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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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In the course of a recent internal audit of its property storage facility, the Salisbury Police Department discovered evidence of a series of potentially egregious breaches of internal policy by a civilian employee. Upon further review of the evidence, SPD command staff determined that there was cause to believe that the civilian employee may have committed one or more thefts while working in the property storage facility.

To better prepare for future recertification reviews by accrediting agency, CALEA (the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies), the Salisbury Police Department has recently undertaken an audit of its property storage processes and procedures. This internal audit was non-compulsory, and was initiated by the SPD to ensure adherence to best practices for property handling and storage. Upon discovering that internal policies may have been breached by the civilian employee, SPD contacted the Wicomico County State's Attorney's Office, and informed them of the evidence that a crime—or crimes—may have been committed in the property storage facility at the Salisbury Police Department. Discussion between the two agencies led to the decision to seek the assistance of the Maryland State Police, who were asked to conduct a criminal investigation. That investigation is currently ongoing.

“The community needs to know that when they give you their trust, you’re going to do the right thing when they’re not looking” said Salisbury Police Chief Barbara Duncan. “As a law enforcement agency, integrity is paramount for us, so this situation is disappointing. It’s frustrating. Right now, our focus is on ensuring the secure operation of our property facility, and assisting the MSP and the State’s Attorney’s Office to determine exactly what happened. Moving forward, SPD is committed to taking every possible step to ensure that the trust of our citizens is well-placed.”

In 1987, to help foster a stronger relationship with the community, SPD first pursued accreditation by CALEA – the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Widely recognized within the law enforcement profession as the gold standard benchmark for professional excellence, CALEA conducts periodic inspections to ensure that agencies are adhering to the rigorous standards set forth for certification. Since 1987, the Salisbury Police Department has undergone 16 process reviews under CALEA – each involving an inspection of the property storage facility. Not one inspection to date has revealed any evidence of either breaches in protocol, or illegal activity in the property storage facility, or anywhere else within the SPD.

Chief Duncan said, “We’re always looking for areas where we can improve how we work, tighten up our policies. The process by which you identify those areas of potential improvement calls for scrutiny and objectivity. That’s what led us here. No one ever wants to be in the position of questioning the integrity of someone you trust, but when you take that internal look within the organization, one of the reasons you do it is to determine if there’s anyone who’s not living your standards.”

The Maryland State Police investigation into this matter is ongoing, and may continue for a considerable time to come. The Salisbury Police Department will provide updates as they become available, however SPD will not offer any comment on the ongoing MSP investigation.

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Captain Rich Kaiser