

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Inspector General



Inspector General

March 4, 2016

Cathy L. Lanier
Chief of Police
Metropolitan Police Department
200 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Room 5080
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chief Lanier:

This letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) *Re-Audit of the Metropolitan Police Department's Management of Seized and Confiscated Property* (OIG No. 12-1-15FA).

The objective of this re-audit was to determine whether the recommendations from our prior *Audit of the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Management of Seized and Confiscated Property* (OIG No. 07-1-21FA), issued on May 19, 2008, have been implemented.¹ The prior audit identified 11 recommendations designed to improve the operation of the MPD's Evidence Control Branch (ECB). The prior audit findings and corresponding recommendations are included as an Attachment (*See Attachment*).

In February 2016, we met with representatives from the ECB to discuss the tentative results to date. During this meeting, ECB representatives provided verbal feedback, including an update on actions taken during the course of the re-audit to address our prior audit recommendations. As a result of this meeting, and the evidence provided by ECB representatives, we concluded that the MPD had addressed all 11 recommendations from our 2008 audit report. We are making no additional recommendations for corrective action as a result of this re-audit. Therefore, we will not issue an audit report to your agency for this engagement.

¹ The objectives for the prior audit, OIG No. 07-1-21FA, were to: (1) evaluate the adequacy of the MPD's internal controls for the intake and custody of seized assets; (2) determine whether law enforcement personnel followed applicable laws and procedures related to the handling and disposal of evidence, accountability for evidence, as well as the sale of seized and forfeited property; and (3) evaluate the internal controls over the proceeds generated from the sale of such property.

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I appreciate the courtesy and cooperation of the MPD during our engagement. If you need additional information, please call me or Toayoa Aldridge, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202)727-2540.

Sincerely,



Daniel W. Lucas
Inspector General

DWL/fg

cc: See Distribution List

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION:

- The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia (via email)
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- The Honorable Kathleen Patterson, District of Columbia Auditor, Office of the D.C. Auditor (via email)

Attachment - Status of Prior OIG Audit Recommendations

This appendix provides the recommendations, MPD’s comments to our recommendations, and the status of each recommendation from the *Audit of the District of Columbia MPD’s Management of Seized and Confiscated Property/Evidence* (OIG No. 07-1-21FA), issued on May 19, 2008.

Recommendation	Agency Initial Response	Current Status
Prior Audit Finding 1: The MPD’s Evidence Control Branch (ECB) is not achieving its mission relative to preserving the integrity of evidence in its custody. The ECB lacked basic organizational controls to ensure ECB’s operations are efficiently and effectively performed, property records are properly managed and maintained, and that adequate security exists to safeguard property against loss, theft, and unauthorized use. Our audit of ECB’s operations found: (1) property records were in disarray; (2) unmanageable levels of property ready for disposition; and (3) ECB personnel with unregulated access to property vaults and property records.		
Recommendation 1. Develop a record maintenance system that will ensure that the locations of specific assets are readily available.	MPD concurred	Closed. ECB acquired and implemented a computerized database system (EvidenceOnQ) to manage, maintain, and track property and evidence from the crime scene, to the courtroom, and final disposition. The new system allows for management of the chain of custody on both new and old evidence.
Recommendation 2. Conduct inventories of evidence maintained at ECB annually or more frequently if deemed necessary.	MPD concurred	Closed. The MPD formalized and implemented a Branch Order requiring ECB staff to conduct inventories of evidence in ECB’s custody every 3 years. According to ECB officials, to achieve the 3-year goal, ECB Property & Disposal Technicians are conducting inventories of evidence maintained at ECB every Thursday and Friday.
Recommendation 3. Re-evaluate staffing levels after a manageable inventory level has been determined and maintained.	MPD concurred	Closed. ECB’s current staffing level is 31 full-time equivalents (FTEs) compared to 17 FTEs at the time of our prior audit. ECB management has adopted a policy of using predominantly civilian personnel, instead of sworn officers required to participate in redeployment and, therefore, have less time to handle property.

Status of Prior OIG Audit Recommendations (con't)		
Recommendation	Agency Initial Response	Current Status
Recommendation 4. Purge all seized and confiscated property and evidence no longer needed for prosecution prior to relocating to the new ECB facility.	MPD concurred	Closed. ECB management stated that confiscated items no longer needed were purged at the old warehouse prior to relocating to the new facility.
Recommendation 5. Maintain active property records in a secured area with access limited to authorized ECB personnel.	MPD concurred	Closed. The ECB's new facility is physically secured, and access to property, evidence, and related records is restricted to authorized personnel.
Recommendation 6. Establish policies that identify and limit those individuals who should have access to secure areas.	MPD concurred	Closed. Access to sensitive areas of the warehouse is granted on a need-to-know basis. Cash, narcotics, and gun vaults are restricted to authorized ECB personnel.

Status of Prior OIG Audit Recommendations (con't)		
Prior Audit Finding 2: The Information Technology Branch (ITB) could not identify those who had access or the level of each user's access. In addition, ITB had no controls on how access is assigned and the level of access users have in the property database.		
Recommendation 7. Establish policies that identify who will have access and the level of access they will have to the property database.	MPD concurred	Closed. The ECB assigns user access to the property database based on job function. ECB documented standard operating procedures that identify who will have the appropriate level of access for authorized purposes.
Recommendation 8. Direct ITB to determine who has access to the property database and if their level of access is appropriate.	MPD concurred	Closed. A new database system has been implemented, and access is controlled by the ECB. Requests for access are made via email to the ECB director , who grants or denies access and determines the level of access granted.
Recommendation 9. Direct ITB to document instructions needed to run the property database accurately and efficiently, including back-up and retention procedures.	MPD concurred	Closed. The MPD has created and implemented standard operating procedures to conduct database back-ups to ensure safekeeping and restoration capabilities for MPD data.
Recommendation 10. Direct ITB to conduct a thorough review of all critical systems under its purview and ensure user, operational, and administration manuals exist for these systems.	MPD concurred	Closed. User, system, and administration manuals are available for all critical systems utilized by the ECB.
Recommendation 11. Create and implement a back-up system to provide assurance that in the event of disruption of power to MPD's property database, data will be backed up at a minimum of once a week, resulting in MPD having the capability of restoring its database.	MPD concurred	Closed. The MPD created and implemented a back-up system and performs back-up procedures twice per week. In the event of a server failure, the MPD has established protocols that will assist with restoring the application and databases so that operations can resume.