

Receiving property and exhibits

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Policy statement and principles

What

Efforts must be made to reunite lost and found property with its owner. This chapter details procedures for recording property coming into Police possession and receiving found property and exhibits (seized, produced, detained and removed property), while adhering to the [National Recording Standards](#) (NRS) that contain the recording rules for lost and found property.

Why

For all exhibits and property, master records must be maintained within the Police Register of Property (PROP), depending on specific requirements in this policy and recording requirements in the NRS. In brief, the NRS states:

- entry of records of lost and found property **is mandatory** (2L, 2K files)
- lost and found property must be entered as soon as possible and no later than the close of business on the day the property was reported
- lost or found property with identifiable marks or numbers must be entered as an item and accurate item status maintained
- found property must be entered into the PROP.

How

The person from whom the item was taken, or if they are not the owner, other persons with an interest in the item, must be given a receipt. The receipt must be provided as soon as practicable after the seizure and within 7 days. Receipts can be printed from PROP and emailed, posted or hand delivered.

PROP supersedes the following forms:

- Property Record Sheet Index (POL268)
- Arms Surrender Form (POL FRM67)
- Drug Exhibit Form (POL374)

Note: Information gathered at the scene in notebooks, must be used for data capture into PROP.

Exhibits must be packaged appropriately and taken to an exhibit store for storage.

The NRS requires all firearms, explosives, and ammunition to be recording in NIA (discovered, lost, stolen, found, recovered, seized and surrendered). This is in addition to being recorded in PROP.

When cash is received, the [Cash handling](#) chapter applies.

Records of property coming into Police possession

Master records

Master records of all property coming into possession of Police must be maintained at each police station or community policing centre using one or more of these:

| Record | Use for ... |
|--|---|
| Police Register of Property (PROP) | All property other than <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detainee property and DVD interviews (these will not be recorded in PROP) - 'identifying' or biometric information/biotrack data such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elimination sets of fingerprints - DNA body samples, eg. 'samples' taken for the DNA database that may or may not become evidence - arrest/charge set of prints e.g. prisoner prints - Land Transport Act (LTA) blood specimens - other personal 'identifying' data, e.g. prisoner photos and 'samples' of photos (facial recognition) to be run against databases for 'suspect nomination' purposes. |
| Electronic NIA 2K file | All found property. This NRS requirement is additional to entry into PROP. In the case of found cash in excess of NZD\$100 both a NIA 2K file and entry into PROP is required (see: Cash handling chapter). |
| Other Electronic NIA record for firearms, explosives and ammunition | The National Recording Standard (rule 1.11.1) requires all firearms, explosives and ammunition to be recorded in NIA (discovered, lost, stolen, found, recovered, seized and surrendered) This is in addition to being recorded in PROP. Depending on the circumstance of Police coming into possession of these items, the NIA record could be a 2K file (found) or as an item in the Occurrence. |

Electronic record of possession, chain of custody and disposal of property

An electronic record of property is maintained in the PROP application, including all chain of custody transactions and disposal. Disposal must be managed in accordance with the Police Retention and Disposal Schedule and general disposal authorities. (See [Retention and disposal of Police records](#) in the Police Manual).

Related information

See also the '[Reporting and internal control checks](#)' part of the 'Exhibit and property management' chapter.

Receiving found property

Receiving property away from a station

Follow these steps if you are handed property away from a station or community policing centre.

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | <p>Enter in your notebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time of receipt - the date, place, and circumstances of finding - a brief description of the property and a photograph - location where found, and sub-location where found if relevant (e.g. name of public park and the sub-location being children's playground). <p>Ask the finder if they wish to claim the property if the owner cannot be located or identified and record their answer.</p> |
| 2 | <p>If the finder wishes to claim the item, record their full name, and private or business addresses, telephone numbers, email and some unique identifier (DOB, DL#, FL#...). If the finder is an organisation, note the organisation's name and contact person, telephone numbers, email and some unique identifier.</p> <p>If the finder does not wish to claim the item they do not have to provide their personal details, but it is preferable that they do so in case it is related to a crime, occurrence or an event that is subsequently reported later and further information from the finder is sought.</p> |
| 3 | <p>If the finder of an electronic item containing a digital memory indicates they wish to claim it, advise them that personal information may be deleted or removed from the device by New Zealand Police.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Check the property in the finder's presence against your notebook entry.</p> |
| 5 | <p>If the found property is a firearm, then comply with the guidance for the safe and secure handling, transportation and storage of firearms in the 'Non-Police firearms security management' chapter.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Capture the property in PROP, label the property with a PROP number and deliver the property as soon as practicable, to the person at the station responsible for the control of property (e.g. the watchhouse keeper or property/station support officer).</p> |

Receiving found property at the station

Follow these steps when you receive found property at the station, from a member of the public or a Police employee.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | <p>Check the property in the presence of the person delivering it.</p> |
| 2 | <p>If the finder of an electronic item containing a digital memory indicates they wish to claim it, advise them that personal information may be deleted or removed from the device by New Zealand Police.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Be aware that some property handed in as found, may be relevant to a crime, and may be an exhibit. If the item appears to be linked to a crime, (e.g. a firearm, or a knife with blood stains on it) or the location or circumstances around where and when it was found is suspicious, seek assistance from the Property Office supervisor (Sergeant or above). In these cases, consider forensic opportunities from the outset, and maintain the integrity of that item in case it is required for later fingerprint or DNA analysis.</p> |

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| 4 | <p>If the property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is already captured in PROP, update the chain of custody and storage location of the found property - has just been handed over the counter by a member of the public, capture the property in PROP and label the property with a PROP number. <p>Sub-status is 'Investigation in Progress', group is 'Property' and the QID is that of the Property Officer or employee in charge of property.</p> |
| 5 | <p>In relation to NIA recording, NRS requirements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entry of records for found property is mandatory (2K file) - Found property must be entered as soon as possible and no later than the close of business on the day the property was reported - The narrative must include item type, colour, make, model, style, any special features, and serial number, where available. Multiple items should be itemised. - Found property that has unique identification numbers, names or marks, or is rare or unusual, or very valuable must be entered as an 'item' and its status maintained at all times. |
| 6 | <p>In the case of found cash in excess of NZD\$100, in addition to standard entry requirements, PROP must also be used. Ensure it is witnessed and is processed in accordance with the Cash handling chapter.</p> |
| 7 | <p>In the case of a firearm being handed in, record within PROP and issue the finder with a receipt. Firearms must be managed by the Arms Officer who is the appropriate person to handle firearms. Firearms must be recorded in NIA to comply with NRS rule 1.11.1</p> <p>Note: The 'Non-Police firearms security management' chapter provides guidance for the safe and secure handling and storage of non-Police firearms.</p> |
| 8 | <p>If the finder requires a receipt, print off a receipt from PROP and give it to the finder or post/email a copy after the item has been entered.</p> <p>Should the finder require an immediate receipt and it is not practicable to arrange through PROP, then consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - taking a photo of the item and sending an email with the photo attached from your Police mobile device or computer to the finder, or - preparing a handwritten receipt <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure to include on the receipt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - item received - identity of Police employee receiving the item and place - date and time of receipt. |
| 9 | <p>Place all property taken over the public counter in the secure storage area for found property, as soon as possible. The security and integrity of found property must be maintained and controlled at all times from receipt to return or disposal.</p> |
| 10 | <p>If the owner is identified, contact them to let them know their property has been recovered and arrange return.</p> |

| | |
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| 11 | <p>In other cases, if time allows and circumstances dictate, make enquiries to locate and notify the owner of the property:</p> <p>Step 1</p> <p>Check Lost Property Reports searching for details of an owner. If a 2L file exists that relates to the found property, NRS rules 1.2.6 (to update) and 1.2.7 (to cross reference) require the narrative of both the 2L and 2K files to contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - updates to indicate that the property has been recovered - cross reference details - details of any other enquiry information. <p>Step 2</p> <p>If you think the property may be reported stolen property, use the NIA Item Query to check names or serial numbers. If appropriate, also check with the Intel section.</p> |
|----|---|

Receiving abandoned personal documents left in rental properties

Under section [62A\(3\)](#) of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, landlords must store goods abandoned by tenants for not less than 35 days where the value of the goods exceeds the cost of storing, transporting and selling them. Following that, the landlord must either:

- continue to store the goods or do any of the following;
- take any personal documents belonging to the tenant to the nearest Police station and receive a receipt for them from Police and;
- sell the other goods at a reasonable market price.

Follow the above procedures for receiving found property at stations when receiving abandoned personal documents in these situations.

Other enquiries relating to goods left in rental properties

Refer to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's [Tenancy - Abandoned goods webpage](#) for information about landlords' responsibilities in relation to abandoned goods in general.

Receiving reports about lost property

Follow these steps when you receive a report of lost property.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | Property handed in after 19 April 2020 can be queried in PROP. You can query by the 'description' or 'storage location' (e.g. Auckland City) and you can restrict the search by 'from' and 'to' dates. |
| 2 | Query NIA for both 'item' and 'narrative' to see if it has been handed in. Multiple searches may be required if property could be found in another district or has been lost for a significant period of time (more than 30 days). |
| 3 | In relation to NIA recording, NRS requirements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entry of records for lost property is mandatory (2K file) once checks have been done to establish if the property has already been logged as found and are unsuccessful - Lost property must be entered as soon as possible and no later than the close of business on the day the property was reported - The narrative must include item type, colour, make, model, style, any special features, and serial number, where available - Lost property that has unique identification numbers, names or marks or is rare or unusual or very valuable must be entered as an 'item' and its status maintained at all times - Attach pictures if available. |
| 4 | Print a PAF and give to the complainant, or post/email it if required. |
| 5 | When you return property: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check the claimant's identity - follow the procedures for returning property to owners in the 'Disposal of found property' part of the 'Exhibit and property management' chapter. - NRS 1.2.6 requires updates to the narrative and the item status if an item is recorded |

Reports for insurance purposes

Note: The purpose of taking lost property reports is to reunite people with their property. Where an item is genuinely lost and an insurance report has to be filed, the Complaint Acknowledgement Form will be sufficient for that claim.

Passports reported lost

For passports belonging to foreign nationals that are reported lost, follow the steps for [reporting lost property](#).

New Zealand passports do not need to be reported as lost property. The owners of those passports must be directed to Department of Internal Affairs (www.dia.govt.nz) and can report their passport lost there. However, if a NZ passport has been lost, is still valid and the owner has no intention to renew it, then complete the lost property process.

Receiving exhibits

Procedure when exhibit is seized

Follow these steps when receiving exhibits:

- seized with or without warrant
- produced under a production order
- detained by Police or removed as property of uncertain status under the [Search and Surveillance Act 2012](#)
- where ownership is unknown at the time of receipt.

| Step | Action by OC case or OC Exhibit |
|------|---|
| 1 | <p>Determine whether the item you are considering seizing is required as an exhibit. Does it contain evidential value, or can it be photographed and left in-situ? If the item has evidential value proceed to step 2.</p> <p><i>Note that if a potential exhibit is photographed and left at the scene, the photograph itself becomes an exhibit, and the custody of that photographic exhibit must be maintained. The photograph must be downloaded / emailed to the Police server as soon as practicable. The photo exhibit must not be stored on any non-police storage device. Photographs by the Photography Section are preferred. See Photography (Forensic imaging).</i></p> |
| 2 | <p>If the property has been seized, produced, detained or removed under the Search and Surveillance Act 2012, follow the detailed notice and inventory requirements after search and seizure or removal under 'Form of written notice when exercising a search power' in 'Part 5 - Carrying out search powers with or without a warrant' of the Search chapter.</p> <p>Those requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing a receipt from PROP Desktop of all seized items to the occupier of the place, or person in charge of the vehicle or other item within 7 days of seizure or seek postponement under section 134. - This receipt will include a copy of the authority for the seizure and rights of access to the items and claiming privilege. - The receipt may be hand delivered, emailed or sent by mail. <p>Note: You do not have to provide this information to the occupier of the place or person in charge of the vehicle or other item from which the seizure took place, if you are satisfied that none of the items seized are owned by that person. (s 133(2))</p> |
| 3 | <p>Ensure a record within PROP is completed and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the case/file number (or card number) - the type, category and origin - if it was seized under the Search and Surveillance Act 2012 - if it was hazardous - the seized details - QID, date/time, seized location and seized sub-location if relevant - a full description of the exhibit details - the full name, DOB, address and contact details of the person the property was seized, produced, detained, or removed from - the owner's (or disputed owner's), person's or organisation's details - the agent person's details representing the owner or organisation. <p>The record must also include chain of custody information and storage location.</p> <p>Do not seize any exhibits, including those that will be photographed and returned, without completing these details.</p> <p>Note, it is mandatory to obtain verification within PROP by another person for all cash and drugs seized or received.</p> |
| 4 | <p>If the exhibit is a firearm, then comply with the guidance for the safe and secure handling, transportation and storage of non-Police firearms in the 'Non-Police firearms security management' chapter.</p> |

| | |
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| 5 | Complete any other forms that may be necessary for specific purposes (e.g. Drugs Search and Seizure notification form in the ‘Notifications’ page on the Intranet). |
| 6 | <p>In addition to providing the occupier of a place or the person in charge of the vehicle or other item, notice of what is seized, section 133(1) requires you to provide any person you have reason to believe is the owner of the item seized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - written notice specifying what was seized and information about the person's right to have access to the item or claim privilege in respect of the item seized, and - a copy of the authority for the search, i.e. the search warrant or for warrantless searches, the name of the enactment under which the search took place. <p>The section also provides that this information must be provided as soon as practicable after the seizure and, in any case, within 7 days.</p> <p><i>You must take care when providing this information to owners following seizure. Search warrants, advice of the exercise of a warrantless power and inventory of items seized, all contain details of the location from where the items were seized, and except for notices following warrantless searches, the identity of the person from whom they were seized. A receipt may also contain details of property belonging to a number of owners. Providing this personal information to the owner(s) of stolen property which is recovered, may pose a threat to the safety of the person from whom it was seized.</i></p> |
| 7 | <p>If the owner, occupier of the place, or person in charge of vehicle or other item is not present when items are seized, leave the search warrant and appropriate attached notice or POL1275 'Notice to person not present during warrantless search' at the address or in the vehicle in a prominent place.</p> <p>If it is not practicable to complete and leave the documentation, you must provide it to the occupier of the place or the person in charge of the vehicle or other thing within 7 days or seek postponement under section 134. (s 131(4))</p> |
| 8 | <p>If appropriate, arrange for potential exhibits to be photographed or copied and returned to their owners (s 152 Search and Surveillance Act 2012).</p> <p>If the rightful owner is not known, or if returning the exhibit would be inappropriate (e.g. it is a seized weapon or requires forensic examination) treat the item as an exhibit and place it in the store.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Ensure that the exhibit is packaged and sealed in an appropriate bag / envelope / box / container depending on the nature of the exhibit and any forensic requirements. Ensure that the exhibit cannot be interfered with and the integrity of the exhibit is maintained. Ensure that wellness and safety issues are fully considered when packaging.</p> <p>(See the ‘Packaging, handling, and storage of exhibits’ part of the ‘Exhibit and property management’ chapter for information about packaging requirements and safe handling of exhibits).</p> |
| 10 | Record exhibit(s) in PROP and obtain the unique PROP number. |
| 11 | <p>Take the packaged exhibit labelled with the PROP number, to the exhibit store.</p> <p>If the exhibit store is closed, place the property in the identified secure temporary store for subsequent collection by the exhibit officer.</p> |
| 12 | Record any movement of property in PROP. |

Exhibit numbering

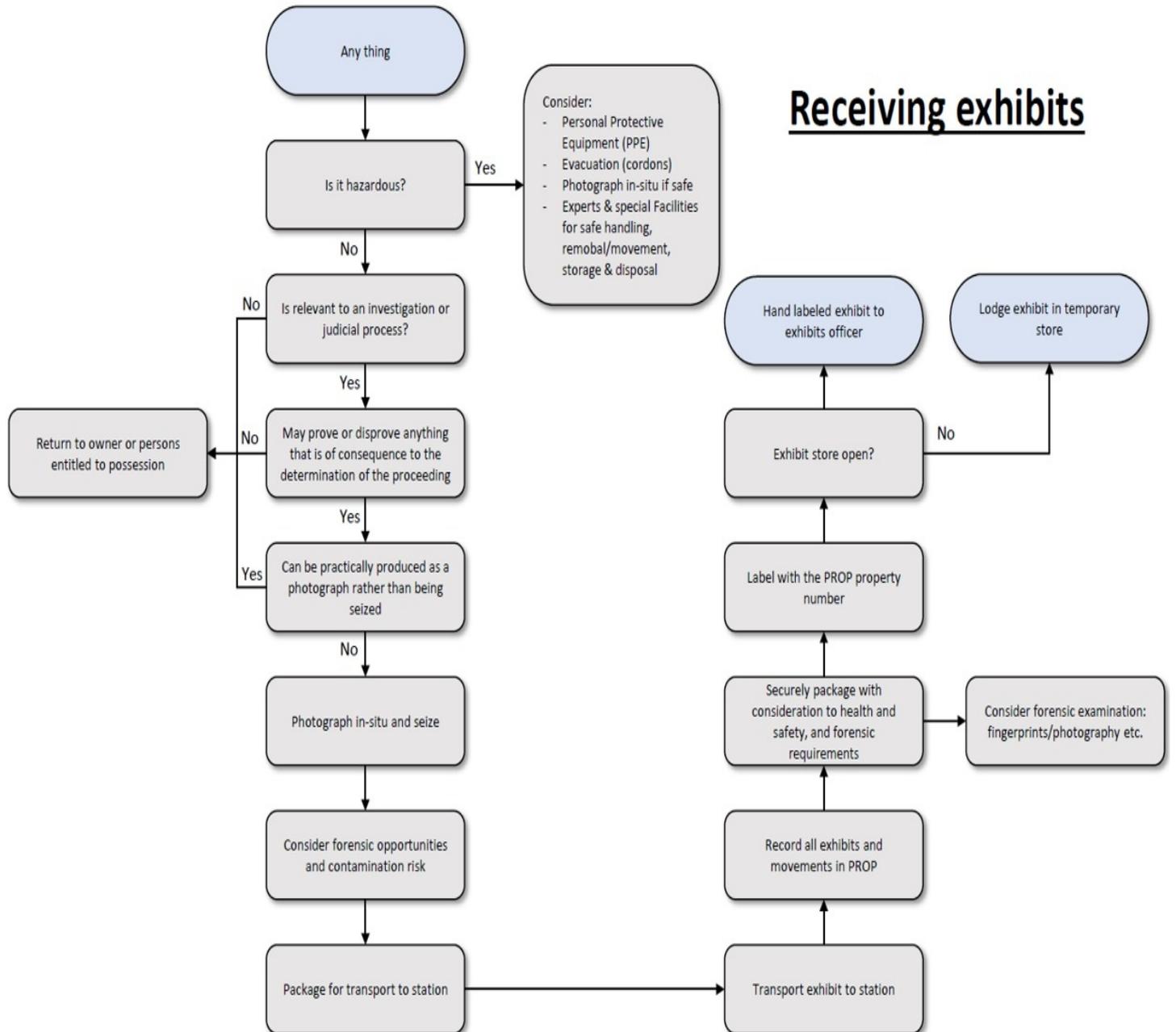
Volume and non-serious crime

Exhibits and property are captured in the Police Register of Property (PROP) system which will generate a unique alphanumeric identifier, e.g. AQN1BA. The PROP property number **MUST** be clearly written and used on all packaging and labelling of items. It is the only way for Police to uniquely identify each item across New Zealand.

There may be cases where the old manual district numbering system is still in use. These numbers can be captured in the PROP 'alternative reference' field, enabling queries of those district numbers to locate property and exhibits in PROP.

Serious crime exhibit numbering

The processes detailed in the [serious crime template](#) and [Part 16 Exhibit management in homicide or serious crime investigations](#) must be used for all serious crime investigations.



Receiving property from people in Police detention

Follow the procedures for dealing with detainee's property in the [People in Police custody](#) chapter, including photographing the property and sealing in tamper proof bags. The procedures in the [Cash handling](#) chapter also apply for any cash taken from detainees that exceeds \$1000.

Note that if any property is taken and retained as an exhibit for further investigation, you must also capture this in PROP.

Receiving deceased persons property

Follow the procedures for dealing with deceased person's property in the 'property' section of the [Sudden death](#) chapter.

Receiving cash

Cash, by its very nature, holds a significant risk to Police and its employees. The utmost care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of Police is maintained throughout the cash handling process when cash is under the control of or in the custody of Police.

The [Cash handling](#) chapter details the policy and process for the counting, handling, and banking of seized or received cash, and for requesting quantities of cash for Police duties.

Refer to the [Cash handling](#) chapter for guidance when handling cash in these circumstances:

- seized with or without warrant (see these topics in particular - 'Cash records', 'Cash exhibits', and 'Parties interest in cash and notification priorities')
- detained, removed or held:
 - as an exhibit
 - for safekeeping
 - as deceased persons' property
- received as found property (see these topics in particular - 'Cash records' and 'Holding cash at Police stations').

Receiving motor vehicles

Motor vehicles may be seized from time to time, with or without warrant for the purpose of an evidential examination, as an exhibit, or for safekeeping. Local procedures must be followed. If no local orders exist, then follow these steps when receiving vehicles:

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | Record details of the vehicle, and the person it was seized from, in PROP. Also include details about who is authorised to collect the vehicle, and under what conditions or time frames it may be released. |
| 2 | Give a receipt from PROP to the person it was seized from. |
| 3 | Ensure the vehicle is stored in a secure location. If forensic examination is required, ensure that either the location is secure, or adequate signage is erected to protect forensic integrity. |
| 4 | Enter an alert against the vehicle in NIA, including details about where the vehicle is stored, where the keys will be located, and under what conditions the vehicle can be released. |
| 5 | When the vehicle exhibit is recorded in PROP, the system creates a Police-wide alphanumeric identifier, e.g. AQN1BA. This PROP number must be clearly written on the vehicle keys. Place the vehicle keys in the designated location within each station. This may be, for example, with the Property Exhibits Officer, forensic examination officer, or a location within the watchhouse. |
| 6 | When the vehicle is released, generate and print a property record sheet from the PROP Desktop and accompany the person collecting it from the secure storage area. Obtain information from and record details and signature from the person collecting the vehicle on the property record sheet and update PROP. The signed property record sheet can be scanned or photographed and attached against the vehicle exhibit record in PROP. |
| 7 | If the vehicle has been stored by a third party provider and is to be released, provide written authority to the person collecting the vehicle, authorising the vehicle's release. |