PURPOSE:

Effective investigative law enforcement requires information to be obtained from the application of scientific knowledge and methods. There is no practical alternative to Forensics Science. Research indicates physical evidence must be identified, collected, preserved and promptly transmitted to a laboratory if lab support is to be useful. Physical evidence is normally the best support of a criminal investigation and prosecution. The Sheriff's Office is committed to professional collection and preservation of evidence.

CRIME SCENE RESPONSE:

The first deputy on scene secures and protects the scene while determining the seriousness of the crime. Any action taken by first responders or emergency medical personnel that changes the conditions of the scene (for example opening a door during the search for perpetrator or moving the victim to check for vital signs) will be documented as soon as possible.

If additional support is required to preserve the scene, a field supervisor is notified. Crime scenes may be secured by various means, such as; verbal commands, ropes, lines, blocking paths with vehicles or officer presence. A field supervisor requests the services of the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) or the Specialized Investigations Division (SID), Selective Enforcement Division (SED) Traffic Unit, Collision Reconstruction Team for traffic accidents, or Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) for drug related investigations as needed.

Investigations personnel assume control of the investigation immediately upon arrival at the crime scene. Forensics Division is notified at the discretion of investigators. Forensic personnel take no action until directed to do so by investigators.

A supervisor on the scene is responsible for briefing the Sheriff or PIO, and any member of the Command Staff immediately upon their arrival. A similar briefing is provided to the Coroner if present.

Only personnel essential to the investigation of the crime and security of the scene are authorized in the inner perimeter as marked with crime scene tape. All other personnel are politely, but firmly, denied access. The identity of all persons entering any crime scene is to be recorded including name, agency, time and purpose.

A civilian ride-along should remain in the patrol car while answering a call for service due to safety concerns. Once the scene is rendered safe, the civilian may be allowed to exit the patrol car, however, they will not be allowed to enter any crime scene.

Non-sworn Sheriff's Office employees may be allowed to enter the outside perimeter of a crime scene if one exists, but will not be allowed inside the inner perimeter.

CRIME SCENE TRAINING:

Crime scene processing training is provided to all deputy trainees. Personnel responsible for crime scene processing receive specialized training to ensure the development of specific skills to perform these tasks.

Specialized training includes:

- Recovery of latent fingerprint and palm prints.
- Recovery of the foot, tool and tire impressions.
- Videoing/Photographing crime, accident, or traffic collision 8scenes.
- Preparing crime, accident, or traffic collision scene sketches.
- Collecting, preserving and transmitting physical evidence, including biological materials for DNA testing.

In addition to the above-specialized training, forensic crime scene specialists responsible for processing scenes under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office have at least two years of law enforcement officer experience.

CRIME SCENE SPECIALISTS:

Crime scene specialists, assigned to the Greenville County Department of Public Safety, are on-call to the Sheriff's Office twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Crime scene specialists operate in compliance with:

1. Evidence collection and preservation guidelines established by the FBI in the HANDBOOK OF FORENSIC SERVICES.
2. Evidence submission guidelines established by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Crime Lab. The SLED Lab is ASCLD certified.
3. Evidence submission guidelines are established by the Forensics Division Laboratory Evidence Submission Manual. The Forensics Division DNA Lab is ANAB certified.

Whenever a crime scene specialist is required at a scene, the specialist is notified within one hour. This is required because, in many cases, the continuation of the investigative process must await the completion of certain aspects of a crime scene specialist's work. Instructions can be obtained on how to proceed until a specialist arrives.

Crime scene specialists work under the direction of the investigating deputy in charge of a scene. If Uniform Patrol investigates a crime scene, the patrol deputy determines need for a crime scene specialist. If CID/SID investigates the scene, their personnel determine the need for a crime scene specialist.

SERIOUS CRIME SCENES - Whenever photographs are not taken or physical evidence is not recovered from the scene of a serious crime, the investigating deputy prepares a report citing reasons why.

PROSECUTION COORDINATION:

Captains from the Criminal Investigations Division, the Forensic Division, and the Greenville County Crime Lab attempt to meet at least every six months with the solicitor and judges for coordination purposes. This coordination is necessary to ensure the solicitor and judges are made familiar with the latest crime scene processing techniques and laboratory capabilities, as well as to address any investigative or procedural concerns of the solicitor and court.

COLLECTING, PROCESSING AND PRESERVING EVIDENCE:

The primary responsibility for ensuring a crime scene is processed lies with the investigating deputy. Processing can be accomplished in a detailed manner with fully trained crime scene specialists or in a limited manner with trained Master Deputies.

Functions to be performed include:

1. Photographing and/or sketching the scene.
2. Examination for fingerprints.
3. Examination for potential DNA or trace evidence when applicable.
4. Protecting, collecting and preserving evidence.
5. Videoing of the scene.

CRIME SCENE VEHICLES - Crime scene specialists are responsible for re-stocking crime scene response vehicles with sufficient supplies to conduct the following:

1. Recovery of latent fingerprints.
2. Photography.
3. Sketch of the scene.
4. Collection and preservation of physical evidence.
5. Video equipment.

Important factors to be considered when collecting evidence:

1. Evidence must be material and relevant. Evidence must be handled and protected in a manner to avoid contamination or destruction of biological evidence.
2. An article must be properly identified.
3. Continuity of the chain of custody must be proven.

Most mistakes committed in connection with evidence take place in the collection phase. Improper collection techniques can result in a failure to realize the full value of evidence.

EVIDENCE TRANSFER IN THE FIELD - If evidence is transferred to another person before being logged into Property & Evidence, a Property Report Form is to be completed documenting the transfer to maintain chain of custody. The Property Report is to record date and time of transfer, receiving person's name, and reason for the transfer.

COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION PROCEDURES - Personnel involved in the collection and preservation of evidence adhere to specific collection procedures.

When collecting evidence that may require biological testing the following precautions will be used:

1. Disposable gloves suitable for handling biohazardous material (such as Nitrile) gloves will be worn.
2. Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) including foot covers, face masks, and coveralls will be available for use as needed to protect crime scene personnel and minimize the possibility of contamination.
3. Evidence will not be handled unnecessarily and items will be packaged individually so that cross-contamination cannot occur.
4. Gloves will be changed between collecting items, other PPE will be changed if contaminated, and non-disposable tools will be cleaned following use in the collection of items.
5. No eating, drinking, gum chewing, tobacco use, or spitting will be allowed in the crime scene area.

Evidence is properly sealed and marked or labeled for identification as it is collected or as soon as practical. This is accomplished by:

1. Marking hard objects with a scribe or similar tool.
2. Marking absorbent articles with pen and ink.
3. Sealing articles in containers, and dating and initialing containers.
4. Labeling articles with affixed tags or gummed labels.

The marking/labeling of evidence or evidence containers is to include:

1. Case number.
2. Date and time article was found.
3. Name and description of the article.
4. Location of the article when found.
5. Initials of the person who collected or discovered the article.

Property and Evidence (P&E) has the responsibility of storing evidence pending laboratory examination and/or court presentation. Forms provided for the transmittal of evidence to P&E are to be completed as thoroughly and accurately as possible. P&E forms include a detailed description of the evidential items, including size, color, make, model serial number and other identifying data.

LATENT PRINTS - Evidence of latent prints on non-absorbent, hard, smooth surfaces can be collected at the scene. Evidence of latent prints on absorbent, porous, non-smooth surfaces are not collected at the scene. These articles are sealed within a container and transported to the LEC marked "To be processed for latent prints."

HOMICIDE - A homicide victim's hands are carefully covered with paper bags and secured with tape. The entire body is placed in a body bag before transport to the hospital. The entire body is examined for blood, hair, and fibers. Medical Examiner retains the body bag used in transportation.

PERISHABLE EVIDENCE - Evidence in the form of organic matter, such as food, blood or tissue, presents special problems in preservation. Unless the following preventative measures are taken, decomposition will destroy this type of evidence before laboratory examination:

1. Putrefaction of blood can be avoided by allowing it to air dry before sealing in an airtight container. Wet or bloody clothing is air-dried and packaged in paper biohazard containers.
2. Physiological fluid is frozen.
3. Items supporting latent fingerprints are protected from movement or action that may destroy or contaminate the prints.
4. Semen samples are either air-dried or refrigerated.
5. Saliva samples are collected using buccal swabs and air-dried.

The Greenville County Department of Public Safety – Forensics Division has a space for the air-drying of blood-soaked articles and articles presenting evidence of human excretions or secretions. Deputies should request a crime scene specialist to collect wet or damp articles suspected of containing blood or other bodily excretions/secretions.

Crime scene specialists process crime scenes to collect wet bloodstains and other body fluids. Stained evidence is placed in the space provided for complete drying after logging items into P&E. All appropriate evidence forms are completed. All perishable evidence is preserved and transmitted to a forensic laboratory in a prompt and timely manner.

COMPARISON KNOWN EXEMPLARS - For comparison purposes, known exemplars are collected whenever possible. Known exemplars include, but are not limited to:

- Hairs.
- Saliva.
- Fingernails.
- Textile fibers.
- Paint.
- Wood.
- Soil.
- Tool mark impressions.

These substances are packaged and marked with the date, time, and initials of the collecting crime scene specialist and a P&E form is completed.

CRIME SCENE SKETCHES:

The following basic equipment is available for use in sketching:

1. Plain, unlined or graph paper.
2. One, fifty-foot steel tape.
3. One straightedge ruler, preferably eighteen inches in length.
4. One, eight-foot or twelve-foot steel tape for ancillary measurements.
5. Several thumbtacks to hold one end of the tape when working alone.
6. Sonin Laser Measuring Device.
7. FARO 3D scanner.
8. Drone.

A sketch is to include at least the following information:

1. Deputy's or crime scene specialist's full name, rank, and unit number.
2. Date and time, crime classification, and case number. Full name of any person assisting in taking measurements.
3. Address of crime scene, its location within a building, specific landmarks, and a compass direction designation indicating the northern direction.
4. When a sketch is not drawn to scale, it is to be identified as: "Not to scale, dimensions and distances tape measured."
5. Locations of major items of physical evidence and critical features of the crime scene indicated by accurate from at least two fixed points.
6. A legend of symbols used to identify objects or points of interest on the sketch. Color may be used to distinguish objects or features; however, the use of a large number of colors can be confusing and eliminate the ability to reproduce the sketch rapidly.

The initial sketch may be rough nature but is to include sufficient information to allow for a final drawing made to scale.

CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHY:

All crime scene specialists adhere to the following protocol regarding photography in general and photography occurring at crime scenes:

1. At the scene of a crime, accident, property recovery or other call for service requiring photographic support, overall photographs are taken first, encompassing the entire area or subject involved. Photographs include reference points to major landmarks, street signs, or permanent structures. Overall photographs are taken to indicate where victims, perpetrators, witnesses or objects were before an incident and where they came to rest after the incident occurred, if different than original positions.
2. To ensure proper photographic perspective, the relativity of objects concerning their size and position, a scale is used to reflect dimensions of a specific item of evidence in relation to the entire crime scene. A photograph is made before the introduction of a scale and a second made with the scale lying adjacent to the object. All weapons are photographed to scale.
3. The information recorded when photographs are taken includes the date, time, location, and case number. Video recording can supplement photography, but cannot replace it.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE DIGITAL CAMERA USE:

DIGITAL CAMERAS are available for use by division personnel to photograph evidence in place of responding Forensics for lesser offenses, such as minor assaults and malicious damage. More serious offenses are to be referred to Forensics. The cameras can also be used under exigent circumstances where immediate documentation needs occur before Forensics can arrive. A photo kiosk has been placed outside of Property & Evidence for images obtained by field deputies that contain an evidentiary value.

Personally-owned Electronic Devices:

- Deputies will refrain from using their personal electronic devices to capture evidence at a crime scene except in exigent circumstances where there is an imminent threat of evidence being lost.
- Sharing pictures of crime scenes and other sensitive images is **strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action** (up to and including termination).
- In the event that an individual takes a picture on their personal device of official business, they should:
    1. Notify their supervisor immediately;
    2. Have a duplicate of the photograph made and maintained in property and evidence;

3. Maintain the original on their electronic device (do not delete the photo off of the device until notified by the solicitor's office that they are permitted to do so); and
4. Do not share the photograph with anyone outside the office (or within the office to personnel disconnected from that case/investigation).

LABORATORY ANALYSIS:

It is the responsibility of the primary investigating deputy of a crime scene to request laboratory examination or analysis of evidence. The primary investigating deputy is who the criminal incident is assigned to for investigation. It is also the investigating deputy's responsibility to periodically check with P&E to ensure evidence is transmitted to the lab for examination.

The primary investigating deputy may, at his discretion, transport evidence himself or appoint a designee for transport. It is the responsibility of Greenville County DPS Forensic Crime Lab technicians to check with P&E daily to determine if there is evidence awaiting laboratory examination.

It is the responsibility of P&E personnel to transport, on an as-needed basis, those items of evidence awaiting laboratory examinations by SLED.

GREENVILLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY FORENSICS CRIME LAB - Sheriff's Office personnel requesting laboratory analysis conducted by the Greenville County Crime Lab complete a Laboratory Request form for the items requiring testing. All items of evidence can be listed on the same Property & Evidence form, with a separate Laboratory Request form for items requesting testing.

SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION LABORATORY ANALYSIS - Sheriff's Office personnel requesting lab examinations conducted by SLED. All items can be listed on one Property & Evidence form with items needing testing by SLED will be listed on a SLED Laboratory Request form.

Both lab analysis forms document:

1. Date and time of transfer.
2. Receiving person's name and functional responsibility.
3. Reason for transfer.
4. Name and location of the laboratory, synopsis of the event, and examinations desired when transferred to a laboratory, not within the agency.

Evidence collected at a crime scene may identify a specific suspect, but only when a known exemplar is available for comparison. When a known exemplar is not available, the evidence is preserved and stored in P&E, pending collection of comparison items. Once these are obtained, the evidence is forwarded to the appropriate laboratory for examination purposes.

RECORDS ON PHYSICAL EVIDENCE SUBMITTED TO A LABORATORY FOR EXAMINATION continues the chain of custody by documenting:

1. Name of the officer last having custody of item.
2. Date and time of submission or mailing, and method used for transmission.
3. Date and time of receipt in the laboratory.
4. Name and signature of the person in the laboratory receiving the evidence.

In all cases of laboratory examination, submitting deputies request written reports of lab results. The SLED form for laboratory analysis includes the name of the person requesting the examination. A report of the lab results must be obtained through SLED's ILAB system.

Whenever submission of evidence to a crime laboratory is delayed for any reason, such as awaiting a known exemplar, the reason is noted on the report accompanying the evidence to the laboratory when it is submitted.

SEXUAL ASSAULT KITS – Incident reports involving the collection of sexual assault kits are to be forwarded to SID by the next day. When a sexual assault kit is received by uniform personnel and placed in Property and Evidence, a SID investigator will complete a Forensic Division Laboratory Services Request form. All sexual assault kits, except anonymous kits, will be sent to the Greenville County DNA Laboratory.

Anonymous Kits:

When a deputy takes into their possession an anonymous sexual assault kit, the deputy will initiate an incident report. **No victim information is allowed in the incident report.** The victim should be referred to by their MRN (Medical Record Number) that is located on the kit and hospital paperwork. The incident should be marked as active and a follow up assigned to Specialized Investigations Division. SID will track these kits for proper disposition.

STOLEN VEHICLE EVIDENCE PROCESSING:

When a stolen vehicle is recovered, the agency that reported it as stolen, the owner of the vehicle and any other appropriate persons are promptly notified. **Before the vehicle can be released, it is processed for evidence**. If owner notification occurs before processing is complete, the owner is advised the vehicle will be released after evidence processing. If the vehicle is in a condition inhibiting immediate processing, such as wet from dew or hot from probable arson, it is towed with "hold - pending evidence processing." It is the reporting deputy's responsibility to ensure the vehicle is processed for evidence and to notify the registered owner and/or tow service that the vehicle can be released. If the "hold" is placed or requested by an on-call investigator the on-call investigator assumes this responsibility. If circumstances dictate a need, supervisors may use discretion in varying from these requirements.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE EVIDENCE PROCESSING:

Electronic devices can be severely damaged or data lost due to improper shutdown procedures. Electronic devices can be programmed to erase or destroy data when normal start-up or shutdown procedures are not followed.

If an electronic device is seized as evidence and it is activated at the time of seizure, a SID Computer Crimes Investigator is to be contacted for shutdown procedures. If the electronic device is deactivated at the time of seizure, it is to be placed in Property and Evidence. SID will provide a Computer Crimes Specialist to aid with retrieving evidence from the electronic device's hard drive. Other devices capable of storing data in an electronic format (i.e., disks (all types), drives, and peripheral equipment) are to be examined by a Forensic Computer Specialist for retrieval of data. In the event that an exigency exists or questions arise, contact the on-call computer crimes investigator for assistance.

This does not include devices associated with DEU, DPU, Gang, and Homicide related cases which will still be done through the Intelligence Unit.

PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE STORAGE:

When putting evidence or property into P&E, both a Property Report Form and an Incident report will include the following:

1. Description of items, such as make, model and serial numbers.
2. Source from whom or where was obtained.
3. Name of person collecting items.

All evidence is placed into P&E before the end of the tour-of-duty.

There are no exceptions to this rule without supervisory approval. In the event evidence is seized during an out-of-town investigation, the supervisor who approves for delayed entry into P&E is to complete a descriptive inventory over the phone.

DRUG / NARCOTIC EVIDENCE OR CONTRABAND – Whenever drug / narcotic evidence or contraband is placed into Property and Evidence for storage, each substance is to be counted and weighed before relinquishing control to a P&E clerk. Counts and weights are to be noted in incident reports and on P&E forms. *Note - Pre-packaged, sealed over-the-counter medications would be exempt from this requirement.*

FIELD TEST KITS – Because drug field test kits are sulfuric acid-based and create a health and safety hazard when improperly stored, used kits are not to be placed in Property and Evidence for storage. Kits are not required for prosecution purposes. Prosecutions hinges on the results of chemical lab tests. Used kits are to be placed in the dumpster behind the Law Enforcement Center or the dumpsters at the Northern or Southern offices.

EVIDENCE DROP BOX PROCEDURES:

The impounding deputy will report to the LEC basement area (directly across from the loading dock doors) outside of P&E to place items into drop box or evidence storage lockers. This area is equipped with a work station and all necessary forms, envelopes, and supplies needed to properly package all drop box items. Items requiring refrigeration must be placed in the appropriate, designated area. Deputies are to refer to Temporary Storage Procedures for proper storage of items after hours.

Property Reports - The impounding deputy will complete section #1 through #24 on the P&E report as it applies to their case. When using the drop box, section 20- 24 must be completed with the deputy's name in section 20, signature in section 21, "drop box" written in section 22, and date written in Section 23 and time of drop-in section 24. If the items being dropped are sealed, the deputy must indicate **"drop box-sealed"** in section 22.

All firearms, money, drugs, audiotapes, videotapes, gunshot residue collection kits, and biohazard property can be placed on the same property report. Multiple items in these must be separated by type of item and item number. Article descriptions must include size, color, make, model/model number, serial number, caliber, brand and weights for drug items/accurate count for pills.

NOTE - If there is more than one property report per case **do not duplicate** item numbers.

If an item is "authorized to be released" be sure to complete disposition area, section #25, of the property report including

authorized individuals name, items authorized for release, authorizing deputy's name, signature, and date.

NOTE - If an error is made on the P&E report, the deputy must place a single line through the error, along with their initials at both ends.

Packaging and Submission of General Property in the Drop Box - Items needing to be placed in P&E should be placed in a size appropriate envelope with the completed P&E report included with the package. It should be fastened using the clasp on the outside of the envelope and dropped in the appropriate box. Deputies are not required to record any information on the envelope.

Firearms must be unloaded before being placed into P&E. Any ammunition with the weapon is to be placed into a small bag or envelope so it is not loose in the package.

The deputy submitting the weapon must complete the "unloaded verification section" on the P&E report indicating the weapon has been checked and secured and that it is not loaded.

Packaging and Submission of Sealed Evidence in the Drop Box - All drugs, money, and jewelry must be heat-sealed. The impounding deputy is to use a size appropriate heat seal bag, record the case number, date, and signed initials inside the heat seal bag with a blue permanent sharpie pen and heat seal the item.
When dropping items that are sealed, the deputy must record **"drop box-sealed"** in section 22, indicating the items were sealed before the drop by the impounding officer.

Drugs - Drugs must be weighed and the drug weight of each drug item recorded on the property report in section #10. Place drugs in heat-seal bag and seal with the heat sealer. Syringe tubes are supplied for all used and uncapped syringes. Place tape strip across top of tube and record case number, date and initials. Unused capped syringes are not considered a "sharps" and should not be packaged in a sharps syringe tube. Drug items should be placed into a containment bag and packaged to coincide with the item number that is on the property report. Item numbers should be written on each package. Therefore, the number of items on the property report should equal the number of packages submitted.

Marijuana plants must be packaged in a size appropriate envelope or paper bag and sealed with a strip of red evidence tape. The impounding deputy's signed initials and date must be written across the tape and the packaged labeled with the case number.

Money - Paper currency is to be considered one item but should be listed by denomination and a total reflected on the P&E Report. Coins

can be listed as one item and totaled. Coins do not have to be listed according to denomination, except for large amounts of coins.

NOTE – Because it is not true currency, counterfeit money can be listed as one item and does not need to be sealed.

Jewelry - Seal items in packaging as they are listed on the P&E report. Costume jewelry does not require heat seal; however, if the deputy is unsure of the type of jewelry, then the jewelry should be treated as real jewelry and heat sealed.

Latent prints - All items requiring Lab testing or have the potential to be Lab tested should be sealed to maintain evidentiary value. The impounding deputy's initials and date must be written across the tape, and the package labeled with the case number.

Biohazards - P&E will not receive any damp or wet property, including items containing bodily fluids. Forensics will receive these articles, dry, package and submit them to P&E. Evidence having any possible dried blood or any other dried body fluids on it should be sealed in an envelope or paper bag with evidence tape. The deputy's initials, case number, and date should be recorded over the tape seal. A biohazard label must be placed on the sealed package. The deputy should record the type of biohazard (urine, blood, semen, cavity search, etc.) on the label. Paperwork is not to be sealed inside a package containing biohazard articles.

Examples for packaging items and completing property report forms are available in the evidence packaging guide at the drop box workstation in the basement.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION REPORTING:

All personnel involved in the collection and preservation of evidence are to complete supplemental reports to original incident reports including the following:

1. Case number.
2. Date and time requested to respond to the scene.
3. Date and time of arrival at the scene.
4. Location of the crime.
5. Victim names, if known.
6. Suspect names, if known.
7. Action taken at the scene, including the number of photographs taken, measurements (yes or no) and a listing of physical evidence recovered.
8. Disposition of collected evidence after the seizure.
9. Name of investigating deputy.

EVIDENCE OR CONTRABAND DISPOSAL:

IMPROPER DISPOSAL - Deputies are prohibited from improperly

disposing (destroying) of evidence or contraband. All evidence and contraband items are to be placed into Property & Evidence for storage and proper disposal. Flushing, pouring-out, and throwing away are examples of improper disposal. Contact a supervisor immediately when in doubt as to what to do with evidence or contraband.

PROPER DISPOSAL –

1. At the time an incident/investigation is determined unfounded or exceptionally cleared, evidence held in storage under the corresponding case number is to be disposed of. Immediate authorization for disposal is the responsibility of the deputy who placed the property in storage or the deputy who unfounded or exceptionally cleared the case**.**
2. Evidence is to be disposed within five working days following the conclusion of judicial proceedings (hearings, trials) unless the case is subject to appeal. Appeal probability can be verified through the Solicitor's Office.
3. Dispositions are to be specific regarding the disposal of property. **Hold** means the property is to remain in P&E pending further notification.
   Dispose of means that the property can be destroyed or relinquished to the County for sale or use. **Return to owner** indicates that the property is clear for release to the owner. **It is the releasing deputy's responsibility to notify the property owner. In the event a deputy is unable to locate a property owner, the deputy is to immediately seek assistance from a supervisor. See sections RECOVERED / FOUND PROPERTY OWNER NOTIFICATION and PROPERTY OWNER NOTIFICATION BY CERTIFIED MAIL of this policy.**

PROPERTY & EVIDENCE DISPOSITION REPORTS –
Semi-annually, Property & Evidence distributes Property & Evidence Disposition Reports to members of the Sheriff's Office. The reports are a product of the EvidenceOnQ Barcode Tracking System Property & Evidence computer program, generated by employee star number, and reflect items stored in P&E by case number.

Only P&E Staff can run these reports that are generated on the EvidenceOnQ Barcode Tracking System. Supervisors are encouraged to request Property & Evidence Disposition Reports on a regular basis to facilitate the removal of items from storage in a timely manner.

Property & Evidence Disposition Reports procedures:

1. A proper review of P&E Disposition Reports may involve research utilizing the vConnect, E911 400, and AppXtender (Imaging) computer systems to determine ticket numbers and

corresponding dispositions.

2. If research indicates that an incident was re-assigned to an investigator for follow-up, responsibility for evidence storage is to transfer to the assigned investigator. Write the name of the investigator on the P&E Disposition Report. Return the report to P&E. P&E will update property records to reflect the investigator's assignment.

   Future P&E Disposition Reports for the case in question will generate on the investigator's star number.

3. For arrests prior to 2006 involving state tickets, if research indicates a ticket has not been adjudicated and the evidence must be held:

   a. Write the state ticket number on the P&E Disposition Report.
   b. Circle HOLD.
   c. Send a copy of the P&E Disposition Report to the Captain of Records or the Records Supervisor.
   d. Send the original P&E Disposition Report to Property and Evidence.

   Records will add the ticket number to the property record, which will alleviate repetitive research for the ticket number; however, it will still be necessary to check for a ticket disposition.

   Evidence should be periodically reviewed for probative value. **With supervisory approval**, evidence determined to be of no significant prosecutorial value should be "*disposed of*" from Property & Evidence. The best resource for confirming the probative value is the Solicitor's Office.

Seized Firearms/NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network) Testing:

All firearms seized by the Greenville County Sheriff's Office are subject to NIBIN testing. Examples of these are firearms recovered by law enforcement that were illegally possessed, used in a crime, or suspected by law enforcement officials to have been used in a crime. If the firearm is operable and meets the following criteria it is subject to being tested.

1. semi-automatic pistols including .22 caliber and larger
2. semi-automatic rifles
3. 12 gauge pump-action shotguns or semi-automatic shotguns

4. long guns that use handgun ammunition
5. revolvers .22 caliber and larger

After a firearm has been tested and or the firearm has an indicated positive hit on NIBIN, it is subject to being held for up to 3 years. In addition to the above listed criteria, contact the case agent and if a firearm is seized and has a nexus to documented gang activity or a documented gang member the firearm is subject to being held for up to three years after the NIBIN testing has been completed.

Note: After the above-listed criteria have been met for the seized firearm to be NIBIN tested, upon placing the firearm into Property and Evidence a Laboratory Analysis Form must be completed in its entirety to include the "Firearms NIBIN" box to be marked and the "Firearm/Gang Related" box to be marked if applicable. After the Laboratory Analysis Form has been completed in its entirety, a copy of the form must be placed into Records.

RELEASE/RETURN OF FIREARMS/SALE OR TRADE

When returning firearms from property and evidence to their rightful owner, the following steps must be completed:

1. Verify there are no associated charges awaiting disposition.
2. Run a criminal history for the intended possessor to verify their legal right to possess.
3. Run an NCIC inquiry on the firearm to ensure it's clear.
4. Complete the "Firearm Return Background Investigation" form located on the I:drive and place in records.
5. Confirm that the firearm has not been tested on NIBIN or that the firearm has not had a positive hit on NIBIN. If either of the two listed above have been confirmed, the firearms lab must be notified of the firearms release.
6. Disposal/Destruction of Evidence (Gun Trade) – See General Order 139

It is unlawful for anyone in South Carolina to own or possess a firearm if they have been convicted of a violent crime (see **South Carolina Code of Laws 16-1-60 Violent Crimes**). **South Carolina Code of Laws 16-1-70** defines nonviolent crimes as those not specifically listed in 16-1-60.

CRIMINAL HISTORIES ON WEAPONS VIOLATORS - See General Order 129 reference running criminal histories on weapons violators.

RECOVERED / FOUND PROPERTY OWNER NOTIFICATION - It is each recovering deputy's responsibility to

identify and notify the owner of recovered/found property. Prior to notifying the owner, each deputy must determine if the property should be retained or released. Even though other deputies/agencies may be involved in the case, ultimate responsibility lies with the recovering deputy. All property must be checked against NCIC and/or other property records to ensure proper ownership before release.

PROPERTY OWNER NOTIFICATION BY CERTIFIED MAIL - When the owners of recovered/found property are identified and the property is clear for release, they must be notified to retrieve their property.
If, after notification, owners fail to report and claim their property from P&E, a **Property Owner Recovery Notice** is to be mailed to the owner via certified mail.

If an owner cannot be notified because they have moved and further investigation fails to produce a forwarding address, investigative efforts to locate a new address and/or telephone number are to be documented under the original case number. Additionally, a **Property Owner Recovery Notice** is to be mailed to the owner via certified mail. If the Post Office is unable to deliver the letter, its return to the Sheriff's Office as undeliverable can be used as evidence of our efforts to locate the owner as required under **SC Code of Laws §27-21-10.**

Division secretaries are to maintain copies of Property Owner Recovery Notice forms and materials for certified mailing. The form must be completed legibly with no omissions. If necessary, additional comments may be indicated on the back of the form or as an attachment with the case number. List only those items belonging to the addressee. Multiple owners involved in a case will result in multiple mailings for each owner to receive notification as required by the state statute.

NOTE - Property & Evidence and Records must receive copies of completed Property Owner Recovery Notice forms.

Hobart Lewis, Sheriff