-04/010.60, Packaging of Evidence for PCP.

Powders

All powder shall be left in the original container, e.g., plastic bags, balloons, foil, bindles, etc., except where the container is United States currency. If possible, the officer shall initial the original container and note the URN and date. If this is not feasible, a slip of paper noting this information shall be placed in the transparent evidence bag along with the evidence.

Item descriptions entered into PRELIMS for this type of evidence should be similar to the following:

- One plastic bag containing white powder resembling amphetamine sulfate;
- One red balloon containing a tan powder resembling heroin; or
- One foil bindle containing a white powder resembling cocaine.

Large quantities in excess of 200 units shall be left in the original container. The specific count is not necessary. A minimum of 20 units of the entire quantity seized shall be selected and initialed for identification. If the quantity is such that it will not fit into a transparent evidence bag, it shall be placed in a suitable container. See prior instruction, Plant Material – Cannabis, Large Quantity.

Small quantities of less than 200 units, a minimum of one-tenth of the quantity seized, shall be selected and initialed for identification, and the contraband and the container shall be placed in a transparent evidence bag. Quantities of ten or less shall be initialed in total for identification.

Examples of descriptions entered into PRELIMS for this type of evidence are as follows:

- One suitcase containing five plastic bags of a large amount of white, double-scored tablets resembling amphetamine sulfate; and
- One plastic bag containing a large amount of purple tablets resembling LSD.

Liquids

Liquids shall be left in the original container, if possible. If the container leaks or there is no way to secure the top, the liquid may be transferred to a more suitable container or a container specifically designed for the evidence.

The original container shall be kept as part of the evidence and shall be marked with the deputy's initials, the URN, and date. Evidence shall be sealed in a transparent evidence bag and may be described as follows:

- One quart mason jar, ¾ full, containing a bluish liquid resembling LSD; or
- One 2-inch vial, ½ full, containing brown liquid resembling hashish oil.

Paraphernalia

Drug paraphernalia is defined by the California Health and Safety Code, section 11364.5(d), as all equipment, products, and materials of any kind which are intended for use or designed for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, concealing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance.

Paraphernalia encountered may be as follows:

- Rock cocaine pipe;
- Cocaine inhaler; and
- Burnt spoon with cotton swab and hypodermic needle.

Central Property personnel shall transport paraphernalia to the Central Property custodian for storage and disposition. Paraphernalia may be transported to Scientific Services Bureau should there be a specific need for analysis. The Central Property custodian, in collaboration with Narcotics Bureau, shall dispose of paraphernalia. The Central Property custodian will dispose of large items such as scales, beakers, burners, and other containers.

With the exception of hypodermic syringes and/or needles, all narcotic-related paraphernalia shall be marked and placed in a marked transparent evidence bag or in a plain evidence envelope, booked into PRELIMS, and a PRELIMS-generated property/evidence label attached. The evidence bag/envelope shall then be placed in the narcotics evidence locker.

The following procedure shall be followed when a hypodermic syringe/needle is taken as evidence and is not

to be examined by Scientific Services Bureau:

- Upon seizure of a hypodermic needle and/or syringe, it should be transported to the station/unit during the current shift of the seizing deputy;
- Two photographs of the syringe will be taken in the presence of the watch sergeant with the file number clearly displayed. The names of the deputy taking the photograph and the witnessing sergeant will be noted in the incident report;
- The syringe and/or needle shall immediately be disposed of in a "Sharps" infectious waste container (red) or other suitable container authorized by the Narcotics Bureau captain. When the containers are full, they shall be delivered to the Narcotics Bureau for disposal;
- The photographs serve as the “next best evidence” and shall be placed in an evidence envelope, marked, booked into PRELIMS, a PRELIMS-generated barcode label affixed, and placed into an interim storage location for future court proceedings;
- Syringes and/or needles containing substances or residue will not routinely be examined by the Scientific Services Bureau and should be disposed of in a "Sharps" container or other container authorized by the Narcotics Bureau captain. When a syringe or needle containing a substance is seized in a case involving driving under the influence, narcotics cases within custody facilities, internal or special investigations, or other unusual cases, an examination of the substance may be requested;
- In cases where a syringe/needle containing a substance is held as evidence and one of the above circumstances exists, the contents of the syringe shall be placed in a small glass vial, tightly capped, and transported to the laboratory in a transparent evidence bag. The description on the property label affixed to the bag should include the following text: "contents of syringe"; and
- A syringe or needle held as evidence shall be placed securely inside a Biohazard Eva-Safe container. The container shall be placed in a transparent evidence bag and the description on the property label affixed to the bag should include the following text: "NEEDLE." The transparent evidence bag shall be placed in the narcotic evidence locker. When it is no longer necessary to keep the syringe or needle, the Biohazard Eva-Safe tube containing the syringe or needle shall be placed in a “Sharps” container and disposed of in the same manner as other syringes and needles. The Biohazard Eva-Safe container is available through Central Supply.

Extreme caution shall be utilized when working with a syringe or needle. Plastic gloves shall be used when handling a syringe or needle. Care shall be taken to avoid skin puncture or any contact with fluid from a syringe or needle.

Any questions relating to the safe handling of a syringe or needle shall be directed to the Scientific Services Bureau prior to handling.

Other Narcotics

Occasionally, officers will encounter forms of narcotics or dangerous drugs not enumerated above. When possible, the evidence shall be kept in its original container, described in PRELIMS and PRELIMS-generated item label affixed to the transparent evidence bag. Some examples of item descriptions are:

- One foil-wrapped 2" x 2" x 1/4" package containing a brown material resembling hashish; or
- A small quantity of green plant material resembling peyote buttons.