

# **POST AUDIT REPORT POLICE PROPERTY ROOM AND IMPOUND LOTS PAR25-01**



WEST PALM BEACH

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Internal Audit

## **City of West Palm Beach Internal Auditor's Office**

Beverly Mahaso Esq., CIA, CFE  
Chief Internal Auditor  
February 11, 2025



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Audit Committee  
City of West Palm Beach  
401 Clematis Street  
West Palm Beach, Florida

**RE: POST AUDIT REPORT OF THE POLICE PROPERTY ROOM AND IMPOUND  
LOTS PAR25-01**

Dear Audit Committee Members:

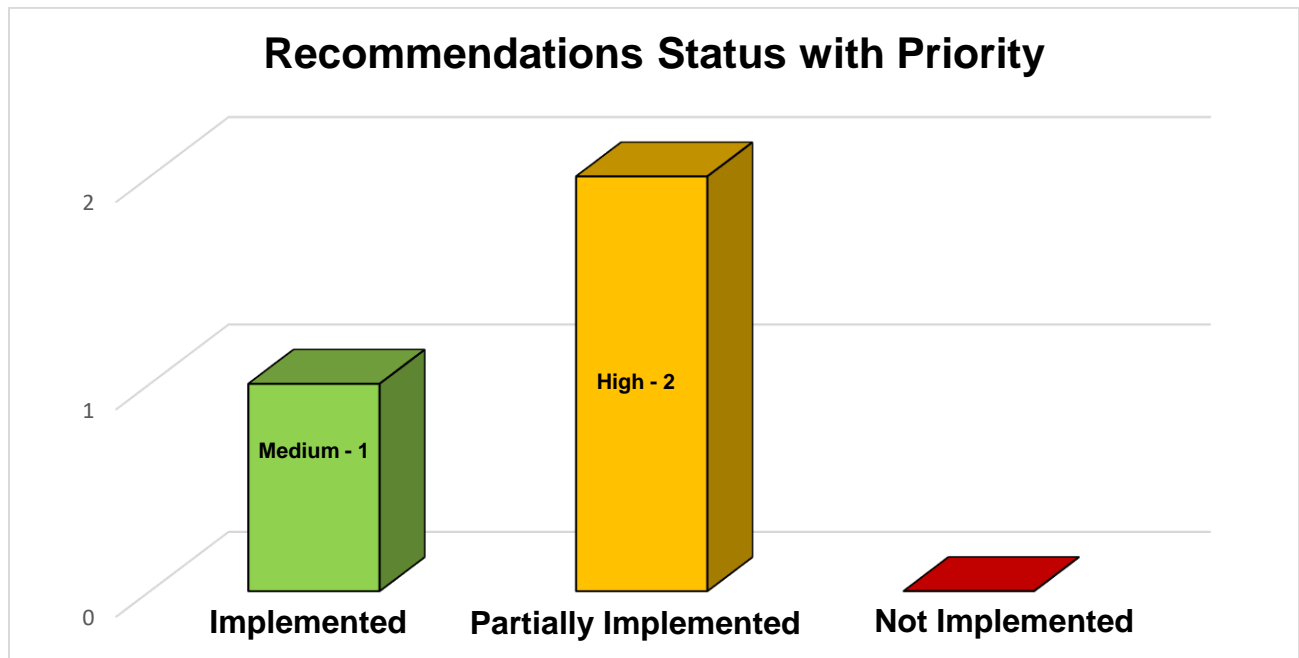
In FY 2016, the Internal Auditor's Office released an audit of the Police Property Room and Impound Lots **(AUD15-06)**. Subsequently, we performed certain procedures, as stated below, with respect to activities of the audit to reach a conclusion on the status of the recommendations made as a result of that review.

This Post Audit Report (PAR) consisted primarily of inquiries of City personnel and examinations of various supporting documentation. It was substantially less in scope than an audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

The evidence obtained provided a reasonable basis for our conclusions; however, had an audit been performed, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you and our conclusions may have been modified.

The audit contained three (3) recommendations that addressed the audit's findings. Upon completion of this PAR, we concluded that 1 recommendation was fully implemented, and 2 recommendations were partially implemented.

We have enclosed a table listing all the recommendations with the current statuses. We found that the Police Department made significant efforts to take corrective action. Further, we note that the Police Department is actively continuing to make improvements. As such, additional steps may have been taken to implement the recommendations after the conclusion of this Post Audit Review. We will conduct another Post Audit Review in approximately 12 to 18 months, resources permitting, at which time we will review all additional changes made after the conclusion of this Post Audit Review.



We thank the personnel at the Police Department for their assistance in conducting this review.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/ Beverly Mahaso  
Chief Internal Auditor

cc:

Cathleen Ward, Commission President  
Shalonda Warren, Commissioner  
Christy Fox, Commissioner  
Joseph Peduzzi, Commissioner  
Christina Lambert, Commissioner

Keith James, Mayor  
Faye Johnson, City Administrator  
Jose-Luis Rodriguez, Assistant City Administrator  
Antonio Araujo, Interim Chief of Police  
Anthony Shearer, Deputy Chief of Police

Encl.

# POST AUDIT REPORT POLICE PROPERTY ROOM & IMPOUND LOTS AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Legend**  
■ Implemented  
■ Partially Implemented  
■ Not Implemented

| No.                          | Auditor's Condition and Recommendation  | Management's Initial Response   | Auditor's Status Update   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b><br>High<br>Priority | <p><b>CONDITION:</b><br/> The Impound Lot was designed as a facility to store vehicles involved in fatalities or serious bodily injury within the City limits. The vehicles must be properly secured and preserved as they are evidence in state court cases. As such, a chain of custody must be maintained to ensure that the evidence has not been tampered with.</p> <p>We toured the Impound Lot and found that the current conditions were insufficient to ensure that vehicular evidence would be safeguarded or preserved. We found that the Impound Lot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did not have a surveillance system or any functioning lights.</li> <li>- Had been burglarized multiple times and evidence stolen.</li> <li>- Did not have a tracking system to determine who was on the premises or what they did.</li> <li>- Did not have a covered building to protect vehicles from the elements or to permit employees to conduct tests.</li> <li>- Had severe overgrowth of landscaping, brush, and weeds.</li> </ul> <p>We further found that the conditions of the Impound Lot were such that</p> | <p><b>MANAGEMENT'S INITIAL RESPONSE:</b><br/> We agree with the assessment of the current condition of the Impound Lot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The security camera system, Department-wide, requires upgrades, enhancements and more coverage. The Department has been pursuing the upgrades for several years.</li> <li>- The Police Department has requested an assessment of the property by the Building Department which is responsible for all City owned property; the current condition of the property is not sufficient to house evidence properly.</li> <li>- Upon securing the lot, the Property and Evidence Section will be responsible for ensuring the continuity and consistency in the safekeeping of the vehicles housed at the lot.</li> <li>- Parking Garage storage - measures have been taken to expand and secure the vehicles housed in the Police Department's parking garage.</li> <li>- Impounding officers have been utilizing off site, secure lots (i.e. Kauffs or Sheehans tow yards) to conduct preliminary investigations prior to storing the evidence in the impound</li> </ul> | <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED JANUARY 2025</b><br/> Based on the review we conducted, we found that there remained some opportunities for improvement. Specifically, evidence stored in the outdoor lots remained exposed to the elements which may create challenges if secondary assessments of the evidence are needed. Further, PD management advised that they are working on scheduling maintenance of the lot on a weekly or monthly basis. PD is also installing a keypad reader which will log who enters the lot and will create an audit trail. PD advised that while capturing evidence, the property is secured and is not stored outside. Subsequently, once the evidence is processed and documented, then the property is moved to the outside impound lot. Finally, PD advised that video and alarm systems have been installed which we were able to confirm.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/> April 2025</p> |

# POST AUDIT REPORT

## POLICE PROPERTY ROOM & IMPOUND LOTS

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|     | <p>employees were unable to conduct the necessary inspections of vehicles. As such, vehicles involved in fatalities were not taken directly to the Impound Lot, but were towed to the Towing Company's lot for inspections.</p> <p>Although not as severe, similar security concerns were identified at the Police Parking Garage that is used to store larger pieces of evidence such as bicycles, motorcycles, or cars. Specifically, we noted that additional barriers were needed to prevent unauthorized access to the evidence section of the Police Parking Garage. Further, we found that surveillance camera coverage needed improvement. This issue is discussed further in the following finding.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b><br/> The Police Department should ensure that evidence stored at the Impound Lot is secured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assigning the evidence at the Impound Lot to the Evidence Section and requiring immediate implementation of Evidence Policies.</li> <li>- Reviewing the outside consultant's Security Survey and implementing changes that will ensure that the</li> </ul> | <p>yard to avoid loss of evidentiary material.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/> FY2017</p> | <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED DECEMBER 2022</b><br/> Based on the review we conducted, we found that there remained some opportunities for improvement. Specifically, evidence stored in the outdoor lots remained exposed to the elements which may create challenges if secondary assessments of the evidence are needed. Further, the entry tracking system is not enforced. Finally, a door leading to the Homicide Evidence Lot, which is accessible to the public, was left unlocked and open. Police Management advised that they are working within their budgetary constraints to keep in compliance with standards, however, water leaks, outdated security equipment, and facility limitations have been an ongoing challenge for police administration.</p> <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED FEBRUARY 2019</b><br/> Management advised us of the following:<br/> The Impound Lot has been modified to include a fence with barbed wire, cameras, alarm system, a two factor access, which is a swipe pad and key for entry. We have not incorporated the impound lot with our evidence</p> |

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|     | <p>evidence is always secured and preserved.</p> <p>Further, the Police Department should ensure that evidence stored at the Police Parking Garage is secured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducting a Security Survey to identify specific opportunities to enhance security.</li> <li>- Reviewing the recommendations and implementing the most cost-effective measures.</li> </ul> |                               | <p>section. We have storage issues with police vehicles that need to be rectified prior to turning the lot over to evidence. We are planning on adding additional fencing to accommodate the evidence section. When the fence is installed, it will be incorporated with our evidence section.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/>June 2019</p> <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED<br/>MAY 2017</b></p> <p>Management advised us of the following:</p> <p>For the Impound Lot, video access control and alarm services have been contracted and are near completion. Fence repairs have been completed. Paving was requested, but denied and the overgrowth of brush and weeds remains an impediment to returning the lot to a useful state for evidence. Parks has been contacted and the site has been requested as an addition to their routine services, however the fact that this site is not manned and has limited access makes this impractical and based upon the observation of just the short term growth this does not seem feasible.</p> |

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|                       |   |   | Parking garage, evidence rooms (main and overflow locations): Increase in camera coverage is requested in the overall surveillance camera system upgrade, but the consultants have not yet taken our projects to bid. There is a follow up meeting with the consultants and Engineering on all the building issues in May 2017.  |
| 2<br>High<br>Priority | <p><b>CONDITION:</b><br/> We reviewed the surveillance cameras dedicated to stored evidence and found opportunities to improve surveillance. Specifically, we found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three evidence overflow rooms did not have any surveillance cameras in place.</li> <li>- Half of the cameras monitoring evidence at the Police Parking Garage were inoperative.</li> <li>- Some viewing angles of the cameras did not provide sufficient views of the area being monitored.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b><br/> The Police Department should ensure that stored evidence or property is properly safeguarded by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revising its SOP to expand the scope of use for surveillance cameras.</li> <li>- Obtaining a consultant to analyze the current surveillance system and</li> </ul> | <p><b>MANAGEMENT'S INITIAL RESPONSE:</b><br/> We agree with the assessment of the current surveillance camera coverage of evidence storage areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are no internal cameras in the overflow evidence storage areas. This does not mean the areas are not secure, but they are not under 24/7 surveillance. The evidence stored in the overflow areas consists of older cases most of which are inactive. The overflow evidence storage is not ideal, and the areas require increased camera surveillance if these areas are determined to be the long term solution to overflow evidence.</li> <li>- The nonfunctional cameras in the police parking garage have been assessed and require replacement in conjunction with the larger camera needs of the Evidence Section.</li> </ul> | <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED JANUARY 2025</b><br/> Based on the review we conducted, we found that there remained some opportunities for improvement. Although some cameras were noted around evidence rooms, they did not provide sufficient views of the areas being monitored. We also noted that some cameras were observed on the outside of the Evidence Overflow Rooms, but none had been installed inside the rooms. PD management advised that they are working with IT and should have everything installed and completed within 8 weeks.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/> April 2025</p> |

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|     | <p>identify strategic areas to install surveillance cameras and improve camera viewing angles.</p> <p>- Upgrading the surveillance system to include installing, repairing, or replacing cameras in accordance with the consultant's recommendations.</p> | <p>- Policy revisions will be made after implementation of upgrades to the system.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/>FY2017</p> | <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED DECEMBER 2022</b></p> <p>Based on the review we conducted, we found that there remained some opportunities for improvement. Although some cameras were noted around the lots and evidence rooms, they did not provide sufficient views of the areas being monitored. Further, there were no alarm systems that had been installed for the outdoor lots. In addition, some doors had not been appropriately secured to prevent the public from entering or disrupting the evidence stored within these lots. We also noted that some cameras were observed on the outside of the Evidence Overflow Rooms, but none had been installed inside the rooms. Police Management advised that outdated security equipment and facility limitations have been an ongoing challenge for police administration. In the interim, Police Management advised that they will meet the minimum standards for storing evidence while striving to implement the recommendations.</p> |



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|                         |  |                               | <p><b>PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED FEBRUARY 2019</b><br/> Management advised us of the following: We have updated the Digital Video Recorder (DVR) system that works with our CCTV camera system. The additional DVRs allow for more storage. We are still in the process of upgrading our entire camera system to include adding the appropriate cameras. This is a budget issue that needs more time to fix.</p> <p><b>Target Implementation Date:</b><br/> June 2019</p> <p><b>NOT IMPLEMENTED MAY 2017</b><br/> Management advised us of the following:<br/> a. Policy revision will follow with an upgrade of the camera system.<br/> b. Consultants (RGD) have done multiple walk through inspections to formulate the scope of work.<br/> c. Upgrades will follow after receipt of the consultant's reports.</p> |
| 3<br>Medium<br>Priority | IMPLEMENTED                            | IMPLEMENTED                   | IMPLEMENTED AUGUST 2016  |