

## The Evidence is Clear: Wolter Helps South Elgin Police Department Build a Smarter, More Secure Storage System from the Ground Up

**Opportunity:** Build a new police station to serve the community, build a better storage system to serve Police Department operations.

South Elgin, IL, suburb of Chicago, is a village of nearly 25,000 people with a police department averaging about 17,000 calls per year. Staffed by over 30 full-time officers and a civilian team of 6, the Department had outgrown its existing station. When Village leaders were financially able to address the expansion needs of the police headquarters, they chose to build a new police station rather than remodel.

This gave the Department's design team the opportunity to start with a clean slate that included addressing storage issues. They explored the latest innovations in key areas including evidence chain of custody and preservation, as well as options available for locker rooms and tactical equipment storage. The team toured several recently built police stations to aid in the development of the storage plan for the new HQ. "These tours helped us figure out what we wanted, and what we definitely didn't," said South Elgin Chief of Police Jerry Krawczyk. "We paid close attention to others' storage mistakes to avoid similar ones in our building."

**Solution:** Wolter addressed storage in **8 different spaces** within the new station, including: evidence processing, men's & women's locker rooms, duty bag storage, tactical weapons storage, sidearm storage, electronics evidence storage, and lockers for detainee's personal effects.



*Evidence lockers*

The Evidence Processing area was designed using Steele Solutions' Tiffin **Evidence Lockers** for intaking newly received evidence. They are a pass-thru locker system mounted in a wall that officers load from one side and evidence custodians unload from the other side in the evidence vault. As soon as the locker is locked, the chain of custody transfers from officer to evidence custodian. The system includes optional integrated refrigerated lockers for the safe storage of items, such as blood evidence that must be preserved in a climate-controlled zone. It also incorporates **temporary evidence storage lockers** to allow officers to secure evidence immediately and process necessary paperwork later in their shift, without compromising the chain of custody. "We didn't have a good solution for that before," said Chief Krawczyk. "Now, even items that require refrigeration can be placed in a locked unit and retrieved securely from the other side."

Another innovative addition is the **Charge & Lock electronics lockers**. Each locker has a built-in power supply capable of charging up to 3 devices, secured with a programmable electronic lock. "With people filming incidents or even their own crimes, cell phone & electronic evidence has become critical in many cases," Krawczyk explained.

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“That’s where this locker comes in,” added Ken Pahlke, also known as “Mr. Storage” at Wolter. “We recommend using this system to keep the chain of custody intact while ensuring devices stay powered and protected.”



*Mechanical assisted high-density storage system*

Once evidence is taken in by the evidence custodian, it’s transferred to a **mechanical assisted high-density storage system** by Aurora Storage. The Aurora system was originally installed in the old station by Wolter back in 2016. Ken handled the original installation and then oversaw its transfer and expansion into the new building. “The original carriages were 15 ft long. We added 5 ft to each, to total 20 ft and added more carriages to further increase storage capacity. With it being a modular system, we were able to add on and even match paint color on everything. Being able to reuse existing equipment saved the Department about \$40,000,” he said. “I told Ken, he’s 1 of 2 vendors I would recommend to anybody. I’m just extremely happy with Wolter,” Chief Krawczyk added.

“ “ **The level of customer service from Wolter, specifically Ken, was unbelievable. Anytime we asked something, Ken responded immediately and said, “okay. I’ll be right there.”**

*Jerry Krawczyk, SEPD Chief*



*Locker rooms*

In the **locker rooms**, Wolter recommended the Tiffin Infinity Locker System by Steele Solutions. It’s a modular design featuring reconfigurable accessories, optional electrical charging, a built-in seat and an independent pull-out base drawer equipped with a rack for bullet proof vest storage. Wolter worked with the architect and builder to configure the building’s HVAC system to draw air through the base drawer, helping to dry vests between shifts. “Our old locker rooms were basically high school lockers. They didn’t fit anything and served no purpose except for storing a couple items that usually just didn’t fit right. Now, we have a really nice locker room that doesn’t smell like one. Officers finally have space for their gear and dry vests that don’t smell the next day. I think upgrades like that help with officer retention,” the Chief said.

The architectural design of the station placed the officer’s locker rooms on the upper level, so it became necessary to include **duty bag storage** near the personnel entrance closest to the motor pool. Officers use their duty bags for auxiliary equipment needed while on patrol, including flashlights, extra batteries, paperwork, gloves, etc. “It just wouldn’t make sense to carry those big bags across the station, that’s why we wanted lockers by the door near the squad cars,” the Chief said. Pahlke recommended Steele Solutions’ Tiffin Duty Bag Locker system configured with 3 doors and a bottom pull-out drawer. “That’s a feature we really pushed because, officers are coming in

from outside, so it might be raining or snowing. If you have the bottom locker and have to take a knee to open it up, your knee's gonna get wet, but if you have a pullout drawer, you don't have to take a knee to unlock it. It's a little extra consideration for the officer," Ken said.



*Tactical weapons & gear storage*

For **tactical weapons and gear storage**, Wolter conducted a comprehensive survey of the equipment SEPD currently uses—as well as what they anticipate needing in the future, before designing custom weapons lockers. Ken worked with the Chief to configure the lockers specifically for their rifles. The racks were designed to provide a precise, secure fit. He also pre-tested the Taser storage so that the brand SEPD carries fit precisely and was in clear view with easy access. “I think Ken helped us the most. I mean, we let him know what type of rifles we were carrying and, he just took care of it for us,” said the Chief.



*Sidearm storage lockers*

**Sidearm storage lockers** located near interrogation rooms are Steele Solutions heavy-gauge, recess-mounted lockers featuring keyed locks, fold down doors and felt lined bottoms. “They’re never coming out of the wall,” Ken laughed.

“I would 100% recommend Wolter and Ken. We’ve actually had people call and I’ve told them that already. One of the best vendors we’ve ever dealt with. And the products, I think, are excellent, so we’re very happy,” the Chief said.



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