



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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To: All Wyoming BLM Employees
From: State Director
Subject: Employee Responsibility for Government Personal Property

This Information Bulletin provides guidance to Wyoming BLM employees regarding their personal responsibility and accountability for government property. The authority for this policy is set forth in BLM Manual 1520. Employees are responsible for reporting and documenting any loss, theft or damage to government property promptly (see Attachment 1). Employees must ensure that they take acceptable security precautions in regard to government property in their care (see Attachment 2). If the loss has a question of financial responsibility for the employee it will go through the Board of Survey process (see Attachment 3).

It is the goal of Wyoming BLM management to ensure government property is being appropriately secured and Wyoming BLM employees understand that misuse or carelessness may result in personal liability. Additional information on this topic and the Report of Survey process can be found on the BLM Wyoming Online website at <http://web.wy.blm.gov> under the property link on the Business Management section.

If you have any questions concerning the above information, please contact your local Property Management Staff, or Floyd Watson, Wyoming State Office, at 307-775-6053.

Signed by:
Robert A. Bennett
State Director

Authenticated by:
J. Camargo, Secretary
State Director's Office

3 Attachments:
1 - Employee Responsibility for Government Property (2 pp.)
2 - Table of Minimally Acceptable Security Precautions (1 p.)
3 - Accountable Property List (1 p.)

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Do you know what your responsibilities for government property are? You are responsible for the proper care, safeguarding, maintenance, and use of all government property in your custody at all times, even if you have not signed a receipt for the property.

What is a custodial property officer? Custodial property officers are designated officials (usually supervisory or management) who are responsible for ensuring that property under their control is properly recorded in the official records of the Bureau and appropriately maintained and protected. Custodial property officers are also responsible for providing documentation regarding the loss, damage, or theft of government property under their control and for ensuring that departing employees complete a final salary clearance procedure. For further information about custodial property officer responsibilities, please refer to BLM Manual 1520.04, Responsibilities, on the Property Homepage at http://web.nc.blm.gov/property/guidance/guid_manual.html.

Do you know the regulations regarding personal use of government property? Although limited personal use of government property, such as personal computers, printers, fax machines, copiers, and telephones, is now authorized under certain conditions during non-duty hours, personal use of government vehicles and most other equipment is specifically prohibited. For specific guidelines, please see the BLM Manual 1520.04 on the Property Homepage at http://web.nc.blm.gov/property/guidance/guid_manual.html.

Do you have a signed property pass for government property taken home to use? The Custodial Property Officer must approve property items being taken out of a government facility by signing a DI-1934 Property Pass or DI-105, Receipt for Property. A copy of the DI-1934 or DI-105 must accompany the property item when it is being taken off-site. The Department of Interior Building in Washington, D.C. will ONLY allow Government property to be removed from the building with an approved DI-1934 Property Pass.

Is your sensitive property secure? Any equipment that is highly susceptible to theft, such as laptop computers, portable radios, cameras, cellular telephones, etc., must be kept in a locked room, locking cabinet, or locked desk, or secured with a security cable when not in use. If secured storage is not available, contact your supervisor or custodial officer immediately to obtain proper locks, security cables, and/or locking storage cabinets as soon as possible. For clarification of minimally acceptable security precautions, keep the attached table where you can refer to it during the year.

Do you exercise the same care and vigilance with government equipment that you would exercise with your own personal property? Immediately report all incidents of damage, loss, or theft to the Custodial Property Officer (CPO) and your supervisor. The CPO will determine the resources needed to search for the missing item and/or document the incident.

What if you need to remove usable parts from worn out or obsolete property and use them as spares? This is a completely acceptable procedure to save the government the cost of new parts or equipment **if** the paperwork is submitted in advance. Contact your property disposal specialist, property manager, or warehouse staff for more information. If the paperwork is not submitted in advance, then a survey action will be required and you may be held liable for the loss.

Do you purchase sensitive property with a government bank card? If so, it is your responsibility to ensure that sensitive property is taken to your property manager to be entered into the property records. All government property that is not expendable should be marked as BLM property.

Do you operate a government vehicle? If you do, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the vehicle and its operating characteristics. You must ensure that the vehicle is operated safely, comply with government regulations, and properly maintain the vehicle. Proper fluid levels and tire pressures are your responsibility. Expenses resulting from vehicle damage due to inadequate or improper maintenance or negligent operation, including towing charges, can be charged to your benefiting activity.

Vehicle Operators shall not operate government vehicles while under the influence of drugs (that may impair judgment or reactions) or alcohol. Operators must not use alcohol or drugs that may impair judgment or reactions 8 hours prior to driving/operating government vehicles/equipment. Operators must not engage in any activity that distracts them from safely operating their vehicle. Vehicle operators are ultimately, and always, responsible for the safe operation of their vehicle. Such activities as the use of cell phones, eating or drinking, smoking, and using two-way radios while operating a vehicle can be distracting. Reducing or eliminating distraction may require that operators pull safely off of the road and stop; this may be particularly true when making or receiving cell phone calls in reduced visibility, moderate to heavy traffic, on unfamiliar roadways, or other situations that require absolute attention to the traffic environment. The driver's seat in a vehicle is not the place for extended cell phone conversations or complex discussions. Operators must have sufficient sleep before operating a government vehicle. Being on duty more than 16 hours of the previous 24 hours or having less than six hours sleep since the last duty period of eight or more hours would be considered insufficient sleep. BLM Manual H-1112-2, Section 4.2 describes limitations on operating hours. If any of the above listed actions *contributes to* an accident, the operator could be considered negligent and held accountable by the Board of Survey reviewing the case.

What happens if you lose or damage property? The State Office Board of Survey investigates the incident and considers the possibility that the employee involved was negligent and/or responsible for the loss, damage, or destruction. (410 DM114-60.8)

What happens if you loan the property to someone else and they lose or damage it? You can be held liable for property loss unless you have transferred accountability of the property by using a DI-105 (Receipt for Property) or similar form. However, accountability of the property can be transferred only temporarily to other BLM employees using this method. You must contact your property manager and/or custodial property officer if you want to permanently transfer accountability of property to someone else. Because contracted employees, volunteers, and employees of cooperating agencies have contractual agreements with our agency, it is likely that their liability will be limited. Government property used by these individuals should be assigned through their custodial property officers (Contracting Officers, Assistance Officers, or Volunteer Coordinators).

TABLE OF MINIMALLY ACCEPTABLE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

In the office:	On the road or in the field:
<p>Sensitive equipment: Laptop computers, handheld computers, radios, cameras, cellular telephones, etc., are especially susceptible to theft and should be stored in secured, locking cabinets or desks when not in use. Laptops that are stored in docking stations need to be locked in the docking station or attached via a security cable. If secured cabinets are not available, your supervisor should contact the warehouse staff to determine if locking furniture is available or contact the procurement staff to arrange acquisition of furniture necessary to provide security.</p> <p>Custodial Officers need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always maintain pooled sensitive equipment in a locked cabinet and reissue it to other employees only on a Receipt for Property (DI-105). 2. Never dispose of government property, no matter what method is used -- trade-ins, donations, destruction, or sale --without Property Management Authorization. 3. During an office move: Inventory all equipment you are responsible for both before and after the move. Occupying space with other agencies: If assigned to an office space under the control of another agency, take time to become familiar with the security policy of that office. Contact their supervisor if the office cannot provide the minimum safeguards outlined above. 	<p>When In the Field: Inventory equipment frequently while using it to ensure that a loss has not occurred. If a loss occurs, notify your supervisor and take immediate steps to find the equipment. If you are using vest pockets to hold small field-going equipment, make sure that the pockets are secure.</p> <p>When operating a government vehicle: Remain alert and fully aware of vehicle and road conditions. If you become drowsy, change drivers or take a break from driving for several minutes. If any drivers are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with a vehicle, take a few minutes before you start to find all controls and make all adjustments necessary. Allow yourself plenty of time to get where you need to go.</p> <p>Always lock the vehicle when you park it. When leaving equipment in the vehicle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a locking truck box or car trunk. • Place equipment out of sight behind or under the seat of locked vehicle (short-term only). • Remove equipment from the vehicle if other employees are going to use the vehicle, or when leaving the vehicle with vendors. <p>When in Official Travel: Keep sensitive property with you whenever possible. Airlines and motels do not assume responsibility for lost or stolen valuables. Do not check sensitive equipment as baggage on airlines. If you must leave sensitive property in a motel room while you are out of the room, store the property out of site. Use of security cables is strongly recommended.</p>

BOARD OF SURVEY PROCESS

I. Government property is lost, stolen or damaged.

- The employee responsible for the property reports the incident to his/her supervisor.
- Both immediately document the incident.
 - If the item is **lost**, do a reasonable search for the lost item. A reasonable search includes, but is not limited to the following actions – email to the office to see if anyone has seen the item, physically look for the item at the last known location, etc.
 - If the item is **stolen**, contact Law Enforcement immediately.
 - If the item is **damaged** as the result of an accident, complete the proper accident reports.
- The supervisor provides the Property Manager with documentation of what happened to the item.

II. Property Manager prepares form DI-103 Report of Survey.

- The property manager confirms the loss.
- The property manager provides the employee responsible for the property at the time of the incident with notification of survey action, a copy of the initial Report of Survey documentation and an opportunity to provide a statement.
- The responsible employee may decline further comment or may provide a written statement of events.
- If the loss is under \$5,000 and there is no likelihood of financial responsibility (monetary value assessed) to the item, the Property Manager enters the disposal document into the Fixed Asset system. The Property Manager gives the Report of Survey file to the Field Office Survey Officer for approval.
 - The Survey Officer approves the report and sends it to the Local Reviewing Authority (Deputy State Director for Field Offices, Business Center for State Office) for processing.
 - If the DSD, Division of Support Services concurs, the approved disposal document is sent to the Business Center.
 - If the DSD, Division of Support Services does not concur, he/she may prepare a written statement outlining the reasons for their disagreement and attach it to the Report of Survey. The Report of Survey should then be forwarded to the National Business Center for resolution.

III. Board of Survey

- If the loss has any question of financial liability on the part of the responsible employee, then the Report of Survey is sent to the Board of Survey for review.
- The Board of Survey reviews the Report of Survey to determine if reasonable care was taken by the responsible employee to ensure that government property was secure.
- The Board may request additional information from the responsible employee. This may be done in person or in writing.
- If the Board determines that there is no financial liability on the part of the responsible employee then the Report of Survey is sent to the Local Reviewing Authority (DSD or NBC) for processing.
 - If the Reviewing Authority concurs the process is complete and no financial liability will be assessed to the responsible employee.
- If the Board determines the responsible employee is financially liable for the loss, then the Report of Survey is sent to the Local Reviewing Authority.
 - The employee is notified that he/she may be financially liable for the item.
 - If the Local Reviewing Authority does not concur, then the Report of Survey goes to the Survey Board with the reasons for disagreement attached.
 - If the Reviewing Authority concurs with the Survey Board, the process is complete and no financial liability is assessed to the employee.
 - The State Director will sign off on the final document.
 - If the Reviewing Authority does not concur, then the final decision goes back to the Board of Survey.
 - If the Local Reviewing Authority concurs, then the financial liability of the responsible employee is determined.
 - The employee is notified of the liability. The National Business Center will bill the employee for the amount of the liability. The disposal document is approved.
 - The employee may appeal the finding. If so, the case is sent to the Office of Hearings and Appeals.
 - The Office of Hearings & Appeals will either uphold the finding or overturn the finding.