

Lost and Found

Health and Safety – Public Safety

EWU Policy 603-08

Authority: Board of Trustees

Effective: October 21, 2022

Proponent: Vice President for Business & Strategy

Purpose & Scope: This policy establishes university standards and procedures relative to personal property that is found or abandoned on university grounds or in university facilities. Property obtained by the EWUPD as part of a criminal investigation is outside of the scope of this policy.

History: This policy revises a previous version of the policy dated November 18, 2011. It was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 21, 2022. Housekeeping edits to position titles were made on October 21, 2025.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1- Introduction

Chapter 2- Found Property

Chapter 3- Disposal of Property

Chapter 4- Finder's Claim for Found Property

Appendix A- Sample Property Log

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 or abandoned 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

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 Eastern Washington University Police Department (EWUPD) does not normally accept found property unless the property is valuable or sensitive, including:

- (1) Valuables: cash or items valued at \$50 or more; and items of obvious value, e.g. jewelry, laptops, cell phones.
- (2) Weapons
- (3) Illegal items or items that are commonly used for illegal activities.
- (4) Identification documents (e.g. passports, driver's licenses, ID cards), media storage devices such as thumb drives or external drives, and bank cards.

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, or they may request the item be

picked up by EWUPD by filling out a form at: <https://inside.ewu.edu/police/police-services/lost-and-found/>.

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.

d. Notification of Lost Property: A person who loses an item of value on campus may notify the University Police Department by filling out a form at: <https://inside.ewu.edu/police/police-services/lost-and-found/>.

2-2. Abandoned Property

Personal property that is abandoned in a university facility or on university property is subject to disposal under this policy. Items left within a residential space are subject to abandonment and disposal under the terms of the applicable residential agreement. Employees who separate from employment will be notified to take their personal property with them. If the employee fails to take their personal property with them, the department must either secure the area where the items are stored or create an inventory of the items left behind and move them to an alternative location. If the abandoned property includes items covered under section 2-1(b), the items should be transferred to EWUPD before moving the remaining items to surplus. If the former employee does not retrieve their property within 60 days, it is subject to disposal under section 2-3 or chapter 3. The university is not responsible for any theft, damage, or loss of property left behind by students, visitors, or employees.

CHAPTER 3 – DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY

3-1. Lost and Found Offices

a. Locations: The locations of lost and found offices can be found on the EWUPD website, <https://inside.ewu.edu/police/police-services/lost-and-found/>.

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 EWUPD 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 immediately notify the apparent owner of the property; and
- (3) contact EWUPD immediately for pick-up of items identified in 2-1(b)

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

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

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

g. Donation to Charity: Found property that is not valuable or sensitive and remains in possession of a lost and found office for more than 60 days may be transferred to surplus or 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 EWUPD for scheduling and oversight of property donations. Donations shall be scheduled between academic terms, or as needed to support the needs of lost and found offices.

h. Retention of property: Lost and found offices shall not permanently retain found property and shall dispose of the property in accordance with this policy after 60 days.

i. Property Log: Lost and found offices shall use a log to record receipt and disposition of found property. A sample log is available from EWUPD.

j. Any claims by the finder for unclaimed property should be referred to EWUPD and will be handled in accordance with chapter 4.

3-2. Disposition of Property by Police

Property under the control of EWUPD 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 60 days after the find was reported to the EWUPD, EWUPD shall release the property to the owner, providing that the property is legal for the owner to possess and it is not associated with a criminal investigation.

c. Unclaimed Property. After 60 days, EWUPD will follow the process for disposing of the property pursuant to chapter 63.32 RCW. Electronic devices shall not be donated, disposed of, or sent to surplus until the contents are completely erased by the EWUPD.

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 EWUPD and file a written claim for the property with the police. If requested, the finder shall also surrender the property to EWUPD.

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 makes a claim for such property to EWUPD, 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 30 days after a finder has surrendered property to EWUPD and filed a claim for the property per section 4-1, EWUPD 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, EWUPD 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 60 days have passed since the find was reported to EWUPD, 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 EWUPD. 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