

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS  
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 9th OCTOBER 2012**

**Question**

In order to ensure that the States of Jersey Police return property taken during investigations in good condition and in a timely manner, will the Minister undertake to review procedures in order to ensure such property is:

- (a) adequately logged (and photographed where appropriate) and a copy of the itemisation supplied to the owner;
- (b) stored in labelled containers for easy location, thereby avoiding either the owner being advised the items do not exist or hours of police time wasted searching for them?

Will the Minister further undertake to review the police armoury facility to ensure property does not go missing and that public as well as police firearms are in a suitable environment as regards humidity etc?

**Answer**

Since late 2006, the States of Jersey Police has operated an electronic property management system which employs a digital auditing process for all items of both seized property and lost and found property. Each item, or series of connected items, is stored against unique alphanumeric codes which identify in which specific store on the Police estate the item is lodged.

Each item of property is categorised when being added to the electronic system by the officer recording the entry. The item is then passed to the property officer, in the majority of cases, for storage allocation. The property officer, a civilian member of police staff, will then lodge the item dependent on the item's type, value, status (lost and found or seized), legal status (ie controlled drugs), size and potential danger to others (knives etc). For example, cash, drugs and medication are kept in individual safes, with limited audited access, whereas bicycles and larger items are kept in a more suitable outdoor, but covered, area given the volume of space they require to store.

The States of Jersey Police is satisfied that the storage provided for all items is suitable, and fit for purpose, given the site they currently possess. An efficient logging system is in place which allows the property officer to know exactly where an item is, similar to a library indexing system. Labelled containers are already in use, where suitable, by the States of Jersey Police to aid in the safe storage process.

Items are not routinely photographed unless there is a specific evidential need to capture something on record which may later fade, perish or change. All of the property stores within the States of Jersey Police are secure with limited access controls in place, and those indoors (for normal property storage) are a dry and suitable working environment. None of the States of Jersey Police's stores are air conditioned or humidity controlled.

The property office operates during normal office working hours. When operating out of working hours due to need, or at times of annual leave, on occasion another member of police staff will be asked to work in this area. It is therefore not inconceivable that during these odd periods, some short delays could be experienced in that the member of staff locating the item/s may be relatively unfamiliar with the process when compared to the regular full time member of staff.

The Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence (Jersey) Law 2003 sets out, under article 23 (1) that:

*A police officer who seizes anything in the exercise of a power conferred by any enactment, including an enactment passed after this Law, shall, if so requested by a person showing himself or herself to be the occupier of premises on which it was seized, or to have had custody or control of it immediately before the seizure, provide that person with a record of what he or she seized.*

Article 23 (2) then states that:

*The police officer shall provide the record within a reasonable time from the making of the request for it.*

The States of Jersey Police use printed Premises Search Booklets to record all searches of properties, be they residential or commercial. One double sided page of that booklet is to be given to, or left for, the premises' occupier or owner upon completion of the search process. This 'Information to the Occupier' page gives a relevant précis of sections of the Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence (Jersey) Law 2003 on police powers of entry; powers of search; and powers of seizure. The pages also set out the rights of the occupier or property owner in respect of a list of items seized being provided, upon request, within a reasonable time, and supervised access, if suitable, to any seized items at any time during an investigation.

With regard to the Police Armoury Facility identified in the question, and given that the question relates to property management, it is important to identify that the Police Armoury is solely used for the storage of operational weapons and munitions belonging to the States of Jersey Police. The Police Armoury can also be used for the safe 'clearing' and checking of seized, found or surrendered firearms before they are lodged in a secure area, or Public Armoury as it is known, on the police estate. Neither the Police nor Public Armoury is heat or humidity controlled as neither areas were purpose built for weapon storage.

The Police firearms' storage process is controlled by the same electronic system which manages all other property, the only difference being that firearms tend to be handled and managed by members of the firearms training team due to their weapon handling knowledge and proficiency, rather than other members of police staff. Prior to 2008, the Public Armoury did not have a dedicated manager as it does now, and, as with any computer system, the information is only as reliable as the initial input. Since 2008 a standard operating procedure has been created for the entry of seized items into the Public Armoury and is currently managed by at least two officers, in addition to their core duties.

In 2008, the States of Jersey Police carried out an internal inspection of the way it stores and records firearms in the Public Armoury. Several recommendations were made as the storage manner was found to be confusing and the audit trail was inadequate. Those recommendations, and others, have been addressed and the States of Jersey Police leadership is content in the way in which the Public Armoury now operates.

Firearms seized by police are not serviced or cleaned whilst in their possession. Weapon maintenance is a specialist skill and one which the States of Jersey Police has invested in simply to maintain the limited range of weaponry in the Police Armoury. To be qualified to cater for the care and maintenance of each and every weapon is an impossible task.

The concern of Deputy Baudains arose from a specific case in 2007 in which a large volume of firearms was seized. This was a complex case and there were a number of issues around the legality of some of the weaponry held. Some items seized, which were not on the owner's licence, were later added to that licence, which allowed for partial return of items. This then led to a confusing property management process of partial return and partial retention and it is acknowledged that difficulties arose. The States of Jersey Police leadership is certain now, that given the designated management approach of the Public Armoury, such a complex situation could be more easily managed should it happen again.

I am satisfied from the information provided to me in this answer, that proper systems are in place for the management of property in Police possession and that no further review of procedures is required. However, the issue of the lack of purpose built stores will inevitably continue to exist until such time as a new Police Headquarters building is constructed.