



Police Department Finds 50% More Storage Space Within Existing Evidence Vault

Evidence vaults, sometimes also referred to as property rooms, are a critical component to any criminal or civil case. Each piece of evidence is bagged, tagged, bar-coded and stored in a designated location within the vault. Two of the largest challenges for evidence management are preserving the chain of custody, and having enough physical space to store the evidence, some of which must be kept forever.

What happens when the evidence vault is at capacity?

Most evidence vaults are bursting at the seams, causing police departments to look to expand the footprint or relocate to a larger location. The Northbrook Police Department understood there had to be a better way to utilize their existing space.

Before the storage renovation, the evidence vault located in the basement of the Police Department, utilized standard static shelving units with aisle ways in between. The vault also had several locked cabinets and gun safes they wanted to re-use in the new room configuration. The Northbrook PD's evidence vault was at maximum capacity for the current storage method. They needed to increase the storage capacity of the existing space without compromising the chain of custody or security of the evidence stored.

The Value of Space

The Northbrook Police Department needed to solve their space utilization problem quickly. They evaluated multiple storage solutions with varied configurations. Although each solution increased capacity, the system designed by Ken Pahlke at Ellis Systems provided the highest storage capacity while at the same time allowing the department to maintain some of its past investments in locking cabinets and gun safes. The new and old were all incorporated seamlessly into one new high density storage system design. The newly proposed solution checked all the boxes for maximum storage capacity, quality, functionality and budget. Pahlke's recommendations helped the police department avoid unnecessary and costly modifications.



Successful Past Installation

The Northbrook Police Department was confident the recommended solution would work best, as Ellis Systems previously designed and installed a secure bike storage cage at this same facility. The designated area now consists of a two-level bike storage units and additional single wall-mounted storage racks on two sides of the cage. This idea provided the greatest space utilization with safe easy access to all bikes stored.

The Storage Solution is Evident

The newly designed evidence storage area now consists of six mechanical assist, high density mobile shelving units and one fixed shelving unit located in the center of the space. There are three mobile shelving units to the left and three to the right of the fixed unit. Removing fixed aisle through the use of high density mobile shelving dramatically increases the storage capacity of a room because what was once open air space is now storage space. Shelving units that roll side to side still allow the user to gain access to everything stored in the space very quickly.



Here's How it Works

The mechanical assist mobile shelving units roll on top of tracks that are installed directly on the floor. When the user turns the crank, the carriage with shelving on top is easily moved to the left or right creating access to the contents of the next carriage in the system. This shelving style is ideal for those leasing or renting, as high density mobile storage systems can be removed and easily relocated to a new location.

Installation's a Breeze

Typically installation of any equipment can be disruptive to the everyday processes of a Police Department. With Ellis System's professional and experienced in-house installers, the Northbrook Police Department staff mentioned how much they enjoyed the efficiency, cleanliness and organization of the installation crew throughout the process.



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“The Property Room was at 100% capacity,” said Tom Moore, Northbrook Police Dept. “The new mobile shelving units gave us over 50% more capacity in a fixed, confined space.”

Tom Moore, Northbrook Police Department



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