

Evidence and Property Management

Evidence and property items in the possession of law enforcement agencies should be collected, managed, and returned through victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive practices. This may include understanding the known traditional and cultural practices of the rightful owners whenever possible. Agencies should also be mindful of death and burial practices. Agency policies and personnel should be respectful of these practices to the extent that they do not interfere with investigations, lead to the possible destruction of evidence, or are detrimental to victims' interests. Agency personnel should afford opportunities for victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive services whenever possible.

Incorporating victim services personnel into evidence and property management practices can enhance victims' and co-victims' experiences during interactions and police-community relationships. It can also reinforce the prompt return of property that is no longer needed for investigation and prosecution, which is often a right specified through state statutes.

Promising Agency Practices

- ✓ **Develop a partnership between victim services, investigations, and property personnel to ensure proper and timely property return notifications and processes for victims and co-victims.**
- ✓ **Provide trauma-informed property return training to agency personnel.**
- ✓ **Use victim-centered, trauma-informed language in written and spoken communication for property return notifications.**
- ✓ **Revise policies to include the role of victim services in property return notifications and processes.**

Helpful Resources

- **[Evidence and Property Management Policy – Template \(OVC\)](#)**
- **[Trauma-Informed Property Return – IACPLearn: Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services \(LEV\) Webinar Series](#)**
- **[Communication with Victims | IACP](#)**