

**Police Property Room Audit
November 2007**

Patrice Randle, City Auditor
Craig Terrell, Assistant City Auditor

City Auditor's Office

November 16, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am pleased to present the City Auditor's Office's report on the Police Property Room. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the adequacy of internal controls over property and evidence, determine whether property and evidence is booked in and released timely in accordance with applicable laws, determine whether sufficient space exists to house property and verify that recommendations made in the previous audit report were addressed.

Management concurs with our audit findings and related recommendations. Management's responses to our audit findings and recommendations, as well as target implementation dates and responsibilities, are included in the following report. Within twelve months, the City Auditor's Office will conduct a follow-up audit and comment on management's implementation of these audit recommendations.

We would like to thank the Police Department for their cooperation and assistance during this project and we look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure adequate controls exist over property and evidence.



Patrice Randle, CPA
City Auditor

- c: Jim Holgersson, City Manager
Fiona Allen, Deputy City Manager
Gilbert Perales, Deputy City Manager
Trey Yelverton, Deputy City Manager
Robert Byrd, Interim Deputy City Manager

Police Property Room Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	1
Audit Scope and Methodology	2
Background	2
Audit Results.....	5
Detailed Audit Findings.....	7

Police Property Room



Office of the City Auditor

Patrice Randle, CPA
City Auditor

Project #07-07

November 16, 2007

Executive Summary

*Controls over property
and evidence are adequate*

*Substantial improvement
since last audit*

*Previous audit
recommendations have
been addressed*

*Inadequate storage space
for murder case evidence*

*Untimely release and
disposal of property*

*The property management
system is not used
effectively*

Opportunities for Improvement

- *Obtain additional storage space for murder case evidence*
- *Increase efforts to identify and dispose of property that can be legally released or destroyed*
- *Utilize property management system more effectively*

As part of the 2007 Annual Audit Plan, the City Auditor's Office conducted an audit of the Police Property Room. The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except for the peer review. The objectives of the audit were to determine whether:

- Adequate controls exist over property and evidence
- Sufficient space exists to house property and evidence
- Property and evidence is booked in and released timely in accordance with applicable laws
- The current property management system is utilized effectively
- Recommendations made in previous audit reports have been addressed

The City Auditor's Office noted that controls and accountability over property has increased since the prior internal audit. Audit tests indicated that property records (both electronic and hard copy) accurately reflected the status of property – with only a limited number of exceptions. However, the City Auditor's Office did note the following exceptions:

- Adequate storage space does not exist for murder case evidence
- A complete inventory of all items stored in the Property Room does not exist
- Final disposition of found, recovered, and evidentiary property is not always accomplished timely
- The property management system is not used effectively to help manage Property Room operations
- The property management system lacks data input and security controls
- Several drug destructions were not documented by signed witness statements.

These findings and recommendations are discussed in the Detailed Audit Findings section of this report.

Audit Scope and Methodology

All transactions and activity since the 2001 internal audit were included in the scope of this audit. However, due to the implementation of a new bar-coding system in FY 2007, audit tests were focused on transactions that occurred in FY 2007.

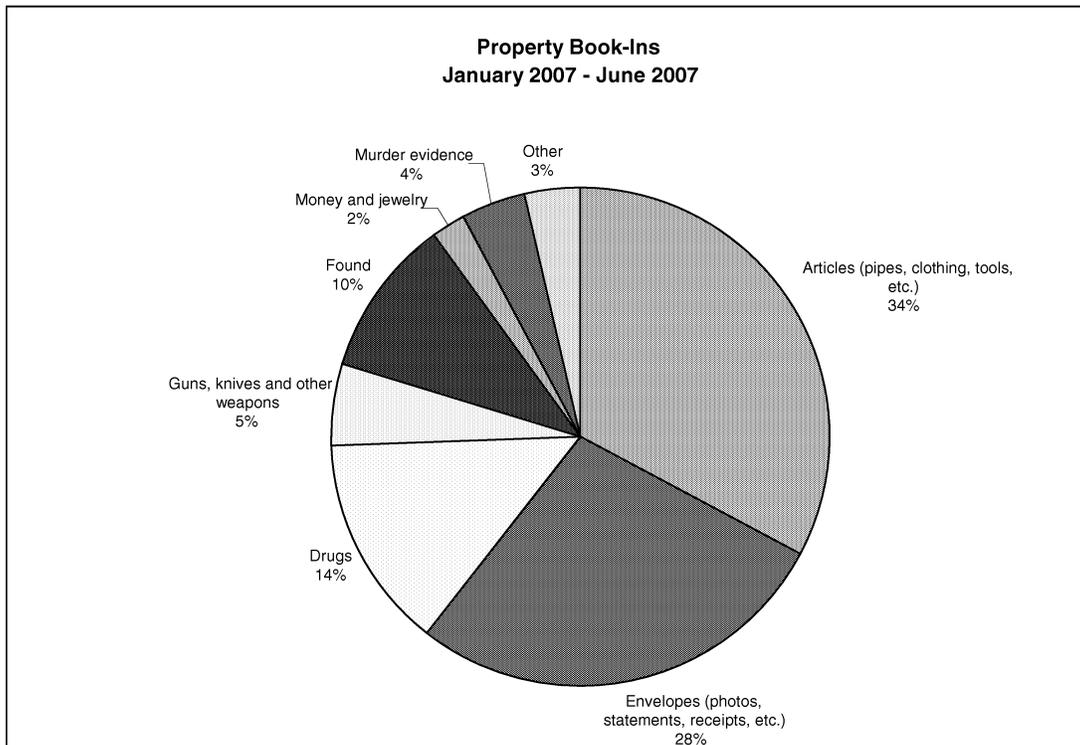
The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except for the peer review. The following methodology was used in completing the audit:

- Interviewed Police Department staff knowledgeable of the internal controls associated with property and evidence
- Gained an understanding of the property management system and its operation
- Reviewed property and evidence control standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)
- Selected a sample of items from the property management system and verified the actual existence of the items in the Property Room
- Selected a sample of items throughout the Property Room and verified that the property management system or hard copy transmittal forms accurately reflected property status
- Verified that article, drug and gun destructions were conducted in accordance with department policy and applicable laws
- Confirmed the existence of property that was reported as being in Tarrant County's possession

Background

The purpose of the Property Room is to receive and store evidence and other property coming into the custody of the Arlington Police Department in a secure facility, provide a controlled chain of custody on evidence, and to release or otherwise dispose of property pursuant to applicable legal statutes. The Property Room maintains custody of properties such as cash, narcotics and firearms, which are highly vulnerable to the risk of theft or abuse.

The chart on the following page indicates the percent of property items booked in by type for the first six months of calendar year 2007. Over 12,000 items were booked in on the property management system during that time period.



Source: Tiburon Property Management System

The Property Room is supervised by a sworn officer who reports to the Support Operations Bureau Assistant Chief. The unit currently consists of seven Property and Evidence Technicians that report to a sergeant responsible for the Property Room.

Property Management System

A new bar-coding system was installed as an extension of the property management system which was upgraded in the summer of 2006. Starting in FY 2007, Property Room Technicians affixed barcode labels to each piece of property or evidence booked in to the Property Room. As a result, the chain of custody for all property booked in during FY 2007 was to be recorded on the property management system. In addition, Property Room staff indicated that barcodes are printed and affixed to any property that is moved, released or destroyed by Property Room staff. Therefore, the chain of custody for any item moved, released or destroyed after FY 2006 was also to be recorded on the system. Not all property has been moved, released or destroyed since the implementation of barcodes. Therefore, there are still many property items in the warehouse that do not have barcodes or property tag numbers. The chain of custody for these items is documented on hard copy "Property and Evidence Transmittal" forms.

Disposition of Property

Property Room management has identified the need to research old cases and identify property that can be legally disposed. This is primarily accomplished in two ways. First, detectives from various units have been assigned to the Property Room on a revolving basis to research old cases and identify property that can be released or destroyed. Detectives started by working through old hard copy property transmittal files from FY 2000 and progressing forward. The detectives are currently researching cases from FY 2004. Management has also identified the need for Property Room Technicians to research older cases based on the likelihood that additional space can be made available. Property Room Technicians concentrate their efforts on specific sections of the Property Room warehouse, as demonstrated in the pictures on page 7.

Audit Results

The City Auditor's Office noted that controls and accountability over property has increased since the prior internal audit. The City Auditor's Office randomly selected 163 property items from various sections of the Property Room and traced to the property records (electronic and hard copy). In addition, a random sample of 159 electronic property records was selected to verify that the property management system accurately reflected the true status of property.

Shelf to System and Manual Property Records

Item	# of Items in Sample	# of Items Matched System or Transmittals	# of Errors Found	Notes
Main warehouse	40	39	1	a
Gun vault	25	25	0	
Drug vault	30	28	2	b
Safe (money and jewelry)	68	62	6	c,d,e
Total	163	154	9	

System to Shelf Test (Items with Barcodes Only)

Item	# of Items in Sample	# of Items Found	# of Errors Found	Notes
Main warehouse	30	30	2	f
Gun vault	44	44	0	
Drug vault	30	30	0	
Safe (money and jewelry)	25	25	0	
Murder evidence	30	30	0	
Total	159	159	2	

Notes:

- a. A CD with photos was bar-coded but not recorded as "booked in" on the system.
- b. Property location was not documented on transmittal forms for two drug items.
- c. Location on transmittal or system did not match the physical location for four property items.
- d. One watch was observed in the Property Room, but was documented on the transmittal form as destroyed.
- e. Property description had faded on evidence bag for a 1988 case and could not be traced to the transmittal form.
- f. System record for two items did not include description of the property. Property was found based on tag number.

The City Auditor's Office considers the above exceptions to be immaterial. Most of the exceptions are addressed by recommendations contained in the "Detailed Audit Findings" section of this report. The testing indicates that property management system records are more accurate than the hard copy transmittals, as evidenced by the results obtained from testing within

the gun vault. All property located within the gun vault has been bar-coded and subject to periodic inventory. As more property located in the Property Room is bar-coded and tracked with the property management system, the City Auditor's Office believes that the management and accountability over property will continue to improve.

Detailed Audit Findings

1. Property Room staff has managed to maintain most of the warehouse areas in an organized manner, with the exception of rooms used to store murder case evidence.

The December 2001 Police Property Room Audit noted that “The Property Room is completely filled up. The current conditions in the Property Room may present both safety and health hazards.” The following picture was included in the December 2001 audit of the Property Room.



Warehouse - November 15, 2001

While conditions have improved, the main Property Room warehouse remains full. Fluctuations in incoming and outgoing property contribute to the ongoing need to clear the warehouse of items ready for disposal. For example, recent efforts were concentrated on one warehouse aisle used to store bulkier items. The following photographs were taken approximately two months apart.



Warehouse - July 23, 2007



Warehouse - September 14, 2007

Due to the efforts of Property Room staff, the gun, drug and money vaults have become very well organized and sufficient space exists to add additional property with minimal effort. Due to

the recent bar-coding efforts, all items now stored in the gun vault have identification labels (property tags) and the property management system can be used to obtain an inventory of items stored in the vault. Handguns have been placed in boxes, while rifles and other firearms have been placed in barrels. The following pictures show the current status of the gun vault.



Gun Vault - July 23, 2007



Gun Vault - July 23, 2007

The following picture depicts the gun vault prior to using gun boxes and prior to the 2006 gun destruction effort.



Gun Vault - June 2006 per APD

Similar improvements have been made in the drug and money vaults. However, Property Room staff has not yet bar-coded all property in those vaults. Therefore, an inventory of all items stored in those locations can not be obtained from the property management system.



Drug Vault - July 23, 2007



Drug Vault - July 23, 2007



Money and Valuables Vault - July 23, 2007

The main Property Room warehouse, including the gun, drug and money vaults appeared to be neatly organized. In addition, property held in these locations appeared to be adequately safeguarded from theft, fire or other casualties. However, two additional storage areas for murder case evidence did not appear to be adequate, as shown below:



Murder Room 1 - September 14, 2007



Murder Room 2 - September 14, 2007

Both murder rooms were crowded and evidence was stored by case number without any additional location identification such as shelf number. Murder Room 2 is located in a locked closet on the third floor of the Ott Cribbs building. During City Auditor's Office testing, it was difficult to locate items in Murder Room 2, although eventually all items in the sample were found. Murder Room 2 has been used since FY 2006. As of August 2007, evidence for 21 murder cases was stored in the room. Murder Room 1 is located in the basement of the Ott Cribbs building, adjacent to the Jail. Evidence in murder cases is generally stored longer than in other cases. There is currently no additional space within the Ott Cribbs building to effectively store additional murder case evidence. The City Auditor's Office was not able to estimate the additional square footage needed due to the uncertainty over the number of future murder cases and the type of evidence that may be collected in those cases.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should ensure that sufficient space exists to adequately store and safeguard evidence related to murder cases.

Management's Response:

The Police Department is currently exploring a variety of options for additional storage space.

Target Date: On-going
Responsibility: Property Room Sergeant

2. A complete inventory of all items stored in the Property Room does not exist.

Section 84.1.5 of the CALEA Property and Evidence Control standards requires that "records reflect the status of all property held by the agency." The standards state that a records system should reflect the location of property; the date and time when property was received or released; the character, type, and amount of property on hand; and the chain of custody from the time property was stored until its destruction or other final disposition. The standards do not require that the records be electronic, however, the section notes that "Many agencies have successfully installed a 'bar-coding' system for property management."

As noted in the background section of this report, the Police Department only recently began using a bar-coding system to record the chain of custody for property. Most property associated with older cases (both active and closed) is recorded on the property management system but the chain of custody is not. The hardcopy "Property and Evidence Transmittal" forms must be reviewed to determine whether the property is still located in the Property Room. At this time, the Police Department meets the CALEA standard by a combination of electronic barcode tracking of property and the hard copy transmittal forms for older property.

A decision has been made by the Police Department to not barcode every item in the warehouse due to the large number of items included in storage. Many of these items have been stored in the Property Room since prior to FY 2000. Rather than barcode existing property, management made the decision to concentrate efforts on identifying property and evidence that can be released. While this appears to be a logical and sensible position, the absence of an inventory

report makes it more difficult to perform reconciliations, audits and confirmations, which increases the potential for property and evidence to be misplaced, lost or stolen. It also results in Property Room personnel needing to check two sources of data (hard copy transmittals and the electronic property management system) to determine the status of a given piece of property.

In the past, Property Room personnel were inconsistent in documenting transactions in the property management system. In some cases, older items that were identified to be destroyed were bar-coded and recorded as destroyed on the system. In other cases, no barcode was assigned and the destruction was only recorded on the Property and Evidence Transmittal form. The following table documents how destructions were recorded for a sample of 16 items included in the April 27, 2007 firearm destruction:

System Only	Property & Evidence Transmittal Only	Both	Neither	Total
4	9	1	2	16

The noted inconsistency complicates the audit process. It also decreases the reliability of any management reports produced using the automated system. For example, a review of the automated system would indicate that five firearms were destroyed, when in fact 16 were destroyed. Recording all activity in the property management system, regardless of whether the property is bar-coded or not, would ensure that accurate reports of Property Room activity could be produced from the property management system.

While bar-coding all property in the Property Room may not be feasible, the Police Department may be able to expand its bar-coding efforts to specific sections of the Property Room with the goal of producing accurate inventory reports for critical sections of the Property Room.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should ensure that the Property Room staff continues its efforts to barcode existing property and evidence (as appropriate) with priority given to the drug vault, money vault and murder rooms.

Management's Response:

To date, items including money, jewelry, and guns have been bar-coded. Since new items submitted to the Property Room are bar-coded, current bar-coding efforts will focus on drugs and other older items in the general warehouse. Once the entire warehouse is bar-coded, a complete inventory will exist.

Target Date: On-going
Responsibility: Property Room Sergeant

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that Property Room staff record all activities on the property management system, except for the destruction of any older property that has not been input to the system.

Management's Response:

All activities related to property will be recorded in Tiburon when practical. As the property technicians come across property that is not bar-coded, the destructions will be recorded on the evidence transmittal. For other transactions, such as release for court proceedings or moves within the storage area, evidence without barcodes will be bar-coded.

Target Date: On-going
Responsibility: Property Room Sergeant

3. Final disposition of found, recovered, and evidentiary property is not always accomplished timely.

Section 84.1.7 of the Property and Evidence Control standards states:

“Final disposition of found, recovered, and evidentiary property is accomplished within six months after legal requirements have been satisfied.”

During audit testing, the City Auditor's Office noted numerous examples where detectives had authorized property releases on Property and Evidence Release forms but the associated property was still on hand in the Property Room. For example, in a sample of 40 items selected from the main warehouse, detectives had authorized the release of 10 of the items. However, those 10 items were still being held in the Property Room. In addition, three of a sample of 30 drug items had authorized releases but the drugs were still on hand in the Property Room. The Property Room staff limited available storage space by maintaining custody of property that could legally be disposed of. According to Property Room management, items released by court order are addressed immediately but other items may be held until it is economically feasible to retrieve them for release or destruction.

Report #	Description	Book-In Date	Authorized Release Date
030005400	Sword	02/07/03	04/27/07
040018562	Blue cell phone	03/24/04	10/14/04
040084731	Emerson DVD	12/15/04	07/20/06
040059860	Metal box	09/07/04	07/26/06
040019426	X-Box remote	03/25/04	07/24/06
030013676	Diaper	03/03/03	06/23/04
050091248	VCR recorder	12/30/05	07/07/06
070008004	Lock box	02/05/07	07/19/07
050068207	Computer	09/29/05	07/23/07
050022516	Space heater	04/07/05	06/28/06
070017337	Marijuana	03/15/07	04/13/07
020089408	Needles with yellow substance	12/02/02	11/17/06
050024962	Marijuana	04/22/05	11/09/06

Each month, the Tarrant County District Attorney distributes an electronic case status report to the Management Initiatives Sergeant. This report is distributed to officers and detectives for follow-up and preparation of Property and Evidence Release forms. The City Auditor's Office noted several examples where a case was dismissed, charges were not filed, or the suspect had been convicted and served his time. For these cases, the City Auditor's Office noted that a Property and Evidence Release Form had not been completed.

In several cases, the City Auditor's Office noted that more than one Property and Evidence Release form was completed for a particular report. According to the Police Information Resources Manager, this might be attributed to how the cases were worked by detectives. There has been a current effort to have detectives rotate through the Property Room to "work" older cases to identify property that can be released.

Property and Evidence Release forms are not recorded on the property management system. They are only recorded as hard copies attached to Property and Evidence Transmittal forms. Therefore, there is no database or record of all release forms. It may be possible to start recording property release information within the property management system. The Police Information Services Division could then write specific queries to identify when specific warehouse locations or boxes contained a high percentage of "ready to be released" property.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that the Police Department Information Services Division coordinate with Property Room management to automate the identification and recording of property ready to be released. This effort may include, but not be limited to, establishing methods to record release authorizations on the property management system and creating reports identifying property on hand that is ready for disposal.

Management's Response:

Personnel from the Property Room and Police Research and Development will meet to determine what can be automated, define report structures to identify property eligible for release, and will look at determining if the property management system will allow for this process.

Target Date: January 31, 2008

Responsibility: Arlington Police Research and Development and Property Room Sergeant

4. The property management system is not used effectively to help manage Property Room operations or increase control over property.

The Police Department does not utilize the property management system to assist in establishing management controls over the Property Room function. Management controls assist management in identifying exceptions and opportunities to streamline operations. The City Auditor's Office identified the following opportunities:

- *Report of property items not booked in.*

The City Auditor's Office noted that there were property records input to the property management system through the police report process that were never "booked in" to the Property Room. These items were assigned property tag numbers by the system and excluded lost, stolen and recovered property. For some items, there were reasonable explanations for why the property was never booked in. For example, fingerprint and certain video disk evidence is stored at the Crime Scene Division and never booked in at the Property Room. However, some property may have been received at the Property Room but not booked in on the system. In other cases, officers may have inadvertently not turned in property to the Property Room. Producing a report of those items not booked in within a certain time period would identify any items not processed correctly, whether it was due to a Property Room or officer error. Of 11,587 property and evidence items assigned tag numbers on the property management system from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007, the City Auditor's Office noted that 389 (3.3%) items (excluding fingerprint and disk evidence) did not have activity records on the system.

- *Report of items checked out but not returned.*

Drugs, guns and other property are routinely checked out of the Property Room and sent to various locations such as the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office, drug lab and court. A report is currently not produced identifying items checked out that have not been returned. Property Room and Police Information Services personnel will need to coordinate to establish criteria and parameters (type of property, length of time since check-out, etc.) for identifying exceptions. During a confirmation of items checked out to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office (ME), the City Auditor's Office noted that two property items were returned by the ME's Office but not checked-in on the system. One item had originally been released to the ME's Office on February 14, 2007 and returned on March 28, 2007. It was not until September 2007 (due to audit testing) that Property Room personnel noted that

the property was not checked back into their custody. Although the evidence was subsequently found in the Property Room, an exception report would have identified this “un-returned” item earlier for follow-up.

- *Report of property by case type.*

A report by the type of case filed could help Property Room management and detectives concentrate case research on those cases most likely to be ready for release/destruction. For example, the statute of limitations for misdemeanor offenses is two years from the date of the offense but five years for felony theft, burglary and robbery offenses.

- *Identification of property authorized for release/destruction but still held in the Property Room.*

As noted in Finding #3, Property and Evidence Release forms are not recorded on the property management system. However, if the Police Department is able to implement the recommendation to document the authorization to release property on the system, the Police Information Services Division could identify property on hand but ready for release or destruction. Such a report would help ensure that Property Room Technicians concentrate disposal efforts on warehouse locations with the most property that is ready to be disposed.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that the Police Department Information Services Division coordinate with Property Room management to identify, create and distribute useful management reports based on property management system data. Such reports could include, but not necessarily be limited to, the reports discussed in this section.

Management’s Response:

Personnel from the Property Room and Police Research and Development, upon identifying the abilities of the property management system, will establish reports that can be created to help effectively manage Property Room operations or increase control over property.

Target Date: January 31, 2008

Responsibility: Arlington Police Research and Development and Property Room Sergeant

5. The property management module lacks data input and security controls.

Data input and security controls help ensure data integrity. The City Auditor’s Office noted the following exceptions related to system controls.

- *“Book-in” and other transactions were often duplicated.*

During a test of activities recorded on the system, the City Auditor’s Office noted that some property item “book-ins” were duplicated. Property Room staff noted that technicians may scan an item in the system but due to slow response from the system, may try to scan the item again. This results in duplicate entries and inaccurate management reporting. As a result,

Property Room personnel record book-in transactions on an electronic spreadsheet for management reporting, rather than relying on a system-generated report of transactions.

- *Date fields, such as the date of a recorded activity (such as a “book-in”), do not include edit controls.*

The City Auditor’s Office noted that the activity date field for some transactions contained erroneous data. For example, auditors noted that the activity date for a “check-in” transaction was recorded as 04/25/2050. In most cases, Property Room personnel do not need to change the default data presented by the system. The City Auditor’s Office found only an insignificant number (35 future dates out of over 100,000 entries) of these errors, but controls should exist to ensure that such errors do not occur. Left uncorrected, this type of error may impact management reporting.

- *Controls do not exist to ensure that activity codes are reasonable.*

For example, the City Auditor’s Office noted that the property management system indicated that one piece of property was released to an owner after the activity code for “article destruction” had been recorded for that property. It would not appear possible to record an article destruction and then subsequently perform a different action for that same piece of property. From review of the system and the hard copy property and evidence transmittal form, it was not clear whether the item had actually been destroyed or returned to the owner.

- *A security access log is currently not available.*

The Police Department is unable to print a report indicating who has access to modify Property Room records. However, the System Administrator is able to verify the access level of any one individual. To determine which employees have access to the module, however, the System Administrator would have to review the access level of all employees. The vendor indicated that the functionality to produce a listing of access levels will be included in a future release of the software.

- *A report of changes to system default values is not produced.*

The “Activity Date” field populates with the current date as a default. However, this date can be changed during data input. The City Auditor’s Office noted that the activity date entered matches the current date over 95% of the time. Although Property Room personnel rarely modify the default date, an exception report could be produced for management to ensure that changes to the default date are reasonable and authorized.

- *An audit trail for deleted property tag records does not exist.*

Property tag numbers are automatically generated by the property management system in numerical order. The City Auditor’s Office identified 30 property tag numbers that were not used in calendar year 2007. Property Room staff indicated that these “missing” tag numbers may be associated with expunged cases. Because the tag numbers were not recorded on the system, the City Auditor’s Office was not able to associate the tag numbers with a report number. Without a report number, Police Department personnel were not able to confirm

that the tag numbers were related to expunged cases. The City Auditor's Office could therefore not determine whether the 30 items related to missing property.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that the Police Department Information Services Division, in conjunction with Property Room management, identify all needed field edit and audit trail controls and determine the feasibility of inclusion in future system upgrades.

Management's Response:

Personnel from the Property Room and Police Research and Development, upon identifying the abilities of the property management system, will look at additional needed field edit and audit trail controls and determine the feasibility of inclusion in future system upgrades.

Target Date: January 31, 2008

Responsibility: Arlington Police Research and Development and Property Room Sergeant

Recommendation:

Until needed field edit controls are established, the Police Chief should require that the Police Information Services Division create exception reports that would identify potential data input errors and unauthorized system access.

Management's Response:

The Property Room Sergeant will work with Police Research and Development to define exception reporting requirements and develop on-demand reports to identify data input errors and unauthorized system access.

Target Date: January 31, 2008

Responsibility: Property Room Sergeant and Police Research Development Staff

6. Several drug destructions and one gun destruction were not documented by signed witness statements.

Section 481.154 of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires the preparation of a statement that contains the names of the persons who witness the destruction and the details of the destruction.

The Police Department's Property Standard Operating Procedures (Section 204.04) state that "a listing of those drugs or firearms destroyed shall be annotated by attending supervisory personnel and/or authorized witnesses and placed in an appropriate file."

None of the drug items included in the audit sample were documented by signed witness statements. However, the destruction files did include signed drug destruction court orders and transmittals listing each case number and item number included in the destruction.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that all drug destructions be documented by signed witness statements.

Management's Response:

The Property Room Sergeant will insure that signed witness statements accompany each destruction event. This is being accomplished and began with the drug destruction on 10/28/07.

Target Date: Completed
Responsibility: Property Room Sergeant

7. The Tiburon property management system did not always indicate the actual destruction date and method of destruction.

As noted in Finding #2, section 84.1.5 of the CALEA Property and Evidence Control standards requires that “records reflect the status of all property held by the agency.” During audit testing of firearm destructions, the City Auditor’s Office noted that the actual date of destruction was not always recorded on the property management system. In many cases, when a piece of property or evidence is identified to be destroyed, a record is created to move the item to a “destruction” location. For example, drugs may be moved to location “DRD” (drug destruction) with receiver code “DRD 2007-10”, which indicates the 10th drug destruction box for 2007.

The actual location and method of destruction is also not noted on the system, although the City Auditor’s Office did find sufficient documentation in paper files to identify this information. Recording such information on the property management system would improve the ability of the Police Department to produce accurate management reports of property destructions. As noted in the table below, the actual destruction date matched the date recorded on the property management system for only one of 15 property items included in a sample of drug and firearm destructions.

Sample of Drug and Firearm Destructions					
Property Tag #	System Destruction Date	Actual Destruction Date	Matches Actual Destruction	Before Actual Destruction	After Actual Destruction
060824106	04/05/2007	07/01/2007		X	
000066911	06/12/2007	11/05/2006			X
000050519	06/11/2007	11/05/2006			X
020045218	07/01/2007	07/01/2007	X		
010008258	06/12/2007	11/05/2006			X
010015231	06/14/2007	03/18/2007			X
060826986	06/13/2007	11/05/2006			X
010074622	06/15/2007	03/18/2007			X
010079137	06/15/2007	03/18/2007			X
010086653	06/15/2007	03/18/2007			X
060039079	11/14/2006	08/03/2006			X
040082496	03/20/2007	04/27/2007		X	
050032423	05/31/2007	07/09/2007		X	
050046975	05/31/2007	07/09/2007		X	
050074175	05/25/2007	07/09/2007		X	
Totals			1	5	9

According to Property Room personnel, the actual date of destruction is now being recorded on the system. However, because there have been no recent firearm destructions, the City Auditor's Office was not able to confirm this.

Recommendation:

The Police Chief should require that the actual date and method of destruction be recorded on the property management system for those items already recorded on the system.

Management's Response:

Personnel from both the Property Room and Police Research and Development will determine if this recommendation is possible and practical utilizing our current system and resources. If attainable, destruction dates and methods of destruction will be documented on bar-coded property.

Target Date: January 31, 2008

Responsibility: Arlington Police Research and Development and Property Room Sergeant