



Policy and Procedure Manual: CoS/02

PROPERTY PROCEDURES – OPERATIONAL.

All members of the public and communities we serve, all police officers, special constables and police staff members shall receive equal and fair treatment regardless of, age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation. If you consider this policy could be improved for any of these groups please raise with the author of the policy without delay.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Force Property Officer, Central Secure Stores, on extension 7800 2330.

CONTENTS.

Section A:

SEIZED PROPERTY PROCEDURES.

<u>Section 1:</u>	1	DEFINITION.
<u>Section 2:</u>	2	INITIAL SEIZURE of PROPERTY.
<u>Section 3:</u>	3.	PROPERTY LEFT WITH its POSSESSOR.
<u>Section 4:</u>	4.	INITIAL ACTION AT THE STATION.
<u>Section 5:</u>	5.	PACKING OF PROPERTY.
<u>Section 6:</u>	6.	SEIZED MONEY.
<u>Section 7:</u>	7.	SEIZED JEWELLERY.
<u>Section 8:</u>	8.	DRUGS.
<u>Section 9:</u>	9.	FUEL.
<u>Section 10:</u>	10.	HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.
<u>Section 11:</u>	11.	INITIAL STORAGE and MOVEMENT OF PROPERTY.
<u>Section 12:</u>	12.	CRIMINAL PROCEDURES and INVESTIGATION ACT 1996.
<u>Section 13:</u>	13.	REMINDERS for OUTSTANDING PROPERTY
<u>Section 14:</u>	14.	RETURN of DETAINED PROPERTY.
<u>Section 15:</u>	15.	FINALISATION and DISPOSAL of SEIZED MONEY.
<u>Section 16:</u>	16.	TRANSFER to ANOTHER FORCE/OCU.

Section B:

FOUND PROPERTY PROCEDURES.

Section 1:

1 DEFINITION.

Section 2:

2. INITIAL RECEIPT of PROPERTY
2.1 Found property handed to an officer on the street.
2.2 Property found on private premises.
2.3 Property found on Public Service Vehicles.
2.4 Finds of Treasure

Section 3:

3. PROPERTY LEFT WITH THE FINDER.

Section 4:

4. RETURN of PROPERTY HANDED to an OFFICER IN THE STREET

Section 5:

5. INITIAL ACTION at the STATION.

Section 6:

6. PROPERTY FOUND BY POLICE EMPLOYEES.

Section C:

LOST PROPERTY PROCEDURES.

Section 1:

1 DEFINITION.

Section 2:

2. REPORTING of LOST PROPERTY
2.1 Reports in the street.
2.2 Reports of losses occurring on private premises

Section 3:

3. INITIAL ACTION AT THE STATION.

APPENDIX A.

Hierarchy of Property Responsibilities

SECTION A.

SEIZED PROPERTY PROCEDURES.

1. DEFINITION.

- 1.1 Seized property includes all property coming into possession of the Police which is suspected or known to have been obtained following the commission of a criminal offence or is evidence of such an offence.

2. INITIAL SEIZURE OF PROPERTY.

- 2.1 Items of property taken into police possession will remain the responsibility of the Officer in the Case (OIC) who will be the point of reference for all further enquiries. Every effort must be made to restore property to its lawful owner/person entitled to lawful possession at the earliest opportunity once it is determined that the retention of the property is no longer required. It is accepted that even though a criminal investigation may have been concluded there may be doubt as to the ownership of the property.
- 2.1.2 It will be necessary under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, to retain the property as long as is necessary in the circumstances, to ascertain ownership of the property whether that be by further investigation or civil proceedings instigated by the Legal Services Department. It remains the responsibility of the OIC to ensure that items of property are not retained unnecessarily.
- 2.1.3 Once property has been entered onto the property system it is the responsibility of the OIC to ensure that the property is disposed of as expeditiously as possible.
- 2.2 **As a general rule, property should not be brought into police possession unless the following applies:**
- (a) It is believed that the property has been obtained in consequence of the commission of an offence, **and** that is necessary to seize it in order to prevent it being concealed, lost, damaged, altered or destroyed.
 - (b) It is evidence in relation to an offence which an officer is investigating, or any other offence, and it is necessary to seize the item in order to prevent it being concealed, lost, damaged, altered or destroyed.
 - (c) Items are offensive weapons or implements used to facilitate crime.
 - (d) Items are forged documents
 - (e) Items are for forensic examination
 - (f) Items are absolutely vital for evidential purposes or known to be the proceeds of crime, or there is a dispute over ownership.
- 2.3 Items that are dangerous or illegal, namely:
- drugs
 - firearms and knives
 - obscene material (magazines, videos, DVDs etc)
- Will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant policy and procedure
- 2.4 Hazardous or suspected hazardous substances must be dealt with in accordance with Support – Property Procedure P18, paragraph 1.21(a).

- 2.5 Fireworks or any other item containing an explosive charge (such as car airbags) will be held in a safe and secure area within the property store. At the earliest opportunity the OCU Property Officer will contact the Force Property Officer, Central Secure Stores to arrange transfer to the Explosive Store.
- 2.5.1 Bulk seizures of fireworks should if possible be left in situ. Contact should then be made with the Force Property Officer, Central Secure Stores for advice.
- 2.5.2 Property shall not be retained for use as evidence for the purposes of investigation if a photograph or copy would be sufficient for those purposes (PACE Codes of Practice Code B6.6 and 6.7).
- 2.6 Property connected with deceased persons, (see also Part One order 05/2003) will always be recorded as crime property on the property system:
- (a) In a Street or Public Place - in non-suspicious/crime related circumstances, a careful search of the body should be made to establish identity. Under normal circumstances, no property should be removed, as this process will be undertaken at the mortuary.
- (b) In a Hospital – any property taken from a person, who has died in hospital in a hospital, is the responsibility of the hospital authorities.
- (c) At Home - where there is a relative or next of kin present, property should be entrusted to them. It will be their responsibility to secure the premises. Where the deceased person cannot immediately be identified, and/or a relative or next of kin cannot attend within a reasonable time, and there is concern over security, a search of the premises should be made. Any transportable items of value such as money, jewellery etc. should be seized and dealt with as below in the normal way. Other property should be left in situ and the premises secured.
- 2.7 In cases where 'unrelated property' is found at the scene of a crime or in a stolen / recovered motor vehicle, the OIC will carefully consider the classification under which the items are to be retained due to differing retention policies. In cases of doubt, officers should seek the advice of a supervisor or the OCU Property Officer.
- 2.8 OICs should exercise care when formally 'exhibiting' items of property in prosecution court files. Once an item has been formally exhibited it is necessary to retain that property for specified periods of time. Accordingly, the OIC should seek guidance from a supervisor and / or the CPS when compiling a list of exhibits.

3. PROPERTY LEFT WITH ITS POSSESSOR.

- 3.1.1 There are circumstances when property can be left with its possessor. Where an officer decides that it is not appropriate to seize property because of an explanation given by the person holding it, but there are reasonable grounds for believing that it has been obtained in consequence of the commission of an offence by some person, he shall inform the holder of his suspicions and explain that if he disposes of the property he may be liable to civil or criminal proceedings. Property should not be retained by the police except in the circumstances outlined at paragraph 2.2.
- 3.1.2 Officers must make use of Form WG 530 (Section 66 Pace) where property can be left with its possessor. Form WG530 is generated by the system. Consideration should be given to taking photographs of the property.
- 3.1.3 Officers who are uncertain if the property should be left with its possessor should seek advice from a supervisor before seizing the property.

3.2 PAWNBROKERS.

- 3.2.1 When a Pawnbroker is requested to retain possession of articles which have been pledged, the OIC should issue Form WG 530 which clearly describes the articles and specifies that the items must not be sold.
- 3.2.2 Where criminal proceedings result, the OIC should ensure that the Pawnbroker is made aware of the place, date and time of any Court hearings so that they may be represented. The OIC may wish to consider whether or not the appropriate claim for compensation forms should be included in the case papers on behalf of the Pawnbrokers. If the Court makes no order as to the disposal of the items, the Pawnbroker, and any other party concerned, will be informed how it is proposed to deal with the property.

4. INITIAL ACTION AT THE STATION.

- 4.1 The OIC must ensure that all seized property is entered onto the property system. The following information **must** be recorded on the property record:
- (a) ICIS Custody Record number *(if applicable)*.
 - (b) Crime Report number *(if applicable)*.
 - (c) Reason for retention, and details of the name and address of the person, and the precise location from which the property was seized (for example, under bed; in garden).
 - (d) If the property requires photographing by a Forensic Science Investigator (FSI) *(use the Comments Box)*.
 - (e) If FSI has been requested to examine the property for forensic purposes *(use the Comments Box)*.
- 4.2 Once entered onto the property system, the OIC must take the following action:
- (a) An ultra violet light should be used to find any identifying marks that could assist in establishing ownership of the property, and the property record ticked in the appropriate box.
 - (b) Use the search facility to check with other Force databases to assist in the identification of the property.

Any information obtained as a result of these enquiries will be entered onto the property record.

At the conclusion of these checks, the property will be packaged as per paragraph 5.

5. PACKING OF PROPERTY.

- 5.1 The OIC will ensure that property is packaged as follows:
- (a) Damp or wet items must be left to dry thoroughly in a secure area.
 - (b) Soiled, stained or polluted items must bear a warning in a clearly visible position.
 - (c) Cash, credit cards, jewellery, drugs and other valuable items must be removed from pockets, handbags, wallets, etc and secured separately in a cash in transit bag in a safe.

- (d) Any item having a sharp blade or point must be individually placed in the approved plastic container. Knives with retractable or folding blades should have a rubber band placed around them so that the blade cannot become accidentally exposed.
- (e) Glass, antiques and similar fragile items should be wrapped and sealed in a manner which will avoid damage during transit and clearly labelled 'FRAGILE'.
- (f) Batteries should be removed from radios, cassette/CD players, torches and similar appliances and disposed of safely.
- (g) Where property is likely to be submitted to the Forensic Services Unit (FSU), Procedure F06 must be complied with.
- (h) Where a perishable item is required for forensic examination advice should be sought from the FSS.
- (i) Where ownership of perishable items is unknown, they should be disposed of immediately.
- (j) Paper exhibits including photographic stills should be attached to the relevant file, and the Property Computer updated with the URN and Crime Reference Number (if applicable). Thereafter, the retention and storage of these exhibits will be in accordance with the Destruction Policy.

5.2 When all of the above have been considered, the property must be placed in a property bag together with the computer printout and sealed. The neck of the bag(s) must be tightly closed with a secure property seal. Where an entry on the property record requires the use of more than one bag, an additional computer printout should be placed in each bag. Where the item is too large for the use of a bag, a printout and seal must be securely attached to the property.

5.3 Bulky Property - Due to storage limitations, consideration should to be given to the storage of bulky items of property before they are seized. The OIC should liaise with a supervisor and the OCU Property Officer. Further consideration should be given to use of Form WG530 where appropriate.

6. SEIZED MONEY.

6.1 Such money may be £ Sterling or any foreign currency, includes coins, and can be described as:

- (a) Known to be stolen.
- (b) Money believed to be the proceeds of crime. **If the money is seized under the specific provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) there is no need to count it before it is entered into the Property System (see para 6.4 below).**
- (c) Money suspected of being (a) or (b) which is subsequently 'disclaimed' by the person from whom seized, and no true owner is established.
- (d) Money suspected of being (a) or (b), which subsequently forms the basis of a dispute between two or more parties as to ownership.

6.2 Checking and Initial Storage of Seized Money

The OIC, together with one other person, will check the total value of the money. Details will be entered on the system in accordance with Paragraph 4.1. The money will be sealed in a cash in transit bag and the seal number recorded on the property record and an entry made in the station safe register as per Procedure S5. All money required to be retained other than in its original form, will be banked.

6.3 Recording cash (sterling) using the computer system

- 6.3.1 Having logged on in the normal way, select from the yellow menu depending on whether the cash is crime related, lost or found. Click on 'ADD PROPERTY ITEMS'. At the relevant screen enter the brief item description.
- 6.3.2 Enter the word 'cash', and then select 'search'. This will quickly produce a list of descriptions containing the word 'cash'. Select 'CASH STERLING MONEY'.
- 6.3.3 Complete the field describing where the cash was found (this is not the address, but the actual location, for example 'under bed', 'in cupboard', 'in lounge', 'in garden shed' etc.). *The next two tick boxes are optional.*
- 6.3.4 In the 'SUM OF CASH' field, enter the total amount recovered. This field will only accept entries in the format ££.pp (for example 25.50). Do not enter pounds or pence signs.
- 6.3.5 The 'DENOMINATIONS' field is free text. Enter the make up of the cash, for example: '1 x £10 note, 3 x £5 notes, 1 x 50 pence piece.'
- 6.3.6 The 'ADDITIONAL INFORMATION' field can be used to record anything considered to be useful.
- 6.3.7 The 'PROCEEDS OF DRUGS' tick box is optional.
- 6.3.8 Finally click 'Create Item'

6.4 POCA (Money uncounted).

- 6.4.1 **Officers creating 'CASH POCA UNCOUNTED' will not be able to add other categories of property to the record. This is to allow the 'CASH POCA UNCOUNTED' record to be totally transferred to the ECU (see below), who will then take sole responsibility for it. Similarly, a 'CASH POCA UNCOUNTED' record cannot be added to a record with existing property.**
- 6.4.2 From the main category 'CASH', use the 'item description' called 'CASH POCA UNCOUNTED'. By clicking on this, a screen will open with the usual fields plus one headed *DESCRIPTION (e.g. APPROX £1000 STERLING UNCOUNTED). Here enter as much detail as possible, including an estimate of the amount seized.
- 6.4.3 The money must be sealed twice, and the seals can be shown using the 'New Seal' and 'External Ref' fields. The latter can take free text entries. The OIC will notify the Financial Investigation Team (part of ECU) who will collect the cash. The record will then be transferred to the ECU.
- 6.4.4 When the cash is eventually counted, the record can be updated accordingly.

6.5 Money retained in original form

- 6.5.1 **Any decision to retain money in its original form must be made in writing by the Crime Manager and must accompany the money. This document is generated by the computer system.**
- 6.5.2 The only circumstances when seized money will be retained in its original form are as follows:
- (a) It is required for forensic examination.
 - (b) It is to be produced as an exhibit in court.
 - (c) It is obvious from initial enquiries that the money will only need to be retained pending identification by serial numbers or other markings.

7. SEIZED JEWELLERY.

7.1 Checking & initial storage of Seized Jewellery

The OIC, together with one other person will check the jewellery, record it in accordance with Paragraph 4.1 and then seal it in a bag. A full description of each item of jewellery should be recorded on the computer. Items should not be described as being gold or silver, but gold or silver coloured.

- 7.2 If a valuation of the jewellery needs to be undertaken for court purposes, the OIC will make the necessary arrangements. The valuation costs should be entered on the file in order that these expenses can be brought to the attention of the court.

8. DRUGS.

- 8.1 Officers should refer to Procedure D07 for how to deal with controlled drugs. The following specifically relates to the handling and storage of drugs as detained property.
- (a) Seized and found drugs will be entered on to the property system as crime property in the normal way in accordance with Paragraph 4.1.
 - (b) The OIC must ensure that the property number generated by the computer is entered on to the tamper proof bag and the HOLAB form in the Property Reference section.
 - (c) The OIC must ensure that a copy of the computer record is placed with the tamper proof bag containing the drugs into the property bag prior to sealing in accordance with Paragraph 5.2.
 - (d) Initially drugs will be stored in the Enquiry Office safe, until they are removed by the OIC for transport to the FSS or by the OCU Property Officer for storage in the Secure Drugs cabinet. In the event of a bulk seizure of drugs, refer to Paragraph 5.3
 - (e) Before drugs are sent for testing, the OIC should endorse the HOLAB form with the property number. After submission to the FSS, the OIC should inform the Property Officer of the Laboratory Reference Number as soon as it is known. The OIC will receive a computer generated e-mail message as a reminder to supply the Laboratory Reference number.
 - (f) Should the OIC deem it necessary to transport a bulk seizure of drugs (for example cannabis plant) directly to the Central Secure Store, in all cases the Force Property Officer must be contacted to ensure that the drugs can be accommodated.

9. FUEL.

- (a) Fuel (i.e. petrol, diesel, oil etc.) should be entered onto the system in the normal way as per Paragraph 4.1
- (b) Where an item of property is fuel and the owner is known and accessible, because of its volatile and combustible nature it should be returned forthwith, subject to it being in a suitable container. Form WG586 is to be completed and signed by the owner and then forwarded to the OCU Property Officer for action.
- (c) If the owner cannot be established or located, it should be disposed of by transporting it to the nearest Police Garage subject to it being in a suitable container. The OIC will update the property record on the course of action taken.
- (d) Any items which may have been used in the commission of an offence e.g. pipes, containers etc. that may be needed for evidence, should be made safe by filling with water. Details should then be entered onto the computer system in accordance with Paragraph 4.1.
- (e) If in any doubt, see paragraph 10.

10. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.

- 10.1 Should items be seized bearing toxic or hazardous substance labels or for any reason suspected of being hazardous substances, the OIC will notify a supervisor and will liaise with a Haz-Chem Consultative Officer and / or the Fire Service with regards to the identification and storage of the substance. The OCU Property Officer will be advised at the earliest opportunity.

Details of Haz-Chem Consultative Officers are held on Command and Control and by the FCC.

11. INITIAL STORAGE AND MOVEMENT OF PROPERTY IN THE HOLDING STORE.

- 11.1 The person booking the property is responsible for the initial storage of all detained property and ensuring that any movement of property into and out of the Holding Store is recorded on the system. Any officer who is a property user can book out property while the property is in the Holding Store.
- 11.2 If an officer intends to retain an item of property and not immediately place it in the Holding Store e.g. for the purposes of an interview, the property **must** first be booked out to the officer on the system and booked back in when those immediate enquiries are finished.

12. CRIMINAL PROCEDURES AND INVESTIGATION ACT 1996.

The above Act, which came into effect in August 1996, lays down rules or minimum standards which must be applied by the police in respect of the retention of material.

12.1 Period of Retention.

Please refer to the Records Management policy (R02) for full supporting guidance which can be accessed via the force policy library, which sets out the following retention periods:

These records will belong to one of two categories:

1. Convicted: - If an individual has been convicted of the offence, all records relating to the investigation must be retained for the length of any court ordered sentence or a minimum of 6 months following the end of the investigation/court case (whichever is longer).

In cases of historical interest, consideration may be given to retaining the materials for longer. For example, murder cases may be retained for longer.

2. All other cases (including acquittals, NFAs, or where no suspect has been identified):

- Group 1 = 50 years
- All other offences = when the Senior Investigating Officer has confirmed that there are no further lines of enquiry and the investigation is closed.

12.2 It is imperative that the OIC determines which material is relevant to the case and disposes or returns all other property at the earliest opportunity.

12.3 Once the minimum retention periods have expired, the property can then be disposed of in the normal way, and the property record updated accordingly.

13. REMINDERS FOR OUSTANDING PROPERTY.

13.1 After 28 days the OIC will receive an e-mail reminder into their own account requesting an update as to the current status of the investigation. They will also receive an advisory note on the home page of the property system. The OIC must be satisfied that continued retention of the property is justified. The officer must respond via the property system and notify the OCU Property Officer accordingly within 14 days. Should it be the case that the Legal Services Department are dealing with the matter, then the OIC should advise the OCU Property Officer of the Legal Services Reference Number.

13.2 If no response is received within 14 days or the response is unsatisfactory (e.g. a request to retain without a supporting explanation), the OCU Property Officer will refer the matter to the supervisor of the OIC.

13.3 If the property is to be retained, the details will be entered on the property record. A further reminder will be sent as appropriate.

14. RETURN OF DETAINED PROPERTY.

14.1 When the case has been finalised the OIC will take steps to return the property at the earliest opportunity as follows:

- (a) Return in person – obtain a WG586 receipt which must be forwarded to the OCU Property Officer, or
- (b) Give the OCU Property Officer authority to return the property to the owner.
- (c) Property Connected with Deceased Persons: - under normal circumstances property can be returned to a relative or next of kin, having taken reasonable steps to confirm their identity. A WG586 receipt should be used as in (a) above. Should the property have a substantial value, or there are doubts concerning ownership, **it should not be released to any person.** In these circumstances, a report should be submitted to Legal Services Department containing details of the property, the deceased person and the claimant.

15. FINALISATION AND DISPOSAL OF SEIZED MONEY.

- 15.1 The return of any money which has been either banked or retained in its original form will be undertaken in accordance with Procedure P18 (section 2.8).
- 15.2 At the conclusion of the case, or in response to a reminder, the OIC will 'Authorise to Dispose' (ATD) giving details in the NOTES box of the specific action required.

16. TRANSFER TO ANOTHER FORCE / OCU.

- 16.1 The officer transferring the property to another Force must either:
 - (a) Obtain a WG586 receipt on handover of the property (if transferring in person), which must be forwarded to the OCU Property Officer, or
 - (b) Give the OCU Property Officer authority (written or by Email) to arrange the transfer of the property.
- 16.2 Where transferred to another OCU, the Property Officer will be responsible for accepting and updating the computer record.

SECTION B

FOUND PROPERTY PROCEDURES.

1. DEFINITION.

- 1.1 Found property includes any property coming into the possession of the police which is not suspected or known to be the proceeds of crime or required for evidential purposes.
- 1.2 Items of property from sudden deaths, drugs or property that could be linked to a crime are often recorded as 'found' on pic, found in car, found in bedroom etc. **THESE ITEMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE RECORDED AS CRIME PROPERTY.**

It is important for officers to be aware that a Property Officer can dispose of unclaimed found property after 6 weeks without any authorisation from the officer. This could result in a possible loss of evidence.

- 1.3 If found property is subsequently determined to be the proceeds of crime or may be required for evidential purposes, it will be dealt with in accordance with Section A.

2. INITIAL RECEIPT OF PROPERTY.

2.1 Found Property handed to an officer in the street

When property found in the street is brought to the attention of an officer, the officer must obtain the name and address of the finder and a full description of the property which must be recorded in the officer's pocket notebook in the presence of the finder, who must sign the entry. Details of any money or valuables must be carefully checked with the finder. If the finder does not wish to retain the property, the officer will take possession of it. At the station, the officer will enter full details onto the property system, and post the receipt to the finder.

2.2 Property found on private premises

The police should not normally accept custody of property found on private premises such as a theatre, hotel, etc. However, if it would be unreasonable for the finder to return the property to the owner of the premises, the police may accept it and must inform the owner of the premises.

2.3 Property found on Public Service Vehicles (PSVs)

Items of property which have been found on 'Public Service Vehicles' should not normally be accepted for retention by the police. The finder should be advised to hand the property to the operator, but if this would cause great inconvenience, the police may accept it. In such cases, the operator must be informed.

2.4 Finds of Treasure

2.4.1 Definition In general terms, treasure can be defined as an object or group of objects, or coins over 300 years old which contain 10% or more gold or silver (or if 10 plus, coins of any metal) together with any item of any substance found in association therewith. In addition, younger gold or silver apparently hidden for future recovery which would have been classified as 'treasure trove' under the old law, is defined as a treasure under the new.

- 2.4.2 Persons reporting a find to a police officer or station should be encouraged to notify the Coroner or his office direct. Reports of a find can be made to the Coroner in person or by letter, telephone or fax.
- 2.4.3 If the finder declines to retain the find, the object(s) should be entered into found property as per Procedure P18, (section 1.2) the Coroner's Office notified accordingly.
- 2.4.4 Release of the objects will be in accordance with Procedure P18 (section 1.8).

3. PROPERTY LEFT WITH THE FINDER.

3.1 Finders should always be encouraged to retain property unless:

- (a) The finder is under 18 years of age.
- (b) The finder has no fixed abode.
- (c) The value of the property exceeds £100.
- (d) The property is identifiable, and can be returned to its owner.
- (e) The property is suspected to be proceeds of crime.
- (f) The finder is a Police Officer, Police Community Support Officer, Special Constable, or a member of Police Staff
- (g) The property has some security value.
- (h) The property is dangerous.
- (i) The property is cash, cheque, postal order, premium savings bond, saving certificate, key, pawn ticket, gambling instrument, document, hypodermic syringe, drug, medicine or tablet, mobile phone, laptop computer, pedal cycle. Any items containing material of a personal nature or covered by the Data Protection Act.
- (j) The check on the computer reveals that the property has already been reported lost/stolen.
- (k) The property is of an obscene nature (e.g. books, magazines and other publications) or films, videocassettes, DVDs or CD ROMs, the subject matter of which is unknown.
- (l) The property is a service uniform or piece of equipment which is unlawful for the finder to retain.
- (m) The finder wishes to retain only part of the property. The property can only be wholly retained or deposited.
- (n) Any part of the property is unsuitable for retention by the finder. In any of the above circumstances, the finder will not be allowed to retain any property:

4. RETURN OF PROPERTY HANDED TO AN OFFICER IN THE STREET.

4.1 When property, found by or handed to an officer in the street, is claimed before it has been possible to deposit it at the station, the officer should, if satisfied regarding ownership, hand the property over obtaining a signature for receipt against the original pocket note book entry.

5. INITIAL ACTION AT THE STATION.

- 5.1 When found property is brought into a police station for deposit, the Visitor Handler (VH) should check all appropriate records to identify if the item(s) have been reported as lost.

6. REWARDS TO FINDERS.

- 6.1 The police should not advise members of the public regarding the amount of a reward to be offered for the recovery of lost property, nor should a reference to any police station for the payment of a reward be allowed in any notice publishing a reward.
- 6.2 Under no circumstances should a police officer accept a reward for the return of property, nor accept a reward on the basis of handing it to the finder.

7. PROPERTY FOUND BY POLICE EMPLOYEES.

- 7.1 Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers or Special Constables, who find property that is not claimed by the owner, cannot claim the property as a 'finder'. The property will be dealt with as though unclaimed by the owner or finder. Similarly, for Traffic Wardens and members of Police Staff who find property **during the course of their duties**, they will not be able to claim the property.

SECTION C

LOST PROPERTY PROCEDURES

1. DEFINITION.

An item of property shall be deemed lost if the owner does not know its current whereabouts.

2. REPORTING OF LOST PROPERTY

2.1 Reports in the Street.

If the loss is reported to a police officer in the street, full particulars will be recorded in the officer's pocket notebook. Ops Centre staff should be informed at the earliest opportunity so that details can be entered onto the system. The person reporting the loss should be informed that contact will only be made if the property is traced.

2.2 Reports of losses occurring on private premises

If a loser states that the property has been lost in a shop, theatre or other private premises or on a 'Public Service Vehicle', they should be advised to make enquiries at the premises or with the operator. An entry on the RECORD will still subsequently be made.

3. INITIAL ACTION AT THE STATION.

- 3.1 On return to the station, the officer will undertake a check of all appropriate records to see if the property has been found and handed in to the police.
- 3.2 A detailed description will be entered onto the record.
- 3.3 Where the search appears to match an item recorded as being 'recovered', the officer will contact the loser and advise them to visit the police station where the property is being held. The property record will be updated accordingly.
- 3.4 Should a person report lost property which appears to be identical to an item recorded as found and retained by the finder, the Ops Centre staff will contact the finder to arrange the return of the property to the station for identification.
- 3.5 If a loser subsequently finds property previously reported as lost, they should be advised to contact the OCU Property Officer. The appropriate entry on the property record should then be updated.



CHIEF CONSTABLE

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Amended/Agreed by.
1.0	19/11/2009	New policy.	New Force policy approved by CC Sims
1.1	28/02/2011	Amendment to section 12 with regards to the period of retention. This has now been updated to include that shown in the Records Management policy (R07).....sections a), b), c) and d) removed	Corinne Brazier – Force Records Manager (MoPI)
1.2	24/04/2012	Policy amended as follows with included: > policy reference, > signature of CC Sims. N.B. policy is currently subject to a full review and all enquiries should be conducted with the author/contact as indicated on the front page should further clarification be required as to the information held.	Martin Keating – Force Policy Coordinator

Hierarchy of Property Responsibilities

Officer in the Case (OIC)

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Create initial record (usually seized property)
- Ensure integrity of procedures regarding booking in/out of property from overnight secure storage
- Manage progress of the case
- Timely response to property reminders via the property system
- Authorise/obtain authority for disposal of property

Operations Centre Staff

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Create initial record (usually lost or found property)
- Check if the property is identifiable
- Identifiable property notify the owner
- Update the 'comments box' in the record with the action taken

Property Officer

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Maintain security of Property Store at all times
- Day-to-day management of the property system on their OCU/Dept
- Update property system with property movements in and out of store
- Transfer property from holding store(s) to Property Store
- Identify 'missing' property in the holding store(s) and set seals as missing
- Send supervisors property reminder for oic's who have failed to respond to their reminders
- Authorise/decline request for a change of oic.
- Authorise/decline requests for further report dates requested by officers for property and seal numbers.
- Arrange/manage transfer of property from the property store to other locations. E.g. WMP Central Secure Store
- Manage disposal of property that has been authorised by the oic, for return, destruction or sale inline with force policy.
- Manage disposal of found property that has not been claimed.
- Return found bank cards etc to issuer to trace owner if contact could not be made by Ops Centre Staff.
- Maintain liaison with OCU Business Manager in order to identify problems with non-compliance with property management procedures
- Assistance in training property users on using the property system.

Supervisory Officer

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Manage/deal with system generated e-mails relating to non-response by OIC to property reminders
- Monitor OIC property records

Business Manager

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Manage and support Property Officer
- Conduct/manage regular audit of Property Store and storage facilities
- Maintain liaison with OCU Property Officer, in order to identify problems with non-compliance with property management procedures
- Produce and action management reports, utilising 'Data-viewer' system

Operations Manager (Superintendent)

- Familiarise with Policies P17 and P18 – Property Procedures
- Maintain overall responsibility for property management at OCU/Department level
- Ensure compliance with Force policy, by all members of staff
- Create/manage 'discretionary' local policy for property management; in line with Force policy. E.g. Number of requests/days allowed for property retention