

SALEM POLICE

SUBJECT: Temporarily Secured property for people experiencing homelessness

REFERENCE (S):

Page
1 of 3

DEPARTMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 156

Date of issue:
July 1, 2024

Effective Date
Jul 1, 2024

ISSUING AUTHORITY

Chief Lucas J. Miller

X NEW AMENDS RESCIND

I. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for handling property secured by officers of the Salem Police Department from people experiencing homelessness who are being removed from public property under the city ordinance 24-31.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Abandoned Property – Any property to which the true owner has, in writing, declared his intention to relinquish any claim or right thereto, or any unclaimed property which has been held for at least 60 days.
- B. Found Property – Any property which comes into the possession of department officers but does not play a part in a specific crime.
- C. Safekeeping Property – Any individual property that has been seized by, or turned over to, the department by the alleged owner for reasons explained by the owner. This property will be held for 60 days. On day 60 or before the property owner may ask for a one-time 60-day extension. This extension is contingent upon space and approval from the Community Impact Commander.
- D. Responsibility - The Community Impact Unit will be responsible for maintaining all property that falls within this policy.
- E. Eligible Property- means a limited number of items including but not limited to clothing, hygiene products, and toiletries, personal effects, and items of basic necessity. Any items damaged in such a manner that it is deemed, by the board of health, or their agent, to be unsafe to store or may pose a health risk, hazard, is not eligible property.

- F. Storage – each person will receive 4 bins for their items that will be placed in a secure storage container. All items must fit into the bin. A request for more than 4 can be granted by the CIU commander depending upon space.

III. GENERAL

- A. All abandoned property, found property, or safekeeping property that comes into the possession of an officer shall be properly logged and placed into a bin, and then placed in a storage container. Property shall not be stored at an employee's residence, within a personal locker, a police vehicle, office, or desk.
- B. The officer who has control of property shall ensure the chain of custody is always maintained.
1. When property is released to the owner or transferred to another officer, the "Transfer Receipt Form" must be signed.
 2. When property is released or transferred to another officer of another police department, to the owner or authorized agent, (following their presentation of proper identification), the "Transfer Receipt Form" must be signed by the person accepting the property.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING PROPERTY

- A. Found or Abandoned Property
1. A report shall be generated including the date, time, location, and description of the property. Officers who seize abandoned property or found property shall make an attempt to locate the owner.
 - a. Found property may be released should the owner be located. A transfer receipt form shall be signed by the owner and attached to the report.
 - b. If the owner of the found property is not located it shall be placed in a bin and then placed in a storage container.
 2. When the officer's investigation reveals that found or abandoned property is associated with a violation of the law, the property shall be managed as evidence.
 3. Officers will not secure any property that they consider to be ineligible property or a biohazard. This is to include any item that is soiled with urine, blood, fecal matter, insect infestations, extremely dirty, hypodermic needles, drug paraphernalia, drug residue, cash or any items that the officer

deems dangerous. The officer should document the soiled item and place it in the trash or discard it appropriately.

- B. When property held for safekeeping is not reclaimed within 55 days, the case officer shall attempt to notify the owner that the property will be disposed of, if not claimed within 5 days. If the owner does not claim the property within this period, the property shall be disposed of in a manner consistent with this policy.
- C. All participants will have access to their bins Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 11:30 pm. In case of an emergency access will be allowed 24 hours a day through the OIC.

V. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. CIU COMMANDER

- 1. The CIU commander or designee shall maintain an accurate record of all property maintained in the storage container, to ensure that all items are released or disposed of in a timely manner.
- 2. The OIC, CIU commander or CIU supervisor shall have access to the storage container. Other employees may only access the secure area after having received explicit authorization from the OIC, CIU commander or CIU supervisor.

VI. INSPECTION

- A. Maintaining the integrity of the property control function is paramount. Therefore, the following inspection, inventory, and audit protocols shall be followed:
 - 1. An audit of all property shall be conducted whenever the person responsible for the property and control function is assigned to, and/or transferred from, the position. The newly designated CIU Commander and a designee of the Chief of Police shall jointly complete this audit to ensure records are correct and properly annotated.