

EVIDENCE & PROPERTY ROOMS – THE FORT KNOX OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

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More and more, there has been a trend in law enforcement to utilize third-party suppliers for long-term storage solutions of DNA, homicide and sexual assault/rape kit storage. In this article, we will examine traditional solutions to long-term storage of evidence and property versus some of the more innovative and far more economical alternatives available to law enforcement agencies, courthouses and crime labs that are being achieved through the utilization of third-party suppliers able to provide secure chain-of-custody for long-term storage solutions.

The need for the right solutions to long-term storage of DNA-based evidence and homicide evidence is critical. Why? Because unless all criminal activity in this world comes to an end (which we know won't be happening anytime in the foreseeable future), then traditional long-term storage solutions need to be able to keep pace with the evidence storage requirements, without the risk of compromised, lost or misplaced evidence.

Because of the ongoing need to make space within a limited area, long-term storage will always be a reoccurring and an expensive line item when managed and kept within a limited environment. For example, a physical building will always have space constraints – because buildings have walls. Further, construction costs to build new facilities and/or renovate existing facilities will always include: development, planning, budgetary approvals, permits, schedules, inspections, etc. Also, with most public institutions, they must be careful on how they manage and spend taxpayer dollars, which subsequently requires a lot of reviews, approvals, budgetary adjustments, etc.

There's Gold in Dem There Evidence & Property Rooms

Similar to Ft. Knox, law enforcement's Evidence & Property rooms closely guard valuables. While Ft. Knox guards the nation's gold reserve, law enforcement property & evidence rooms are tasked with storing valuable property and evidence that ultimately represents either freedom, justice and/or incarceration; and, in many cases, directly impacts the generation of new legislation and/or changing existing laws.

Those tasked to manage and run property & evidence rooms are many times the unsung heroes of law enforcement. They are the infamous custodians of evidence and property. Their ability to ensure chain-of-custody, proper storage and documentation of evidence is critical to cases being solved, especially with the many advances in processing DNA-related evidence and the strides in the field of forensic testing. Lost or compromised evidence can be like kryptonite for a law enforcement agency. It can

literally thwart the community's trust, end the careers of peace officers; and worst of all, allow the guilty to go free.



Loaded Gun Barrels or Sustainable, Efficient, Innovative Solutions

Trying to manage the daily influx of evidence, coupled with the long-term storage retention of DNA and homicide evidence, sexual assault/rape kits, oversized and odd-shaped evidence, weapons, drugs, vehicles, etc. can be daunting. But it is not as daunting with a customizable solution that greatly minimizes the expense and cost of some of the more traditional long-term storage solutions.

The best and most innovative long-term storage solutions for law enforcement is a convenient, affordable, customizable option to law enforcement agencies and crime labs offered by third-party suppliers. The benefits are numerous and the solutions they offer are catching on. For instance, 1) third-party suppliers save law enforcement agencies money - it's an affordable alternative solution and far less costly than any of the other options out there (i.e. new construction, renovation of existing facilities, expensive racking and shelving); 2) third-party suppliers also provide long-term, secure, and strict chain-of-custody; 3) third-party suppliers can offer customizable storage, logistics, freight and packaging solutions.

When There is a Breach in Chain-of-Custody

After visiting my first of Evidence & Property room firsthand, I left amazed at the level of space management and planning that must be incorporated in order to effectively and efficiently store the evidence and property. I mused in my mind during the tour that these must be the "storage gods and goddesses" of law enforcement! Just how do they do it, and keep up? I discovered that there is an answer for this, and that answer is they don't have an answer for the most part.

Continued on Next Page