

ROYAL MAIL GROUP SECURITY - PROCEDURES & STANDARDS

SEARCHING		P&S Doc. 7-X
1. PURPOSE.		
Conducting searches is a fundamental part of criminal investigations. The purpose of this document is to specify the required Procedures & Standards for all Investigators within the Royal Mail Group.		
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2. INTRODUCTION.		
2.1	Investigators within Royal Mail Group have no statutory power to conduct searches without the appropriate consent as described at Section 3 below. The possibility of any misapprehension by a suspected offender, the Police or indeed any other person, in this respect must be avoided.	
2.2	Any search which is carried out in England & Wales, as part of a criminal investigation, must be conducted in accordance with the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Investigators must ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the legislation, in particular Code B of the 'PACE' - Codes of Practice.	
2.3	Searches carried out in Northern Ireland shall be in accordance with the Police & Criminal Evidence Order 1986.	
2.4	Searches carried out in Scotland shall be in accordance with Common Law.	
2.5	Irrespective of the area of legal jurisdiction in which a search is carried out, Investigators are required to complete the relevant Group Security documentation as described at Section 6 below.	

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- 2.6 Investigators will conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner, demonstrating consideration and respect for other persons and property (i.e. to prevent other people in the office or house from taking offence to what must be a disagreeable procedure for them, or to preclude the risk of neighbours getting to know what is going on).
- 2.7 There are no grounds for damaging or destroying property during the course of the searches. If existing damage is observed during a search, consideration should be given to making a written record using the relevant form GS005c - Record of Search, and/or taking a photograph of the affected area.

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- 2.8 It is also important that the area and the nature of search are completely proportionate to the loss being investigated and that all aspects of the search can be justified.

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3. CONSENT TO SEARCH.

- 3.1 In the absence of a search warrant authorising Investigators to search or the police searching under their powers (including searches conducted under Section 18 or 32 of PACE) a search of private property cannot be conducted without the consent of person(s) entitled to grant it. Investigators must ensure that the suspect is in a position to give consent to any proposed search.
- 3.2 **Grounds and Extent of Search** In accordance with the PACE CoP Code B 5.2, before seeking consent to search an Investigator shall state the purpose of the proposed search and its extent. This information must be as specific as possible, particularly regarding the articles being sought and the parts of the premises to be searched. In the main suspects are informed that searches are conducted for the purpose of recovering potential evidence of offences and/or any property or items obtained as a consequence of those offences.
- 3.3 **Consent to Search for Assets.** In consensual search cases, which may go into Proceeds of Crime Confiscation Proceedings, (due to the high level of financial loss) Investigators should also be looking for evidence of assets held by the suspect and making notes of such evidence. This is because all assets held by the suspect are realisable in confiscation proceedings, not just those obtained as consequence of offences. Accordingly if Investigators intend to search for evidence of assets, some of which may well have been obtained legitimately, then the suspect should be informed of this when being told the purpose of the search and appropriate consent obtained. In addition a record of the consent should be made in section 4 of the Consent to Search - Interviewee Form GS005 to this effect. (Investigators should note that there is no power to seize assets or the evidence of assets which have been obtained legitimately but there is nothing to stop the suspect surrendering items voluntarily). See 4.6 below for searching for assets under Police Powers or a Magistrates Warrant
- 3.4 Investigators are not permitted to conduct any search for which consent was given under duress or withdrawn before the search is completed. (See 3.10 below).
- 3.5 Using the form GS005 - Consent to Search, the Investigator must ensure that the Interviewee fully understands the questions therein and appends their reply in the space provided. It is good practice from an evidential perspective to complete the consent documentation whilst the interview is being recorded. In any event consent must be obtained and documented before the search takes place.
- 3.6 Consent should also be obtained for a search of the personal locker but, if declined, the official locker can be searched on the basis that is the property of our Business. See Section 10 below.
- 3.7 Care should be taken not to go beyond the limits of the consent given. To do so could result in challenges under the Human Rights Act. For example, to search the whole house when the suspect is a young person living with his parents may be excessive. Similarly to search the bedrooms of the suspect's children might be unreasonable and subject to challenge. Unless of course, there is reasonable suspicion that evidence, such as stolen

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property, may be hidden there.

- 3.8 In normal circumstances the suspect should be present at all searches. If, however, the person concerned refuses to be present when a search is conducted he should make this clear when completing the GS005, and in addition, provide a separate note in his own writing giving permission for the search to take place. The Investigator can then present this note as necessary to anyone who is entitled to see it. As a precaution, it is advisable to preserve the note as evidence. See Section 10 in respect of official lockers

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3.9 Interviewee Refuses or Withdraws Consent to Search

Investigators have no power to search persons or premises without consent. In some circumstances an Interviewee will ask what will happen if consent to search is not given. Such situations need to be handled with care and diplomacy so as to avoid any inference at a later stage that the consent was given under duress. It is advisable to explain to the Interviewee that the Investigator would prefer to carry out the search with consent in order to progress the investigation. The question of consent should be posed again with the reply being recorded on the GS005. An ambiguous answer should be treated as a refusal to give consent.

3.1 If the interviewee continues to refuse to give consent for a search and there is reason to think that property is outstanding, the question of an arrest will arise. Remember the Investigators power of arrest is only exercisable if all the arrest criteria apply and it is not reasonably practicable for constable to make an arrest instead. It is imperative that Investigators have a thorough understanding of their powers of arrest, which can be found in the Criminal Investigation Procedures and Standards under Investigation Activities - Dealing with the Suspect, Suspect Approach and Arrest. Once the suspect is under police arrest, the police are permitted to carry out searches under the provisions of the Police & Criminal Evidence Act S18 or 32 as appropriate.

3.1 In circumstances whereby an Interviewee withdraws their consent to carry out any search, or part of a search, the same principles apply as outlined at 3.9 and 3.10 above.

3.1 Unless the withdrawal of consent to the search takes place during a taped interview, a written record should be made either in the notes of interview, the GS005 or in a notebook of the withdrawal of consent. A search cannot commence or continue once consent has been withdrawn. The interviewee may consent only to a partial search, for instance of certain rooms only, in which case, only these areas can be searched unless the necessary police assistance is obtained.

3.1 Section 10.2 below provides guidance in the event of a suspect declining or withdrawing consent to search an official locker.

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4. POWERS TO CARRY OUT SEARCHES.

4.1 As discussed above, RMG Investigators have no statutory power to conduct searches without the appropriate consent.

4.2 In some circumstances it may be appropriate to consider applying for a search warrant. This should be discussed with a Senior Investigation Manager within the Unit wherever possible before action is taken.

4.3 Applications for search warrants are addressed through the Police who will both make the application and execute any necessary searches. The Police must also be reminded that RMG Investigators have no statutory power of search without consent.

4.4 Under Section 16(2) of PACE, RMG Investigators can be named on a search warrant allowing them to accompany and advise Police Officers and enter premises without obtaining the consent of the occupier. Investigators named on the warrant may conduct searching and seizures as long as that person is in the company of a constable.

4.5 Under Sections 18 and 32 of PACE, Police Officers can enter and search

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premises without a warrant. Investigators accompanying Police Officers may search under the supervision of the Police Officer in charge who will introduce the Investigators and explain their role in the search. Investigators should carry identification for production on request (PACE Code B 6.5 ii). An Investigator cannot seize any property during the course of a search conducted under these powers. The seizure of any property must be done by the Police Officers.

- 4.6 **Searching for Assets.** If searches are conducted under Police Powers (S18&S32 PACE) or a Magistrate's Warrant (S8 PACE) there is no legal power search for or seize evidence of, or legitimately obtained assets. Of course if searchers come across evidence of legitimate assets during such searches it is appropriate to record details for later consideration and again there is nothing to stop the suspect surrendering items voluntarily. (Searching for evidence of, or legitimately obtained assets can only be conducted with consent)

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5. HEALTH & SAFETY.

- 5.1 Investigators must exercise extreme vigilance and common sense whilst conducting searches of any kind. The health and safety of all persons involved is of paramount importance.
- 5.2 The Criminal Investigation Safe Systems of Work can be found in the Criminal Investigation Procedures and Standards under Investigation Activities - Health & Safety & PORA. Investigators are expected to be fully aware of these including the 'Controls and Measures', which must be applied and/or managed through a risk assessment approach.
- 5.3 Where there is **no** reason to suspect that a person has evidence of an offence or items obtained as a consequence of an offence on them, but it is considered a search is necessary to mitigate risk to Health & Safety, investigators must obtain and record the consent of the person in their notebook and where appropriate offer the presence of a friend. Most importantly the scope of the search itself must only go so far as to rule out the presence of an item with potential to cause harm and should not extend to the close examination of items contained in wallets, purses etc.
- 5.4 It is possible that, during a search of this nature, the Investigator encounters evidence that could reasonably be suspected as stolen, or otherwise significant to the enquiry. In such circumstances, the suspected offender should be cautioned and reminded of his legal rights in accordance with PACE. A written record of the facts must be made, preferably in an official notebook and signed by those present.
- 5.5 With reference to paragraphs 5.3 & 5.3 above Investigators must note that if it is suspected prior to **any** person search that the suspect may have on them evidence of an offence or items obtained as consequence of an offence then the search must be conducted in accordance with PACE, with a GS005 being completed.

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6. DOCUMENTATION - COMPLETION GUIDELINES

- 6.1 **GS005 - Interviewees Declaration/Consent to Search** (for completion by Interviewee)
GS005a - Person Entitled to Grant Entry to Vehicle (If other than Interviewee)
GS005b - Person Entitled to Grant Entry to Premises (If other than Interviewee)

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In each of these 3 forms, the Investigator may complete Part 1 if preferred. Part 2 consists of self explanatory questions to which the Interviewee, or person entitled to grant entry, should be invited to append their reply in the space provided before signing and dating the document. Any questions which do not apply may be scored through and N/A written in the 'reply' box. Space is provided at the bottom of the form to enable the Investigator to comment if it is felt necessary. Such comment may include details of any friend or neighbour requested or whether the search is conducted to identify legitimate asset, etc.

6.2 GS005c - Record of Search

A separate record detailing each search must be completed. Part 4 may be used to record details of any significant occurrence during, or relating to the search in question.

6.3 GS005d - Record of Property Seized During Search

Sufficient detail to properly identify the search to which this form relates should be entered in the blank box at the top of the form. The 'Entry No' should reflect a chronological record of order in which the 'recording

officer' made the record. See also Section 12 below - Property Recovered During Searches.

- 6.4 **Important** - The Q&As sections of the GS005d may be used if necessary to record any questions put to the suspected person during the search. It is imperative that these questions do not constitute an interview and as such must be asked solely for the purpose of furthering the proper and effective conduct of a search. For example, questions to discover the occupier of specified premises, to find a key to open a locked drawer or cupboard or to otherwise seek co-operation during the search or to determine if a particular item is liable to be seized. If questioning goes beyond what is necessary for this purpose, the exchange is likely to constitute an interview as defined by Code C of the PACE Codes of Practice, and would require the associated conditions. Those parties concerned must sign any such questions and replies.

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7. SEARCHING A PERSON.

- 7.1 Wherever feasible Investigators must plan operations to ensure that an officer of the same gender as the suspect is available to carry out personal searches. If this is not possible, in order to provide a safeguard against an allegation of misconduct, arrangements should be made for a supervisor of the same sex to attend as a witness.
- 7.2 An Investigator of the opposite gender may, if necessary, conduct a search of the outer garments (coat, jacket, gloves, headgear, shoes as long as they are removed from the suspects person). However, a person of the same sex must conduct a search requiring 'patting down' or the removal of anything other than outer clothing. In such cases a person of the opposite sex can **only** be present if the person searched specifically consents. A record must be made of this consent. (PACE Codes of Practice, Code A, 3.6)
- 7.3 If exceptionally a person of the same sex is not available the Investigator should consider contacting the Police for assistance or asking the suspect to attend a Police Station on a voluntary basis.
- 7.4 **Important** - Investigators are reminded of the limitations, described at

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6.4 above in relation to questions put to a person during a search. Back to contents	
8. SEARCHING VEHICLES.	
8.1	The PACE Act, Codes of Practice, Code B, 2.3 determines that a 'vehicle' falls within the definition of 'premises' for the purpose of this code. Investigators are therefore reminded that; a) consent to search a vehicle can only be given by the owner, or person entitled to grant entry to the vehicle in question, and b) that person must be given a copy of the Notice of Powers and Rights (GS004).
8.2	Important - Investigators are reminded of the limitations, described at 6.4 above in relation to questions put to a person during a search. Back to contents
9. SEARCHING PREMISES.	
9.1	A Notice of Powers and Rights (GS004) must be handed to the owner/occupier, which fully explains the conditions of the search. The time at which the 'notice' was given is to be recorded on the appropriate 'consent' forms.
9.2	It is important that any search of premises must be conducted at a reasonable hour.
9.3	Important - Investigators are reminded of the limitations, described at 6.4 above in relation to questions put to a person during a search. Back to contents
10. SEARCHING OFFICIAL LOCKERS.	
10.1	Official lockers are provided to some RMG employees for the purpose of housing personal effects. Consent to search an official locker should be sought from the employee concerned and recorded on the GS005.
10.2	In the event of this consent being refused or withdrawn by the suspected offender and it is considered essential that a search must be made, permission to use that particular locker may be formally withdrawn from the key holder. The contents of the locker should then be removed in the presence of a reliable and independent witness. This may be a Manager or Union Representative.
10.3	Withdrawing permission to use an official locker should only be considered in circumstances when the facts can fully justify it.
10.4	Investigators should ascertain whether a suspected member of staff has an official locker and its number. In some offices, it is not unusual for employees to have unofficial use of additional lockers. This may be determined from either the official records held locally, or discreet enquiries.
10.5	Important - Investigators are reminded of the limitations, described at 6.4 above in relation to questions put to a person during a search. Back to contents
11. FRIENDS PRESENT DURING SEARCHES.	
11.1	RMG employees must be offered the 'presence of a friend' at all interviews and searches conducted by RMG Investigators. Irrespective of whether or not the Interviewee opted to have a friend present during an interview, the offer of the 'presence of a friend' must be made in respect of each

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search.

11. As described on the form GS003, the 'friend' must be at least 18 years of age and not already involved in the inquiry.
11. It is important to remember that the offer of the 'presence of a friend' at both the interview and the 'person' search is a RMG requirement only. The PACE Codes of Practice, Code B, 6.11, determines that a friend, neighbour or other person must be allowed to witness the search of premises (which includes vehicles).
11. Such requests may be declined by the Investigator if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the presence of the person would unreasonably delay the search, hinder the investigation or endanger anyone. Either way the Investigator must record the reason and the grounds for this decision on the appropriate search documentation.

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12. PROPERTY RECOVERED DURING SEARCHES.

12. Any property seized during a search is likely to become significant evidence. Failure to comply with the correct procedures may result in the evidence being invalid as part of any later proceedings. Investigators must ensure that they are fully conversant with the PACE Code B, 7 refers to the seizure and retention of property.
12. The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 Part 2, provides for circumstances whereby it is necessary to seize large volumes of material for later sifting. (PACE Code B, 7.7 to 7.13 refer).
12. When searching with consent Investigators should note that there is no power to seize assets or the evidence of assets which have been obtained legitimately. However in order to satisfy potential Confiscation Orders there is nothing to stop the suspect surrendering items voluntarily. The situation is slightly different if searches are conducted under Police Powers (S18&S32) or a Magistrate's Warrant (S8). Although consent can be obtained to search for evidence of legitimately obtained assets there is no legal power to search for, or seize such items. Of course if searchers come across evidence of legitimate assets during such searches it is appropriate to record details for later consideration and again there is nothing to stop the suspect surrendering items voluntarily)
12. As described at section 6.3 above, any item of property seized/recovered during a search shall be recorded using a form GS005d - Record of Property Seized During Search. During joint operations with the Police or other organisations, their equivalent documentation may be utilised.
12. Further guidance concerning the handling of evidence and managing exhibits can be found under the appropriate section of the GSD.

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13. GS027 PROCEDURE. (Thanks for co-operation)

13. The purpose of this procedure is to offer apologies and thanks to an innocent member of staff who has cooperated during an enquiry, by consenting to be searched.
13. The procedure should not be used in circumstances involving an employee who is suspended from duty immediately after the search, or is handed into custody.

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13. Using the draft wording detailed on the GS027, the Investigator should
3 arrange for a letter to be prepared and signed by the appropriate local
Manager before it is passed to the employee concerned. In borderline cases
it is recommended that the Investigator should be more inclined to give
the declaration rather than to withhold it. If you are in doubt consult
your Manager.

13. A copy of the letter signed by the local manager should be retained in the
4 case papers.

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