

Lost and Found

Health and Safety – Public Safety

EWU Policy 603-08

Authority: Board of Trustees

Effective November 18, 2011

Proponent: University Police Department

Purpose: This policy establishes university standards and procedures relative to personal property that is found on university grounds or in university facilities.

History: This policy revises and supersedes UGS-200-140-200, Unclaimed Property.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1-1. General

Eastern Washington University encourages all members of the university community to turn in found property in accordance with this policy and state law.

1-2. Scope

This policy applies to property that has been found on university grounds. For these purposes, university grounds include any property or facility that is owned, leased, or operated by Eastern Washington University.

CHAPTER 2 – FOUND PROPERTY

2-1. Turn-In of Found Property

Any finder of property who fails to discharge the duties imposed under RCW 63.21.040 shall forfeit all right to the property and shall be liable for the full value of the property to its owner.

a. Lost and Found Office: Any person who finds property on university grounds should bring the property to a designated Lost and Found Office.

b. University Police: The University Police Department (UPD) does not normally accept found property unless the property is valuable or sensitive, including:

- (1) Valuables: cash or items valued at \$25 or more; and items of obvious value, e.g. jewelry.
- (2) Weapons
- (3) Illegal items or items that are commonly used for illegal activities

A person who finds valuable or sensitive property may turn in the property to either a Lost and Found Office or to the University Police Department.

c. Claim of Found Property by Finder: A person who finds property and who wishes to claim the property must follow the provisions of chapter 3 of this policy.

2-2. Lost and Found Offices

a. Locations: The locations of lost and found offices can be found on the UPD website, www.ewu.edu/police.

b. Public Awareness: Lost and found offices shall take positive steps to advertise their location, purpose, and hours of operation within the areas they serve. The UPD shall assist with awareness initiatives.

c. Receipt of Property: Upon receiving an item of property, a lost and found office shall:

- (1) log receipt of the property;
- (2) attempt to notify the apparent owner of the property; and,
- (3) contact university police immediately for pick-up of sensitive items (weapons or illegal items per §2-1.b(2) & (3)).

d. Valuables: Lost and found offices shall transfer valuable items (per §2-1.b(1)) to the university police within 30 days, but not less than 10 days after acquiring the items.

e. Electronic Devices: Items that may contain personal information, e.g. media storage devices such as thumb drives, cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), etc, shall not be donated to charity until any personal information contained therein has been completely erased. Lost and found offices may request assistance in erasing such devices by contacting the OIT Help Desk.

f. Public Notice: Lost and found offices shall make a reasonable effort to post notice of found property items.

g. Storage: Lost and found offices shall store found property so that it is out of public view and secured against theft.

h. Release to Owner: Lost and found offices shall release property to a person who satisfactorily establishes his or her ownership or right of possession.

i. Donation to Charity: Found property that remains in possession of a lost and found office for more than sixty

days may be donated to a nonprofit charitable organization. Donations shall only be made to organizations that qualify for tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. Sec 501(c)(3). Lost and found offices shall coordinate with UPD for scheduling and oversight of property donations. Donations shall be scheduled between academic quarters, or as needed to support the needs of lost and found offices.

j. Property disposition: Lost and found offices may only dispose of property by:

- (1) release to owner,
- (2) transfer to university police, or
- (3) donation to charity.

k. Retention of property: Lost and found offices shall not permanently retain found property. After sixty days have passed and it is reasonably determined that the property owner is unlikely to claim the property, the lost and found office should arrange to dispose of the property by transfer to university police or donation to charity (per §2-2.i).

l. Property Log: Lost and found offices shall use a log to record receipt and disposition of found property. A sample log is at appendix A.

CHAPTER 3 – UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

3-1. Responsibilities

The University Police Department shall:

- a. maintain a web page to guide users on turn-in or recovery of lost items and related information
- b. provide annual training to employees who operate a lost and found office on property receipt, storage, surrender, and related activities
- c. assist campus lost and found offices with activities related to this policy

3-2. Disposition of Property by Police

Property under the control of the University Police Department shall be disposed of in one of the manners described below.

- a. Release to Finder per chapter 4.
- b. Release to Owner. If the owner of the property satisfactorily establishes their right to possession of the property within sixty days after the find was reported to the UPD, the UPD shall release the property to the owner, providing that the property is legal for the owner to possess. Property held as evidence may be released to the owner sixty days after the final disposition of the judicial or other official proceeding.
- c. Unclaimed Property. When ninety days have passed after the property was surrendered to the UPD, or ninety days after the final disposition of a judicial or other proceeding involving the found property, and neither the finder nor the owner have satisfactorily claimed the property, the property shall be disposed of as pursuant to chapter 63.32 RCW.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDER'S CLAIM ON FOUND PROPERTY

4-1. Finder Responsibilities

a. Any person who finds property on university grounds and who wishes to claim the found property shall, within seven days of finding the property:

- (1) acquire a signed appraisal of the current market value of the property prepared by a qualified person engaged in buying or selling like items or by a district court judge, unless the found property is cash; and
- (2) bring the property and the appraisal to the UPD and file a written claim for the property with the police. If requested, the finder shall also surrender the property to the University Police.

b. Restriction on Claims: An employee, officer, or agent of EWU who finds or acquires any property covered by this chapter while acting within the course of his or her employment may not claim possession of the property as a finder (RCW 63.21.070).

4-2. Police Responsibilities

a. Advise Finder: When a finder presents found property and a claim for such property to the UPD, the police shall:

- (1) Advise the finder if the found property is illegal for him or her to possess;
- (2) Advise the finder if the found property is to be held as evidence in judicial or other official proceedings;
- (3) Advise the finder in writing of the procedures to be followed in claiming the found property;

b. Public Notice: Within thirty days after a finder has surrendered property to the UPD and filed a claim for the property per section 3-1, the UPD shall publish notice of the found property.

Such notice shall be published at least once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the property was found.

If the appraised value of the property is less than the cost of publishing notice, the UPD may cause notice to be posted or published in other media or formats that do not incur expense to the police department (e.g., university police web site).

4-3. Release to Finder

Found property shall be released to the finder and become the property of the finder when the following conditions are satisfied:

- a. at least sixty days have passed since the find was reported to the UPD, or since the final disposition of any judicial or other official proceeding involving the property, whichever is later;
- b. the property is legal for the finder to possess; and,
- c. the finder has submitted payment of ten dollars, plus the amount of the cost of publication of notice, to the UPD. If the appraised value of the property is less than the cost of publication of notice of the finding, then the finder is not required to pay any fee.

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE PROPERTY LOG

Receipt Date	Item Description / Owner Contact Info	Disposal Date	Disposition
Mar 14, 11	EWU Hoodie, gray, XL, stain on left sleeve Owner Unknown	June 8, 11	Dropped in Goodwill Collection Box in Cheney UPD Rep: Tom James T. JAMES
Mar 17, 11	Cell phone, Samsung Gravity T Owner Unknown	Mar 17, 11	Gave to Univ Police Henry Baker Henry Baker
Mar 18, 11	Wristwatch, Timex, Womens, Pink, WR50M Owner is possibly Megan Miller; called and left a message on her cell phone.	Mar 19, 11	Owner claimed. Returned to Owner: Megan Miller (Psych) Meg Miller
Apr 7, 11	Textbook, Intro to Art, ISBN: 9780300109153 Owner Unknown	June 8, 11	Goodwill Dropbox UPD Rep: Tom James T. JAMES
Apr 19, 11	Apple iPad Owner Unknown	Apr 19, 11	To-UPD Henry Baker Henry Baker
Apr 23, 11	Jacket, Northface, Black with white piping Owner thought to be John Smith, a psych student. Sent email to him.		
May 8, 11	Gloves, knit Owner Unknown	May 9, 11	Owner claimed. Returned to Owner: Megan Miller (Psych) Meg Miller
May 17, 11	Backpack, w/several books, and a notebook inside. Owner's name, Meg Ryan, written in notebook.	May 17, 11	Owner Contacted Returned to Owner Megan Miller (Psych) Meg Miller