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Date: August 17, 2009

To: Audit and Finance Committee

From: Jennifer Ruttman, Interim City Auditor 

Subject: Police Evidence Section Policies & Procedures
Audit Follow-up

cc: Vicki Myers, Interim Police Chief
Michael Dvorak, Assistant Police Chief – Support Services
William Peters, Police Operations Support Division Commander
Shirl Butler, Police Technical Services Division Administrator
Lane Darling, Police Evidence Supervisor

Pursuant to the Council-approved audit plan, we have completed a follow-up review of our audit of the Police Evidence Section Policies & Procedures. Included with this letter is the final report.


We would like to thank the Police Department management and staff for their cooperation, professionalism and assistance throughout the review process. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at x3767 or Jerry Faccone at x2403.



20 E Main St Suite 820
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Date: July 28, 2009

To: Audit and Finance Committee

From: Jennifer Ruttman, Interim City Auditor 

Subject: **Police Evidence Section Policies & Procedures
Audit Follow-up**

Cc: Vicki Myers, Interim Police Chief
Michael Dvorak, Assistant Police Chief – Support Services
William Peters, Police Operations Support Division Commander
Shirl Butler, Police Technical Services Division Administrator
Lane Darling, Police Evidence Supervisor

Background

On September 30, 2008, we issued our Final Audit Report with three Corrective Action Plans for the audit of the Police Department's Evidence Section Policies & Procedures for the period of July 1990 through February 2008. The Corrective Action Plans detailed the findings and recommendations resulting from our examination. In accordance with our practice of conducting follow-up reviews 9-12 months after issuing an audit report, we recently performed a brief review to determine the status of our recommendations.

Discussion

Evidence Submission Errors – Corrective Action Plan #1

The Evidence Section cannot accept items improperly submitted by police officers. These need to be corrected prior to storage as evidence. Submission errors include incomplete impound records, incorrect evidence category codes, absence of signatures, improper packaging, and incomplete integrity seals.

While all evidence submission errors reviewed in the audit were properly resolved, there were instances where this was not performed in the time required by policy. We recommended that Evidence Section personnel process evidence submission errors in a timelier manner.

The Evidence Section satisfied our recommendation by proposing a new timetable for the correction of submission errors and assigning a specific evidence technician to monitor the correction process.

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Evidence Storage – Corrective Action Plan #2

The audit revealed that evidence properly reviewed and approved for disposition was not disposed of on a timely basis due to a shortage of manpower in the Evidence Section. Storage was approaching full capacity. We recommended that Evidence personnel dispose of all items that had been approved for disposition and establish a strategy for the timely disposition of evidence in the future.

Responding to our recommendations, the Evidence Supervisor revealed that the Section had become involved in a Six Sigma project temporarily reassigning PD personnel to purge the items designated for disposition. A team of six individuals spent more than two weeks beginning in late April 2009 disposing of items. Currently, two individuals on a temporary basis continue to assist in keeping up with the process. There is also a proposed grant that would provide funds to hire four additional evidence technicians for a period of two years. More than 95% of the evidence approved for disposition has been disposed of, freeing up much needed storage space.

Evidence Identification Numbers – Correction Action Plan #3

Evidence items received by PD are recorded in I/LEADS RMS, an electronic evidence management system. When evidence is recorded, the system selects the next available sequential number for identification of the item. The sequential issuance of identification numbers is a control that is necessary to help prevent the loss or misappropriation of evidence.

The audit revealed that some identification numbers were not accounted for as the result of being discarded by the system. This occurs when the process of entering an evidence item is canceled before completion of the operation. In such a case, the identification number is discarded and cannot be reused. We recommended that controls be put in place ensuring that all numbers were accounted for.

In response to our recommendation, PD Systems created a report of all missing property identification numbers. This report satisfies our recommendation by providing a continuing accounting for all identification numbers.

Summary

We commend the PD Evidence Section staff and PD Systems for their actions in response to the audit. Corrective measures have been implemented to satisfy our recommendations.