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IAPE Monthly Newsletter & Updates

October 2023



**Ask Joe...**Each month, IAPE's primary instructor and Executive Director, Joe Latta, answers one of your questions pertaining to your everyday property and evidence room questions. To submit a question for Joe, [Contact Us](#)

**Dear Joe,**

I appreciate your time and attention. Lately, I've engaged in extensive discussions with various colleagues within my organization regarding the practice of sealing, initialing, and dating evidence packaging. Historically, our procedure involved having the employees who submitted the evidence date, initial, and seal the packages using the date that it was to the property room, a practice we've adhered to for many years. Unfortunately, even though it is best practice, there are instances when the employee doesn't submit the item(s) on the same day it's collected and they may retain it for several days, including weekends prior to submitting it to the property room. Certain managers within our organization believe that the dates and initials on the tape seal should coincide with the date that it was submitted even if the date collected and the date the items are submitted to the property room are not the same. I'm interested in whether IAPE has any recommendations or thoughts regarding this potential change.

Thank you,  
Anthony I.

**Dear Anthony I.**

As a matter of fact, the IAPE Professional Standards 3.1. does mention submission information in the Reasoning Document:

**1. Standard 3.1. Requirements**

*Reasoning: Guidelines will be developed in a manner that provides personnel direction in the approved method of both documenting and packaging property and evidence. The purpose of appropriate packaging is to both protect the evidentiary value of the item inside while providing a uniform size container that permits more efficient storage and retrieval.*

*Guidelines should also provide a mechanism for items that are not documented or packaged in the required manner to be returned to the submitting employee for correction which is referred to as the "Right of Refusal".*

*To ensure that all property and evidence is packaged and documented in a manner that meets local*

*crime lab standards for submission, storage requirements for the agency, it is important that training be provided. Training for Property Room personnel can be beneficial.*

*Information that should be included on the package, label, or tag should include:*

Case number

Item number or unique identifier

Date of submission

A description of the item(s)

The collector's name

The employee ID or badge number

Type of case

Amongst six of our board members and myself there was consensus that regardless of any other date(s), the seal on the package should include the date, time and initials of the officer when the package was sealed. Ideally the submission date should be the same as the date on the tape seal. But as described above, there may be occasions where the dates do not match. The reason for the discrepancy should be detailed in the report.

**Thank you,**

**Joe Latta**

Executive Director

International Association for Property and Evidence

## **Training**

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classes  
across the country in 2023!*

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*"Property and Evidence By The Book" 2nd Edition.*

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**2023**  
**2-Day Evidence Management Classes**

**November**

**2024**  
**2-Day Evidence Management Classes**

**January**

Des Moines, Washington  
Warren County, Lebanon, Ohio  
Stillwater, Minnesota

**For More Registration Information**

**2024  
1-Day Advanced Evidence Management  
Classes  
(Formerly Supervisor Classes)**

Anaheim, California  
St. John County, Florida  
Sacramento, California  
Humble, Texas  
Union Gap, Washington  
Commerce City, Colorado

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Anaheim, California  
**February**  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
St. John County, Florida  
**March**

Lansing, Michigan  
Sacramento, California  
Tucson, Arizona  
Hutto, Texas

**April**

Cary, North Carolina  
Kansas City, Missouri  
Salem, Oregon  
Lancaster, Ohio

**May**

Commerce City, Colorado  
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania  
White County, Illinois

**June**

Hurst, Texas

**August**

Indianapolis, Indiana  
Humble, Texas

**September**

Union Gap, Washington  
Overland Park, Kansas

**More Coming in 2024!**

## Need Training Right Now? IAPE also offers ONLINE TRAINING



**ONLINE FULL CLASS OPTION:**

The Full online course class option is a great choice if you want much of the same training as the Live classes but without the travel and time away from the department. The IAPE Property and Evidence Management video Course is approximately 14 hours in length and was prepared by Law Enforcement Personnel for Law Enforcement Personnel. Completion of the course meets the training requirements for becoming a Certified Property and Evidence Specialist (CPES).

*\*Registration to any 2-Day class now includes the digital download of "Property and Evidence By The Book" 2nd Edition.*

### Headlines: News and Good News

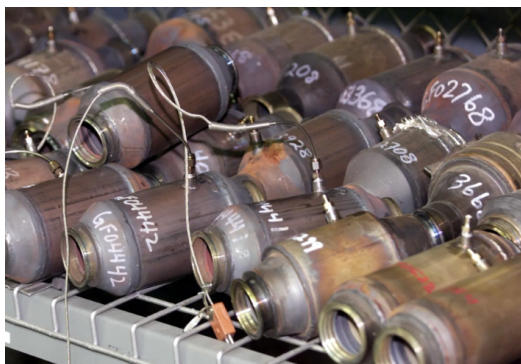
*Commentary: Over the last several years, most all of us have ended up with the "what do I do with this?" –catalytic converter.*

*Several large agencies have had to deal hundreds of them. In many jurisdictions you have had to deal with prosecutors and new state laws that have rarely filed the case and you end up with dozens of "what do I do with this?" If you have followed IAPE over the years, you know we follow Events and Trends that affect our storage of evidence.*

*Well, good news because two events have resulted, and both are very positive. First, someone is going to jail and secondly state legislatures are putting some teeth in the laws.*

### **3 Plead Guilty in \$600 Million Catalytic Converter Theft Ring**

October 19, 2023  
New York Times



Three members of a California family admitted to roles in a ring that shipped stolen catalytic converters, which contain lucrative precious metals, to New Jersey, prosecutors said.

Thefts of catalytic converters have surged in recent years because they contain precious metals like palladium, rhodium and platinum that can be extracted and resold for up to \$50 per gram.

Three members of a California family pleaded guilty for their roles in a "national network of thieves, dealers and processors" that shipped \$600 million worth of stolen catalytic converters from California to New Jersey, federal prosecutors said.

Tou Sue Vang, 32; Andrew Vang, 28; and their mother, Monica Moua, 58, all of Sacramento, were part of a ring that conspired to transport stolen catalytic converters in return for more than \$38 million in wired payments, the U.S. attorney's office for the Eastern District of California **announced on Monday**.

All three pleaded guilty to conspiring to transport stolen catalytic converters from California to New Jersey, prosecutors said. Tou Sue Vang also pleaded guilty to 39 charges related to money laundering.

Heather E. Williams, the federal public defender for the Eastern District of California, who handled the defense for Tou Sue Vang, said in an emailed statement that he pleaded guilty to all 40 counts against him to help his mother and brother secure "beneficial agreements" with prosecutors.

In October and November 2022, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies coordinated their efforts to crack down on what federal prosecutors described as a "nationwide catalytic converter theft conspiracy," in which stolen catalytic converters were sold to a metal refinery for more than \$600 million.

In recent years, thieves across the country have been slithering under vehicles and swiping catalytic converters, which remove the worst toxic pollutants from a car's exhaust.

Catalytic converters are lucrative because they contain precious metals like palladium, rhodium and platinum that can be extracted and resold for

up to \$50 per gram. Nationwide, thefts of the device increased by more than 1,200 percent between 2019 and 2021, according to **the National Insurance Crime Bureau**.

"Some of these precious metals are more valuable per ounce than gold, and their value has been increasing in recent years," the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement announcing the guilty pleas, noting that the devices can be stolen in less than a minute. "The black market price for catalytic converters can be above \$1,000 each."

The family members from Sacramento operated an unlicensed business from their residence, where they bought stolen catalytic converters from local thieves and shipped them to DG Auto Parts LLC in New Jersey for processing, prosecutors said. The family members sold more than \$38 million in stolen catalytic converters to the company.

Last year, about 1,600 catalytic converters were reported stolen in California each month, prosecutors said, noting that California accounted for 37 percent of all catalytic converter theft claims nationwide.

**Read Entire Story**

## **Some Good Catalytic Converter News**

### **Catalytic Converter Thieves Will Find California and New York Tougher with New Law in Place**

October 19, 2022

These states will now require strict records of any transactions involving the valuable car parts; it's one way to approach skyrocketing theft rates. California's governor signed legislation into effect today that will make it harder for catalytic-converter thieves to get away with selling them, the **Los Angeles Times reported**.

The new law will require sellers of the valuable anti-smog equipment to prove they came by it legally or face stringent penalties.

The buyers—generally scrap-metal recyclers or dealers—will also have to keep and show records of where they're getting catalytic converters.

Of the 152 pieces of state legislation, only 26 have been enacted. Most of the others are in the early "introduced or pre filed" category, while some are being seriously discussed in various committees. Some of the states that recently enacted laws regarding converter theft include Connecticut and Mississippi.

In Connecticut, **it is now illegal** for vehicle recyclers to acquire a converter that's not connected to a car, and recyclers now need to keep written records of any transactions *involving converters*. *Mississippi's new law increases fines for anyone caught stealing a converter and requires sellers to provide their personal ID and the VIN of the vehicle that the converter came from in order to sell it. Buyers also need to pay by check.*

Hawaii with 16, Minnesota (14), and California (11) are the three states considering the most pieces of converter theft legislation. Many of the rest are considering between one and a half-dozen. According to the NICB, 13 states are not considering any type of legislation regarding catalytic converter thefts. They are Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas, and Wyoming.

While researching the this issue the above year old article was located which provides the below link.

Interested on how your state is addressing catalytic converter legislation follow the link to a database of statutes:

<https://www.quorum.us/spreadsheet/external/ZaG1kxVbSuPmHqbABjpp/>

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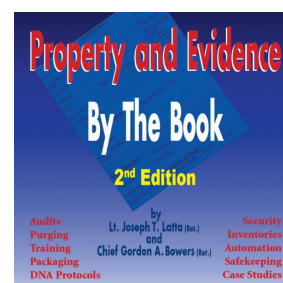
### Got a Job? Need a Job?

IAPE is delighted to announce that we have a new section for posting a job announcement or checking job opportunities.

[Available Job Opportunities](#)

### Become a Certified Evidence Specialist

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Evidence Specialists.

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