

MLS Lost and Found Best Practices

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this workgroup is to establish systemwide best practices for handling lost and found items, while recognizing that each library will have some location-specific criteria.

General Best Practices

The Metropolitan Library System is not responsible for any customer's lost or left-behind items. Customers are solely responsible for their own items.

- As a courtesy to our customers, staff will make a reasonable attempt to determine and contact the rightful owner of any lost and found items if the property contains identifying information and is not hazardous or otherwise in need of immediate disposal.

As a safety measure, staff should wear protective gloves when searching a found item. Staff should *not* reach blindly into any bag, backpack, or container. However, objects such as wallets that obviously do not contain unseen hazards are fine to open. Likewise, if a staff member opens a purse or bag and can easily see and safely remove a wallet to check for identification, they should do so. Any bag, backpack, or container that staff feel uncomfortable closely inspecting due to the potential for unseen hazards – but which staff would not consider “suspicious” – should be documented and processed as a “Tier two” item per the established guidelines. Items that staff deem to be suspicious/potentially illegal should be immediately turned over to local security staff or police for inspection and processing.

Staff should always open wallets, purses, etc., in the presence of another staff member to maintain accountability.

- Each location will designate a specific location (or locations) in staff areas to hold lost and found items and will notify all local staff of those locations.
- Lost & found items (such as flash drives, ear buds, etc.) should not be lent out for the use of other customers, due to privacy, security, and hygiene concerns.
- Locations will affix documentation to each item with the following information:
 - Date/location found
 - Any customer identification (if applicable)

- Any information on attempts to contact the customer.
- Each location will determine which staff member(s) will be responsible for managing the processes of their local lost and found items.
- If a found item is not listed in one of the tiers below, each location will determine the most appropriate way to classify and handle the item.
- Lost and found items should never be in the personal possession of library staff while off-the-clock or outside the library; nor should they be donated to any local organization. Items that need to be disposed of should be thrown away.
- Locations with Security staff do not need to involve said staff with the processing of handling of routine lost & found items but are welcome to involve Security in the handling/processing of suspicious or potentially hazardous materials.
- Lost and found items will be classified in three categories/tiers. If a found item is not listed in one of the tiers below, each location will determine the most appropriate way to classify and handle the item.

Tier one: Any items of value that can be turned over to the police (can vary by municipality and will be listed later in this document). Local tier one guidelines supersede any general guidelines listed in this document.

- These items will be held in a secure location depending on the size of the item (safe, manager's office, etc.).
- Police should be contacted at their non-emergency numbers (noted at the end of this document) to request an officer to come and pick up these items. MLS employees should not have these items in their personal possession at any time.

Tier two: Items of personal value that are not turned over to police (can vary by municipality based on tier one).

- Items of personal value are defined as any item that staff considers to be of "personal value" including but not limited to:
 - Wallets
 - Jewelry
 - Cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other high-cost electronic devices
 - Personal documents such as passports, birth/death/marriage certificates or Social Security cards

- Flash drives and memory cards
 - Glasses or sunglasses
 - Umbrellas
 - Handbags and backpacks without ID
 - Personal paperwork and photographs
 - Clothing in good condition
 - Chargers for electronic devices
 - Headphones
 - Library-related materials (books, periodicals, A/V, etc.) that do not belong to MLS or another library.
 - Credit cards and state or school-issued IDs
 - Any monetary amount above \$5. *Amounts under \$5 should be held locally for the remainder of the business day and entered before closing into the POS as a donation.*
- Materials such as books, music, videos, etc., that are library-related, but not clearly noted as belonging to MLS or another library, whether found locally in the main body of the library or in the book drop, should be held for 7 days before being treated as a donation and handled as such (processed and sent to the Friends). For materials that are clearly noted as belonging to another library, staff should follow established Access procedures for handling these items. All other personal items should be held in the designated lost and found area for a period of 30 days.
 - If items are not retrieved within 30 days, staff will properly dispose of these items.
 - Flash drives can be opened by a staff member at a public computer and any information on the drive should be erased. However, library staff cannot guarantee the destruction of data.
 - Any money not claimed after the designated period can be considered a donation to the MLS and then entered into the POS.
 - Documents with any identifying or personal information can be shredded.
 - Gift cards should be held for 30 days and then shredded.
 - All other items should be disposed of or recycled depending on the nature of the item.

Tier three: Items that do not need to be held and should be immediately disposed of

- These items include:
 - Beverages
 - Any hazardous or perishable item

- Soiled or potentially/visibly infested clothing and personal items (hairbrushes, used earbuds, lip balm, etc.)
- Tier three items should be thrown away when they are found and bagged in cases where infestation may be present prior to disposal.

Location-Specific Guidelines and police contact information

Almonte

OKC Police Department (Southwest Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: Items of high value (wallets, mobile devices, jewelry etc.) that can be traced or are identifiable

Tier 1 guidelines: Illegal or hazardous materials should be turned over immediately. Other items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police. Since each item turned in requires a report, OKCPD would rather the library *not* hold onto things until there are several accumulated but turn them in as they come.

Belle Isle

OKC Police Department (Hefner Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: credit cards, wallets, guns, knives, threatening letters, controlled medications, drug paraphernalia.

Tier 1 guidelines: These items should be turned over within a 24-hour period except guns and drug paraphernalia. Call police immediately when these items are discovered.

Bethany

Bethany Police Department – 405-789-2323

Tier 1 items: Items with value such as cell phones, purses, wallets, credit cards, bicycles, etc. Money by itself is *not* considered Tier 1 unless it is enclosed in a purse or wallet or some other object that contains owner identification.

Tier 1 guidelines: Attempt to contact owner of item if possible and hold items locally for 7 days before turning over to police. Ensure items have post-it note attached with the date and location the item was found prior to turning over to police.

Capitol Hill

OKC Police Department (Santa Fe Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: Items of high value (wallets, mobile devices, jewelry etc.) that can be traced or are identifiable.

Tier 1 guidelines: Illegal or hazardous materials should be turned over immediately. Other items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police. Since each item turned in requires a report, OKCPD would rather the library *not* hold onto things until there are several accumulated but turn them in as they come.

Community Libraries

Choctaw Police Department – 405-769-3821

Tier 1 items: Illegal, contraband, or dangerous items. Any valuable item.

Tier 1 guidelines: For illegal, contraband, or dangerous items, call immediately. Other items of value (IDs, credit cards, purses, etc.), hold locally for 7 days prior to turning over to police.

Harrah Police Department – 405-454-2222

Tier 1 items: Personal items such as wallets, purses, identification cards (photo or non-photo), "good" jewelry, and the like. Any prescription drugs or unidentified pills. While they normally do not want clothing, they want any clothing that staff discovers has pills or the like in pockets.

Tier 1 guidelines: staff should turn over medication or pills immediately, and if said items are found in an article of clothing, they should not touch the items, but turn over the entire article of clothing. Other items should be held locally for 7 days prior to turning over to police.

Jones Police Department – 405-399-2255

Tier 1 items: Personal items like phones, wallets, credit cards. They do not want clothing, etc.

Tier 1 guidelines: Items should be held locally for 7 days prior to turning over to police.

Luther Police Department – 405-277-3500

Tier 1 items: Anything personal that "isn't trash" – i.e. anything of value.

Tier 1 guidelines: Turn in at most weekly or at least monthly depending on the amount of stuff that has accumulated. Don't hold things longer than a month.

Nicoma Park Police Department – 405-769-5675

Tier 1 items: Illegal, contraband, or dangerous items. Any item "with value," as determined by staff (even if item cannot be immediately connected to an owner. For instance, a piece of jewelry).

Tier 1 guidelines: For illegal, contraband, or dangerous items, call immediately. Other items of value (IDs, credit cards, purses, etc.), hold locally for 7 days prior to turning over to police.

Del City

Del City Police Department – 405-677-2443

Tier 1 items: Any item of value such as a wallet, set of keys, phone or electronic device

Tier 1 guidelines: If library staff can cross-reference identifiable owners of items with our cardholders and make contact, that should be done. If the person doesn't retrieve their item within a week, it should be turned over to police. If the owner of the item cannot be identified, items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police.

Downtown

OKC Police Department (Springlake Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: Items of high value (wallets, mobile devices, jewelry etc.) that can be traced or are identifiable

Tier 1 guidelines: Illegal or hazardous materials should be turned over immediately. Other items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police. Since each item turned in

requires a report, OKCPD would rather the library *not* hold onto things until there are several accumulated but turn them in as they come.

Edmond

Edmond Police Department – 405-359-4338

Tier 1 items: guns, knives, computers, cell phones, wallets with important IDs inside

Tier 1 guidelines: items should be turned over to police immediately, per their request. If *any* items are found outside the library by members of the public, library staff should direct these items to be turned into the police, rather than held locally by library staff.

Midwest City

Midwest City Police Department – 405-739-1306

Tier 1 items: Wallets, IDs, Credit Cards, Cell Phones

Tier 1 guidelines: Hold items locally for 7 days before turning over to police

Northwest

OKC Police Department (Hefner Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: credit cards, wallets, guns, knives, threatening letters, controlled medications, drug paraphernalia.

Tier 1 guidelines: These items should be turned over within a 24-hour period except guns and drug paraphernalia. Call police immediately when these items are discovered.

Ralph Ellison

OKC Police Department (Springlake Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: Items of high value (wallets, mobile devices, jewelry etc.) that can be traced or are identifiable

Tier 1 guidelines: Illegal or hazardous materials should be turned over immediately. Other items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police. Since each item turned in requires a report, OKCPD would rather the library *not* hold onto things until there are several accumulated but turn them in as they come.

Southern Oaks

OKC Police Department (Santa Fe Division) – 405-231-2121

Tier 1 items: Items of high value (wallets, mobile devices, jewelry etc.) that can be traced or are identifiable

Tier 1 guidelines: Items should be held locally for 7 days then turned over to police. Since each item turned in requires a report, OKCPD would rather the library *not* hold onto things until there are several accumulated but turn them in as they come.

Village

Village Police Department – 405-751-9564

Tier 1 items: items that could reasonably be reunited with or positively identified by their owner, including cell phones, electronic devices, cash over \$20, IDs, wallets, credit cards; or items that are distinct and valuable, such as jewelry, keys, etc.

Tier 1 guidelines: Hold items locally for 7 days before turning over to police. Turn in items before total number reaches 10-15.

Warr Acres

Warr Acres Police Department – 405-789-0282

Tier 1 items: Items that pose a potential threat to the community, such as guns, drugs, and drug paraphernalia. Any other items that are “significant” (exceptionally valuable either financially or otherwise) will be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Tier 1 guidelines: WAPD prefers, except for the threatening items listed above, that lost & found be handled locally due to space restrictions in the police property room.