



TSA MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE No. 200.51  
DISPOSITION OF LOST OR UNCLAIMED PERSONAL  
PROPERTY FOUND IN TSA-OCCUPIED SPACES

*To enhance mission performance, TSA is committed to promoting a culture founded on its values of Integrity, Innovation and Team Spirit.*

**REVISION:** This revised directive supersedes TSA MD 200.51, *Disposition of Lost or Unclaimed Personal Property Found in TSA Occupied Spaces*, dated July 22, 2008.

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES:** Throughout the directive, references to the now-cancelled TSA Form 254, *Memorandum for Record - Donation of Lost and Unclaimed Personal Property in Lieu of A&D*, have been replaced by [TSA Form 266, \*Donation in Lieu of Abandonment and Destruction\*](#); the attachment entitled *TSA Disposal Guidance for Lost and Unclaimed Personal Property* and all references to it have been removed; and in Section 7, Procedures, Section 7C has been corrected and Section 7F(6) has been added.

1. **PURPOSE:** This directive provides TSA policy and procedures for the care, handling, and disposal of lost or unclaimed personal property found in TSA facilities and occupied spaces, including checked baggage screening areas and contractor operated screening checkpoints. This directive supersedes all previous TSA guidance on lost or unclaimed personal property.<sup>1</sup>
2. **SCOPE:** This directive applies to all TSA organizational elements.
3. **AUTHORITIES:**
  - A. Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), PL 107-71
  - B. 40 USC § 552, Abandoned or Unclaimed Property on Government Premises
  - C. 41 CFR Part 101-48, Utilization, Donation, or Disposal of Abandoned and Forfeited Personal Property
  - D. 41 CFR § 102-36.320, Disposition of Excess Personal Property
  - E. 49 CFR § 171.101, Hazardous Materials Table
  - F. 49 USC § 44901(a), Screening Passengers and Property
  - G. DHS Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, PL 108-90, § 517
  - H. Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, PL 93-633

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<sup>1</sup> Lost personal property is distinct from prohibited items voluntarily abandoned to the TSA at screener checkpoints, also known as voluntarily abandoned property (VAP), which includes *hazardous material* (Hazmat). Procedures for processing VAP is addressed in [TSA MD 200.52, \*Care, Handling and Disposal of Voluntarily Abandoned Personal Property Collected by TSA at Airports\*](#), dated January 21, 2003.

- I. [TSA MD 200.56, Report of Survey for Lost, Damaged, or Destroyed Government Personal Property](#)
- J. [TSA MD 200.57, Personal Property Management](#)
- K. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, PL 94-480
- L. Toxic Substances Control Act, PL 94-469
- M. [TSA Financial Management Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12.1, Monetary Items Found at Screener Checkpoints](#)

**4. DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Care and Handling: Preserving, protecting, packing/storing, transporting, and, in the case of property that is dangerous to public health or safety, destroying or rendering innocuous such property.
- B. Fair Market Value (FMV): The best estimate of the cost of an item if the property were to be sold in a public sale between a willing buyer and a willing seller.
- C. Hazardous Property: Personal property components and materials that are deemed hazardous, chemical substances or mixtures, or hazardous waste as defined under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, or the Toxic Substances Control Act.
- D. Lost or Unclaimed Personal Property: For the purposes of this management directive, refers to non-TSA property found on premises occupied by the TSA, and includes unclaimed personal property located at TSA security checkpoints and checked baggage areas. Lost and unclaimed personal property may include property that contains Hazardous Materials (Hazmat). Lost and unclaimed personal property is subject to the filing of a claim by the former owner(s) within three (3) years from the vesting of title in the United States. Examples of lost or unclaimed personal property are listed in Attachment A, *TSA Disposal Guidance for Lost and Unclaimed Personal Property*.
- E. Original Acquisition Value: The FMV of an item when it was originally purchased or acquired.
- F. Personal Property: Tangible property (equipment, materials and supplies) that can be moved from place to place.
- G. Public Body: Any department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a state or local government; any Indian tribe; or any Federal agency.

- 5. RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Director of the Office of Property Management, under the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, is the TSA Property Management Officer (PMO), and has the overall responsibility for personal property management within TSA, to include: requirements determination; property accountability; oversight of inventory; declaration of excess; and participation in the contracting function.

- 6. POLICY:** ATSA created TSA and made the agency responsible for screening passengers and property to be carried aboard a passenger aircraft. DHS Appropriations Act for FY 2004, § 517, permits TSA to use checkpoint spaces without cost.
- A. TSA voluntarily accepts responsibility for personal property lost or unclaimed at TSA occupied screening checkpoint spaces and checked baggage areas.
  - B. TSA hereby adopts the General Services Administration (GSA) regulations, pursuant to GSA's promulgated regulations for handling abandoned or unclaimed property on premises owned or leased by the Federal government, with the modifications contained herein, for all TSA occupied spaces.
  - C. Lost and unclaimed personal property does *not* qualify for Federal transfer without reimbursement; therefore, it cannot be transferred to GSA or any other Federal agency unless the receiving agency is willing to pay the FMV.
  - D. TSA offices or employees are *not* authorized to requisition or reuse any lost and unclaimed items for official or personal use.

**7. PROCEDURES:**

A. Initial Processing

- (1) *All* lost or unclaimed personal property, including personal identification items such as drivers' licenses and passports, found in TSA facilities or occupied space will be handled immediately upon discovery, directly followed by reasonably diligent inquiries to ascertain the owner of the lost or unclaimed personal property item (e.g., airport announcements). For specific instructions on processing passports and drivers' licenses, refer to Attachment B, *TSA Handling Instructions for Lost and Unclaimed Passports and Drivers' Licenses*.
- (2) The found item will be inventoried on [TSA Form 252, TSA Lost and Unclaimed Daily Inventory Record](#).
- (3) Lost or unclaimed personal property that cannot be immediately returned to its lawful owner is required to be retained by TSA for a minimum of *thirty (30) days*, or until reunited with the original owner, whichever occurs first. Recordation on the TSA Form 252 will serve as the formal start date of the 30-day holding period.

B. 30-Day Storage and Accountability

- (1) After lost non-TSA personal property has been inventoried by TSA and recorded on the TSA Form 252, the property must be stored for 30 days in a TSA-designated secured location for safekeeping. The Federal Security Director (FSD) or TSA functional unit's manager will limit access to this area by designating the Accountable Property Officer (APO) or another TSA employee as the custodian for this non-TSA property.
  - (a) Any lost and unclaimed personal property item containing sensitive information (e.g. personal data assistants (PDAs), passports, drivers' licenses) will be managed with particular care to ensure that TSA respects and protects the privacy of the original owner.

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(b) At a minimum, security controls during the 30-day holding period shall include storing sensitive items in a secure location (e.g., locked cabinet or drawer).

(2) TSA may create and maintain its own “lost and found” storage site, or it may arrange to use the airport’s “lost and found” storage site, as is appropriate and available.

**NOTE:** If TSA utilizes the airport's “lost and found” storage area, TSA will tag or otherwise identify the item as “TSA PROPERTY” so that such property may be easily identified and returned to the owner (upon the filing of a proper claim), or retrieved by TSA for the appropriate disposition processing, in accordance with GSA regulations.

(3) Upon identification of the original owner, such property will be tagged with the name of the owner and any other identifying information (e.g., date, address, phone, etc.), *whether a TSA or airport storage site is used.*

(4) If unclaimed after 30 days, title of the lost or unclaimed property vests with the Government, at which point final disposition processing may be initiated. *TSA may not dispose of any lost or unclaimed personal property, regardless of its value, prior to title vesting with the Government.*

(5) Once the property is in the custody of TSA, it is the Government’s responsibility, regardless of the storage site used (TSA or the airport’s), unless a waiver has been executed as described in this policy. Any subsequent loss, damage or destruction will be annotated on TSA Form 252, and depending on the estimated value of property, will be reported on [DHS Form 200-2, Report of Survey](#). For instructions on completing the DHS Form 200-2, email [TSA-Property@dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-Property@dhs.gov).

(6) The responsible TSA office will ensure that, at all times, the lost or unclaimed personal property’s care, handling and ultimate disposal are completed in a manner that is not detrimental or dangerous to public health or safety.

C. Special Processing Procedures: Any found personal property items containing monies should be handled in accordance with TSA’s Financial Management Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12, Section 12.1, Monetary Items Found at Screening Checkpoints; unless the airport has a waiver (see Section 7F(6)). Certain lost or unclaimed personal property items that are sensitive in nature require special processing following the 30-day holding period.

(1) The following items require *coordination with* TSA PMO for disposition:

- (a) Camcorders
- (b) Cameras (disposable, 35mm, digital)
- (c) Cellular Phones
- (d) Film
- (e) Portable music players (iPods, MP3 players)
- (f) Laptop Computers
- (g) Memory Sticks/Flash Drives
- (h) Mini DVD Players
- (i) Pagers

(j) PDAs

(2) The following items require specific disposition processing:

- (a) Airline Tickets – return to issuing airline
- (b) Birth Certificates – contact issuing State’s Department of Vital Statistics
- (c) Credit Cards – contact credit card company to notify of destruction
- (d) Drivers’ Licenses – refer to Attachment B
- (e) Military Credentials (ID cards/tags) – return to nearest military installation
- (f) Passports – refer to Attachment B
- (g) Prescription Drugs – contact issuing pharmacy to ensure item may be discarded in trash/refuse

#### D. Owner Retrieval and Claims

(1) Lost personal property may be claimed any time before final disposition.

(2) If an owner returns to claim the item, and reasonably describes the lost item (e.g., location and date lost, color, make, model, identifying marks or other appropriate identification) it will be immediately returned to them. A reasonable description may include correct responses to TSA inquiries concerning the property item.

(3) When the lost and unclaimed personal property is reunited with its owner, the owner or his/her representative (designated in writing) is required to sign TSA Form 252 acknowledging return of the item. If a representative of the owner claims the property, a written authorization from the actual owner will be attached to the signed TSA Form 252.

(4) If an owner contacts TSA to claim the item prior to final disposition but after exiting TSA area, the following procedures apply:

(a) The original owner must reasonably describe the lost item, as detailed in Section 7D(2).

(b) The TSA representative processing the return of the property should cross reference the item information with the Claims Database to ensure no claim is pending or has been paid. If a claim is pending or has been paid, contact the Director, Claims Management Office at (571) 227-1300.

(c) To finalize the return of the property, the owner or owner’s representative is required to sign [TSA Form 261, Returned Property Receipt](#). The signed TSA Form 261 will be attached to TSA Form 252. Should the property require shipment to the original owner, the item must be shipped at the owner’s expense.

(d) If the return requires shipment, the TSA representative handling the shipment will ensure TSA Form 261 accompanies the shipment. The owner will return a signed copy of TSA Form 261 via facsimile or mail.

(e) Upon receipt of the signed TSA Form 261, the TSA representative will note the shipment on TSA Form 252 and attach the signed TSA Form 261.

E. Processing Unclaimed Personal Property after 30 Days

- (1) Lost and unclaimed personal property of significant value (original acquisition value equal to or greater than \$500): Significant value items are to remain in the custody, and be the storage responsibility of TSA. Because these items have special processing requirements, for disposition instruction, contact the Office of Property Management at TSA-Property@dhs.gov. The TSA PMO will assess each situation and advise accordingly.
- (2) Lost and unclaimed items having very little or no commercial value, except to the owner, (original acquisition value less than \$500): The cost and care of handling of low or no value items has been determined to exceed the sale value. Therefore, these items may be disposed via donation to a public body or destruction, with the exception of property known or suspected to contain hazardous materials.
  - (a) Donation in Lieu of Destruction (preferred disposition method): These items may be donated to a public body (e.g., State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP)) in lieu of destruction. TSA Form 266 will be completed for the donation of lost and unclaimed property in lieu of abandonment and destruction when a donation is accomplished.
  - (b) Destruction: After all donation alternatives have been exhausted, destruction may be accomplished. Destruction may be accomplished by means of recycling or commercial waste management and removal service. [TSA Form 255, TSA Certification of Final Disposition](#) will be completed for lost or unclaimed personal property when final destruction is accomplished.
- (3) At the time of final disposition, TSA Form 252 will be updated with final disposition method and date (e.g., donated to SASP, or commercial waste management service).

F. Waivers: In certain instances, an airport may be willing to assume complete responsibility for handling lost or unclaimed personal property found at TSA checkpoints and checked baggage areas. If this is deemed in the best interest of TSA, the FSD should submit a formal request for waiver, which addresses the following issues:

- (1) Rationale for the waiver to include a discussion of potential benefits to TSA.
- (2) Written evidence of the airport's willingness to assume responsibility for lost or unclaimed personal property.
- (3) Evidence the airport is a public body in accordance with 41 CFR § 102-36.320.
- (4) Brief description of the airport's procedures for handling lost or unclaimed personal property. Include any appropriate state or local laws as applicable.
- (5) FSD's signature and contact information.
  - (a) A request for a waiver should be submitted to the Director, Office of Property Management at TSA-Property@dhs.gov or via facsimile to (571) 227-2912. Sample waivers may also be requested via the email address.

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- (b) The Office of Property Management will review the waiver request and prepare a draft response. As necessary, the Office of Property Management may request Office of Chief Counsel for legal review.
- (c) The Director, Office of Property Management, has final decision authority and will notify the FSD of the decision within 30 days of receipt of the complete request package.
- (d) If the waiver request is approved, the FSD and Field Counsel will draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the airport outlining responsibilities and procedures for the property transfer.
- (6) Once the waiver request is approved, airports will take ownership of cases where money is found along with the owner's identification (such as money in an item that contains the owner's identity, like a purse, wallet, or billfold). The identifiable property, including the money, will be transferred to the airport so the airport can return the property to the owner. If money is found without the owner's identification, TSA must retain it and handle IAW TSA Financial Management Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12, Section 12.1, *Monetary Items Found at Screening Checkpoints*.

**8. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION:** This directive is effective immediately upon signature.

**APPROVAL**

*Signed*

*7/30/2009*

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David R. Nicholson  
Assistant Administrator and Chief Financial Officer  
Office of Finance and Administration

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Distribution: Assistant Administrators, Office Directors  
Point of Contact: Property Management, [TSA-Property@dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-Property@dhs.gov), (571) 227-5486

**Attachment A**

**TSA Disposal Guidance for Lost and Unclaimed Personal Property**

*Reasonable attempts must be made to identify and return lost and unclaimed items to the owner. All lost and unclaimed personal property must be held by TSA for 30 days prior to disposition processing.* The items listed below are examples of lost and unclaimed personal property that are found in the TSA-occupied spaces:

**Column A** – Lost items having *no commercial value* except to the owner generally may be disposed of via abandonment and destruction (A&D) in local trash and refuse.

**Column B** – Lost items having *minimal value*, where the care and cost of handling is greater than the estimated value; items with an original acquisition value of less than \$500, may be immediately disposed via donation to a public body in lieu of A&D. Donation in lieu of A&D for Lost and Unclaimed personal property is authorized to the State Agency for Surplus Property or other eligible Public Body. *Donations in lieu of A&D to other public bodies must have prior coordination and approval by the TSA Office of Property Management.* **Any found personal property items containing monies should be handled in accordance with the TSA Financial Management Manual Part 2, Chapter 7, Section 7.2, [Monetary Items Found at Screening Checkpoints](#).**

**Column C** – Lost items of *significant value*, equal to or greater than \$500, have additional special processing requirements. Contact the Office of Property Management TSA-Property@dhs.gov for disposition instructions.

**Column D** – Lost items, which are *sensitive in nature*, require special individualized processing.

**Column E** - Lost items suspected of containing Hazmat should be immediately disposed of via existing TSA HAZMAT disposal guidelines. Refer to TSA Property Management Letter, [TSA MD 200.52, Care, Handling and Disposal of Voluntarily Abandoned Personal Property Collected by TSA at Airports](#).

<b>Column A *</b> <b>No Commercial Value</b>	<b>Column B *</b> <b>Minimal Value</b>	<b>Column C *</b> <b>Significant Value</b>	<b>Column D</b> <b>Sensitive in Nature</b>	<b>Column E</b> <b>Hazmat</b>
Alcohol products Beach mats Books Eyeglasses & cases Keys Medications (e.g. Tylenol, Tums, Mylanta) Personal care items (e.g. brush, comb, perfume, makeup) Clothing items (e.g. shoes, hats, purse, coats, ties) Tobacco products Toys Umbrellas	Athletic equipment Backpacks & book bags Baby items (e.g. stroller, car seat) Books Briefcase Coats Cookware Clothing items Electronic games Gift certificates, cards, or coupons Jewelry Keys Tent Toys Umbrella Walkman/CD/Cassette	Athletic Equipment Coats, Leather or Fur Clothing items Electronic games Jewelry Tent	Airline tickets Birth Certificates Camcorders Cameras (disposable, 35mm, digital) Cellular phones Credit cards Driver's license Employee ID badges Film iPods, MP3 players Laptops Memory sticks Military ID/tags Mini DVD players Pagers Passports Personal data assistants Prescription drugs	Hazardous Materials (49 CFR § 171.101 Hazardous Materials Table) Reference: TSA MD 200.52, Care, Handling, and Disposition of Voluntarily Abandoned Property

\*This chart is provided as guidance and is not all-inclusive. The relevant TSA Office (such as the FSD or designee) must make the actual determination as to the property's value. Research may need to be accomplished to determine the appropriate value and category in which the property should be processed (for example, keys which are on an expensive key ring should not be discarded in the trash)

**Attachment B**

**TSA Handling Instructions for Lost and Unclaimed Passports and Drivers' Licenses**

1. All lost and unclaimed personal identification items will be processed immediately upon discovery, with the primary intent to reunite item with original owner, similar to all lost property found in TSA occupied spaces.
2. Lost and unclaimed drivers' licenses and passports will be managed with particular care to respect and protect the privacy of the original owners. At a minimum, security controls during the 30-day holding period shall include storing items in a secure location (e.g. locked cabinet or drawer).
3. At no time will TSA mail any lost and unclaimed drivers' licenses to the personal address on the license. This *may not be the current address* and may compromise the original owner's privacy.

