

# ROLL CALL

## For Law Enforcement/Corrections

JUNE 2026

### High Risk Critical Task: Property and Evidence

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The policy of the Sheriff's Office is to provide for the reasonable safekeeping of all recovered lost/stolen property and evidentiary items that come into the possession of this Agency. With respect to evidentiary items, this Agency shall maintain a proper chain of custody and secure such items in a manner that will ensure that the evidence is available to be admitted at trial. Deputies must submit recovered property and evidence in the designated property and evidence storage area according to policy and prior to the end of their shift.

Deputies shall only seize items when there is probable cause to believe that an item is:

1. Contraband: an item that by the very nature of the item is illegal to possess (e.g., illegal narcotics, child pornography).
2. Stolen.
3. Evidence of a crime.

Note-Under the Community Care Taking Exception-Items that would be dangerous to the public if left unattended may be removed from the vehicle for safekeeping-THIS EXCEPTION ONLY APPLIES TO VEHICLES.

**Scenario:** Deputy Daniels responds to a call from a convenience store clerk who reports that a customer left behind a small bag containing jewelry and cash on the counter. The clerk explains that the customer paid for gas and walked out, leaving the bag behind. Surveillance footage shows the customer's vehicle leaving the parking lot, but the plate number is not clear.

The clerk turns the bag over to Deputy Daniels and requests that the Sheriff's Office hold onto it "until the owner comes back." Inside the bag, Officer Daniels observes a gold necklace, two rings, and approximately \$1,200 in cash. No identification or receipts are found.

**Question:** What is the most appropriate action Officer Daniels should take according to proper property and evidence control procedures?

- A. Keep the bag in the patrol vehicle until the next shift in case the owner returns to the store.
- B. Take the property home for safekeeping until the rightful owner is located.
- C. Immediately document, photograph, and secure the property, then submit it to the Property and Evidence Unit with a completed report.
- D. Leave the property with the store clerk since it was found on their premises and does not appear criminal in nature.

**Answer:** “C”

Agency policy requires that all valuable property of uncertain ownership be promptly documented, photographed, and secured as found property, and submitted to the Property and Evidence Unit before the end of shift. This ensures a clear chain of custody, prevents loss or allegations of misconduct, and maintains public trust. The other answers are incorrect because:

- Leaving property unsecured in a patrol car violates chain of custody and Agency policy regarding evidence storage.
- Taking property home is a serious violation that may constitute misconduct or theft.
- Relinquishing control of found property to a civilian or business violates policy and creates potential liability if the property is lost or mishandled.

*The content of this Roll Call is derived from the Law Enforcement High-Risk Critical Task Lesson Plans of Legal and Liability Risk Management Institute (LLRMI). It has been edited by NIRMA for Nebraska agencies.*