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NIST/NIJ Evidence Management Survey

Introduction

This survey was developed in consultation with the Evidence Management Steering Committee (EMSC), a group of about 20 stakeholders selected by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), who represent state, local, and federal agencies and private organizations that deal with the management of physical evidence.

The Evidence Management Survey is intended for handlers of forensic evidence across the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, courts, hospitals, forensic laboratories, and medical examiner's offices, to obtain data on the extent of evidence management issues within our criminal justice system. The results will provide insight on how to best serve our audience of evidence handlers by assessing existing policies and protocols, personnel education and training needs, and knowledge gaps among entities responsible for storing or analyzing physical evidence.

The survey should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation!

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0693-0031. Without this approval, we could not conduct this survey/information collection. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 45 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Shannan Williams by email to; Shannan.Williams@nist.gov or by phone at 301-975-8021.



* 1. Please indicate your primary organization type.	
Law Enforcement	
Crime/Forensic Laboratory	
Clinic/Healthcare	
Court System	
Medical Examiner/Coroner Office	
Correctional System	
Private Industry	
* 2. How would you classify your organization?	
Local	
State	
Federal	
Tribal	
Private Industry	
Other (please specify):	



" J. W	hat region is your organization located in?
	New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
	Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA)
E	East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)
\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
	South Atlantic (DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, DC, WV)
_ E	East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN)
O 1	West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)
	Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY)
F	Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)
* 4. Ho	ow many total individuals are employed by your organization?
	ow many total individuals are employed by your organization? < 10
	< 10
	< 10 10-25
	< 10 10-25 26-49
	< 10 10-25 26-49 50-99
	< 10 10-25 26-49 50-99 100-499



* 5. Does your organization conduct any of the following?
(Select all that apply.)
Drug test, upon hire
Drug test, routinely after hire
Drug test, randomly after hire
Drug test, upon reassignment
Drug test, after incident/complaint/concern
Background check, upon hire
Background check, routinely after hire
Background check, randomly after hire
Background check, upon reassignment
Background check, after incident/complaint/concern
Neither drug tests nor background checks are performed at my organization
I don't know



lect all that apply.)
ANAB
A2LA
CALEA
IAPE
The evidence/property operations of my organization are not accredited
Other (please specify):



Organization Demographics

* 7. Are the day-to-day operations and management of evidence/property performed by sworn officers or civilians?

(Select all that apply.)

	N/A	Sworn officers	Civilians	I don't know
Day-to-day operations				
Management of evidence/property				



* 8. How many personnel does your organization have assigned full-time to the Evidence Storage/Property Room(s)/area(s)?
O 0
<u> </u>
6-10
11-30
31-50
> 50
I don't know
* 9. Are there personnel responsible for both storing evidence and investigating cases?
Yes
○ No
I don't know



-	idence/property are performed by the personnel at your
organization? (Select all that apply.)	
(Зегест ан так арргу.)	
Definitions for this question:	
 Inventory: the process of accounting for all custody of an agency. 	or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the
·	and processes of the property/evidence functions of the neet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply
	he release or disposal of evidence/property.
• <u>Destruction</u> : the act of breaking apart, meli	
evidence/property unusable before discardForfeited property: property seized by the	ding. government from a private individual or entity by court order,
civil action, or due to statutory requirement	ts.
Receiving	Conducting inventories
Storing	Audits
Indexing or cataloging	Preparing items for transport (e.g., forensic lab, offsite storage)
Securing	Preparing items for destruction
Retrieval	Auction
Disposal	Diversion
Research for disposition	Ensuring agency policy is upheld
Generate disposition requests	Prohibitive possession checks
Complete disposition	Response to seal order
Processing (opening up packaging, etc.)	Response to discovery requests
Ensuring all items are properly marked/tagged	Evidence transfer between facilities
Ensuring all records are accurate including status of ite	em Develop policy
Releasing property to rightful owner	Testify in court
Releasing evidence to officers	Manage/deposit evidentiary funds
Managing digital evidence	Manage the accounts for evidentiary funds
Copying media and documents as requested by an investigator, prosecutor, or other appropriate person or	Forfeited property r agency
Conducting inspections	
Other (please specify):	



* 11.	On average, how many medical forensic patients does your organization serve annually?
\bigcirc	N/A – my organization does not serve forensic patients
	50 or less
	51 – 150
\bigcirc	151 – 300
	301 – 500
	501 – 1000
	More than 1000
\bigcirc	I don't know
* 12.	What types of medical forensic examinations or evaluations does your organization provide?
	N/A – my organization does not provide medical forensic examinations or evaluations
	All forms of injury, abuse, neglect or harm
\bigcirc	Physical abuse/neglect only
	Sexual abuse/neglect/exploitation only



Organization Demographics

* 13. Ha	as your	organization	received an	y grant fi	unding to	assist with	the mar	nagement of	evidence	and
proper	rty?									

Yes

O No



* 14.	Does your organization have a dedicated location or space for evidence/property storage?
	Yes
	No
	I don't know
* 15.	Which of the following best applies to your organization?
\bigcirc	My organization temporarily stores evidence/property items (< 72 hours)
	My organization stores evidence/property items long-term
	My organization stores evidence/property items both temporarily and long-term
	My organization does not store evidence/property items
	I don't know



*	16. Does your organization collect non-report/non-investigative sexual assault kits (NIKs)?
	Yes
	○ No
	I don't know



* 17. Who stores NIKs in your jurisdiction?	
Clinical Program	
Advocacy Organization	
Law Enforcement	
Forensic Laboratory	
I don't know	
Other (please specify):	
* 18. How long does your organization store NIKs?	
* 18. How long does your organization store NIKs? Less than 30 days	
Less than 30 days	
Less than 30 days 30 days to less than 1 year	



* 19.	Do you encounter any challenges transferring evidence/property items between organizations?
	Yes
	No



*	20. Please explain.		



NIST/NIJ Evidence Management Survey						
Respondent Demographics						
* 21. Were you required to undergo a background investigation or background check for your current position?						
Yes						
○ No						
22. What is your current job title?						



* 23. Which of the following best describes your current job level?
Trainee
Entry Level
Experienced Employee
Supervisor/Manager
Director
Administrative
Other (please specify):
* 24. Which of the following best describes your current civilian or officer status?
N/A
Sworn Officer
Commissioned Officer
Civilian



* 25. How long have you been in your current position?				
<pre>< 1 year</pre>				
1-2 years				
2-3 years				
3-5 years				
5-7 years				
7-10 years				
10-15 years				
15-20 years				
Over 20 years				
* 26. Do you have direct contact with items of evidence or property?				
Yes				
○ No				



* 27. How many years of experience do y handling items of evidence or property?	
No experience	
<pre>< 1 year</pre>	
1-2 years	
2-3 years	
3-5 years	
5-7 years	
7-10 years	
10-15 years	
15-20 years	
Over 20 years	

* 28. How many years of experience do you have handling evidence or property inside a property room?				
No experience				
<pre>< 1 year</pre>				
1-2 years				
2-3 years				
3-5 years				
5-7 years				
7-10 years				
10-15 years				
15-20 years				
Over 20 years				



* 29. Do you function as a property custodian?
Yes
No



* 30	Do you hold any other roles within your agency?
	Yes
	No



*	31. Please exp	plain.		



* 32. What is the highest level of education you have completed?				
Less than high school completion				
High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC)				
Professional certificate or diploma				
Associate degree				
Bachelor's degree				
Master's degree				
Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree				
* 33. Do you hold any certifications?				
Yes				
○ No				



*	* 34. Please list your certifications.					



Education and Training

* 35. What is the minimum educational requirement for your position?	
Less than high school completion	
High school diploma or equivalent (for example, GED, HiSET, TASC)	
Professional certificate or diploma	
Associate degree	
Bachelor's degree	
Master's degree	
Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.N.P., or other high-level professional degree	
* 36. Does your role require any of the following?	
(Select all that apply.)	
Attending formal, specialized training for evidence management	
Obtaining certification(s) in evidence management	
Maintaining certification(s) in evidence management	
None of the above	



Education and Training

	What type of training related to evidence handling did you receive for your position? lect all that apply.)
	Self-taught
	On the job training
	Lectures or presentations without CE credits
	Lectures or presentations with CE credits
	Conferences
	Certificate program
	Undergraduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree)
	Graduate level courses related to evidence topics (not part of a degree)
	Graduate program including evidence topics
	None of these
	Other type of education/training (please specify):
* 38.	Is the training documented?
	Yes
	No
	N/A



Education and Training

* 39. Please indicate why the training is documented. (Select all that apply.)	
Employment requirements	
Certification, licensure, or related professional requirement	
Organization accreditation	
Other (please specify):	



Quality Control

* 40. Does your organization have quality assurance/quality control policies?

Definitions for this question:

- Quality Assurance: the standardized procedures, methods, or philosophy for collecting, processing, or analyzing data, that is performed on an ongoing basis and aimed at maintaining or improving the appropriateness and reliability of services.
- Quality Control: the sum of all the activities that prevent unwanted (e.g., negative) change in quality of services.

Yes
○ No
* 41. Does your organization have a designated quality control individual and/or team/unit?
(Select all that apply.)
QC Individual
QC Team/Unit
None of the above



Quality Control

* 42. Does your organization have written policies, procedures, protocols, or other related documents related to the following?

(Select all that apply.)

Definitions for this question:

- <u>Audit</u>: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.
- <u>Inventory</u>: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.
- <u>Destruction</u>: the act of breaking apart, melting, crushing, or making an item of property/evidence unusable before discarding.

Evidence Packaging
Evidence Storage
Evidence Tracking
Evidence Security
Evidence Disposition
Evidence Destruction
Conducting Audits/Inventories
Handling of hazardous and biological materials
Storage to minimize cross contamination
None of the above
I don't know



Quality Control

*	43. What type of guiding principles are followed?	



Quality Control

	44. How often are your organization's standard operating procedures or established procedures concerning evidence management reviewed and/or revised?
(N/A, we do not have SOPs or established procedures
(Never, once they are established, they are not reviewed again
(On a predetermined review schedule
(I don't know
(As needed





You're about halfway done with the survey! We greatly appreciate your time. Click "Next" when you're ready to continue.



Evidence Tracking

^ 45.	How is evidence tracked?
	Manual Written Tracking only
	Electronic Tracking (e.g., computer assisted, computer program) only
	Hybrid of Manual and Electronic Tracking
	None of these
\bigcirc	Other (please specify):



Evidence Tracking

*	46. Please indicate what type of tracking system is used:



Evidence Tracking

* 47. Does your agency/organization track chain of custody?

•	 Chain of custody: the chronological documentation 	n of the collection,	custody,	control,	transfer (temporary
	or permanent), and disposition of evidence, either	physical or electro	onic.			

\cup	res
\bigcirc	No
\bigcirc	I don't know



	48. How does your agency/organization track chain of custody? (Select all that apply.)						
	Manual Written Tracking (e.g., ledger, index cards)						
	Written on evidence package						
	Manual Electronic Tracking, (e.g., spreadsheet)						
	Automated Electronic Tracking (e.g., evidence management system)						
	Case report						
	Other (please specify):						
* 49.	What aspects of chain of custody does your agency/organization document?						
(Se	(Select all that apply.)						
	Item movement/transfer						
	Reason for movement						
	Item custody/possession						
	Authorizing person						
	Disposition status						
	Date and time stamps						
	Other (please specify):						



* 50. Is a unique identifier issued	to each individual evidence/property item?
Yes	
No	
I don't know	



* 51.	Do you label each individual evidence/property item?
	Yes
\bigcirc	No
	I don't know



*	52. How are individual evidence/property items identified and referenced?						



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.

* 53. Which of the following is retention and disposition of evidence/property based on?					
(Select all that apply.)					
Offense type					
State Statutes or Regulations					
Organization Policy					
Blanket Authorization					
Upon authorization of officer/investigator					
Judge/Court Order					
I don't know					
Other (please specify):					



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.
- * 54. Who is responsible for determining the disposition of evidence/property? (Select all that apply.)

	Evidence	Property
Submitting/Case Investigator		
Evidence/Property Room Personnel		
Prosecutor		
Judge/Court Order		
Other (please specify below)		
I don't know		
Please specify for any "Other" chosen above:		



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.

	* 55. What triggers the initiation of the disposition process? (Select all that apply.)				
(36)	ieci ali tilat appiy.)				
	Judge/Court Order				
	Electronic tracking (e.g. computer assisted, computer program)				
	Need for space				
	Statutory requirements				
	Organizational policy				
	Only when authorized by leadership/management				
	When my organization has time				
	I don't know				
	Other (please specify):				



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.

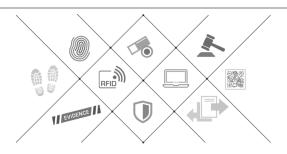
* 56. What process does your organization use to purge evidence following disposition?				
(Select all that apply.)				
Our organization does not purge evidence				
Release to the Owner or Finder				
Release to another organization				
Auction				
Destruction				
Charity/Donation				
Discard				
Crush/Recycle				
Incinerate				
Departmental/Organizational Use				
I don't know				
Other (please specify):				



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.

57. Does your department have an established schedule/pre-determined inventory goal for purging evidence/property?
Yes
○ No
I don't know



Disposition and Retention

- Release to owner: the return of property/evidence to its rightful owner or designee.
- <u>Purging of property/evidence</u>: part of the disposition process referring to the authorized disposal or returning of property/evidence to an owner or their designee in a manner that is consistent with established policy, jurisdictional regulations, and statute of limitations.
- <u>Disposition</u>: the authorization process for the release or disposal of evidence/property.

* 58. Does the Evidence/Propert	y Room routinely sen	d out requests to depa	irtment members for	the
disposition of evidence/propert	y?			

	Yes	No	I don't know
Evidence		\bigcirc	
Property			
* 59. Does the Evidence/Property Room routinely send out requests directly to prosecuting agencies for the disposition of evidence/property?			
	Yes	No	I don't know
Evidence		\bigcirc	\bigcirc
Property			



Inventory

Definition for this section:

• Inventory: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.

* 60. How often does your organization conduct a 100% inventory on the evidence/property room?

(Select all that apply.)

Never

Multiple times each year

Annually

Every 1-5 years

Upon change of leadership/command

Upon change of personnel

I don't know

Other (please specify):



Inventory

- <u>Inventory</u>: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.
- * 61. Does your agency conduct partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory?

 Yes

 No
 - I don't know



Inventory

- <u>Inventory</u>: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.
- * 62. How often is a partial, rotational, or high-liability inventory conducted?

	Partial inventory	Rotational inventory	High-liability inventory
Never			
Multiple times each year			
Annually			
Every 1-5 years			
Continually			
I don't know			
Other (please specify below)			
Please specify for any "Other" chosen above:			



Inventory

- <u>Inventory</u>: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.
- * 63. Do you maintain a system of tracking to know the number of items received and the number of items purged for each of these time frames?

	Yes	No	I don't know
Monthly		\bigcirc	
Annually			
Across Multiple Years			



Inventory

- <u>Inventory</u>: the process of accounting for all or a specified portion of the property/evidence items in the custody of an agency.
- * 64. How many items of evidence/property are currently in your organization's inventory? (Write out number without commas, e.g., 1200000.)

 * 65. Was the number you provided an estimate?

 Yes

 No

 * 66. Does your agency destroy/dispose of more items than you receive on a yearly basis?

 Yes

 No

 My agency does not destroy/dispose of evidence/property

 I don't know



Audits

- <u>Audit</u>: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.
- * 67. Is your organization's evidence/property room audited?

 Yes

 No

 I don't know



Audits

•	<u>Audit</u> : a review of the policies, procedures	, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether
	or not they meet the recognized standards	, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.

* 68. When was the last time an audit was conducted?			
Less than 1 year			
1-2 years			
2-5 years			
5-7 years			
7-10 years			
Over 10 years			
I don't know			
* 69. Who performs the audit?			
Completed by an evidence/property room leadership			
Internal or external to the evidence/property room			
External to the organization			



Audits

- <u>Audit</u>: a review of the policies, procedures, and processes of the property/evidence functions of the agency to determine whether or not they meet the recognized standards, best practices, and comply with applicable statutes and codes.
- * 70. What is evaluated during the audit?

 (Select all that apply.)

 Quality of data entry

 Security controls

 Work environment

 Training records

 Evaluation of evidence for disposition eligibility

 Written policies and procedures

 Compliance with established policies and procedures

 Other (please specify):

 * 71. Are there corrective actions required based on audit findings?

 Yes

 No

 I don't know



Security

	last all that are the
(Sei	lect all that apply.)
	My organization's evidence/property room is not secure
	Key card
	Biometrics
	Code lock
	Double lock
	Video surveillance
	Steel frame doors
	I don't know
	Other (please specify):



Security

* 73. Is there increased security for high-liability items (e.g., drugs, cash, jewelry)?			
Yes			
○ No			
I don't know			
* 74. Do you log who accesses the evidence/property room?			
Yes			
○ No			
I don't know			



Security

75.	Please indicate how you log who accesses the evidence/property roor	n.
	Electronically (e.g., key card, biometrics)	
	Manually (e.g., card file, paper log book)	
	Other (please specify):	



Storage Conditions

76. Please indicate if your organization's evidence/property areas have the following features.
(Select all that apply.)
Temperature controlled
Humidity controlled
Pressure controlled (e.g. negative pressure for ventilation)
Fire suppression (e.g., sprinklers)
Cold storage – refrigerator
Cold storage – freezer
Fire safety cabinets
Specialized storage for explosive/combustible materials
Specialized storage for hazardous materials
Impound lots
None of the above
I don't know
Other (please specify):



Storage Conditions

* 77.	Does your organization take precautions to maintain cold storage evidence during transportation?
	Yes
	No
	I don't know



Safety

* 78. Does your organization have the proper personal protective equipment available for your evidence handlers?
Yes
○ No
I don't know
* 79. Are naloxone products (e.g., Narcan) available for use in evidence/property areas storing illicit substances? Yes No
I don't know



Safety

* 80. Does your o	rganization require safety training?
Yes	
No	
I don't know	



Safety

от. г	rease indicate when the safety training occurs.	
	Annually for all employees	
	Only upon hire	
	Other (please specify):	



Final Thoughts

You're almost done!	To end the survey,	, we have 4 open	 ended questions. 	We appreciate a	s much information as	you can provide!

Toure aimost done: To end the survey, we have 4 open-ended questions. We appreciate as much information as you can pro-
82. What are the biggest challenges you encounter in retaining and disposition of evidence/property?
83. What type of educational topics related to evidence management are of interest to you?
84. Please comment on the current landscape of evidence handling and retention practices.
85. Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding evidence management?



Thank you for completing this survey! We appreciate your time. Please click "Done" to submit your survey.

