

## Section 2: Reception and Release

### Subject: Recording Inmate Property

#### Minimum Standard:

Revised: 07/2001, 07/2004, 12/2008, 07/2009, 12/2011, 10/2014, 09/2015

Authorized: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sheriff Paul A. Sigsworth

### POLICY

All inmate property accepted into the Erie County Jail will be treated with respect and handled with care to prevent loss or damage by all agency employees. No inmate shall possess any personal property while incarcerated, except as otherwise authorized by this policy. The jail shift supervisor or Jail Administrator must grant prior written approval for the possession of personal items by an inmate.

### PROCEDURE

If it is apparent that an inmate is not going to be released from custody immediately upon being admitted to the jail, and the prisoner will then necessarily be integrated into general population, all of the prisoner's personal property shall be collected, inventoried, and stored in accordance with this policy.

- A. The admitting corrections officer will, during the admissions process, collect, inventory and secure all personal property of the newly admitted inmate, including, but not limited to:
  1. Money in any form; and
  2. Belts, ties, hats, jackets, coats, and any other clothing article(s); and
  3. All contents of an inmate's pockets; and
  4. Contents of purses, wallets, checkbooks; and
  5. Contents of backpacks, suitcases, and any other container or luggage; and
  6. Jewelry and/or watches; and
  7. Keys and key chains; and
  8. Any other personal property not covered by the above.
  
- B. In the event the inmate is too intoxicated or impaired to the point that he/she poses a danger to self or others, an inventory of the prisoner's property will be conducted at the time of booking. This inventory will be done in the presence of two witnessing Corrections Officers. Both witnessing Corrections Officers will legibly sign the property inventory sheet.
  1. A notation shall be made on the property sheet that the inmate was not present during the inventory, or was intoxicated to the point of impairment.
  
  2. The impaired inmate's property will be stored in the property room. Any property that cannot be removed from the inmate's possession at the time of booking due to the inmate's condition (i.e.: highly intoxicated) will be removed from the prisoner and properly inventoried and stored at a later time when the inmate can be safely and properly processed.

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- C. All confiscated property [except American currency or any item that could be potentially used as a weapon, such as pocket knives, tools, etc.] will be secured in a hanging locker bag located in the Inmate Property Room. Any item that could be used as a weapon (pocket knives, tools, etc.) shall be tagged with the inmate's name and secured in Main Control in the prescribed location. To determine if an item could be used as a weapon, Corrections Officers shall utilize their training, experience, and common sense. All property placed in the prescribed location in Main Control shall be properly documented.
- D. In the appropriate records location, the admitting Corrections Officer will list and include an objective description of each item in detail, being careful not to assess any value to an item(s); i.e: "one gold tone colored ring with clear stones" rather than a "gold ring with diamonds" since employees cannot determine the authenticity of purported precious metals or gems.
- E. If a prisoner is unable to remove an item from his/her person, i.e. ring, medical tag, etc., the item will be noted on the property inventory screen along with an indication that it was left on the prisoner's person. A narrative shall be submitted explaining the reason why the prisoner was left wearing the item. All jewelry and small items will be placed in an envelope and sealed. The envelope will then be placed in the inside upper portion of the storage bag.
- F. All newly processed inmates will be assigned a property number. Most property, except Money should be stored in the hanging garment bag on the corresponding number. This property number must be included on the property inventory screen.
- G. In order to expedite the release of prisoners, property hangars #1 thru #25 shall be used exclusively for female prisoners.
- H. The inmate will be asked to sign the "Acknowledgement of Inventory Collected" on the printed copy of the Inmate Property screen. The booking officer shall complete the property number used and the inventorying officer's name. In the event the inmate is unable or refuses to sign, the inventory should be witnessed by another officer. Both officers should sign the sheet to indicate the inventory is accurate.
- I. If the inmate is in possession of personal items that will not fit in the hanging garment bag, the items should be clearly marked with the inmate's name and placed on a shelf in processing. This should be noted on the inmate property screen.
- J. Bicycles or exceptionally large items will not be accepted for storage at the time of a prisoner booking and will be left in the possession of the arresting agency. An exception can be made by the supervisor if it appears the prisoner will be securing his/her release soon after being processed.
- K. Medications in the form of pills or tablets only that are prescribed to a prisoner and that are in properly labeled and currently dated prescription bottles will be accepted, but will not be handled

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by Corrections Officers. The transporting officer presenting a prisoner for incarceration will be directed to place any such medications in the inmate medication deposit box located in the jail vehicle sallyport prior to the prisoner being admitted into the jail proper. The Corrections Officer, who is made aware of the presence of that medication, will be responsible for properly recording the deposit of this medication such that the jail medical staff will be made aware of the existence of the medication.

In the event that a transporting officer presents a prisoner for incarceration with liquid medication that is not suitable for deposit in the jail vehicle sallyport medication deposit box, a Corrections Officer may accept that medication and immediately report its receipt to any on-duty jail medical staff employee. If no such employee is working, the Corrections Officer is authorized to accept such medication, to properly document its receipt, and to properly store that medication in the refrigerator provided until the medication can be retrieved by a member of the jail medical staff.

The keys for the medication deposit box will be placed on the jail nurse's key chain with an extra set of keys—to be used only in properly documented emergency situations by a Corrections Officer—in the key locker in Main Control. A third set of keys will be placed in the key cabinet in the Dispatch Center, again to be utilized only during a properly documented emergency situation.

At no time will any medications be stored with an inmate's personal property.

- L. Any member of the public wishing to drop off medication for an inmate will be instructed to place the medication in the inmate medication deposit box located in the Sheriff's Office lobby near the jail access door. The deposit of that medication will be properly documented by the Corrections Officer receiving such information so that the jail medical staff will be made aware of the medication's deposit. Keys for this deposit box are identical to the box in the jail sallyport and will be handled in a like fashion.
- M. The following medications discovered in the possession of an inmate upon booking or processing will be considered evidence of a criminal offense:
  - 1. Prescribed to another person; or
  - 2. Unidentifiable or suspicious in nature; or
  - 3. In an unmarked container; or
  - 4. In a container holding various medications; or
  - 5. Any loose medication(s) found in the possession of an inmate.
- N. Perishable/Food items. If it is apparent that a prisoner will not be released within 4 hours, any perishable items will be disposed of. A jail narrative should follow anytime a prisoner's property is disposed. This narrative should include a detailed description, amount and disposition of the item(s).

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- O. Because it is a violation of policy of the Erie County Sheriff's Office to store or possess any alcoholic beverages in this facility except for evidentiary purposes, alcoholic beverages shall not be accepted from the transporting officer. In the event the alcoholic beverage discovered in the possession of an inmate after the transporting officer has left the jail, the beverage and container will be properly disposed of if the transporting officer or his/her agency representative advise, after being contacted, that the beverage is not needed for evidentiary purposes.
- P. An inmate incarcerated for more than 10 days will not be permitted to store property in an amount deemed excessive by the Jail Administrator or his/her designee.
  - 1. Any inmate who is deemed to have excessive property will be required to release any excessive items to a person of his/her choice.
  - 2. If excessive items need to be shipped by mail, parcel post, or by other method, the Jail Administrator will see that all unnecessary items are shipped at the inmate's expense. If the inmate is determined to be indigent, the County will pay for shipping of excess property.
- Q. Officers should be suspect of any personal property item(s) an inmate possess which may be the fruit(s) of a crime that yet to be discovered or reported. Items such as personal identification documents, credit cards, smart cards, etc. in the name of another person (other than the inmate being booked into the custody of the jail) should be confiscated and treated as evidence.
- R. Electronic items such as cell phones and pagers may hold valuable information and evidence for investigators that can be easily erased and/or altered. A prisoner shall not be allowed access to any such items while in custody unless prior approval has been received from the Jail Administrator.