

 <p>ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL & MINNEAPOLIS</p> <p><i>United in Faith, Hope and Love</i></p>	Issued Date: 12/9/16	Last Reviewed Date: 12/9/16	Number: 109
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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform and consistent process for collection, handling, and storage of evidence and to insure appropriate methods of chain of custody for the preservation of evidence, including computers or electronic devices, that relates to any internal Archdiocese Safe Environment investigation.¹

II. Definitions

“Director” means the Archdiocese employee responsible for managing Archdiocese processes for handling allegations of clergy misconduct and for leading the Office of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment.

“Evidence” is an item obtained as a part of an investigation and which may be used for the purposes of an administrative or legal proceeding.

III. Policy

Proper procedures for seizing, handling and storing evidence can help ensure that it is not tampered with or lost and therefore preserved so as to be of value in resolving investigations. Evidence should be seized, handled and stored in a manner so as to not interfere with a law enforcement investigation. The following procedure is how evidence will be documented and protected:

1. The existence of evidence shall be reported to the Office of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment (OMSSE).
2. Efforts should be made to seize evidence in a timely manner.
3. Seized evidence shall be described and documented in writing.
4. Evidence should be seized and stored in a manner so as to preserve its integrity and usefulness.
5. Custody and storage of evidence shall be the responsibility of the OMSSE.
6. Written records of the handling and movement of evidence shall be kept, including identifying persons who have had access to it.

¹ See Settlement Agreement, section 12.1.d. dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney, Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749

7. Upon completion of an investigation, evidence shall be returned to its owner or otherwise properly disposed of.