

**CHAPTER 5**  
**PACKAGING OF PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE FOR BOOKING**

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## CHAPTER 5

### PACKAGING OF PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE FOR BOOKING

#### 1. INTRODUCTION.

a. The purpose of this chapter is to provide employees guidance on how to properly package property and evidence in order to maintain its integrity and evidentiary value. Since it is not possible to develop a guide that covers all items and all situations, this chapter will provide examples on how to package the most common types of items the Department encounters while serving as a general guideline for those items not listed. The examples that follow will be based primarily on the California Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS), Physical Evidence Bulletins (PEB) for collection and submission to BFS laboratories where applicable. The most current PEBs may be viewed at <https://oag.ca.gov/cci/reference>.

**NOTE: A copy of this chapter shall be printed and placed in a binder at each Area's packaging station for immediate reference.**

b. Proper Packaging and Storage. Proper packaging and storage of evidence is essential for safety and legal purposes. Chapter 4, Evidence Collection and Identification, of this manual, covers the collection and field packaging of evidence. This chapter describes the final packaging needed before the item is submitted and placed in storage. The goal of packaging is to maintain the item's evidentiary value and protect employees from potential injury. All evidence shall be marked for easy identification and packaged to avoid contamination, degradation, and to ensure the integrity of the evidence.

c. Property Versus Evidence. All items submitted for storage shall be packaged in the same manner regardless of the reason for the item's storage. For example, items that are stored for evidence, found property, safekeeping, or warrant seizure shall all be packaged according to the guidelines of this chapter.

d. Exceptions to Policy. It may be necessary for an Area to deviate from the policy located in this chapter in order to comply with local laboratory or court requirements. If this occurs, the Area shall incorporate details of the exception into the Area's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The Area shall also submit a memorandum to the Internal Affairs Section (IAS), Evidence Unit, explaining the need for the exception to policy and provide a copy of the updated Area SOP for review and approval.

e. Placement of Property and Evidence Items into the Property Control System. Employees shall place all property and evidence in the designated property and evidence temporary storage lockers prior to the end of their work shift. Employees shall

not store property and evidence in a personal locker or any other location. The booking officer shall enter all property and/or evidence into the evidence records management system (RMS) prior to the end of their work shift. When property is booked for safekeeping, such as a wallet or backpack, and evidence/contraband from the same incident is collected, such as drugs or weapons, the property shall be packaged separately from the evidence/contraband. The separation is to prevent the unnecessary opening of the evidentiary seal for the evidence items, affecting the chain of custody, in order to return a person's property. Additionally, it is highly recommended the items should be stored in different locations within the evidence room.

2. SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE PACKAGING.

a. Officers shall use an appropriately sized container to package items unless an item is required to be packaged in a certain container (refer to Figures 5-1 through 5-10). The selection should be large enough to allow for adequate room to open and reseal an item. All containers shall be new and clean to prevent the contamination of samples.

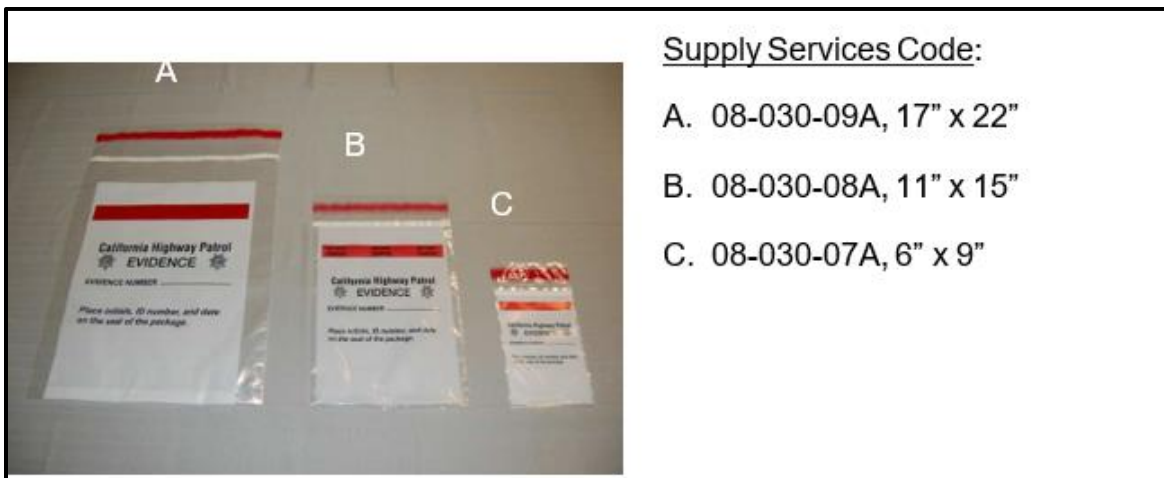
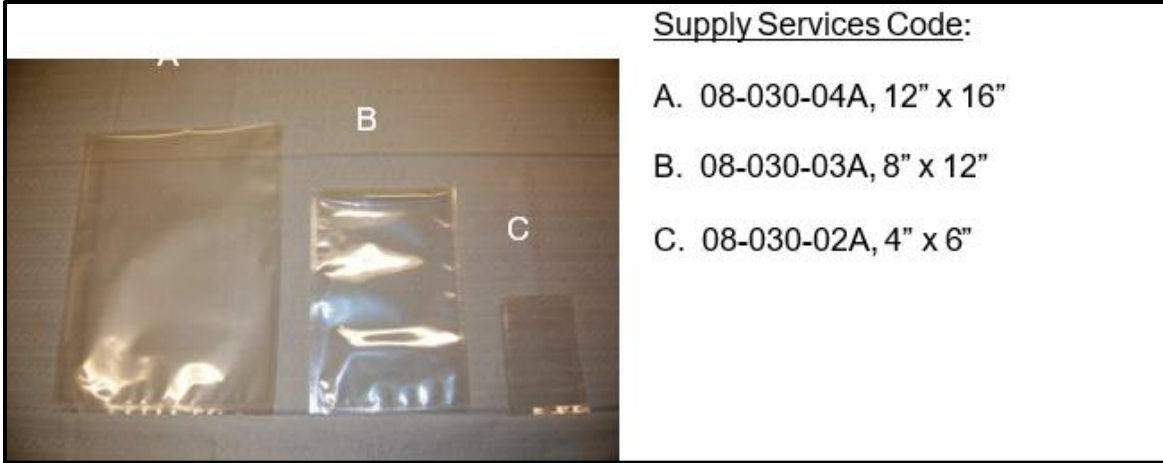


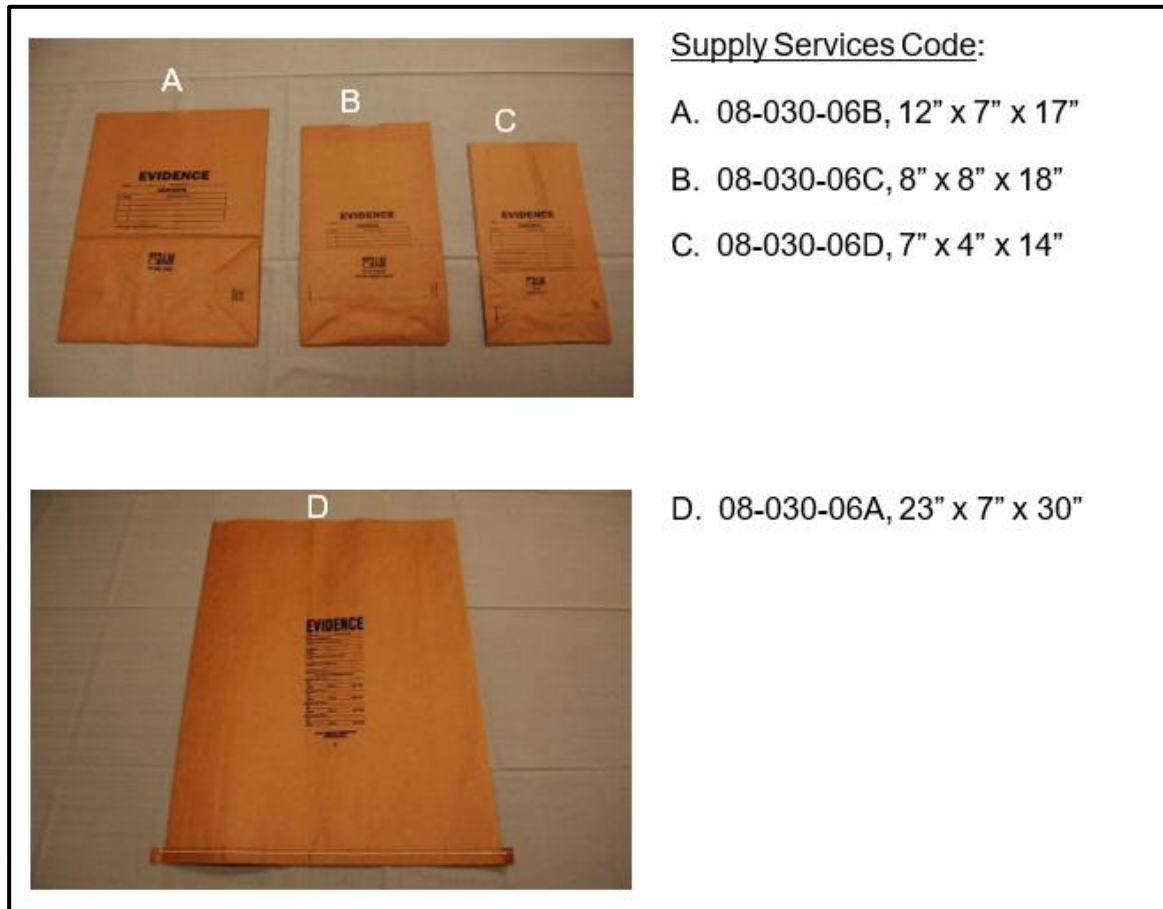
Figure 5-1. Example of tamper resistant plastic evidence bags.



Supply Services Code:

- A. 08-030-04A, 12" x 16"
- B. 08-030-03A, 8" x 12"
- C. 08-030-02A, 4" x 6"

Figure 5-2. Example of heat seal bags.



Supply Services Code:

- A. 08-030-06B, 12" x 7" x 17"
- B. 08-030-06C, 8" x 8" x 18"
- C. 08-030-06D, 7" x 4" x 14"
- D. 08-030-06A, 23" x 7" x 30"

Figure 5-3. Example of kraft paper evidence bags.

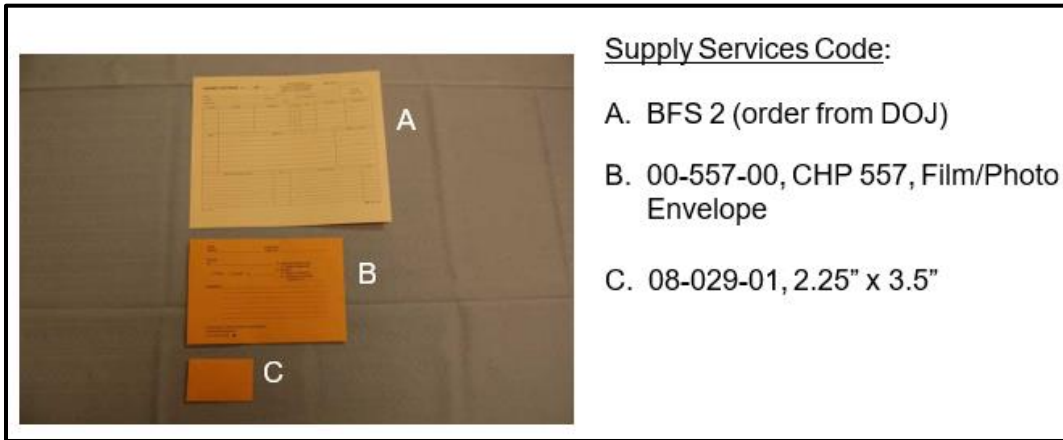


Figure 5-4. Example of envelopes.

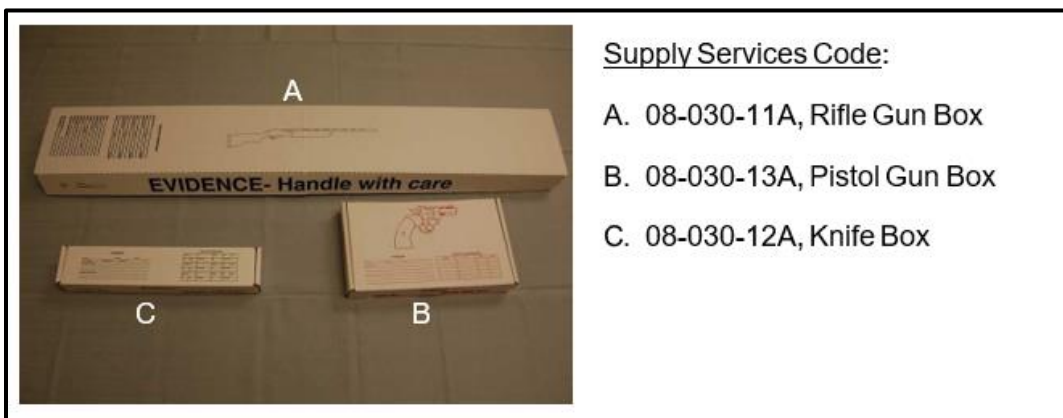


Figure 5-5. Example of boxes.

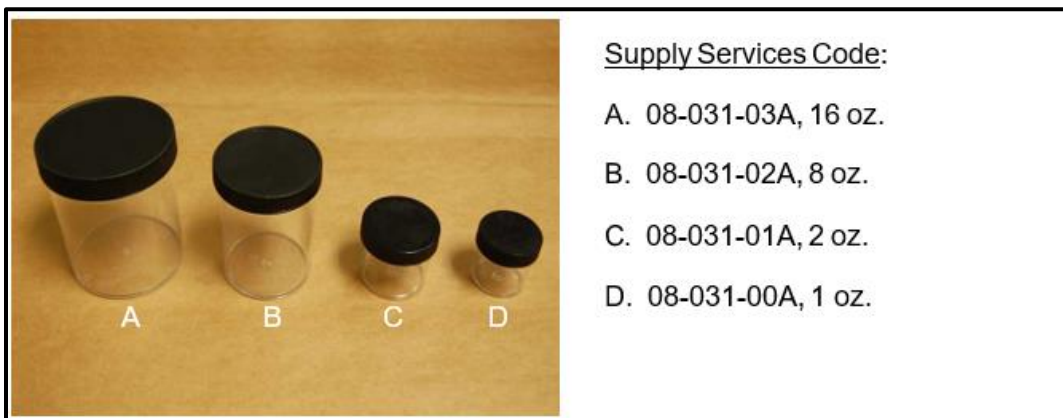


Figure 5-6. Example of plastic jars.



Figure 5-7. Example of miscellaneous containers.

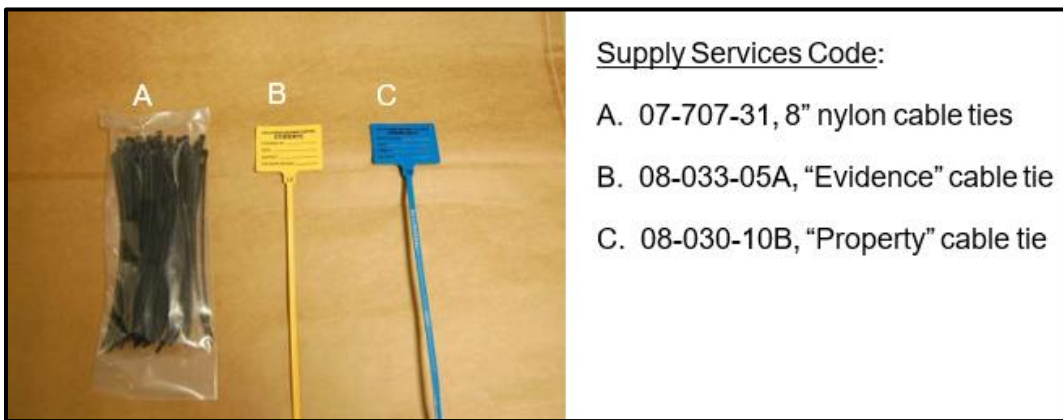


Figure 5-8. Example of cable ties.

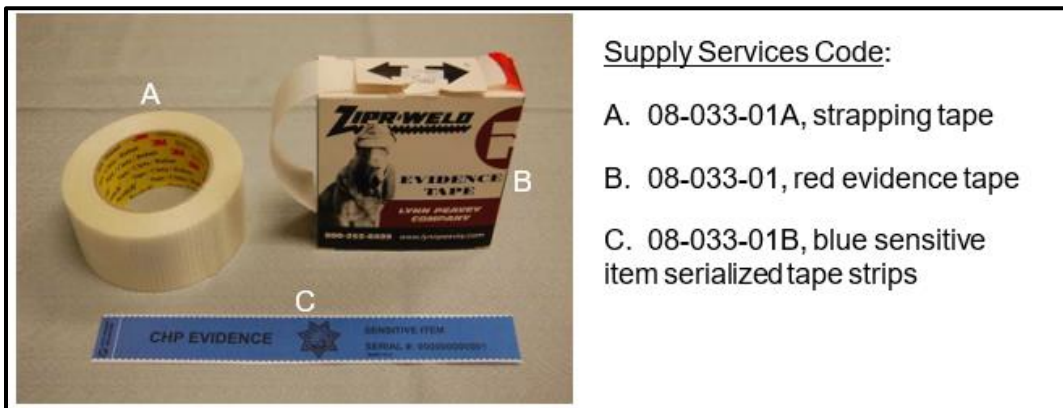


Figure 5-9. Example of tape.

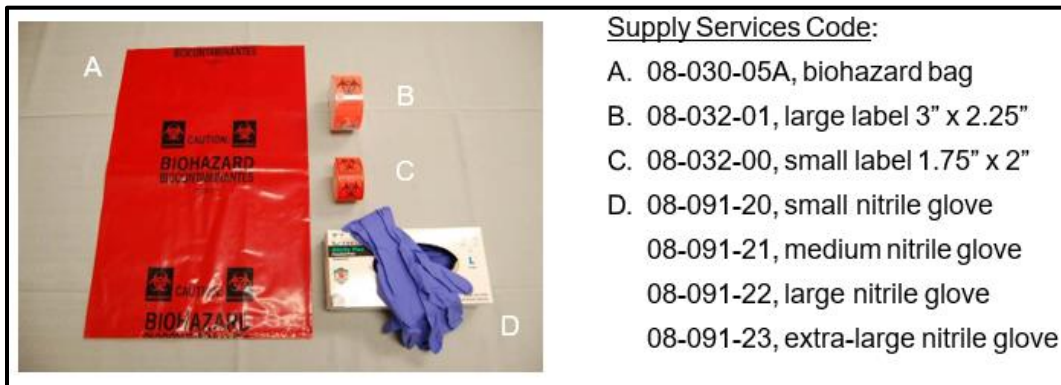


Figure 5-10. Example of biohazard items and nitrile gloves.

### 3. GENERAL PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS.

a. The following requirements shall take effect immediately upon publication of this chapter. Items packaged prior to this chapter's revision date shall be left as they were originally packaged and shall not be repackaged to comply. This will preserve the chain of custody (refer to Figures 5-11 through 5-15).

(1) All packaged items shall have the following handwritten information on the package:

- (a) Property control number.
- (b) Item number(s) (e.g., Item 1, Items 3 and 4).
- (c) Initials, ID number of booking officer, and booking date across the evidence tape seal being sure the information overlaps both the evidence tape and the package.

(2) Tamper resistant plastic evidence bags shall use red evidence tape (except when the evidence bag contains controlled substances, currency, or any other item of value) around the overlapping ends of the package to create an evidentiary seal where the booking officer will write their initials, ID number, and date. Strapping tape is not required to be used on tamper resistant plastic evidence bags, except when resealing an opened item, though it may be used to prevent small items from exiting the bag. Use of the tamper resistant plastic evidence bag's adhesive strip is required and sufficient in most cases.

(3) Tamper resistant plastic evidence bags containing controlled substances, currency, or any other item of value shall use blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape around the overlapping ends of the package to create an evidentiary seal where the booking officer shall write their initials, ID number, and

date. Strapping tape is not required to be used on tamper resistant plastic evidence bags, except when resealing an opened item, though it may be used to prevent small items from exiting the bag. The blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strips may also be used for items of value such as jewelry. When the blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape be used, the serial number shall be noted for that item in the evidence RMS case file.

(4) The CHP 557, File/Photo Envelope, containing only a DVD recording, does not require the use of strapping tape around the seal of the envelope. The flap shall be sealed by moistening the gummed strip and pressing the flap closed. The red evidence tape shall then cover the seal of the envelope. The booking officer shall write their initials, ID number, and date across the seal.

(5) All other paper and cardboard product packaged items (i.e., envelopes, paper bags), except blood/urine kits, shall use strapping tape to securely close the package. Envelopes and paper bags shall have strapping tape around the circumference of the entire package, overlapping the ends of the tape to the back side of the container. Red evidence tape shall be used to cover the overlapping ends of the strapping tape to create the evidentiary seal where the booking officer will write their initials, ID number, and date, with the exception of controlled substances and money, which will require the blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strips. Staples should not be used to seal evidence in any container. Staples make opening the container difficult and leave small holes that can allow evidence to leak out.

(6) All packaged items shall have a bar code label placed on the package. There should only be one bar code label per package unless otherwise specified. It is recommended the label be placed on the back of the package in the upper right-hand corner of most packaged items taking care not to cover the evidentiary seal. This will help to easily locate and identify a package and increase efficiency while conducting inspections and inventories.

(7) Items that may potentially require laboratory testing shall be packaged separately, and individually, from items that will not require testing.

(8) Items with no evidentiary value, low monetary value, or which will not require laboratory testing, such as in-custody property, may be packaged together under one item number with a detailed list of its contents made in the comments section of the item number in the evidence RMS case file.

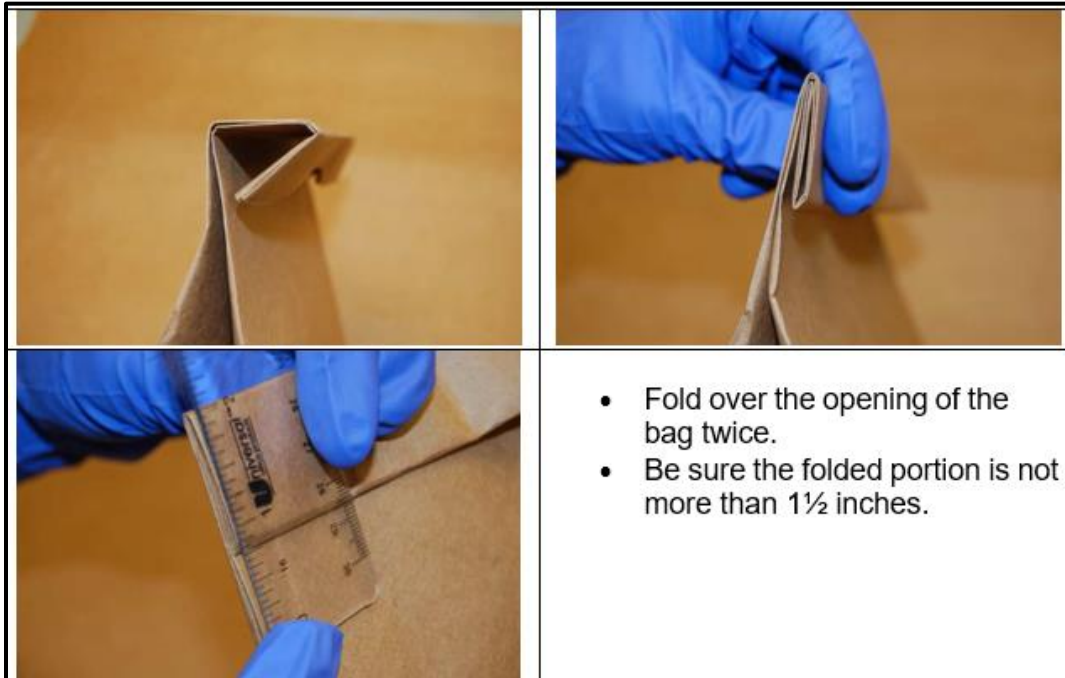


Figure 5-11. Example of proper packaging.

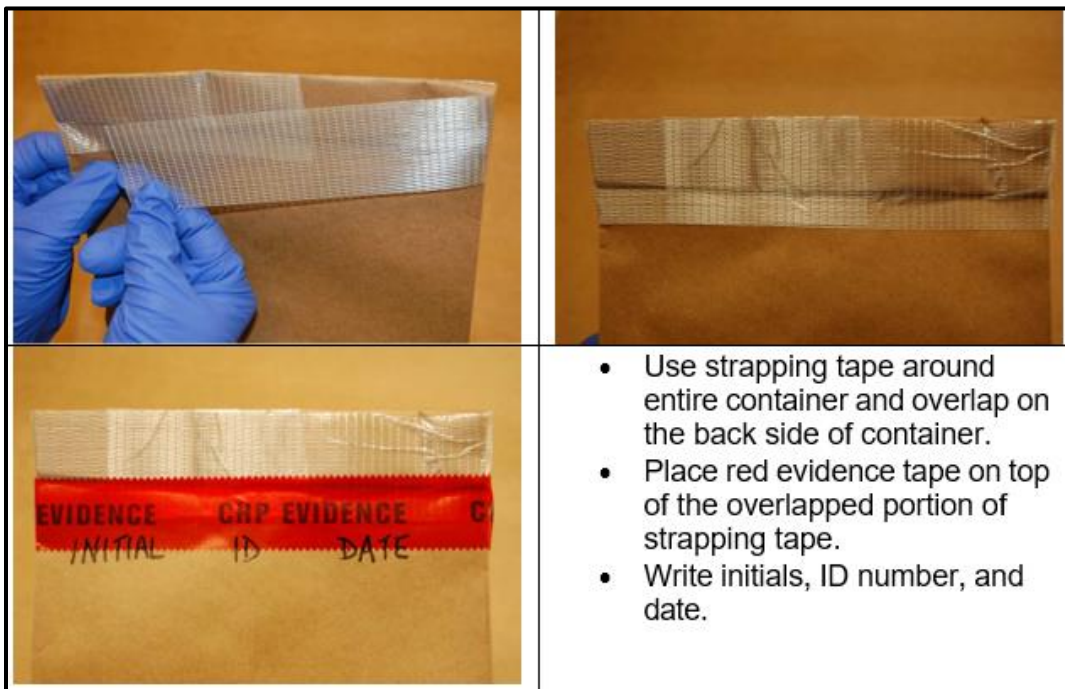


Figure 5-12. Example of proper packaging.

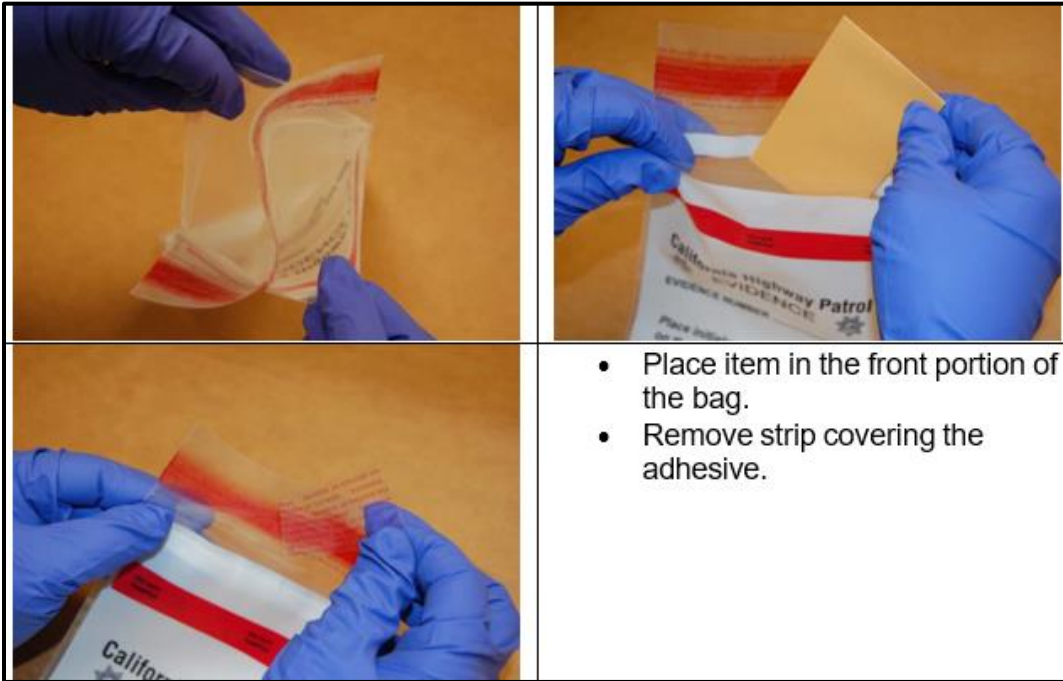


Figure 5-13. Example of proper packaging.

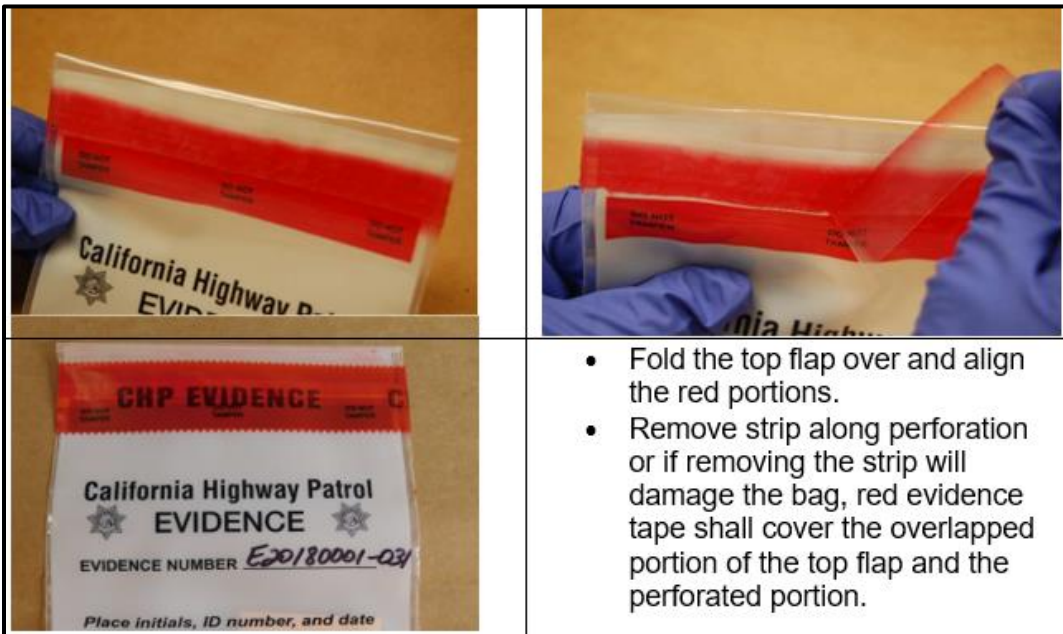


Figure 5-14. Example of proper packaging.

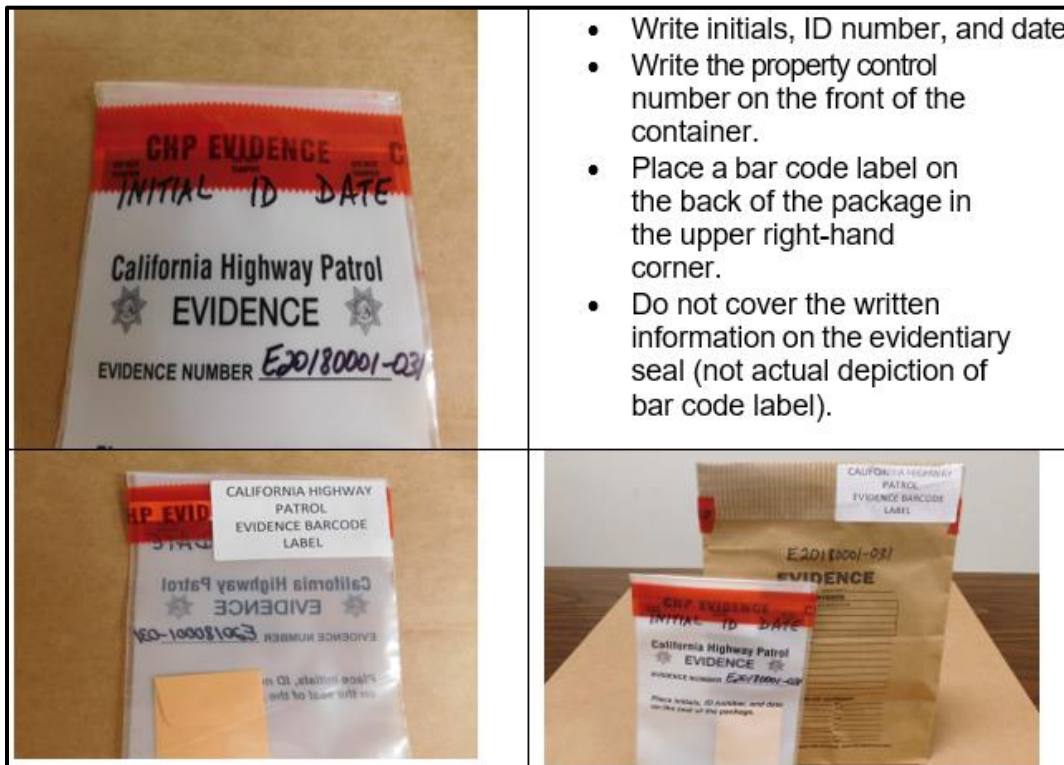


Figure 5-15. Example of proper packaging.

#### 4. RIGHT OF REFUSAL.

a. Submitted items that do not meet the requirements set forth in this manual should be refused by the evidence officer and returned to the booking officer for correction. When an item needs to be returned, the booking officer and their supervisor shall be sent a notification of the refusal through the evidence RMS with clear instructions on how to remedy any deficiencies. Area commands are responsible for creating SOP to ensure the integrity of the chain of possession and the security of the item is maintained during this phase.

#### 5. OPENING AND RESEALING PACKAGES.

a. There are occasions when packages need to be opened to examine, copy, or test an item. No package shall be opened in order to verify contents during any inventory, or departmental or command inspection. If during an inventory, or departmental or command inspection a package is suspected of being tampered with, the Area commander shall be notified immediately. Do not open to verify its contents without the Area commander's approval. The following steps shall be followed when opening and resealing a package (refer to Figure 5-16).

b. Opening.

(1) The package shall not be opened along the original seal. This seal must be preserved.

(2) On a location away from the original seal, cut an opening using scissors or a utility knife, ensuring the evidence item is not damaged.

(3) The reason for opening an item shall be noted in the evidence RMS case file and the chain of custody shall be updated.

c. Resealing.

(1) Seal the opening that was created using strapping tape, regardless of the type of packaging material.

(2) Place red evidence tape or blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape over the strapping tape as was performed originally. Write the evidence officer's initials, ID number, and date (the date it was resealed) across the evidence tape.

d. Repackaging. If an item's original packaging cannot be preserved, the item will need to be repackaged using new packaging materials. When repackaging the item, the original packaging shall be placed in the new packaging, along with the item, in order to preserve the chain of custody of the original seal.

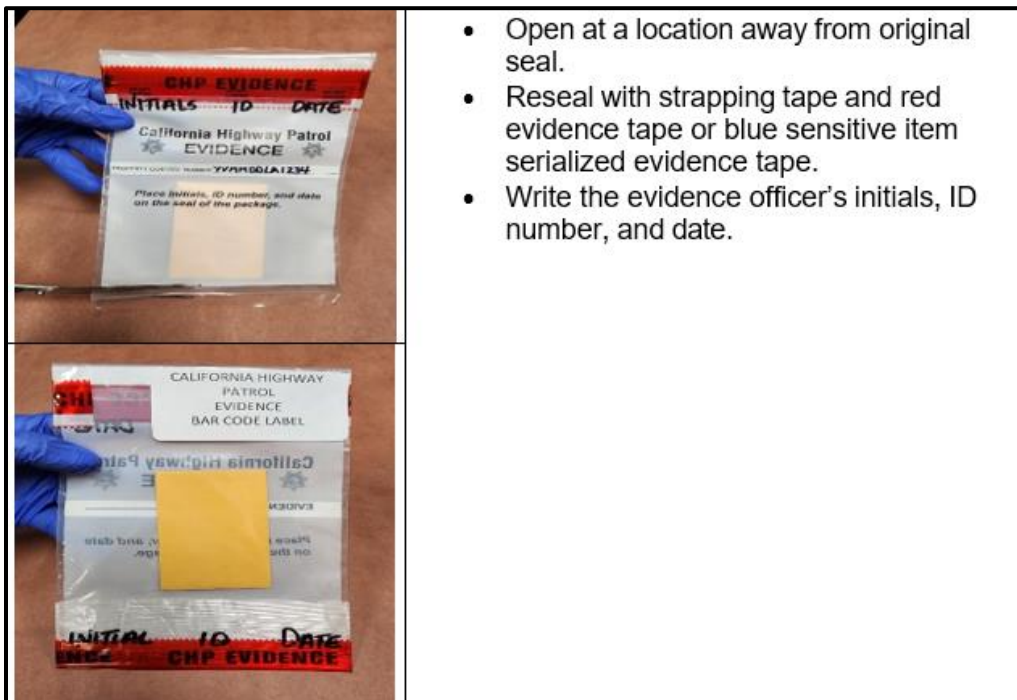


Figure 5-16. Example of opening and resealing.

6. PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE ITEM PACKAGING EXAMPLES.

a. Alcohol. Except for felony cases where the item has evidentiary value, such as fingerprints or the contents are suspected of containing illegal substances like Rohypnol, or cases involving persons under 21 years of age, alcoholic beverages should not be seized and retained. They should be photographed instead. Areas should consult with their district attorney for guidance on this topic and incorporate this information into their Area SOP.

(1) If the alcohol container cannot be sealed and the contents are evidentiary, mark the approximate liquid level on the container, then pour a sample of the contents into a properly labeled plastic evidence jar for storage. Empty or unopened containers of alcohol should be packaged in a paper bag. Samples in evidence jars from open containers should be packaged in a plastic bag.

b. Ammunition – Evidence. Items such as unfired cartridges, fired cartridge cases, fired bullets, fired bullet fragments, projectiles, shot wads, shot pellets, and loaded magazines that have evidentiary value and may require testing should be packaged in the following manner. Gloves should be worn to preserve DNA, latent prints, and trace evidence. These items should be packaged in kraft paper/manila-type envelopes. Each item should be packaged individually in order to preserve markings and to avoid cross contamination and damage from other items. If magazines are loaded, leave them loaded.

c. Ammunition – Safekeeping/Found/Seized. Items such as unfired cartridges, fired cartridge cases, fired bullets, fired bullet fragments, projectiles, shot wads, shot pellets, and loaded magazines that **do not** have any evidentiary value nor require further testing should be packaged in the following manner. These items may be packaged in plastic evidence bags. Ammunition that is already in a box can remain in the box and packaged in the plastic evidence bags. It is also recommended that calibers be separated to assist in preparation for destruction in case the item is not going to be, or not able to be, returned.

d. BB/Pellet Guns. These items, though not considered firearms by definition, shall be packaged following the same procedures as firearms. “BB/Pellet Gun” shall be written on the outside of the box.

e. Bicycles. Bicycles submitted as property shall have a blue plastic ID tag attached with the property control number written on it and a bar code label affixed. Bicycles submitted as evidence shall have a yellow plastic ID tag attached with the property control number written on it and a bar code label affixed. If the bicycle needs to be processed for DNA or fingerprints, use paper bags to cover the area in question (refer to Figure 5-17).

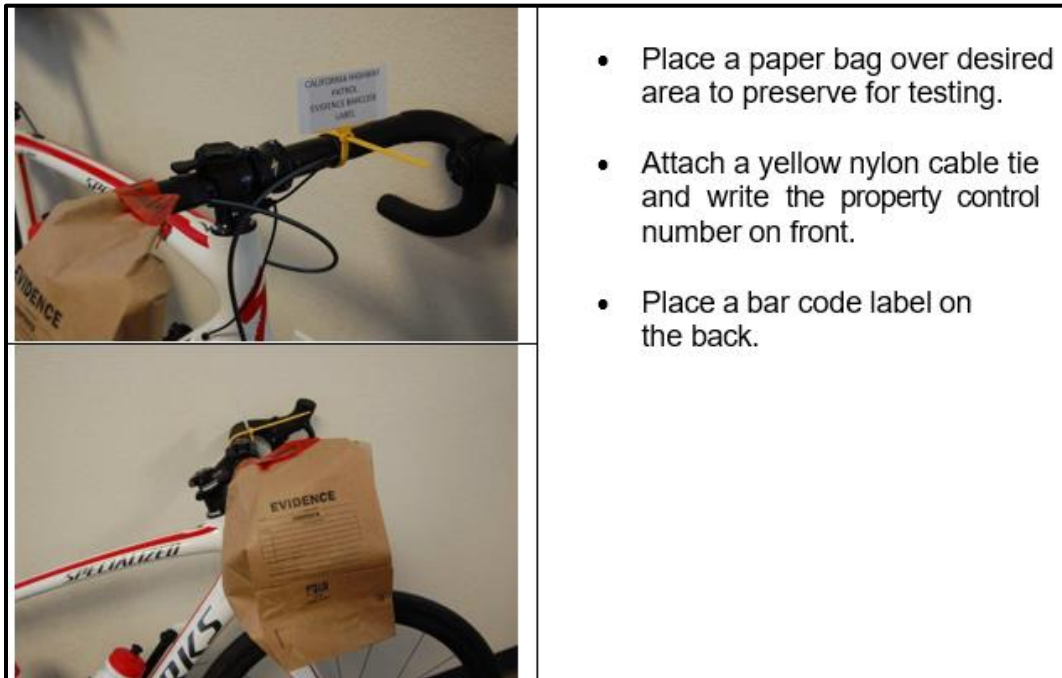


Figure 5-17. Example of preserving evidence on bicycle.

- Place a paper bag over desired area to preserve for testing.
- Attach a yellow nylon cable tie and write the property control number on front.
- Place a bar code label on the back.

f. Biological Hazards. Biological hazards are items containing bodily fluids such as blood, saliva, semen, and urine. Examples are bloody clothing, syringes, blood samples, and urine samples. All biological hazard (biohazard) items **shall** be treated as if they are infected with a communicable disease (universal precautions). All biohazard items **shall** have a biohazard label affixed to the outside of the container. Personnel handling biohazards **shall** use the following safety precautions:

(1) When handling biohazard materials, wear protective clothing, a particle mask, gloves, goggles, and disposable gown. Even dried blood can pose a hazard if the particles are inhaled or get into the eyes. NEVER shake items with dried blood and always hold them away from the body. Remove jewelry, as pathogens can survive in crevices and cracks. Always wash hands after handling biohazard material. If exposed, wash the affected area immediately. If biohazard material gets in the eyes, flush with large amounts of water and immediately report the incident to a supervisor.

(2) Do not eat, drink, or smoke in the area when handling these items. Place biohazard items to be destroyed, and the protective clothing worn when handling those items, in a red biohazard bag or container. Countertops can be decontaminated with a solution of one (1) part bleach to nine (9) parts water and shall be cleaned after each use in order to not contaminate future cases that are packaged using the same counter.

(3) Bloody items should be dried in a drying machine with a high-efficiency

particulate air (HEPA) filter or outside ventilation prior to being packaged. Areas without a drying machine should contact their Division Property and Evidence Program Coordinator, a neighboring Area, or have agreements with an allied agency to use their dryers. If the Area does not have access to a drying machine, first air-dry the items outside the building in a secure and contamination-free area, not in direct sunlight. After drying, package in paper. Never package bloody items in plastic, as the sealed container will cause deterioration of the evidence. Multiple items should be packaged separately to avoid cross contamination. Some crime labs require biological items to be frozen or refrigerated. Evidence officers are responsible for complying with their local labs' requirements. If the Area does not have a secured refrigerator or freezer, the evidence officer shall make the necessary arrangements for storage with a neighboring Area or an allied agency. The Area may also choose to purchase a refrigerator/freezer for their evidence room.

g. Blood Kits. Areas shall ensure their SOP addresses packaging, tracking, and storage of blood kits based on the requirements of their local lab.

h. Buccal Swabs/Kits. Buccal swabs use sterilized applicators to obtain DNA from a person's cheek. When handling this item, be sure to take the necessary precautions to avoid contaminating the DNA evidence such as wearing nitrile gloves, do not breathe or cough on the swab, and do not lick the envelope's gummed seal. The Area shall ensure their SOP addresses packaging and storage based on the requirements of their local lab. When requirements do not exist, follow the general packaging instructions and package this item in paper products and not plastic. Refer to PEB 4, Biological Materials for DNA Analysis, for additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/cci/reference>.

i. Cannabis or Psilocybin-Infused Edibles. Areas shall consult with their local district or city attorney on this issue. The Department's opinion is these items shall not be booked into evidence rooms for the same reasons as food and perishables. These items should be photographed and well-documented. Areas shall ensure their SOP addresses coordination with their local lab for immediate drop-off of items if testing is needed.

j. Computers. Computers shall be packaged by following the general packaging guidelines and using the plastic evidence bags. The vulnerability of electronically stored information requires special precautions be taken to ensure its retrieval at a later time. Therefore, the following procedures shall be followed by the evidence officer:

(1) Ensure the computer components, cords, and software programs on discs, diskettes, or digital portable storage devices have been collected appropriately by the booking officer.

(2) Keep all seized items away from magnets, radio transmitters, electrical transformers, or other potentially damaging elements. Store all evidence off the ground in a cool and dry location.

k. Digital Media. Digital media refers to audio, video, and photographic content that is created, viewed, distributed, modified, and preserved on digital electronic devices. Digital media taken by employees while in performance of their duties are the property of the Department. The originating employee is responsible for verifying the accuracy and methodology used to obtain or reproduce the recording. Unauthorized copying and/or distribution is prohibited. Refer to General Order 110.8, Processing and Storage of Digital Media, for storing digital media that does not have any criminal charges attached to the media, such as traffic collision photos. Traffic crash photographs where an infraction is the most serious allegation charged shall not be booked into evidence. These photographs should be stored along with the other nonevidentiary digital media maintained by the Area's image coordinator. For evidentiary digital media, including administrative evidence, the following guidelines shall be followed:

(1) The digital media shall be downloaded from the original recording device or removable storage card and copied to a CD/DVD. Identifying information, such as a case number, shall be written on the disc. The disc should be placed inside a protective sleeve or plastic case.

(2) The protected disc should then be placed into a CHP 557, Film/Photo Envelope, or similarly sized manila envelope and sealed according to the general packaging guidelines (refer to Figure 5-18).

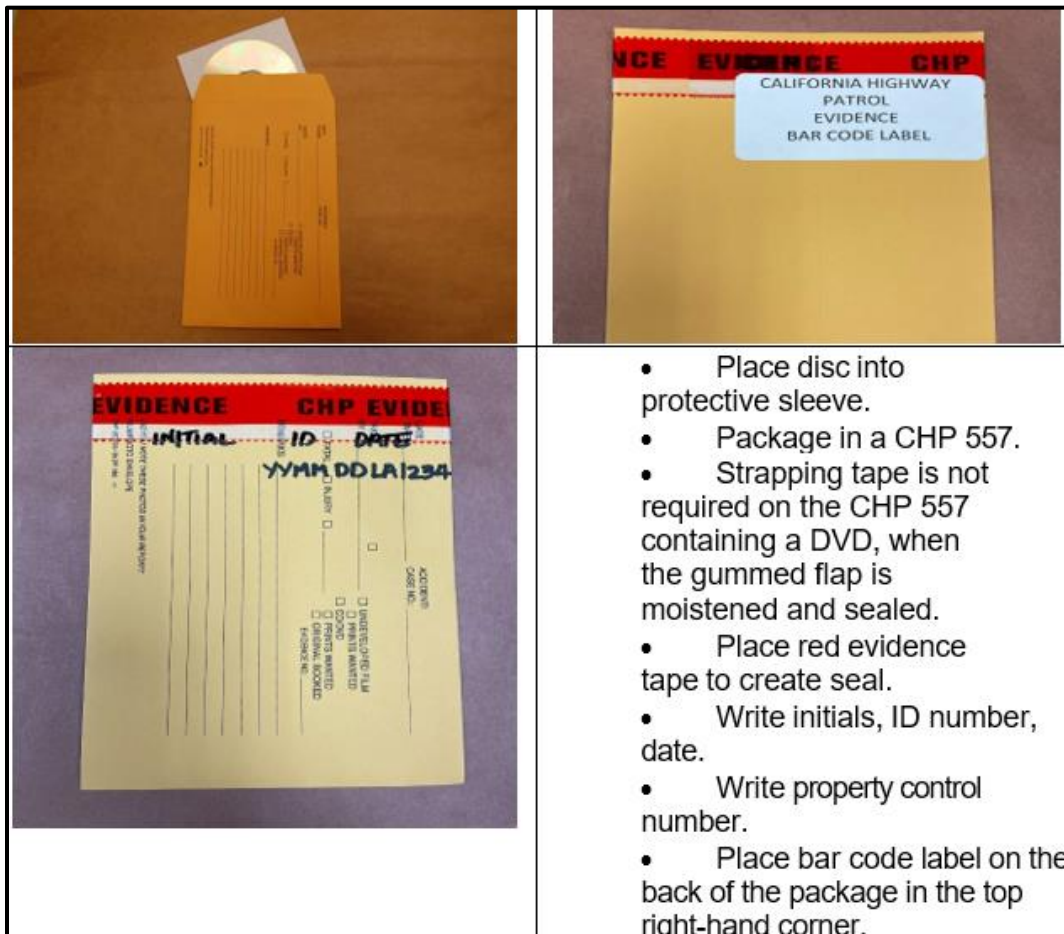


Figure 5-18. Example of packaging digital media.

(3) Storage of departmental Video/Audio recordings shall be processed as outlined in Chapter 15, Storage of Departmental Video/Audio Recordings, of this manual.

(4) Audio recordings shall be saved in a universal format (e.g., waveform [WAV], or moving picture experts group layer-3 audio [MP3]).

I. Deoxyribonucleic Acid Swabs/Kits. Deoxyribonucleic acid swabs use sterilized applicators to obtain DNA cells from a variety of items or surfaces. When handling this item, be sure to take the necessary precautions to avoid contaminating the DNA evidence such as wearing nitrile gloves, do not breathe or cough on the swab, and do not lick an envelope's seal. The Area shall be responsible for creating their SOP to address packaging and storage based on their local lab requirements. When no requirements exist, follow the general packaging instructions and be sure to package in paper products and not plastic. Refer to PEB 4 for additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/cci/reference>.

m. Drugs/Controlled Substances/Marijuana. Disposable high-risk nitrile gloves, not latex, shall be used when handling these substances. All controlled substances (except marijuana) and all unknown substances **shall** be double bagged and sealed using heat seal polyester bags. These bags provide a vapor barrier and are resistant to solvents and other volatile chemicals (refer to Chapter 7, Safety, of this manual, for precautions when handling drugs/hazardous materials). Different types of drugs or controlled substances shall be packaged and weighed individually. In cases where there are multiples of similar substances, such as a dozen plastic baggies with equal amounts of white crystalline substance in each, they can be packaged and weighed as one item. However, if there are any differences in color, characteristics, or packaging, then they should be packaged individually. **There shall be no more than one item type/drug type per package**. Blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strips **shall** be used when sealing these packages. The tape's serial number shall be annotated in the evidence RMS for that item number. All drugs, controlled substances (including pills), and marijuana submitted as evidence or property shall be weighed three times: prior to packaging, after packaging, and after adding the bar code label. Only two weights shall be entered into the evidence RMS case file: prior to packaging and packaged after adding the bar code label. The unit of measurement for weight should be grams.

(1) The following definitions will be used when referencing weight:

(a) Item Weight. The item weight is the weight of the drug and its first container, or original packaging, as found (e.g., plastic bag, paper bindle, vial, prescription pill bottle). Items shall not be removed from their original packaging in order to obtain their weight. This was previously referred to as the net weight.

(b) Packaged Weight. The packaged weight is the weight of the drug and containers after they have been placed in heat-sealed bags, evidence packaging, sealed with strapping tape (if necessary, depending on the type of packaging material used), blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strip, and a bar code label affixed. This was previously referred to as the gross weight.

**NOTE: Evidence officers shall verify the accuracy of the recorded packaged weight before receiving the item. In the evidence RMS case file, the evidence officer shall choose the label "Evidence Officer Packaged Weight Verification" from the Identifier Type drop-down list. The packaged weight (e.g., 0.21 grams) shall be entered into the Identifier field. Any discrepancy shall cause the item to be returned to the booking officer for correction.**

(2) Use the following steps when weighing and packaging drugs, controlled

substances, pills, and unknown substances other than marijuana (refer to Figures 5-19 and 5-21):

- (a) Before placing an item on the scale, zero out or tare an empty scale.
- (b) Place the item, in its original packaging, on the scale and obtain its weight. Notate this measurement as this is the item weight.
- (c) Place the item in a heat seal bag and seal. Be sure to make the sealed portion large enough to allow the lab to open the bag away from the original seal and be able to reseal. Write the booking officer's initials, ID number, and date across the heat seal.
- (d) Place the first heat-sealed bag in a second heat-seal bag and seal. This step is taken as a precaution against potential leaks and accidental exposures. There is no need to write anything on this bag.
- (e) Place the double heat-sealed bag into a tamper resistant plastic evidence bag. Seal the bag using the bag's adhesive strip (refer to Figures 5-13 and 5-14). Place a blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strip across the seal created using the adhesive strip. Write the booking officer's initials, ID number, and date across the seal with the evidence tape.
- (f) Zero out or tare an empty scale and place the packaged item on the scale. Notate this measurement as this is the packaged weight.
- (g) Add 0.4 grams to the packaged weight to allow for the printed label.
- (h) Print the bar code label and then place the label on the back top right-hand corner of the envelope (do not cover serial number on the evidence tape).
- (i) Place the packaged item with the label on the scale to verify the packaged weight including the printed label weight has been correctly entered into the evidence RMS case file.
- (j) Refer to PEB 25, Controlled Substances, or additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/cci/reference>.

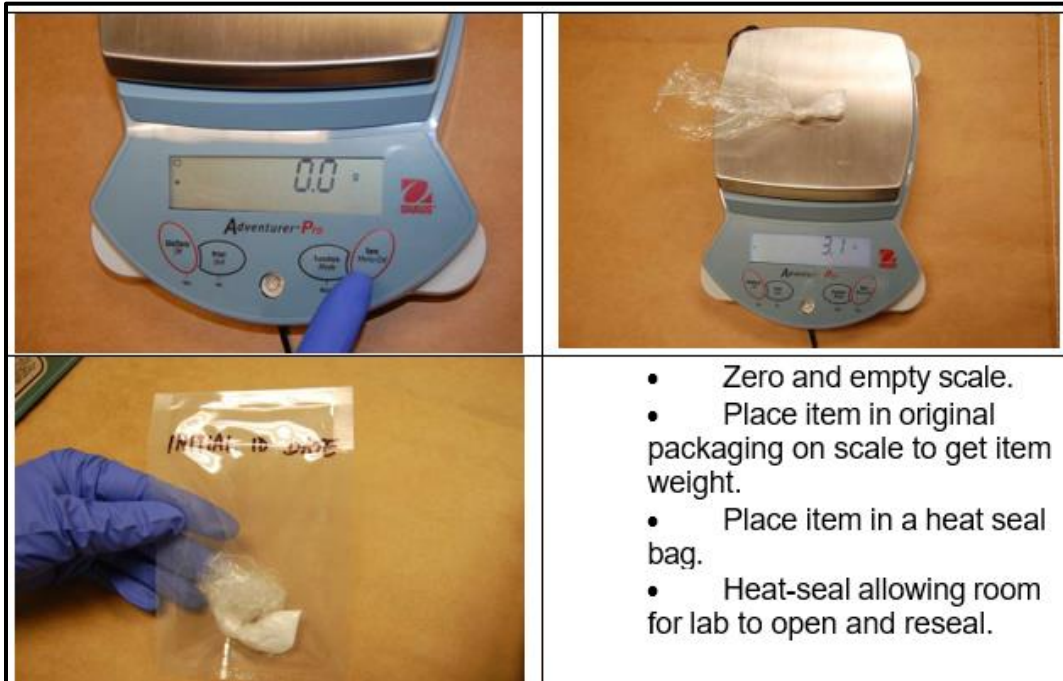


Figure 5-19. Example of packaging drugs.

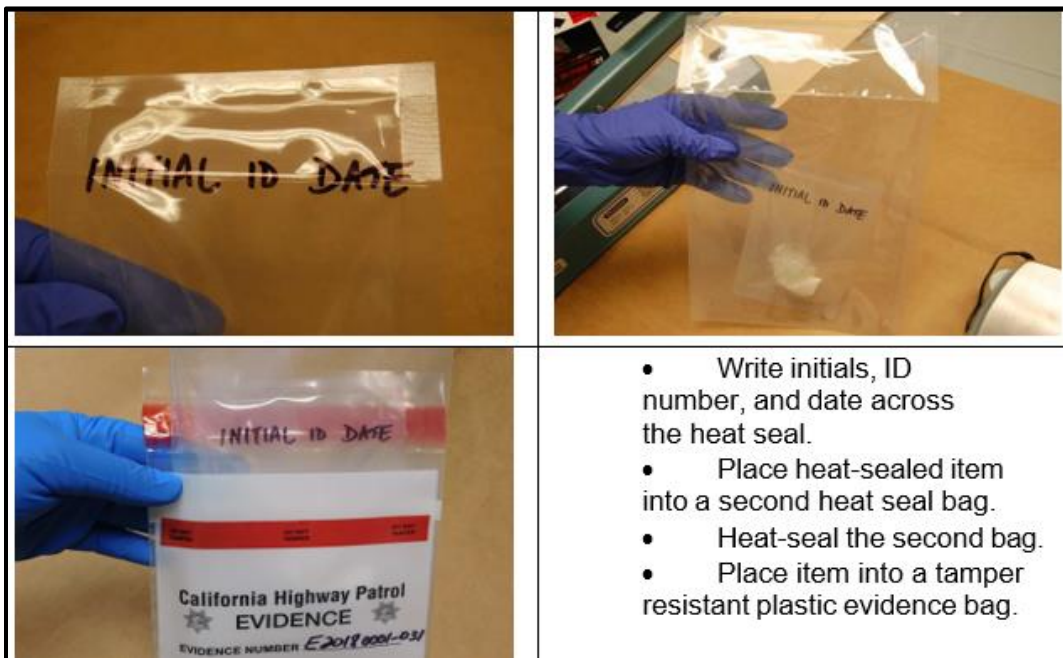


Figure 5-20. Example of packaging drugs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove strip covering the adhesive.</li> <li>• Fold the top flap over and line up the red portions.</li> <li>• Remove strip along perforation. (If removing the strip will damage the bag, blue sensitive item evidence tape shall cover the overlapped portion of the top flap and the perforated portion to create evidence seal.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write initials, ID number, and date across the blue sensitive item tape.</li> <li>• Zero-out an empty scale.</li> <li>• Place the packaged item on the scale to get packaged weight.</li> <li>• Add 0.4 grams to the packaged weight to allow for the printed label.</li> <li>• Place a bar code label on the back top right-hand corner of the envelope (do not cover serial number on the evidence tape).</li> <li>• Place the packaged item with the label on the scale to verify the packaged weight plus the printed label weight is correct.</li> </ul>

Figure 5-21. Example of packaging drugs.

(k) Evidence officers will retain the item in this state until a request is received for the substance to be tested. Once the request is received, the evidence officer will prepare the item to be tested by placing the sealed tamper resistant plastic evidence bag into a DOJ BFS 2 envelope (refer to Figure 5-22). It is recommended the information on the BFS 2 be filled out before placing the item in the BFS 2. The evidence officer will seal the BFS 2 using a strip of blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape and writing their initials, ID number, and date across the seal; strapping tape is not required to be used on the BFS 2 envelopes so as not to cover the information written on the envelope. Notate the additional serial number in the evidence RMS case file. Print and place a new bar code label on the package. The evidence officer shall weigh the newly packaged item and record the new weight in the evidence RMS case file for that item (e.g.,

packaged and sent to DOJ for testing, 48.6 grams, serial #123456789001). Do not overwrite the original weight information in the evidence RMS. The item is now ready for submission to the laboratory. Once the item is returned from the laboratory, **do not remove** the item from the BFS 2 envelope; the evidence officer shall weigh the item again and record the weight in the evidence RMS case file for that item (e.g., received from DOJ, 47.5 grams). There will be differences in the values due to DOJ removing some of the substance for testing in addition to their repackaging/resealing of the item.

NOTE: If the Area does not use a DOJ laboratory for testing, then use the laboratory's required packaging instead of the BFS 2.

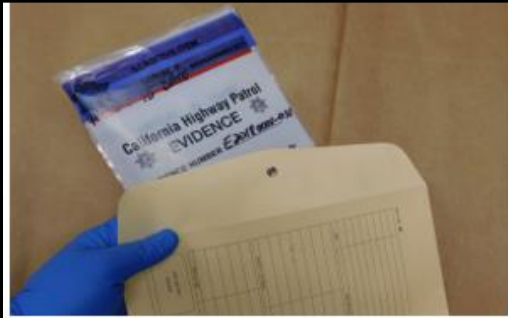
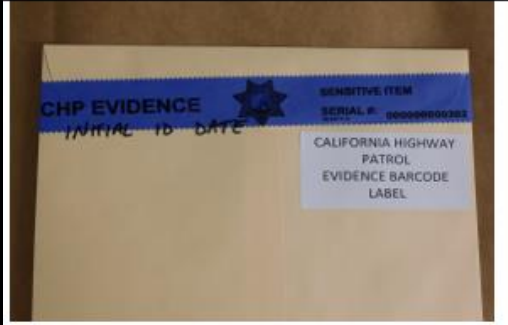

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place the item into a BFS 2 envelope.</li> <li>• Place blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape to create the evidence seal.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write initials, ID number, and date across the blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape.</li> <li>• Place a bar code label on the back (do not cover serial number on the evidence tape).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero out an empty scale.</li> <li>• Place the packaged item on the scale to get weight.</li> <li>• Notate the weight in the evidence RMS case file.</li> </ul>

Figure 5-22. Example of packaging drugs for submission to a laboratory.

(3) Use the following steps when weighing and packaging marijuana or other controlled plant material (i.e., Psilocybin). Marijuana or other controlled plant material must be completely dry before packaging and shall be packaged in

paper envelopes or bags. Storing wet marijuana or other controlled plant material in plastic can grow mold/spores (Aspergillois) that are a health hazard. If the mold or spores are inhaled, they can cause serious injury or death. Storing wet marijuana or other controlled plant material in plastic bags will deteriorate the marijuana or other controlled plant material to the point that it loses its evidentiary value. Officers should dry wet marijuana or other controlled plant material in a dryer prior to packaging. It is recommended that Areas establish procedures with neighboring Areas before using allied agency dryers, if available. If dryers are not available, every attempt should be made to arrange for the marijuana or other controlled plant material to be air dried before packaging.

- (a) Before placing an item on the scale, zero out or tare an empty scale.
  - (b) Place the item, in its original packaging, on the scale and obtain its weight. Notate this measurement as this is the item weight.
  - (c) Place the item into a BFS 2 envelope. It is recommended the BFS 2 be filled out beforehand. If the original packaging does not adequately contain the material, then place the item inside an appropriately sized kraft/manila-style envelope before placing it into the BFS 2 envelope. Seal the BFS 2 envelope using a blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strip. Write the booking officer's initials, ID number, and date across the seal with the serialized evidence tape.
  - (d) Zero out or tare an empty scale and place the packaged item on the scale. Notate this measurement as this is the packaged weight.
- (4) Additional packaging requirements and considerations:
- (a) Pills shall be weighed and not counted.
  - (b) When packaging marijuana or other controlled plant material and the item's original container, or the amount, is too large for the item to be packaged in the BFS 2 envelopes, utilize the appropriate-sized kraft paper bag for packaging and attach the completed BFS 2 envelope to the bag.
  - (c) Do not package pipes, straws, needles, paraphernalia, or property with controlled substances. They must be packaged separately or the crime lab will not accept the drugs for analysis.
  - (d) Drugs with a street value of \$10,000 or greater (Areas may utilize departmental personnel assigned to local Area drug task forces for clarification on drug street values) shall not be stored in a temporary evidence locker (including pass-through cabinets). They shall be secured inside the evidence room immediately after packaging.

(e) In cases where the Department confiscates live marijuana plants or other controlled plant material, the plants shall not be removed from the soil or container. Potted plants should be stored in paper bags, a cardboard container, or wrapped in paper material. The seizing officer shall photograph the plant in its original state prior to packaging. The Department is under no legal obligation to care for the plants.

(f) Any package that appears to have been opened or tampered with, after laboratory analysis, shall be returned to the laboratory to be analyzed again. The evidence supervisor shall be notified immediately.

n. Drug Paraphernalia. Consult your local laboratory regarding their acceptance criteria and specific packaging requirements for any glass drug paraphernalia. Also, consult with the DA's office as to any requirements to bring the glass drug paraphernalia into court. Should the DA's office not require the glass drug paraphernalia for the case, the DA's office should give you guidance to place the glass pipes alongside a ruler and photograph. The DA's guidance shall be in writing by e-mail or letter. Photographs of the glass drug paraphernalia shall be uploaded into the evidence RMS case file. Glass drug paraphernalia, such as glass pipes containing a small amount of controlled substance material shall not be manipulated to remove the controlled substance. The glass drug paraphernalia may be destroyed locally if it does not contain a significant amount of controlled substance. Glass drug paraphernalia containing a significant amount of controlled substance shall be destroyed after adjudication of the case during a Division drug burn event.

o. Fingerprint Evidence. If an item will need to be fingerprinted, packaging in plastic may destroy the prints. Such items should be packaged in paper or a cardboard box. If the fingerprint is on lift tape, attached to backer card, or lifted using AccuTrans, then package the prints in a kraft paper/manila-style envelope. Clearly mark the evidence packaging by writing on the outside of the package, "**HOLD FOR PRINTS.**" It is the responsibility of the investigating officer to provide as much background information as possible to provide to the lab (e.g., date lifted, name of person obtaining the lift, sets of original fingerprints from potential suspects for laboratory comparison, description of item or location from which the latent impression was lifted). This background information should be booked with the fingerprints. Refer to PEB 17, Collection and Submission of Latent Print Evidence, for additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/cci/reference>.

p. Firearms. Firearms shall be packaged as follows:

(1) Firearms shall be submitted unloaded and made safe. The Academy, Weapons Unit, can be contacted for assistance in unloading a firearm. If the firearm cannot be unloaded, for example due to a mechanical defect, the box shall be labeled "LOADED FIREARM." The evidence officer shall also be

notified.

(2) All semiautomatic firearms **shall** be submitted with the magazine removed, the safety on, if equipped, and the slide in the open position and blocked to prevent accidental closure. A nylon cable tie, or flex-cuff, shall be looped through the magazine well and out through the ejection port and fastened in order to prevent the slide from closing completely. Do not place anything through the barrel.

(3) Revolvers **shall** have the cylinder open and blocked to prevent accidental closure. Place a nylon cable tie through the cylinder and trigger guard. Top break revolvers shall be secured in the open position.

(4) All firearms shall be submitted in an appropriately sized gun box; one firearm per box. **Do not seal the box.** Evidence officers will need to verify information on the firearm for entry into the Automated Firearms System (AFS). Evidence officers will secure the firearm to the box using nylon cable ties after verifying the necessary information. **If no testing is required, the box shall be left unsealed.** If testing is required, such as DNA analysis or ballistics, the evidence officer, while wearing gloves, shall confirm all the necessary information needed for entry into AFS before the box is sealed. Evidence officers will then seal the box along all three sides with strapping tape. Place red evidence tape along the front portion of pistol boxes and along all three sides of rifle boxes. Place at least an 18" strip of red evidence tape along the long portion of the rifle box. Write the booking officer's initials, ID number, and date across the seal of pistol boxes and on all three sides for rifle boxes. To contain trace evidence, consider placing the firearm in a kraft paper bag before placing it in the box. Attach the bar code label in a visible spot for quick location of items and to increase efficiency during inventory. If necessary, place a biohazard label on the outside of the box (refer to Figures 5-23 through 5-25).

(5) It is highly recommended the booking officer take multiple photographs of the firearm prior to its submission. However, do not risk the destruction of potential trace evidence by manipulating the firearm to take photos if the firearm is going to be submitted for lab testing for DNA, blood, or similar tests. If the firearm is going to be submitted solely for ballistics testing, then photos should be obtained.

(6) If a seized firearm is already in a gun case, it may remain in that case. Attach the appropriate "evidence" or "property" ID tag plastic zip tie to the case along with the bar code. Consideration should be taken for items requiring lab testing, such as placing those firearms in boxes as mentioned above.

(7) The ammunition magazine shall not be unloaded for firearms being submitted for forensic testing. If a round was chambered, submit the round together with the magazine, but in a separate paper envelope. Refer to

paragraphs 6.b. and 6.c. for further packaging guidelines.

(8) Refer to PEB 12, Firearms Evidence Collection Procedures, for additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/ccl/reference>.

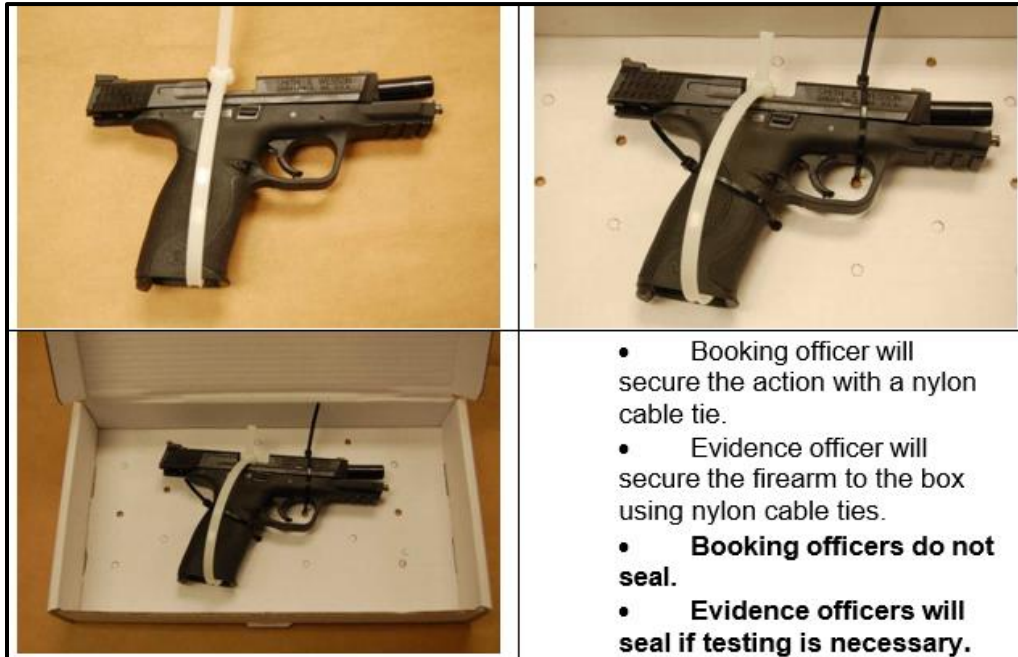


Figure 5-23. Example of packaging a firearm.

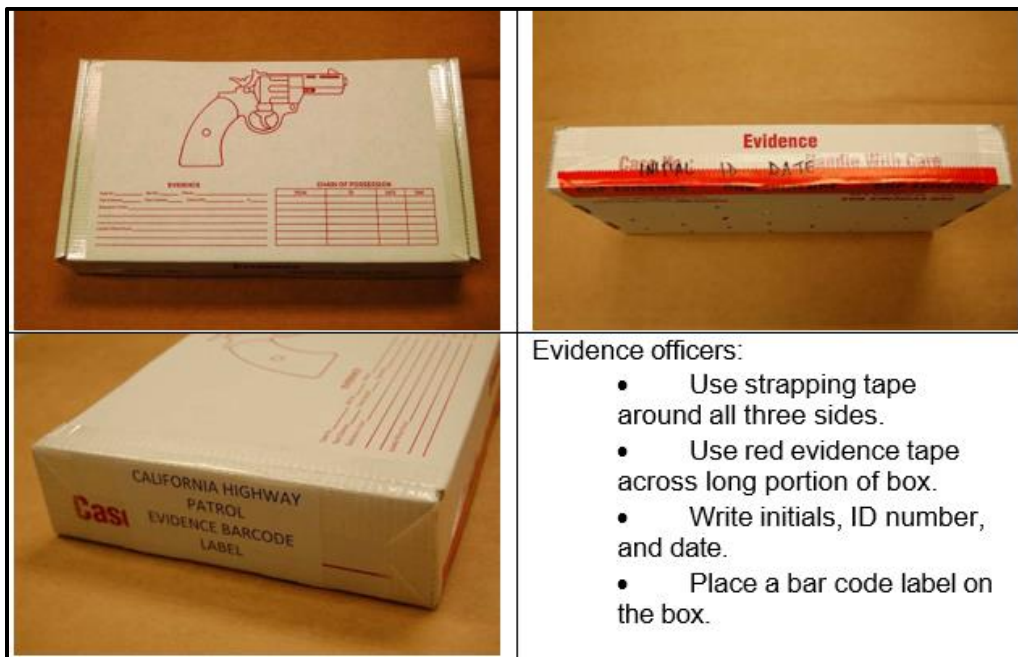


Figure 5-24. Example of sealing a pistol for testing.

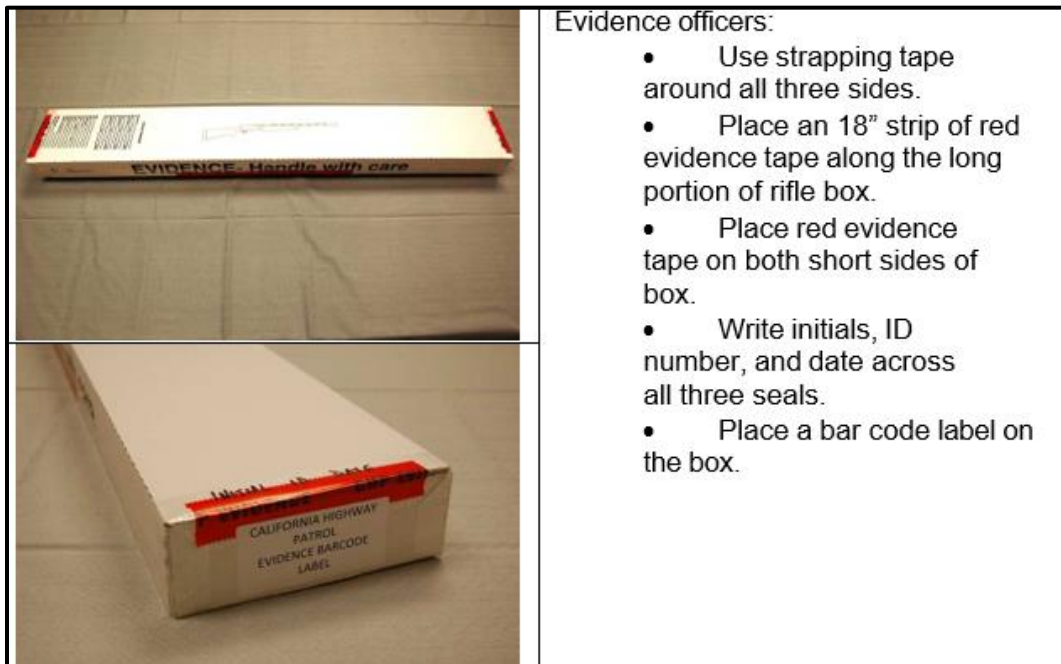


Figure 5-25. Example of sealing a rifle for testing.

q. Flammables and Explosives. Flammables shall be stored outside the office in a properly ventilated bulk evidence room within a locked cabinet designed for the storage of flammables, if so equipped. Explosives shall never be stored in an Area office. Arrangements should be made with an allied agency capable of storing flammables, explosives, or other hazardous materials (e.g., a fire department or bomb squad). It is preferable to utilize external resources to avoid storage of flammables, explosives, and hazardous materials at a CHP facility.

r. Food and Perishables. Food and perishables shall not be booked into the evidence room. These items mold and decay over time, attracting rodents and pests. Their presence will compromise other evidence as they chew through other items to get to the food and perishables. Items that have been bitten into or touched should be photographed and DNA collected from the item. Officers with items requiring immediate testing should contact the evidence officer and coordinate with the local lab.

s. Knives – Evidence. Knives with evidentiary value that may require testing (i.e., fingerprint, DNA, blood) should be packaged securely in a knife box. Gloves should be worn to preserve DNA, latent prints, and trace evidence. Knives should be packaged individually in order to preserve markings and avoid cross contamination and damage from other items. Consider placing the knife in a kraft paper bag before securing to the box. Use nylon cable ties to secure the knife to the box. Do not use tape to secure the knife to the box. Do not place the knife back in a sheath; package the sheath separately. If the knife is covered with blood, be sure the blood is

completely dry before packaging. Be sure to place a biohazard sticker on the outside of the box of items containing biohazard material (refer to Figures 5-26 and 5-27).

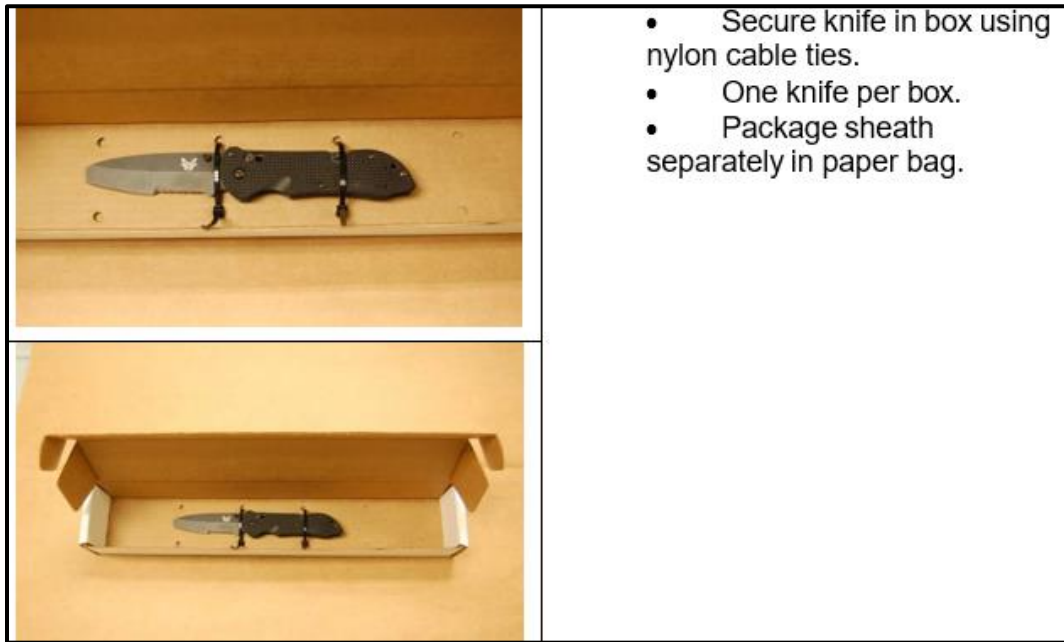


Figure 5-26. Example of packaging knife for evidence.

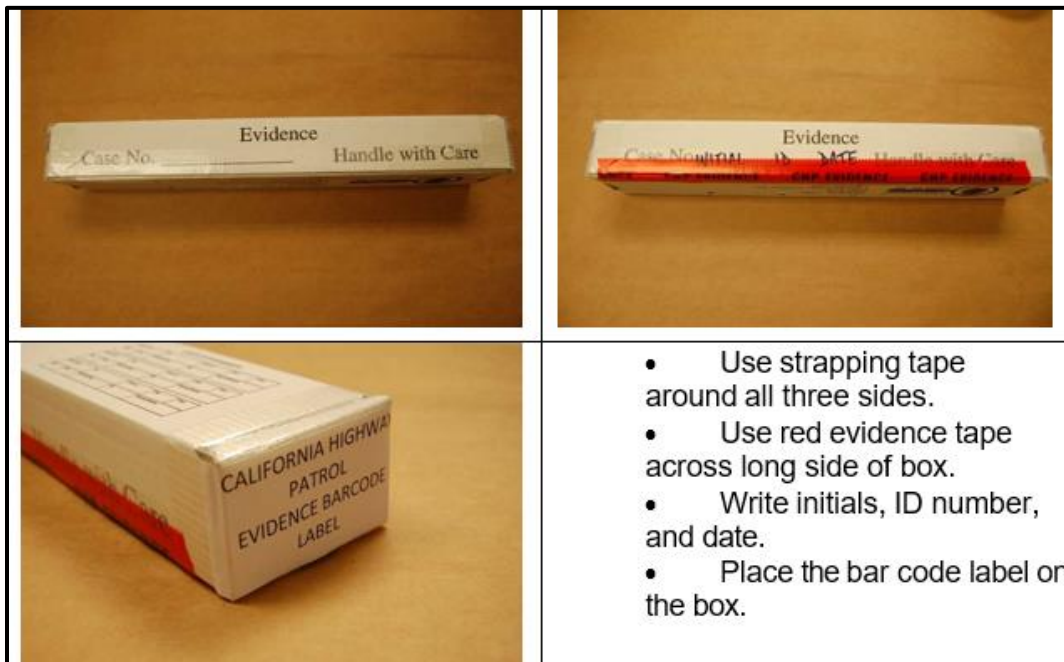


Figure 5-27. Example of packaging knife for testing.

t. Knives – Safekeeping/Found/Seized. Knives that do not have any evidentiary value nor require further testing should be packaged in the following manner. Folding

knives and knives in sheaths may be packaged in plastic evidence bags. Folding knives can be secured using plastic zip ties (refer to Figure 5-28). Knives that are already in a sheath can remain in the sheath and packaged. Fixed blade knives without a sheath shall be securely packaged in a knife box using plastic zip ties. **Do not use red evidence tape to secure a blade.**



Figure 5-28. Example of securing a knife.

u. Large/Oversized Items. Items that are too large for general packaging containers shall have a bar code label attached at a minimum. If possible, attach a property or evidence ID tag plastic zip tie to the item and affix the bar code label to the ID tag. Items too large to be stored at the Area office, excluding vehicles, should be stored at a capable adjoining Area. If it is not reasonable to store at an adjoining Area office, then it should be stored with a local allied agency. Contact the IAS, Evidence Unit, or Division Property and Evidence Program Coordinator for guidance if unable to locate a suitable location for storage of large items.

v. Money – Evidence/Seized/Asset Forfeiture. Money that has evidentiary value that may require testing (e.g., fingerprint, DNA, blood) shall be packaged in a kraft paper (manila type) envelope and sealed with the blue sensitive item serialized evidence tape strips. When applying the strip, be careful not to cover any portion of the tape's serial number. The tape's serial number shall be noted in the evidence RMS case file. Gloves should be worn to preserve DNA, latent prints, and trace evidence, and a biohazard label applied if necessary. Otherwise, money shall be packaged in a plastic evidence bag.

(1) Money seized as Asset Forfeiture should be documented on a CHP 308, Asset Forfeiture Financial Tally. Contact shall be made with the Asset Forfeiture Coordinator within the Area, Division, or Field Support Section to determine whether the money qualifies for asset forfeiture and how to process these funds. Refer to Highway Patrol Manual (HPM) 81.5, Drug Programs Manual, Chapter 2, Asset Forfeiture Program, for additional information.

w. Money – Safekeeping/Found. Money, including foreign currency, with no evidentiary value shall be packaged in plastic evidence bags and sealed with the blue

sensitive item serialized evidence tape strips. When applying the strip, be careful not to cover any portion of the tape's serial number. The tape's serial number shall be noted in the evidence RMS case file. Separate United States currency from foreign currency. Additional requirements and considerations for money:

(1) Money shall be counted by two employees regardless of amount, one of whom should be a supervisor. Both employees shall print their names, ID numbers, and sign the CHP 36 on the Financial Tally sheet in the provided boxes.

(2) Money in excess of \$1,000, seized as evidence or for safe keeping, shall not be stored in a temporary evidence locker/cabinet (including pass-through cabinets). The money shall go directly into the evidence room safe, an allied agency evidence room's safe, or a safety deposit box (cash only) at a financial institution. During normal business hours, the Area evidence officer, alternate, or Area commander shall be notified to immediately secure and process these items. Outside of normal business hours, one of the aforementioned individuals shall be notified and respond to the Area office to secure and process these items. It is at the Area commander's discretion to determine a threshold amount of money the Area will maintain in its safe within the evidence room. The IAS strongly encourages money be sent to Fiscal Management Section (FMS) for storage as soon as reasonably possible in order to minimize the Area's risk. This includes money received as evidence, safekeeping, and found. Money received and booked as safekeeping with a likelihood of being returned to the owner within a short period of time should remain at the Area.

(3) **Before sending money to FMS, authorization shall be obtained from the district or city attorney prior to transferring or converting money booked as evidence prior to adjudication.** Upon approval, money booked as evidence shall be forwarded to FMS on a CHP 230, Transmittal Record. This money shall be placed into an interest-bearing account. This information shall be noted on the CHP 230. Refer to Chapter 9, Disposal of Property and Evidence, paragraph 6.n., of this manual, for additional instructions on sending money to FMS. Contact the IAS, Evidence Unit or Division Property and Evidence Program Coordinator for examples of a completed CHP 230 for money seized as evidence and unclaimed property. Evidence officers shall coordinate with office staff when forwarding money to FMS due to thresholds on the amount of money that can be stored at the Area before a CHP 230 is required to be completed. Refer to HPM 11.1, Administrative Procedures Manual, Chapter 4, Miscellaneous Sales – Transmittal of Collections, paragraph 11.a., for additional information.

(4) Money forwarded to FMS shall include instruction on its disposition, such as "evidence considered closed on (date)," "found and unclaimed as of (date)," "open and active case," or "deposit into interest-bearing account."

(5) For “found money,” refer to Chapter 9 of this manual, paragraph 6.n.

(6) Foreign currency that is not being returned shall be sent to FMS upon adjudication or disposition.

NOTE: Upon disposition, currency that is contaminated with hazardous materials, such as a controlled substance, blood, or mold, shall be forwarded to FMS. It shall be double-bagged and marked as hazardous prior to sending to FMS. Badly damaged currency shall also be forwarded to FMS. Do not commingle these items with noncontaminated currency. Keep evidence separate and maintain proper documentation.

x. Needles and Syringes. Needles and syringes shall be placed in a labeled, closable, puncture-proof, and splatter-proof container before being packaged. Unless otherwise trained and certified, officers **shall never** recap needles that are bent, broken, or removed from disposable syringes. Officers **shall not** remove the contents from a syringe. Currently, there are no known forensic laboratories that will accept needles or syringes for analysis without a formal request from a district attorney. Evidence officers should consult with their local laboratory to determine if needles will be accepted and what is recommended as the safest method of handling. Evidence officers should consult with the local district or city attorney for guidance.

y. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Kits. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner kits are used to collect physical evidence in sexual assault cases. When handling this item, be sure to take the necessary precautions to avoid contaminating the DNA evidence such as wearing nitrile gloves, do not breathe or cough on the swab, and do not lick an envelope’s seal. The Area shall be responsible for creating Area SOP to address packaging and storage based on requirements of their local lab. When no requirements exist, follow the general packaging instructions and be sure to package in paper products and not plastic. Refer to PEB 7, Sexual Assault Evidence, for additional information at <https://oag.ca.gov/ccj/reference>.

z. Serialized Property and Evidence. Serialized property and evidence items are items that have serial numbers or nonserialized property that has been uniquely inscribed. Examples include computers, electronics, televisions, stereos, power tools, generators, etc. Serialized property and evidence shall be checked through the Automated Property System (APS) by the investigating officer before being stored. If a positive response is received, a copy of the printout shall be uploaded into the evidence RMS case file. If an item is reported stolen, the evidence officer **shall** request that dispatch notify the reporting agency of the recovery (locate message) if it was not done by the investigating officer or by dispatch at the time the item was seized. All serialized items are required to be entered into the APS by the evidence officer. Refer to Chapter 8, Management of Electronic Databases, of this manual, for procedures on use of the APS and AFS. Serialized items shall be packaged by

following the general packaging guidelines.

aa. Urine Kits. Areas shall be responsible for creating Area SOP to address packaging, tracking, and storage of urine kits based on requirements of their local lab.

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