

FINAL REPORT

CASE # 0399: Stockton Police Department Property Room

Reason For Investigation

In September 1999, The Record newspaper reported the arrest of a Stockton Police Department employee for stealing money from the Stockton Police Department Property Room. ♦ Members of the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (SJCCGJ) felt that an investigation into the operation of the Property room was warranted.

Background

The newspaper article reported that in addition to the arrest, the Stockton Police Department was conducting its own investigation into the operation of the property room. ♦ The SJCCGJ decided that an additional investigation was warranted relative to the Property Room operation without getting involved in the criminal investigation.

Method of Investigation

Members of the Administration of Justice Committee paid an unannounced visit to the Property Room after the newspaper article appeared, and found the staff unprepared for the visit. ♦ A tour of the

Property Room was conducted and money-booking procedures were explained. It appeared to members of the committee that there was an inadequate amount of Checks and Balances regarding the handling of money.

On October 28, 1999, members of the Administration of Justice Committee met, by appointment, with Chief Chavez and his Administrative Staff to discuss the operation of the Property Room and any improvements to be implemented. Chief Chavez stated that new policies and procedures for the operation of the Property Room were being drafted and should be in effect by December 1999. These were sent to the SJCCGJ on January 13, 2000.

After receiving the new policies and procedures, a return visit was made with Chief Chavez and his staff on February 22, 2000. During that visit he explained how the new policies and procedures were drafted and implemented and that they were currently in effect and working efficiently.

Findings and Conclusions

Upon completing the investigation of the Stockton Police Department Property Room the following information was learned:

- 1) The Criminal Investigation of the Property Room theft problem, conducted by the Stockton Police Department, revealed that two individuals were responsible for thefts of money from the Property Room Safe: both acting independent of each other. Upon completion of the investigation, appropriate action was taken by the Stockton Police Department regarding the involved employees.
- 2) All Staff assigned to the Property Room prior to January 1999, were reassigned (the two responsible were in that employee group).

- 3) The Stockton Police Departments Internal Affairs Division has temporarily taken over the operation of the Property Room, including the safe where the money is kept and the corresponding ledger.
- 4) The Property Room is overcrowded. It will be relocated to a larger facility in the near future. All existing evidence will be reviewed and evaluated prior to the relocation.
- 5) New policies and procedures were drawn up and implemented in January of 2000. A twelve page document detailing the handling of money was provided to the SJCCGJ dated January 13, 2000 and was identified as General Order G-3, subject : Booking Money, with an index for:

- } Booking Money
- } Release of Money
- } Transfer of Money to City Treasury
- } Inspections/Audits

- 6) The new policies and procedures provided, as in item #5 above, were accompanied by a cover letter giving a 15 point detailed synopsis for money control and safeguards.

In conclusion, the SJCCGJ determined that once the theft problem was identified, the Stockton Police Department took an aggressive and pro-active approach to correct deficiencies in money handling within the Property Room, developed and updated policies and procedures for the Property Room, and prosecuted those responsible for the thefts.

Recommendations

The SJCCGJ recommends that all policies and procedures involving the operation of the Property/Evidence room(s) or facilities be reviewed and evaluated annually and upgraded or amended as needed.

Response Required

None