



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 25, 2024

## **DOJ OIG Releases Memo of Concerns Regarding the Handling and Safeguarding of Physical Evidence at United States Attorney's Offices**

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a [Management Advisory Memorandum](#) to the Acting Director of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) advising of concerns with the policies and procedures regarding the handling and safeguarding of physical evidence at United States Attorney's Offices (USAO). The OIG identified these concerns in connection with an investigation of missing physical evidence that had been in the custody of a USAO.

During the course of the investigation the OIG found:

- EOUSA's policies regarding the handling of evidence in criminal matters are contained only in Justice Manual (JM) Title 3, entitled "EOUSA," and not referenced in JM Title 9, entitled "Criminal," which creates a risk that, absent adequate training, AUSAs handling criminal matters will not be aware of such policies. Indeed, multiple AUSAs and other USAO employees told us they were unaware of written policies regarding handling or storing evidence.
- EOUSA's policies do not specifically require USAOs, when storing physical evidence, to maintain documentation identifying the particular USAO employees who handled or had access to the physical evidence.
- EOUSA's policies do not set forth baseline standards for how USAOs should ensure any location in which physical evidence is stored is secure and only accessible to individuals with a need to access such physical evidence.

We concluded that the gaps we identified in the EOUSA's policies create significant risks that evidence could be lost or stolen without accountability, and could potentially impact a USAO's use of evidence in court proceedings.

The DOJ OIG made three recommendations to EOUSA to address the concerns we identified. EOUSA concurred with all three recommendations.

**Memorandum:** Today's memorandum is available on our website at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/notification-concerns-policies-and-procedures-regarding-handling-and-safeguarding-physical>

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