



Date: 29/12/2023
Our ref: 01/FOI/23/011720/H

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/23/011720/H

I write in connection with your request for information dated 24/11/2023, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

1. *Please supply a copy of your force policy document(s) regarding forensic exhibit packaging including the exhibits recovery and storage.*
2. *Please supply a copy of your mobile phone / device recovery and storage policy if this is a separate document to that requested at 1.*
3.
 - i) *In relation to mobile phones and devices what packaging do officers and staff use within the force to store those devices seized as evidence / for examination*
 - ii) *If that packaging is a box are the devices secured within the box and if so how are they secured.*
 - iii) *If boxes are used who are the manufacture(s) of the boxes*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP.

1. The following is an extract from the GMP Management of Property Directory Fourth Edition (v4.1):

1.6 Packaging property

1.6.1 Where an item is to be entered onto the property system, package it suitably in accordance with Force policy. Every item of property, including forensic exhibits must be endorsed with a property and crime or Force Wide Incident Notification (FWIN) number even when being sent to an outside agency for examination. The exhibit label must be completed fully.

1.6.2 Examples of packaging property:

- Place banknotes in a money envelope;
- Put coins in a suitable bag;
- Place sharp instruments in knife tubes;
- Place hypodermic needles or syringes in an approved sharps container;
- Put drugs in a self-seal drug bag;
- Put live cannabis plants into brown paper bags;
- Package clothing, bedding and footwear in brown paper sacks.

1.6.3 Items stained with wet or dried body fluids present a health and safety risk. Therefore, items should first be dried and the package marked with health hazard tape.

Note: Merely attaching biohazard tape to the package will not eliminate the health hazard. Staff must receive adequate instruction and training to identify possible potential for the spread of infection.

Also see:

1.6.4 Packing handwriting samples (exhibits), you should:

- Keep each exhibit flat, and seal it separately in an envelope or polythene bag;
- Fill in the labels, before attaching them to the envelope or bag.

You should not:

- Write any label, or document, on top of your exhibit;
- Mark, fold, pin or staple the exhibit;
- Stick any labels directly onto your exhibit;
- Use more adhesive tape than necessary.

1.6.5 Do not overfill property bags. Each bag must have the property number on it. Bulky items need not be bagged but make sure they are correctly labelled with a property number. When packaging and handling property take into account the health and safety issues of weight / size / shape / etc.

1.6.6 Advice on how to package items can be obtained from the Crime Scene Investigation Unit or the Forensic Submissions Unit, Crime Scene Investigation Section, Scientific Services Branch, Crime Operations Department [V]

1.6.7 Packing Taser barbs

When Taser barbs are removed, they must be examined to ensure that they are complete, be secured in a Plastic Universal Jar (UV jar) and preserved as evidence in a CJA bag. Barbs removed from the body should be considered as biohazards.

2. GMP do not have a separate policy for the storage or recovery of mobile devices. Our Digital Forensic Investigations Unit (DFIU) do provide best practice guidance on the packaging of mobile devices. Please see the attached image for this.
3. Currently, there is no directed use of boxes in force for the secure packaging of Mobile Devices, they are received into the DFIU sealed (in most instances) inside a standard forensic evidence bag.

This has recently been raised as an issue by the DFIU, hence the updated guidance to be provided, however, this is only best practice guidance from the DFIU and the realities of use are much different. As such there are no details on manufacturers or how devices are to be secured in boxes as they are not used.

Handling Mobile Devices

Packaging



Image1



Image 2



Image3



Image4



Images

- If the device is powered off and secured from a network connection, then it is advised this is stored in a suitable box and subsequently placed inside a tamper proof evidence bag as per images 1 and 2 (or in a bag with yellow exhibit label tagged). In instances, whereby a box is unavailable you could consider utilising just an evidence bag although this is not recommended as best practice because of the risks i.e. unauthorised access and/or physical damage to the device.
- When the device is required to remain powered on and it cannot be guaranteed it is isolated from a network, consider utilising a Faraday bag if available, shown in image 3. The device should be placed inside the Faraday bag and then within a tamper proof evidence bag (or in a bag with yellow exhibit label tagged). You may need to consider using a charging pack if the battery level is low. Note: this device will need to be delivered to DFIU at the earliest opportunity following an authorised submission.
- It is recommended that mobile phones/devices requiring trace evidence recovery away from the scene is conducted by a CSI and packaged in a tamper evident bag and subsequently taped into a white CIA box to secure it appropriately, as demonstrated in image 4. If there is a risk of data change or remote factory reset, consideration should be given to using a tamper-evident bag inside a Faraday bag to reduce the contamination risk.
- **Do not** compress devices into packaging that is too small (in particular weapons tubes as per image 5) which may place pressure on the buttons and consequently power off the device. As a result, this could affect the retrieval of data.