

## Lost, Abandoned, Surplus Property Policy

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to clarify long-standing campus protocol for handling lost and found items, abandoned property and surplus items owned by SUNY Cortland or left by vendors. This policy provides clear direction to employees for the proper safeguards, inventory, and disposal of items found by SUNY Cortland employees at any location throughout the campus.

### **Policy:**

Periodically, lost, abandoned or surplus items are found on campus. Lost, abandoned or surplus items include, but are not limited to:

- Lost property – property belonging to another person, such as clothing, keys, identification cards, books, etc.
- Abandoned property – property left behind or discarded by another person or by a vendor, such as clothing, books, office supplies, household items, etc.
- Surplus materials – campus-owned scrap computers, furniture, equipment, tools, etc., and materials left behind by vendors including construction materials, equipment, tools, etc.

Any such items, regardless of value, are considered lost, abandoned or surplus property. It is never appropriate for a SUNY Cortland employee to take any found item from campus, including items found in and around a dumpster or garbage can. Removing property from campus for private or any other use is strictly prohibited. This includes taking property already designated for disposal via certified recycling methods or refuse sites.

The only exceptions to this policy are cans or bottles returnable for deposit and empty cardboard cartons employees may want to use for personal moving, shipping or storage purposes.

### **Procedures:**

Residence Halls – Lost or abandoned property found in and around the residence halls should be managed by the Residence Hall Director (RHD) in the residence hall under the guidance of the Assistant Director of Residence Life and Housing for Facilities and Operations. These items are managed by the following procedures:

1. Donations – The Assistant Director of Residence Life and Housing for Facilities and Operations works in conjunction with a Physical Plant representative to organize a donation drive for the Migrant Education Opportunity Program (MEOP) or any other suitable charity. Students donate clothing and other non-perishable items.

2. Abandoned items – After a student checks out, if the RHD finds an item that appears to be of significant value, the RHD will attempt to contact the student directly to arrange for the item to be returned. If students request that any items left behind are to be discarded, the custodial staff of the Residence Hall will either add the items to the MEOP donations or designate them for disposal. Items that are damaged or in useless condition will be disposed of by the building custodial staff.

Non-residential areas – Lost or abandoned property found in and around any non-residential area should be returned to University Police in VanHoesen Hall. Physical Plant employees working in these areas should return these items to their supervisor, who will turn the property over to University Police. All other employees should return items directly to University Police or to their building administrator, who will then turn items over to University Police. University Police will complete a Lost/Found Property Report and will keep property for the appropriate time in accordance with New York State Personal Property Law.

Surplus property – The Property Control Office is responsible for storing, redistributing, and disposing of all surplus property on campus. Tagged property must never be disposed of by the department or by an employee. Property disposal must always be done by, or in conjunction with, the Property Control Office, with the necessary signed documentation. To request surplus furniture for departments/offices, contact the Property Control Office, extension 2488.

- Scrap Computers and Electronics – All surplus computers and electronics in poor or scrap condition are recycled using certified electronics recyclers. At no time are these items to be placed in the trash. As a general rule, if it has a plug, it should be recycled.
- Hazardous Substances – Surplus/disposal of hazardous substances (chemical, biological, etc.) should be done only with the prior approval of the Director of Environmental Health and Safety, extensions 2508.