

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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In Reply To:

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Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2004-037  
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To: All MT/DAKs Employees  
From: Deputy State Director, Division of Support Services  
Subject: Employee Responsibility for Government Property

The purpose of this memorandum is to reiterate Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy related to employee's obligation for the proper use, care, security and return of government personal property entrusted to them, or under their control or direct supervision. Employees are responsible for the proper care, safeguarding, maintenance, and use of all government property in their custody at all times, even if a signed receipt does not exist for the property. Cognizant employees as listed in the official BLM property database are responsible to inform the **local property manager or zoned property officer**, if that property is damaged, lost, stolen, moved or transferred. This includes vehicles as well as personal property items needed for job performance, regardless of the original acquisition cost. Employees may be required to reimburse the government for lost, damaged or stolen property in their care or control if it is determined by a Board of Survey that the loss, damage, or theft resulted from carelessness or neglect (BLM 1520-06, A).

Although limited use of government property, such as personal computers, printers, fax machines, copiers, and telephones is authorized under certain conditions during non-duty time, personal use of government vehicles and most other equipment is specifically prohibited. Employees **are not authorized to remove government property from the office for personal use, unless specific written authority is granted by the custodial officer.** If you use, or authorize the use of government property for other than official business, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In the same manner, employee-owned property may not be used in the performance of official duties (410 DM 114-60.201).

When government property is assigned for official business, be aware of the following guidelines:

- ❖ Employees are expected to exercise the same care and vigilance with government equipment that would be exercised with their own personal property.

- ❖ Make a written report to the supervisor and the business manager in all cases of property loss, damage, destruction, or theft. This report must be made as quickly as possible, i.e., during the next communication with the supervisor who will determine the resources needed to search for the missing item and/or document the incident. It is the responsibility of the custodial officer (BLM Manual 1520.04) to report the incident to the property manager. If property is lost or damaged, the State Office Board of Survey investigates the incident and considers the possibility of negligence and/or responsibility of loss, damage, or destruction (410 DM, 60.805).
- ❖ Always transfer accountability of property to others using a DI-105 (Receipt for Property) or similar form. Contact the local or zoned property manager and/or custodial property officer if the accountability of property is to be permanently transferred to someone else. Government property used by volunteers, contractors or cooperators should be assigned through volunteer coordinators, contracting officers, or assistance officers.
- ❖ The zoned or local property manager is the expert in property disposal. If equipment is determined to be excess, the first step is to inform the custodial officer who will report the excess items to the expert. Employees must obtain a release through the zoned or local property manager before any property can be donated or disposed of.
- ❖ If the need to remove usable parts from worn out or obsolete property to use as spares arises, contact the property manager for more information. This is a completely acceptable procedure to save the government the cost of new parts or equipment **if** the paperwork is submitted **in advance**. If the paperwork is not submitted in advance, then a survey action will be required and the employee may be held liable for the loss.
- ❖ When the government purchase card is used to purchase sensitive property, it is the employees' **responsibility** to inform the property manager. All government property that is not expendable should be marked as BLM property.
- ❖ When operating a government vehicle, it is the employee's **responsibility** to be familiar with the vehicle and its operating characteristics. Employees must ensure that the vehicle is operated safely, comply with government regulations, and properly maintain the vehicle. Proper fluid levels and tire pressures are the employee's responsibility. Expenses resulting from vehicle damage due to inadequate or improper maintenance or negligent operation, including towing charges, can be charged to an office's benefiting activity.

Attachment 1 identifies sensitive items which require a property number, regardless of the acquisition cost. Attachment 2 is a table of minimal security precautions which should be followed when utilizing government property.

If you have any questions please contact Dotti Green, Property Management Specialist, at (406) 896-5199.

Signed by: Sandra L. Guches

Authenticated by: Aleta Zahorodny (MT-930)

2 Attachments

- 1-Bureau Sensitive Items (1 p)
- 2-Security Precautions (1 p)

**Bureau Sensitive Items**  
**(Items needing BLM property numbers)**

Firearm Global Positioning System (GPS) with an acquisition cost of \$500.00 or more

Laptop

Desktop

CPU

Personal Handheld Radio

**TABLE OF MINIMALLY ACCEPTABLE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS:**

<b>In the office:</b>	<b>On the road or in the field:</b>
<p><b>Sensitive equipment:</b> 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, you may call a locksmith and have a lock changed or a key made; contact your warehouse staff to determine if locking furniture is available; contact your procurement staff to arrange to acquire furniture necessary to provide security; or buy a hasp and padlock and install them on the furniture you have.</p> <p><b>The custodial officer needs to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Always maintain pooled sensitive equipment in a locked cabinet and reissue it to other employees only on a Receipt for Property (DI-105).</li> <li>2. <b>Never dispose of government property, no matter what method is used - trade-ins, donations, destruction, or sale - without Property Management Authorization.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>During an office move:</b> inventory all equipment you are responsible for both before and after the move. <b>Occupying space with other agencies:</b> If you are assigned to an office space under the control of another agency, take time to become familiar with the security policy of that office. Contact your supervisor if the office cannot provide you with the minimum safeguards outlined above.</p>	<p><b>When In the Field:</b> Equipment should be inventoried frequently while in use 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><b>When operating a government vehicle:</b> 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><b>Always lock the vehicle when you park it.</b> When leaving equipment in the vehicle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a locking truck box or car trunk</li> <li>• Place equipment out of sight behind or under the seat of locked vehicle (short-term only)</li> <li>• Remove equipment from the vehicle if other employees are going to use the vehicle, or when leaving the vehicle with vendors.</li> </ul> <p><b>When in Official Travel:</b> 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>