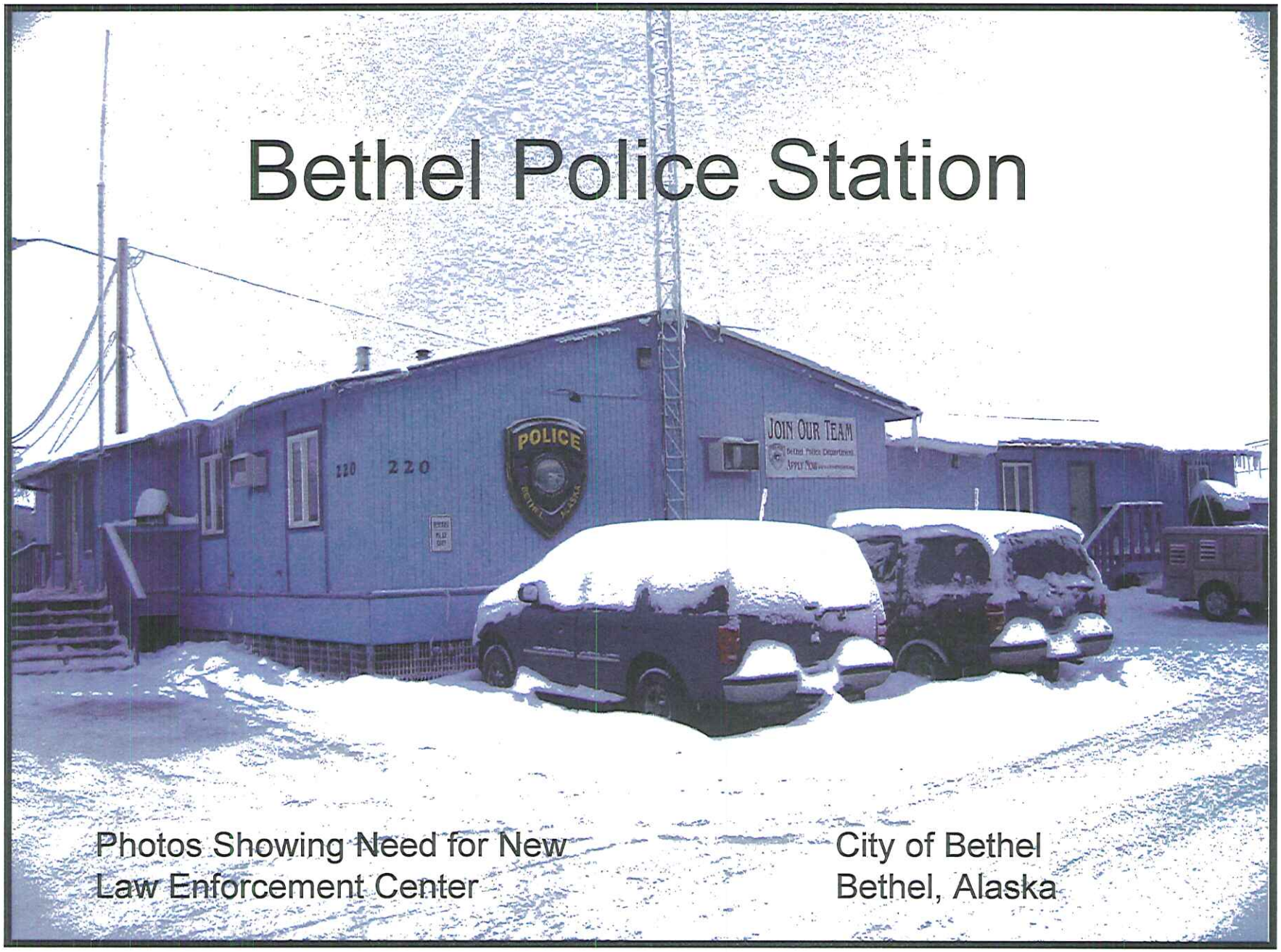
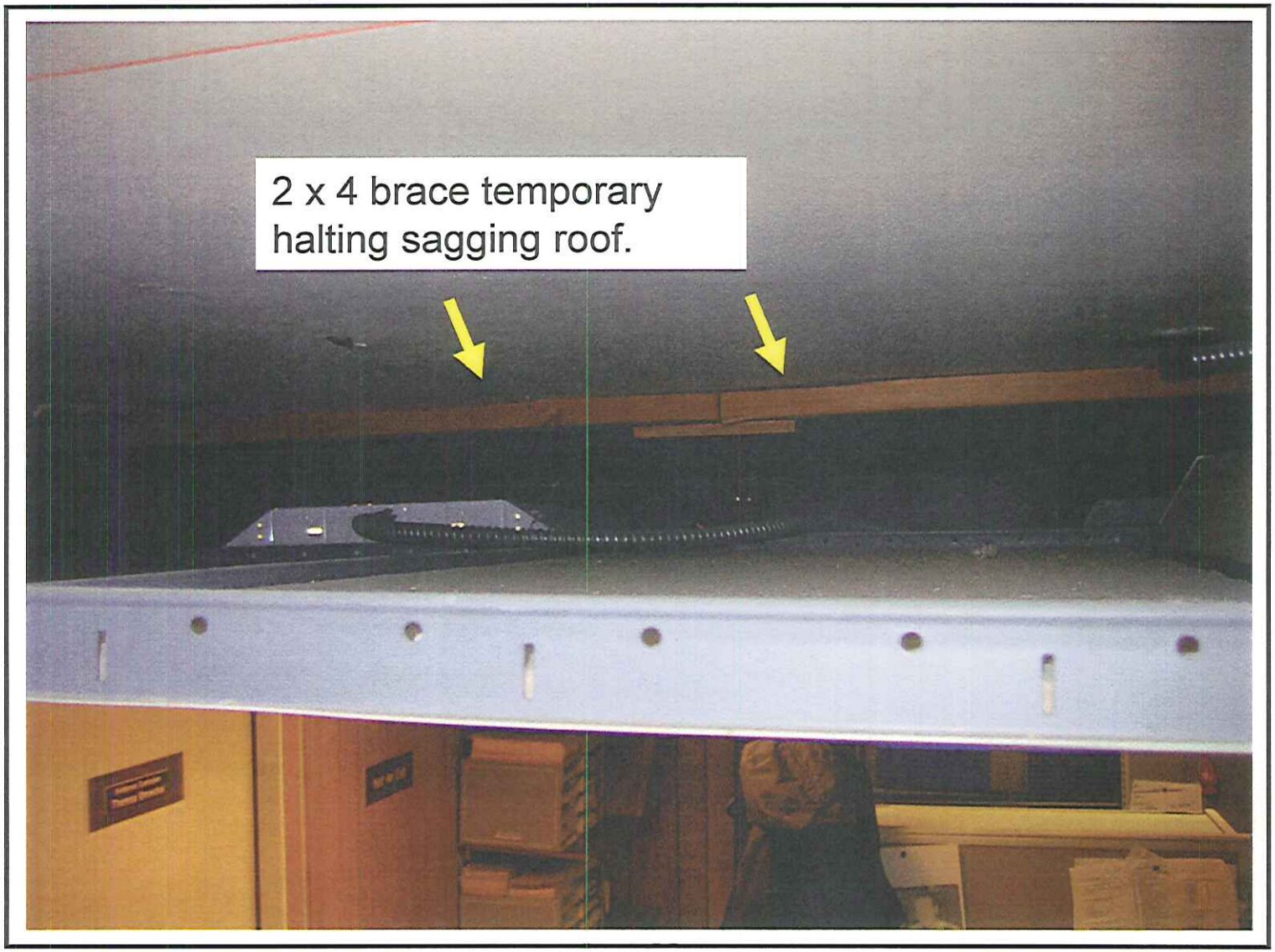
Bethel Police Station

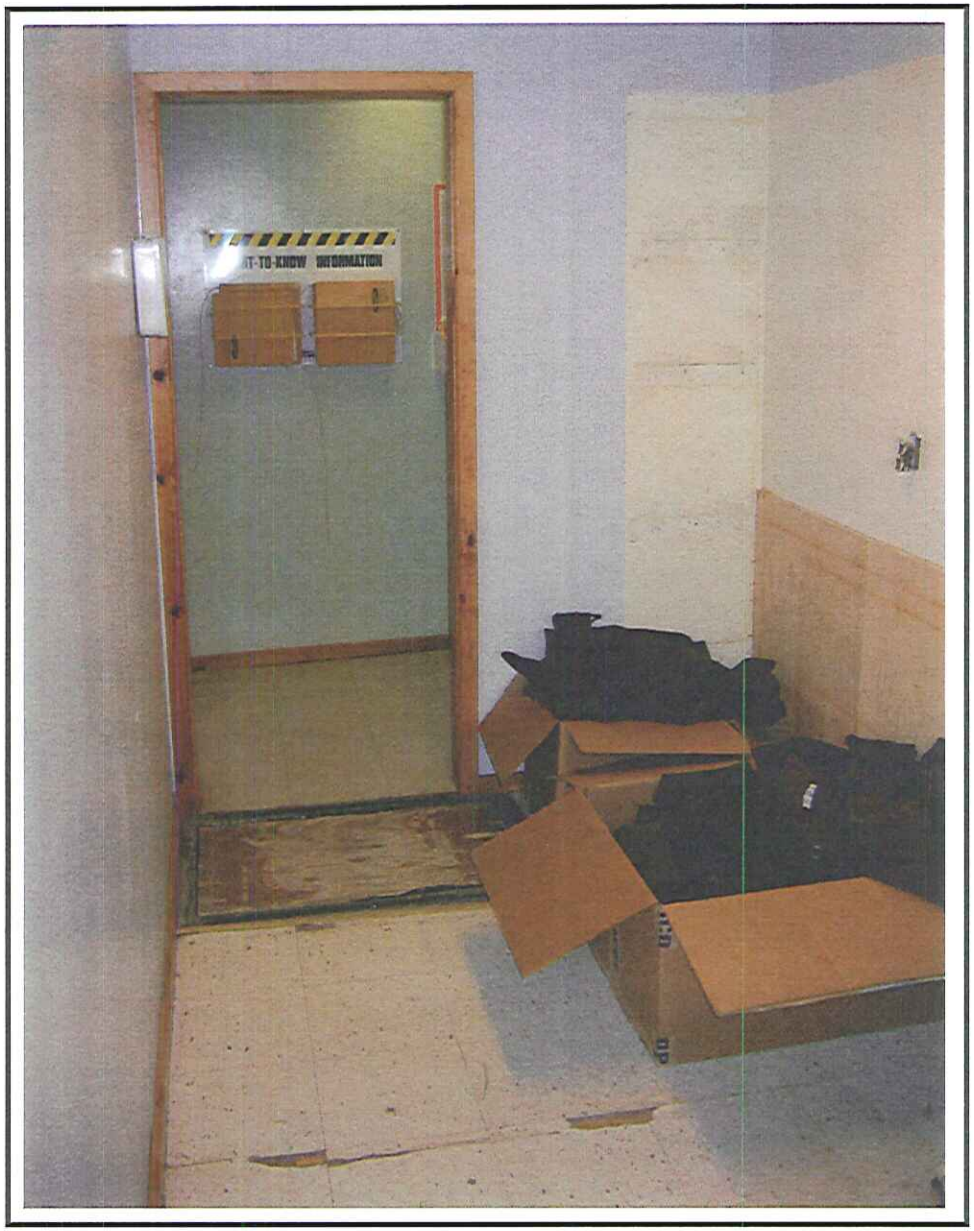


Photos Showing Need for New
Law Enforcement Center

City of Bethel
Bethel, Alaska



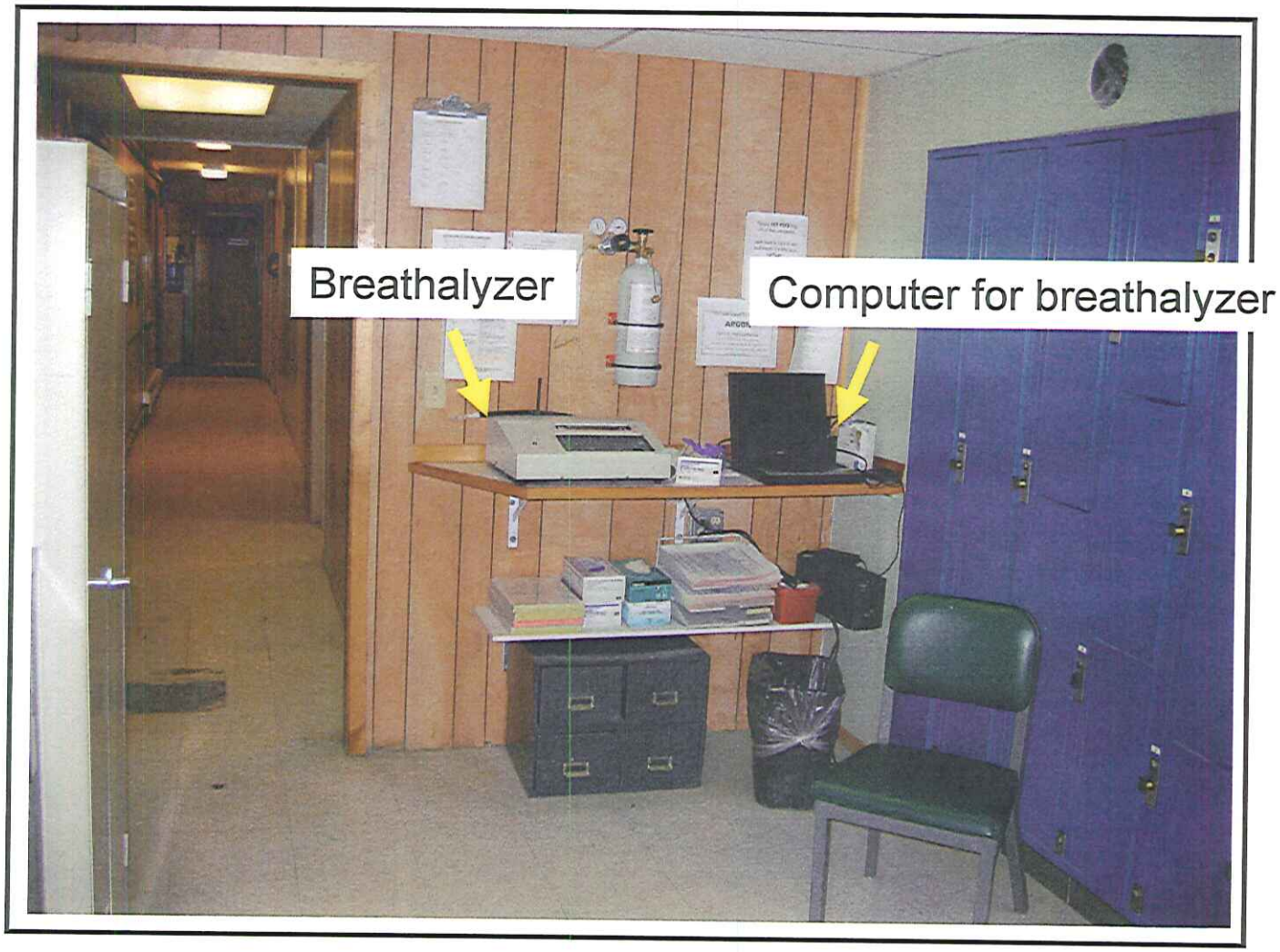
A couple of makeshift 2 x 4s serve as a brace to support the failing roof truss. The brace was recently replaced after it fell down. View is from above the ceiling tiles. Below is the police officer cubicle area.



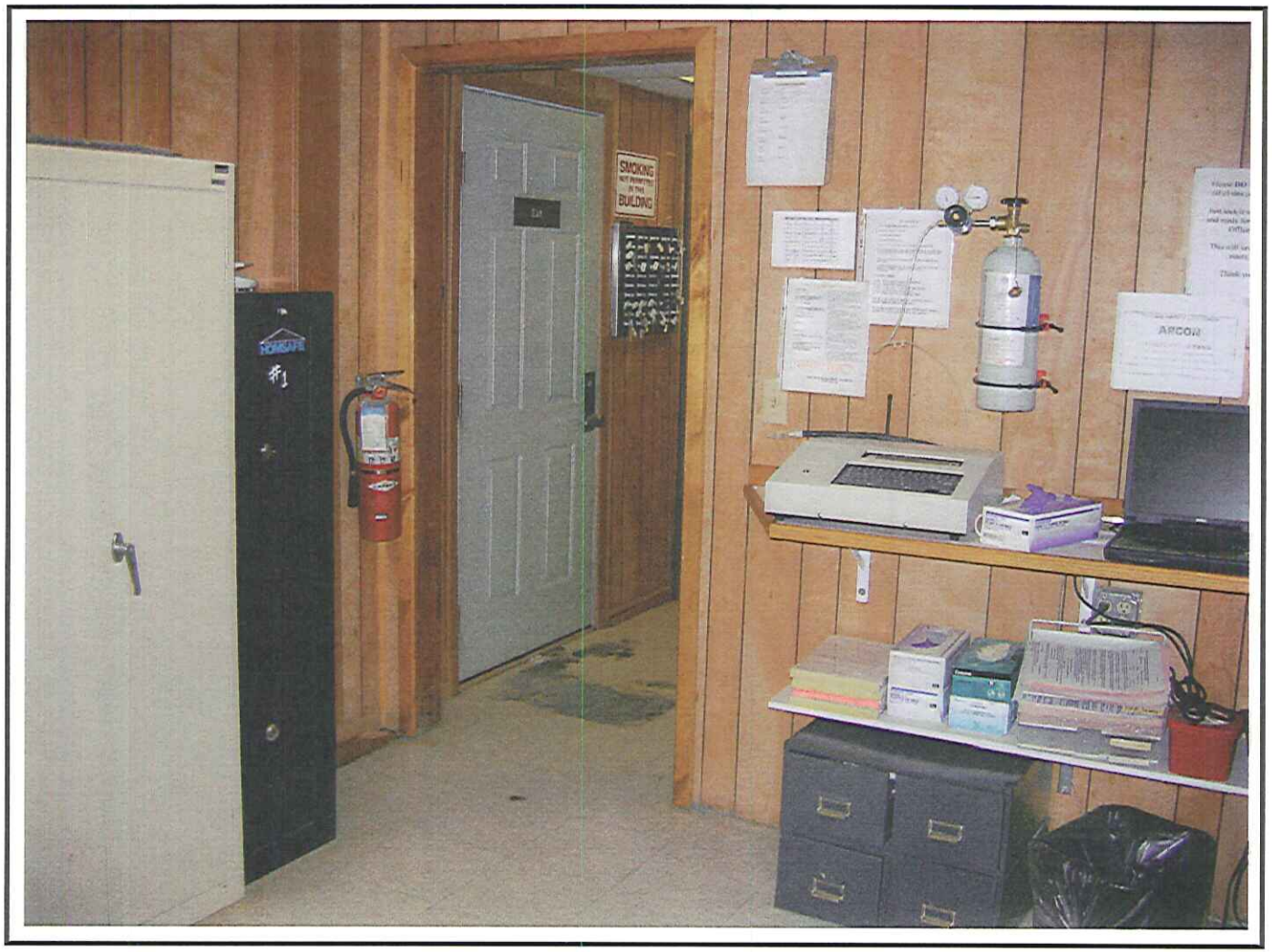
View of hallway turned “kitchen” and “break room.” Trap door hole in the floor by the door it the sewer system access. Sewer tank emits awful odor into the kitchen on a daily basis. Tank freezes require Property Maintenance personnel to continually unfreeze pipes to insure working toilets.

View of sewer trap door that is located just inside the kitchen area. Property maintenance crew uses this door to access sewer tank situated under the building. Sewer smell is so strong that employees are unable to stay in kitchen for long. Plastic bag was placed over the trap door in an effort to reduce the amount of foul odor coming into the room.

Employees report that when the sewer tank freezes during subzero temperatures, the smell is "unbearable."



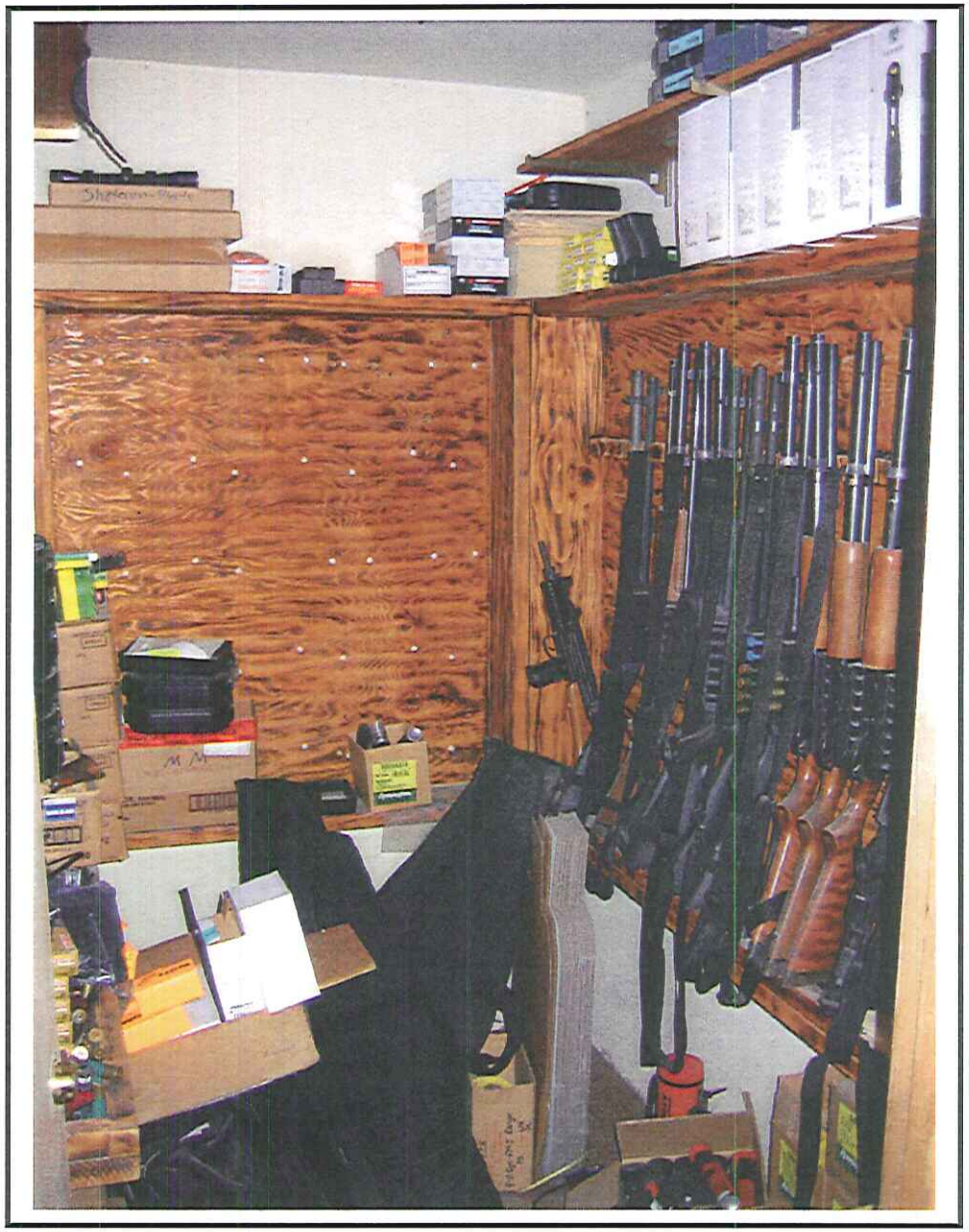
Police officer storage lockers in blue provide the backdrop for the green chair in which the person sits who is having his or her breath analyzed for alcohol content. The cabinet on the left is used to store evidence tape, paper, evidence collection kits, and other supplies. Recordings of the breathalyzer process often contain interference, distracting noises, and other voices.



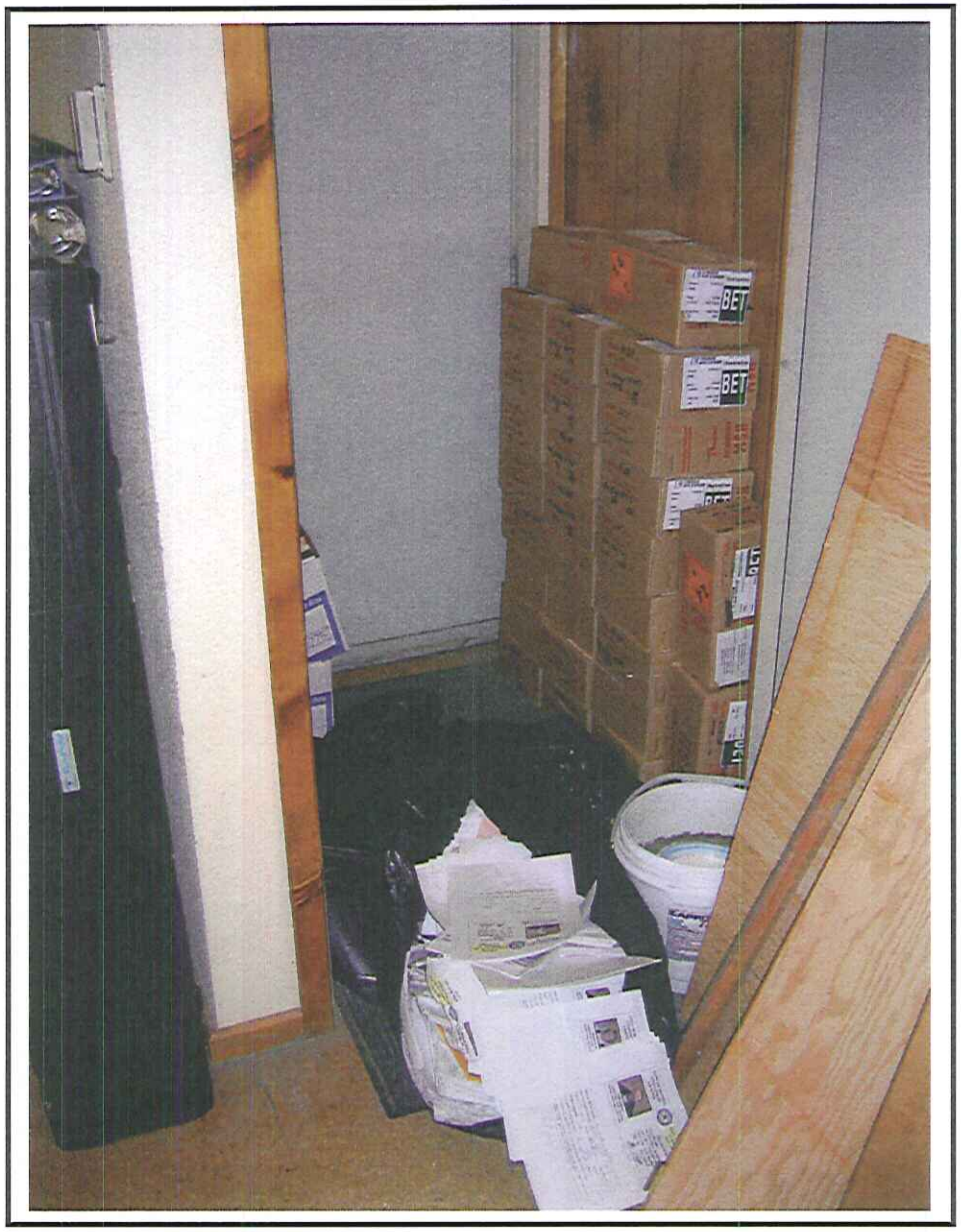
Breathalizer tests are often conducted in this hallway due to lack of space. Taperecorders used to record the tests often pick up extraneous sounds, like voices from nearby cubicles and hallway traffic. Administration staff walking through distrurbs the process.

The only indoor evidence storage room at the existing police station. While the boxes and items stored here are organized and neatly arranged, there are many more boxes of evidence stored outside in the department's one 20' storage container that should be stored inside to preserve it as evidence. This room has filled to capacity over the years.

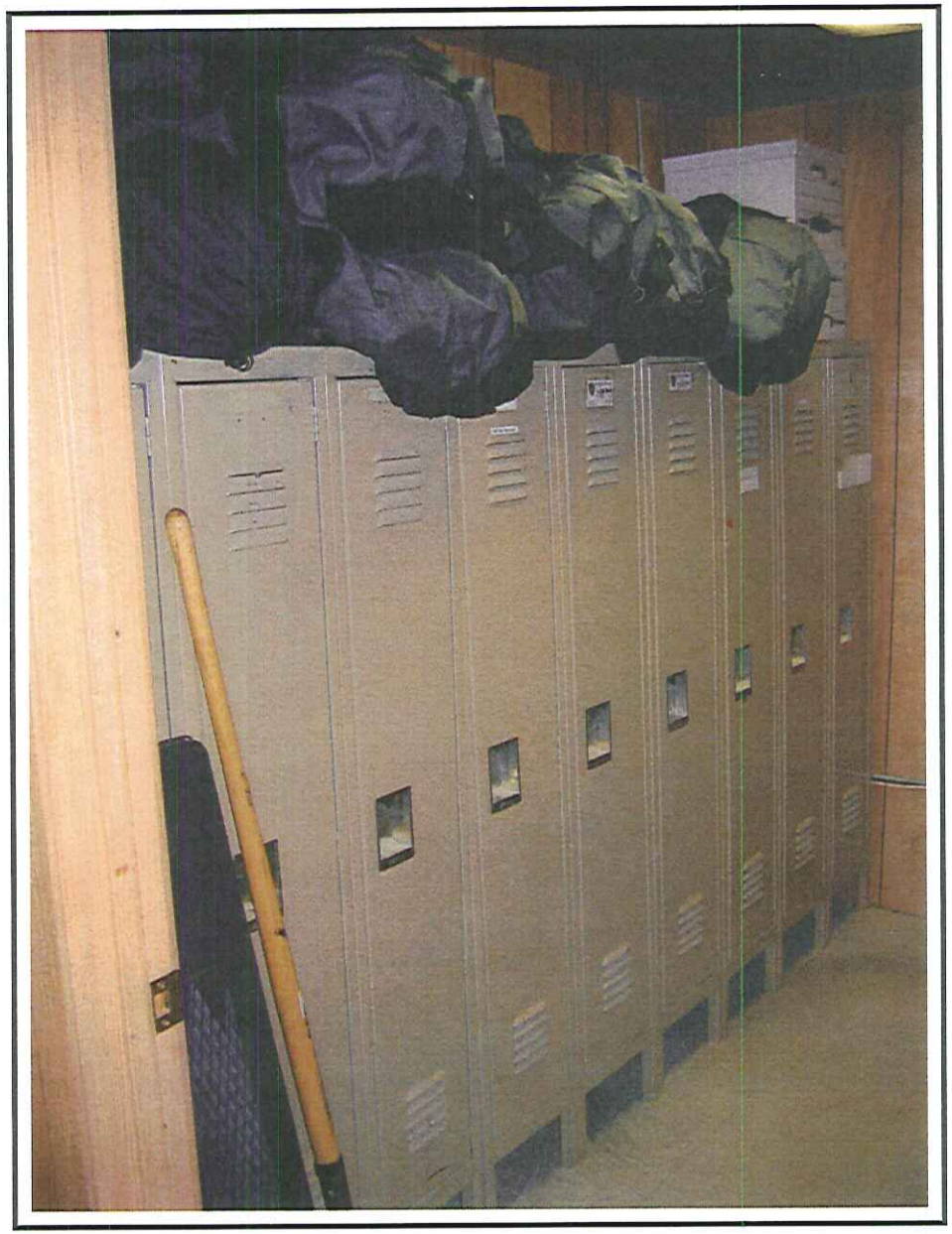
Photo of one corner of the inside evidence storage room. Confiscated weapons, drugs, money, and other evidence is stored here. The refrigerator and freezer must be used to store sexual assault kits, evidence containing blood, and other perishable items. Currently, the freezer is jammed full of a rug containing blood from a murder scene. Evidence from homicides must be kept forever, putting a severe strain on storage space.



The artillery storage room (gun room) containing rifles, shotguns, tazers, ammunition, and pepper spray has spilled over to the Quartermaster's storage area.

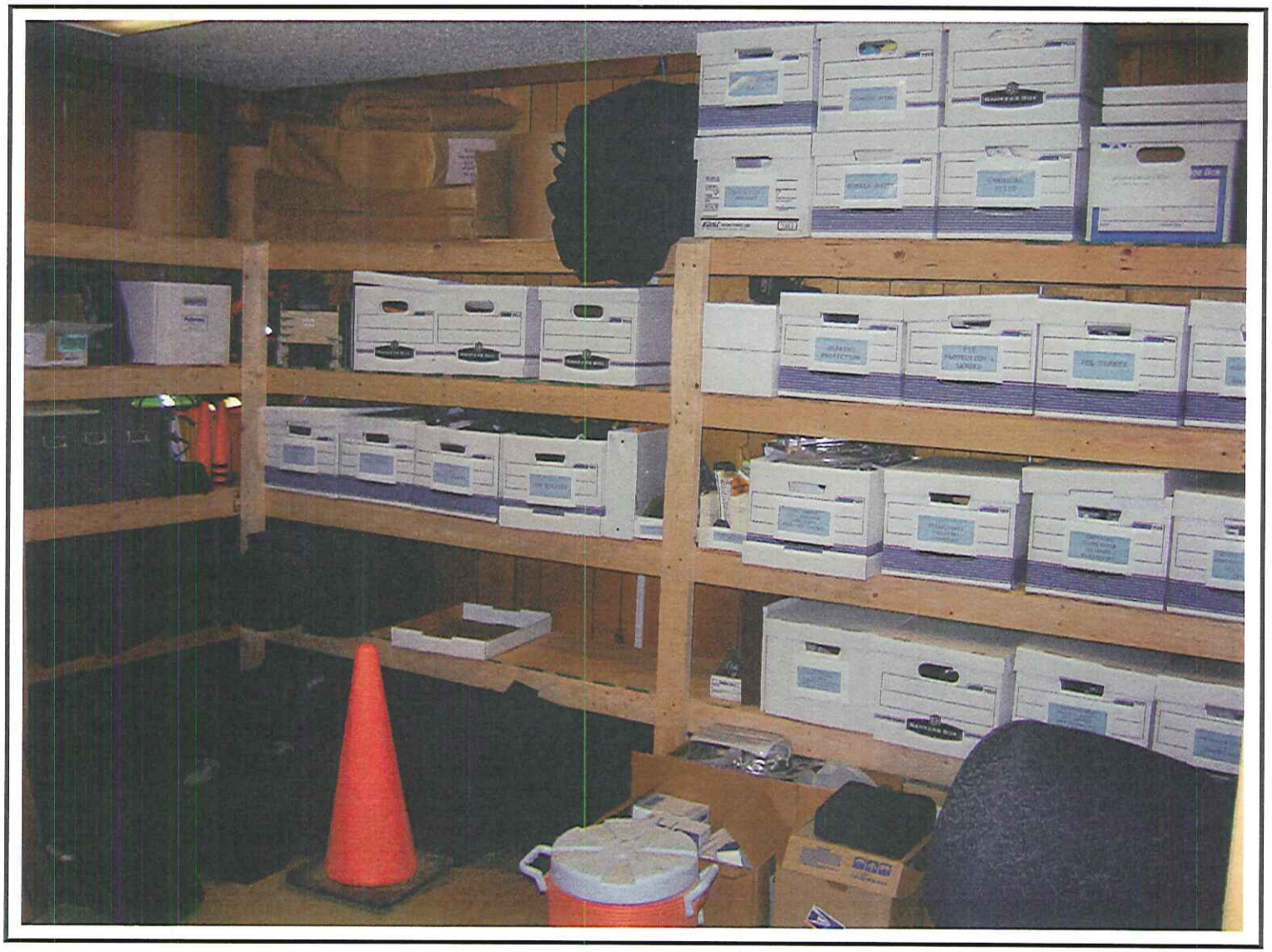


A lack of space in the gun room means that these boxes of ammunition are stored in the corner of this supply room, rather than in the gun room where the rifles, shotguns, and tazers are located.



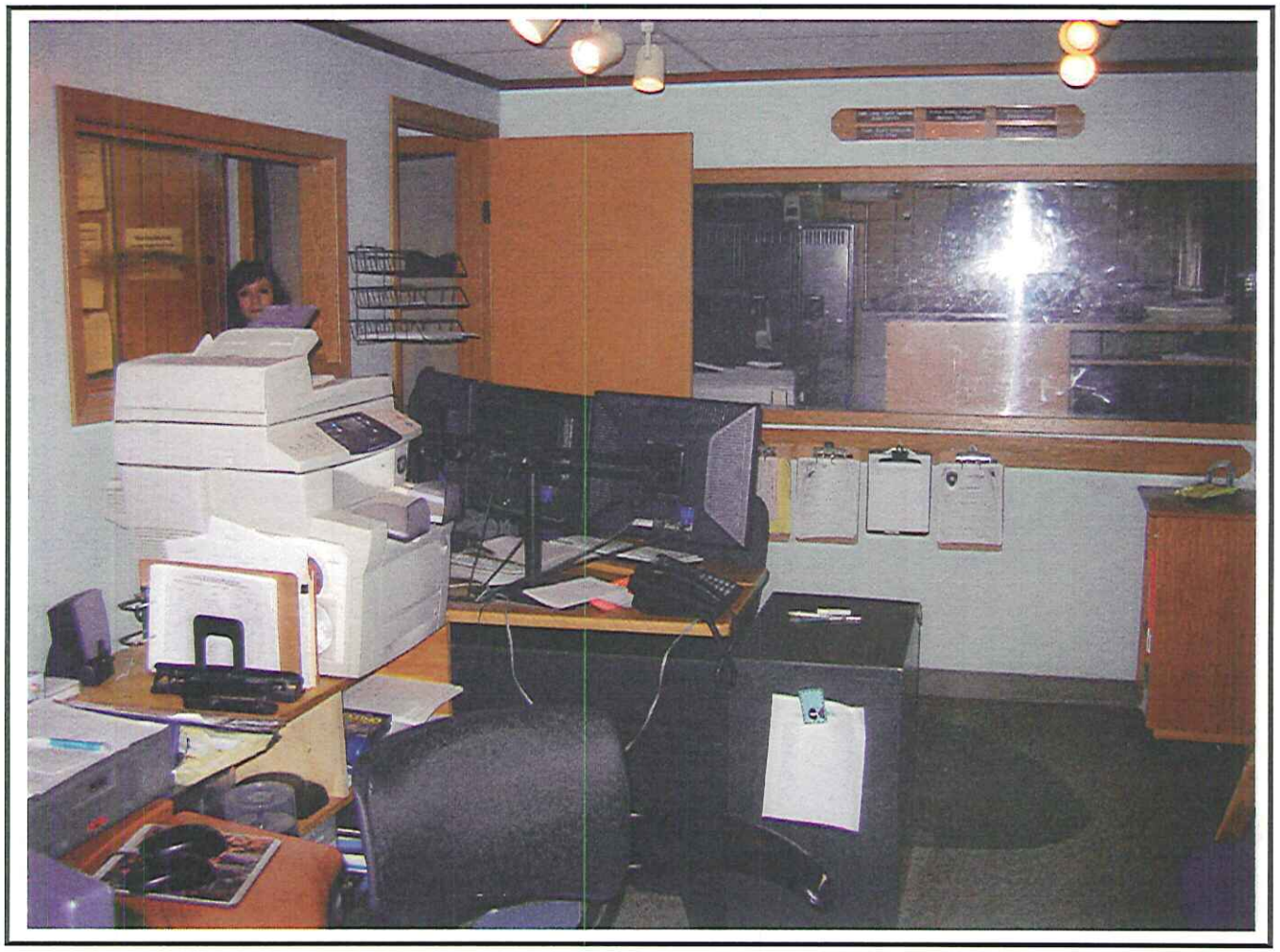
Crowded locker room also contains winter clothing gear stored in black bags.

Quartermaster closet full to capacity.



The Qurtermaster equipment room shown here contains duty bags, evidence collection kits, and boxes full of cameras, digital recorders, batons, body bags, body liners, etc. Notice all of the materials on the floor due to insufficient shelf space.

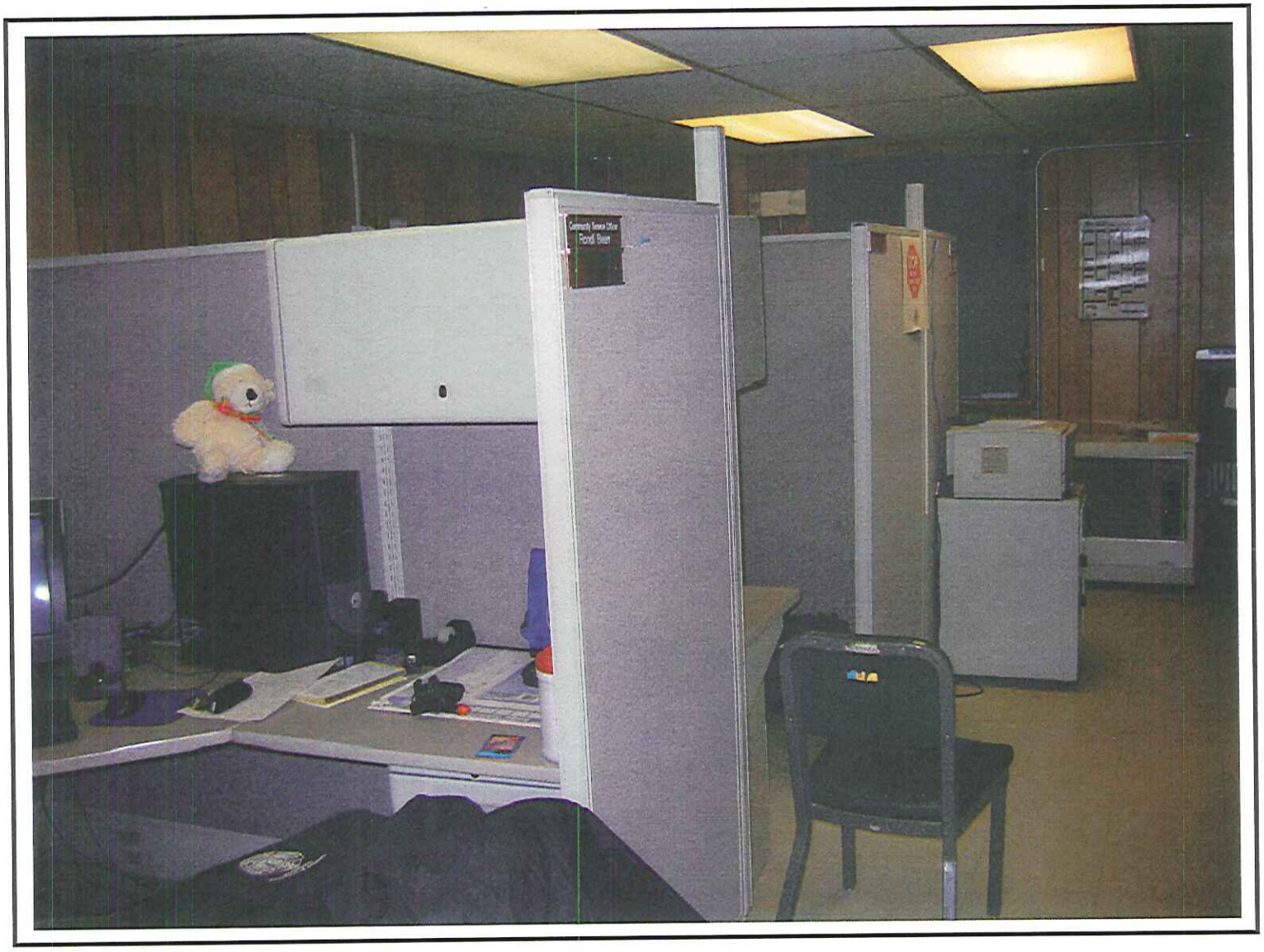
Another supply room appears to be overflowing with stuff. Administrative Assistant Laurie Strickler is seen holding one of the stuffed teddy bears used to hand out to sexual assault victims before an officer begins an interview. Sexual assault interviews are conducted in the Sergeant's office and dispatcher's office because the station does not have a warm, inviting, private room ideally suited for these types of interviews.



The Disptach Communications room is barely adequate to hold the computers, screens, desks, radios, and other equipment for the two dispatchers who work there. Each dispatcher can easily be distracted by conversations of the other dispatcher, keyboard noises, and people in the lobby using the intercom. The dispatchers have a challenging job dealing with many life-threatening situations at the same time. The dispatchers received 3,035 emergency 911 calls last year from Bethel and the surrounding 58 villages.

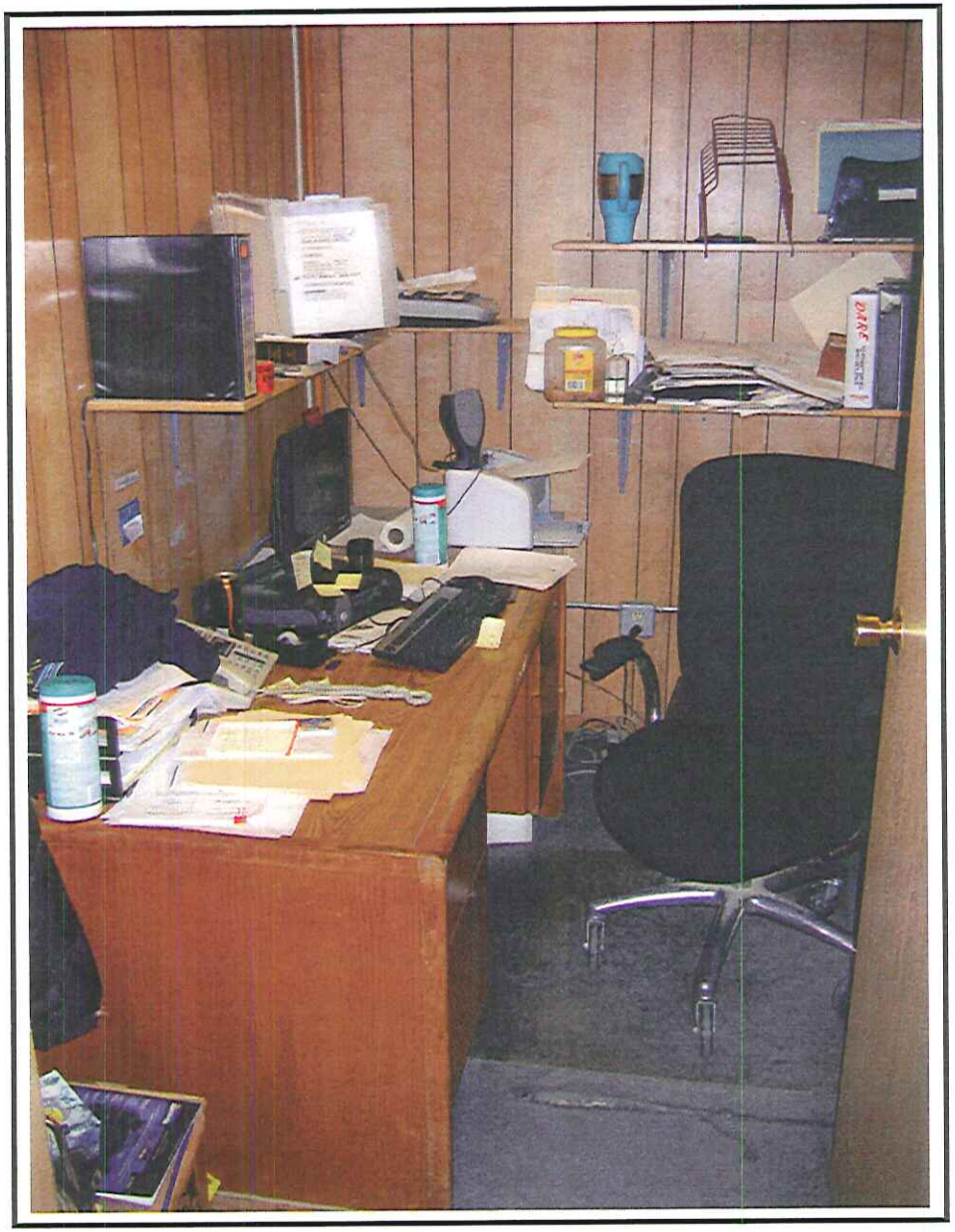
A shade is seen here covering the bullet-resistant window between the Dispatch Communications Area and the police station lobby. The sheetrock walls offer no additional protection to the dispatchers who can be the only ones in the station at night.

The Dispatch Supervisor's office area shown here is also shared by the Records Custodian because there is not enough office space. The floor slopes backward and the floor tiles are coming apart. Computers, fax machines, and other technological devices accumulate massive dust inside the station—more than any other City building.



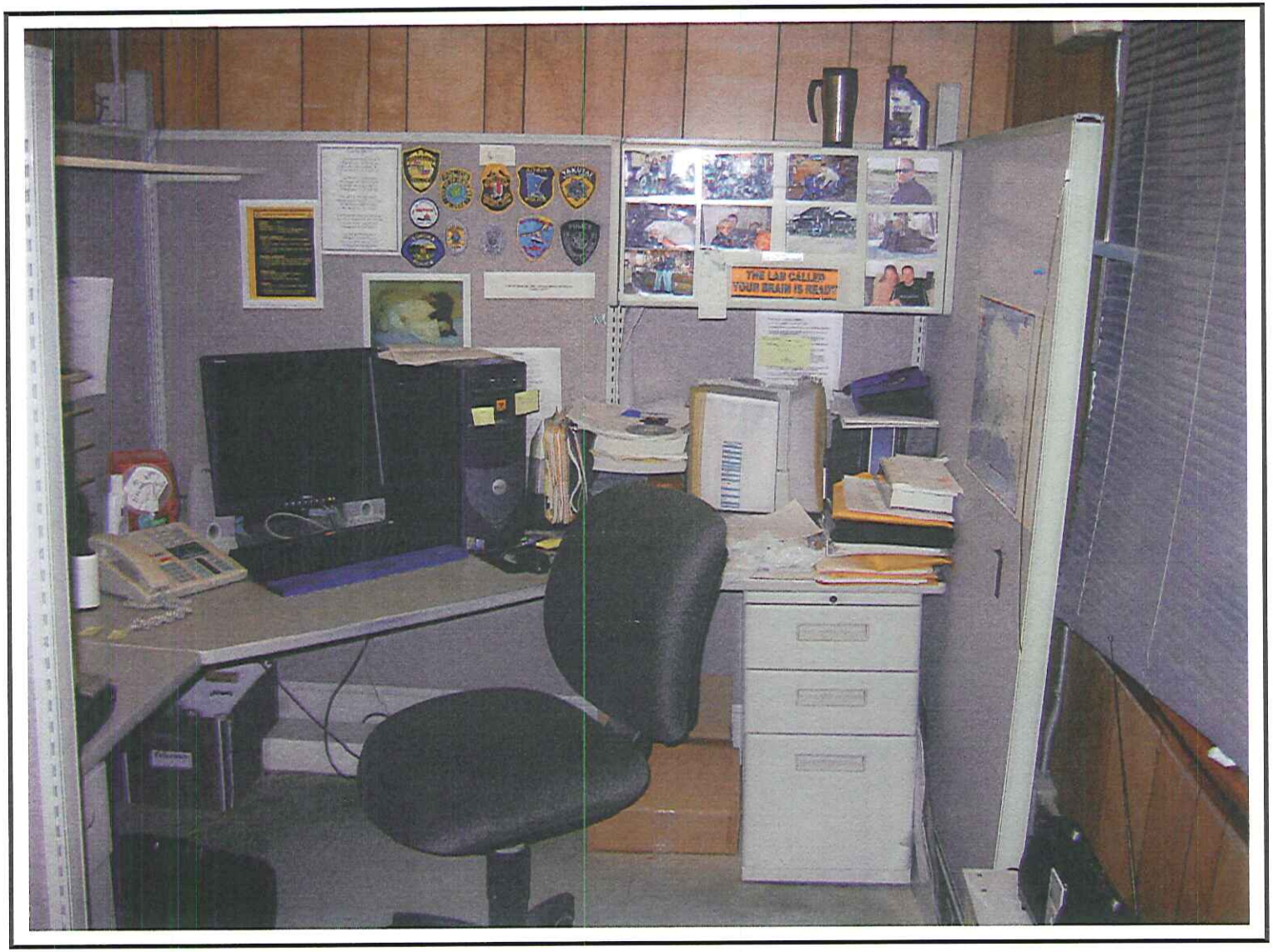
Four cubicles for use by 8 officers when department is fully staffed. Copy machine placed on file cabinet due to lack of space. Officers also use this area to perform breathalizer tests, which ideally should be conducted in a private closed-door office.

Numerous boxes contain forms that must be used on a daily basis. These forms are located in the corner of the area containing the four cubicles for eight officers. What the stacked slots offer department personnel in organization, they take away in efficiency. Department personnel in other sections of the building must retrieve their forms from this location.



Police Corporal's office requires two individuals to share it when the department is fully staffed. This closet-like office has very little room.

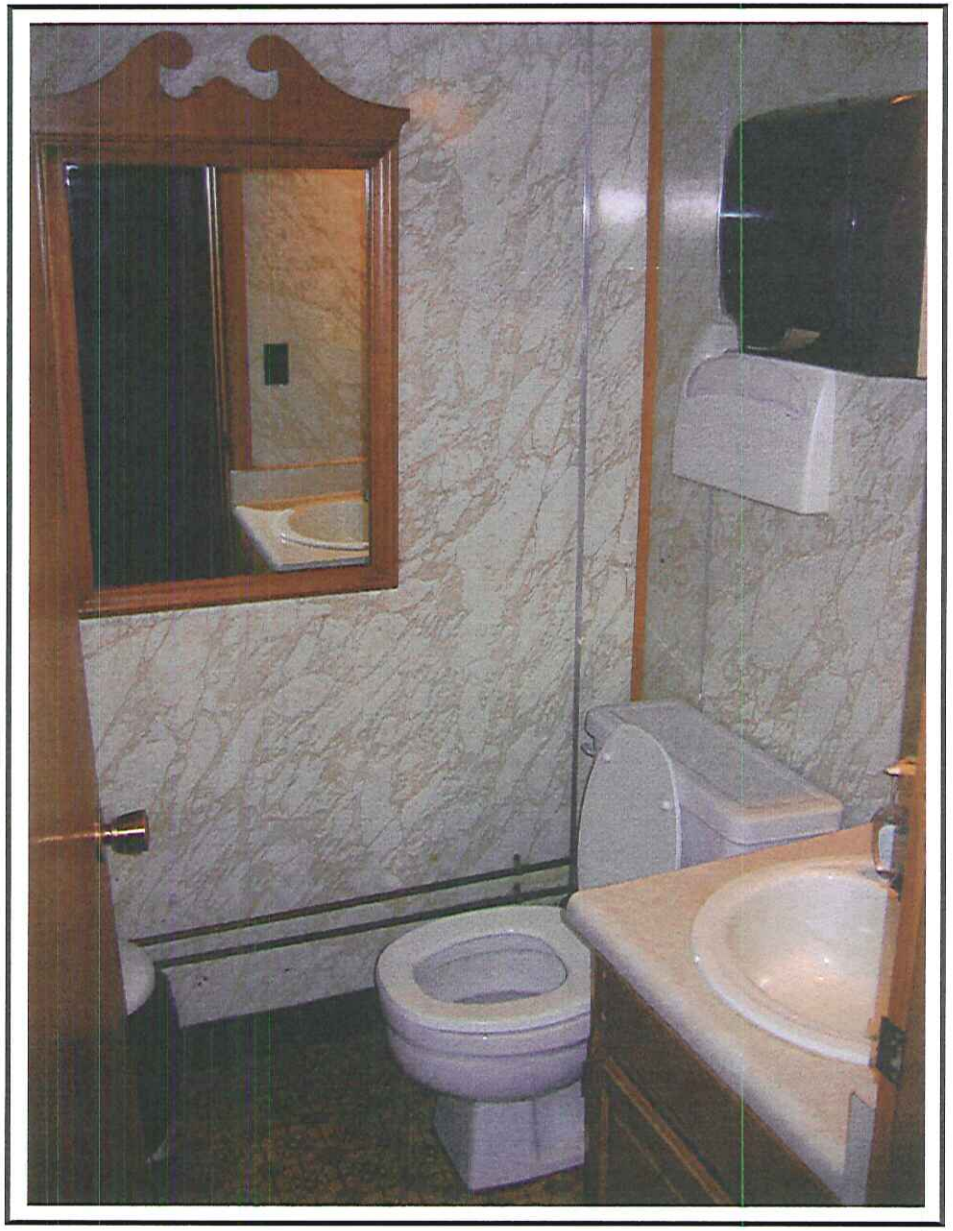
Hard tile floor cracks appear to the front of the chair.



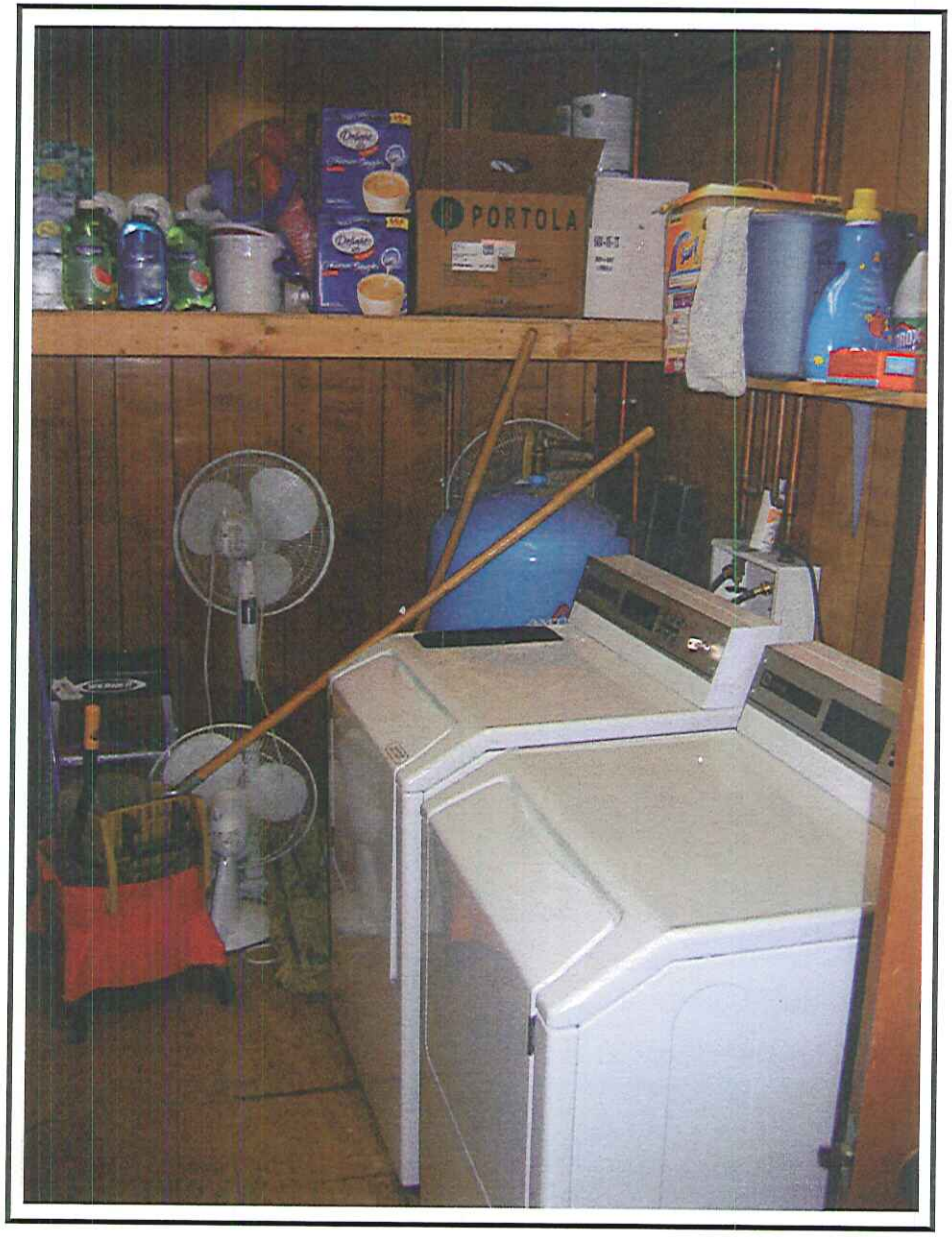
Second Corporal space (cubicle) in police department. The Toyo stove to the right either cranks out too much heat, making it uncomfortably hot, or doesn't put out much heat at all, making it uncomfortably cold. Corporal faces constant breeze from the window. Notice document storage box placed under desk due to lack of space.

View of one of two bathrooms. The shower is hardly used by the officers because the hot water only gets lukewarm. The ambient air temperature also keeps bathroom too cool.

Ceiling has water leakage stains. The sink vanity wood has visible signs of rot.

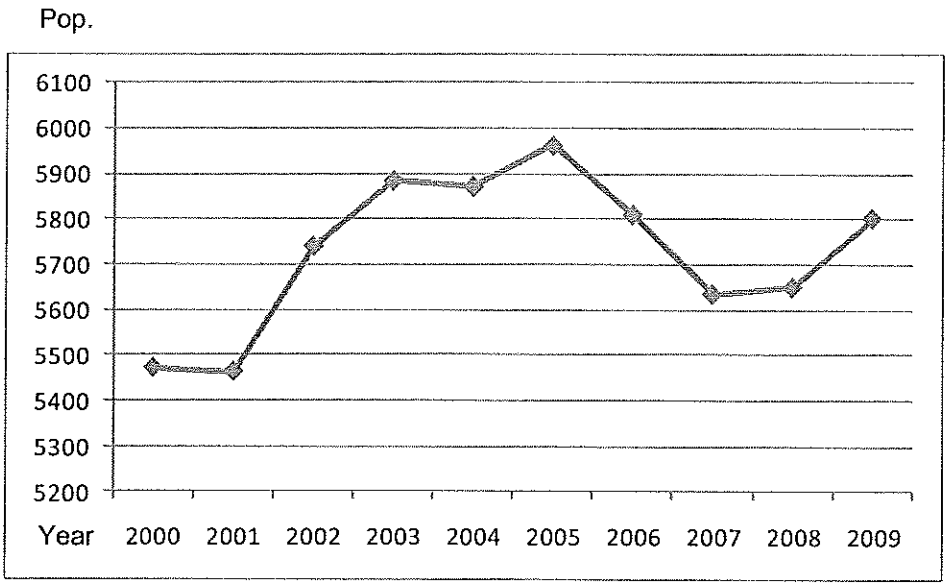


One of two bathrooms. This floor in this bathroom is caving and there is evidence of ceiling leakage. The toilet emits a constant urine odor due to an old, malfunctioning sewer system. The wooden vanity is deteriorating. There is also a strong mold smell.



View of laundry and storage area. This room suffers like other rooms at the station from a lack of storage space, cracking tile floor, exposed pipes, and slanted floor. Only one person can do laundry at a time.

Bethel Population

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2010

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
5471	5,463	5,740	5,885	5,872	5,963	5,810	5,634	5,649	5,803