

Lost and Found Policy

Policy: Lost and Found

Revised:

Effective Date: September 6, 2023

Review Date: September 2026

Responsible Party: Legal Counsel

100.00 Introduction and Purpose

This policy applies to all Montana State University departments or units that receive, store, or otherwise manage lost and found property. This policy does not apply to lost or found University business property. Lost or found University business property should be reported to Safety and Risk Management.

The intent of this policy is to provide a standardized efficient, and controlled process for recording, storing, and returning or disposal of Lost and Found Personal Property.

200.00 Policy

University Police Department (UPD) shall be the central depository for lost and found personal property for the University. Collection sites may be maintained throughout campus in compliance with Section 500.00.

300.00 Central Lost and Found

UPD will serve as the central depository for lost and found items. Found items may be forwarded to UPD. Once items are received by University Police, all items will be maintained, distributed, and disposed of according to UPD Property and Evidence Policy.

MSU sites not located in Bozeman, shall follow all guidance in section 400 except that any item to be forwarded to UPD may be held or forwarded to the local police department. University Police may be contacted for guidance at any time.

400.00 Collection Sites

Units or departments may maintain a collection site to collect items found in the immediate area. Collection sites are generally located in each building and are centrally located. If no obvious collection site is available near the site where an item is found, the item should be taken directly to UPD.

Each collection site must maintain a log of lost and found items presented to the site. This log shall contain a description of the item, the date it was presented, location it was found, and how/when it was disposed of or distributed. The log should also document any attempts to reach the owner if known.

If any item contains contact information for the possible owner, the collection site must try to contact the individual within the first 24 hours of receipt of the item.

An individual making a request to retrieve a lost item at a collection site, must present identification, such as a student ID or driver’s license, and provide a description of the item before the item can be returned.

Upon distribution of the item to the owner, the owner must sign and date the log. The collection site shall maintain the contact information and name of the individual who claimed the property.

Collection sites must provide signage that notifies individuals of the availability of the collection site.

400.10 Collection Sites Disposition Method and Hold Time

Collection sites are required to comply with the following hold times, transfer directives and disposal guidelines as noted below. Collection sites shall contact UPD for clarification and guidance concerning found items not listed below. If a collection site makes contact with the owner, the collection site may continue to hold an item for a reasonable amount of time (even if longer than directed below) if the person has indicated they will pick-up the item.

ITEMS TO FORWARD WITHIN 48 HOURS TO UPD

| ITEM | MINIMUM HOLD TIME BY UPD | DISPOSITION* |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|
| Purse, Wallet, backpack, or similar bag | 30 days | |
| Computer/Laptop/phones | 30 days | |
| Medication/drugs | N/A | |
| Cash | 7 days | |
| Jewelry | 30 days | Donate |
| Recreation Equipment | 30 days | Donate |
| Small Electronics | 30 days | Donate |
| Keys – Other/Non MSU | 30 days | |
| Books | 30 days | Donate |
| Personal Mobility Devices (I.e. bikes, skateboards, etc.) | 30 days | Donate |

Items of value listed above may be sold instead of donated at the discretion of UPD and in compliance with all applicable regulations.

ITEMS TO BE HELD BY COLLECTION SITE

| ITEM | MINIMUM HOLD TIME BY COLLECTION SITE | DISPOSITION |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Water bottle, coffee cups/mugs | 30 days | Donate |
| Credit Cards* | 7 days | Destroy |
| Clothing | 30 days | Donate |
| Glasses | 30 days | Donate |
| USB/Memory Stick | 30 days | Securely Destroy** |
| Headphones | 30 days | Donate |
| Books | 30 days | Donate |
| Notebooks/Binders | 30 days | Destroy |

*Credit Cards must always be stored in a locked and secure location.

** If a site has a question about how to securely destroy a USB/Memory Stick, please contact UIT for guidance.

ITEMS TO FORWARD WITHIN 48 HOURS TO OTHER CAMPUS LOCATIONS

| ITEM | MINIMUM HOLD TIME BY OTHER LOCATION | SPECIFIC OTHER LOCATION TO RECEIVE ITEM WITHIN 48 HRS. | DISPOSITION |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Cat Cards | N/A | Cat Card Office | Per Cat Card Policy |
| Keys with MSU Key | N/A | University Facilities | Per Facilities procedures |
| Library Books | N/A | MSU Library | MSU Library |
| University Property | N/A | Property Management | Property Management |