

Seeking Accreditation?

EVIDENCEONQ HELPS MEET STANDARDS,
ASSURE BEST PRACTICES AND MORE...

AS ANY EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN IS WELL AWARE, THE EVIDENCE ROOM CAN BE A TICKING TIME BOMB if procedures and checkpoints are not in place to assure evidence preservation and proper chain of custody. We've all seen blaring newspaper headlines about mishandling of evidence or lost evidence at various police agencies, with evidence room personnel, and even the police chief, being ousted.

“ We understand that evidence and property management are a high-risk liability issue for agencies on several levels... ”

One approach law enforcement agencies have used to ensure their evidence management process works tightly and reliably is accreditation. Many states have police chief associations that provide accreditation services. The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA) is another option. Whichever option your agency chooses, having an automated solution in place for evidence management can be beneficial and will definitely help meet accreditation standards.



Fairview, Oregon Police Chief Ken Johnson - Certificate of Accreditation

Fairview, Oregon Police Chief Ken Johnson discovered firsthand how valuable having an automated evidence management solution is when seeking accreditation. Chief Johnson came to Fairview PD in 2003 and confronted an archaic and broken evidence management system. To repair it, he installed EvidenceOnQ to control evidence from the time it is collected until disposed. Three key capabilities that the chief wanted in a software program were offered by EvidenceOnQ: inventory control, searching capabilities, and chain of custody.

Exactly how does accreditation benefit a law enforcement agency?

For one thing, it can greatly reduce insurance costs provided the agency is in compliance with accreditation standards. Accreditation also assures county and city officials that a chief, through the accreditation process, is making sure his agency follows principles supported by best practices that are recognized internationally as well as within a community. “It’s a 360-degree model for confidence-building inside and outside the agency,” said CALEA deputy director Craig Hartley.

Oregon Agency One of Few Accredited

Chief Johnson knew from the start of his job with Fairview PD that he wanted accreditation, which he sought from the Oregon Accreditation Alliance which comprises representatives of the Oregon Chiefs of Police Association, Oregon State Sheriff's Association, and Oregon Association of Public Safety Communications. "We're one of the few accredited agencies in the state, and so EvidenceOnQ has

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helped me with the accreditation process and with audits,” Chief

Johnson said. To test the software relevant to accreditation, Chief Johnson asked his evidence technician to provide him with a random list of 20 items in the evidence room, after which he would try to locate them using EvidenceOnQ. "There are standards in the accreditation that are tied to various questions about our chain of custody," Chief Johnson said. "I was able to get a printout of the random list of evidence items I had requested immediately from the software, whereas in the past it would have taken me hours to research that information."



Sgt. Pemberton, FairView Police using EvidenceOnQ

Accreditation is voluntary for any law enforcement agency. Once attained, it assures a community that the agency follows best practices. Accreditation hinges on two factors, says Chief Johnson: "What we say we're going to do, and proving we've done what we say we're going to do."

Reports generated by evidence management software are essential for accreditation. For re-accreditation, which the Oregon Accreditation Alliance and CALEA perform every three years, reports must be generated for each of those years.

Evidence Room 'High-Risk' Liability, Unannounced Audits Conducted

Although evidence management is not given any particular priority over other aspects of an agency's performance and operations as part of an accreditation assessment, "We understand that evidence and property management to be a high-risk liability issue for agencies on several levels," said CALEA's Hartley. For instance, the quality of service a law enforcement agency provides and the trust the community has in that organization ensure that evidence procedures are sound. "We pay great attention to this," Hartley noted. "We do this by ensuring that there are periodic, unannounced structured audits. We do these when the evidence custodian changes and when the police chief requests it."

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CALEA is not concerned with how evidence management is performed-- whether manually or by using software like EvidenceOnQ. Yet Hartley emphasizes that evidence room personnel must make sure they are automating a good process and not a bad one. "It's important that someone is in control of it and understands the functionality of the automation process and that they can identify areas that may have audit risks," Hartley said.

About FileOnQ Inc. (Developers of EvidenceOnQ)

Formed in May 1996 as Integrated Software Solutions, we have specialized—from the beginning—in the development of products focused on lifecycle records management for the corporate, departmental, and workgroup user. For the past nine years, we have dedicated ourselves to powerful and customizable solutions for Law Enforcement to track and manage their property and evidence from the crime scene to the court room. Police and sheriff departments, district attorneys, and prosecutors value the ability to access, view, manage, and track evidence and associated documents, media instantly using a web browser. Allowing them to communicate and work together on cases and evidence like never before.

Agencies at the local, state, and federal level have successfully implemented our system to not only [manage evidence](#) but also [officer equipment](#), [assets](#), [critical incident scenes](#), [fleet vehicles](#), [case management](#), and more. Agencies have discovered that what we offer is much more than a software system. It is a powerful platform with the tools needed to increase efficiencies throughout their entire jurisdiction.

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