

## Introduction

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\*\*\* Last Updated 16/08/2018 \*\*\*

The Met doesn't investigate lost property, and we rarely take in found items.

If you're an officer on the beat or on a front desk, you may meet members of the public who:

- report lost property to you
- want to hand in property they've found.

Direct them to our [Report lost or found property online form](#).

You can also give them some brief advice to help them resolve it themselves:

- [Lost items](#)
- [Found items](#)

## Important

This information is Met policy. Anyone who works for the Met, including contractors and volunteers, must comply with it.

## Property reported lost

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If as a police officer you're approached by someone who's lost something, you mustn't make a record of it.

Advise them to retrace their steps and contact the business or venue they were visiting when they last had the item.

## Items with a serial number

If the item has a serial number and the person knows the number, advise them to:

- register the loss on [Immobilise](#), an online database that police forces use to reunite owners with found property
- register bicycle losses on [The Bike Register](#).

## Items lost on London public transport

Tell them to contact Transport for London on 0343 222 1234 (option 4).

## Lost driving licence

Tell them to [contact the DVLA](#).

## Lost passport

Direct them to the [cancel a passport page](#).

## Insurance letter

If they tell you that their insurer needs a police lost property reference number, tell them that a number isn't necessary – but you or they can print out a [lost property letter](#) to send to their insurer if they wish.

## High-value items

If someone reports the loss of an item valued over £500, or of high sentimental value (such as war medals or family heirlooms), you can make a note of their name and address on the [lost property owner contact form](#).

Make it clear that this is just a record of their contact details, in case the item is handed in – tell them politely that no investigation will take place.

You can 'advertise' the high-value lost item on the Met's [lost and found circulation list](#).

Officers also post found items on this list, so you may be able to match up a person's reported lost item to an item flagged up as 'found'.

## Hazardous item reported lost

Consult your supervisor if someone reports the loss of hazardous items such as:

- firearms
- explosives
- toxins.

Your supervisor may consider dealing with it as a critical incident.

## Visual guides

- [Guidance table for dealing with common lost property items](#)

- [Lost and found flowchart](#)

## Property handed in (found items)

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If you're an officer who's handed a low-value item found by a member of the public, tell them politely to keep the item or dispose of it away from police premises, unless it:

- might be the proceeds of crime, or used in crime
- is cash
- is likely to be of significant sentimental or monetary value (over £500)
- is easily traceable to a loser/owner (it has a name and address on it)
- poses a hazard or security risk
- contains personal/sensitive information
- was found in a licensed taxi (Hackney)
- is being handed in by someone under 18
- was found by a police officer or police staff member
- was found on police premises or in a police vehicle.

For these kind of items, you must:

1. Take the item and make a Book 89 record of it (Book 89 is a standard item of stationery that all police stations should have).
2. Give the finder the receipt section of the Book 89 form.
3. Tell them that they have the right to claim the property four weeks after handing it in (unless the items is illegal or dangerous to possess, or needed as evidence).
4. Tell them they have two weeks from that point to claim the item, after which time they lose their right to claim it, and it will be disposed of.
5. Pack, log and store the item.

Police Officers and staff are not allowed to claim found property.

## Book 89 entries

When recording items in the Book 89 form, write a clear description with:

- serial numbers
- identifying marks
- the correct amount of items (not 'quantity of' or 'amount of')

Open boxes and bags in the presence of a witness, and make a note of whether any locks had to be forced open.

## Trace the owner

If you've taken in high-value found property, make reasonable enquiries to find the owner, and record these efforts on the Book 89 form.

- If the item has an IMEI (International Mobile Station Equipment Identity) or a serial number, check it on Crimint, CRIS and NMPR (The National Mobile Property Register), to see if an owner is registered.
- If an owner claims the item, record it as found on NMPR.
- If the item doesn't have any sort of serial number, check to see if there's a description of it on the Met's [lost and found circulation list](#).

After five days, call your local criminal exhibits officer to get the item transferred to your local exhibit store. This frees up space in your station storage cupboard.

Record the transfer on the Book 89 form.

### Possible sale of unclaimed items

If you're an exhibits store officer who thinks that a found item has a sale value, enter it into the TOAST database as follows:

- Station ref: enter the Form 89 reference
- Case name: put the finder's name and the words 'street property'
- Property Status: 'unused letter code' Street property CREV
- Property Description: as normal

After six weeks, if no-one's claimed the item, send it to [Criminal Exhibit Services](#) in its tamper-evident bag, accompanied by a filled-in [exhibit form](#).

Mention on the form that the item is 'street property'. This shows that it's not a crime-related item (the CREV form is used to log crime-related exhibits, but it's also used for found property).

Criminal Exhibits Services will arrange the sale of the item.

### Treasure

Treasure is a stash of coins, precious metals or gems, with no known owner.

If someone hands in treasure, record it on a [found property form 66](#) and phone the district coroner as soon as possible.

If the finder keeps the property, make a note of this on the Form 66 and tell them to contact the district coroner as soon as possible. Failure to do so is a criminal offence under the [Treasure Act 1996](#).

## Visual guides

- [Guidance table for dealing with common found property items](#)
- [Lost and found flowchart](#)

## Restore found property to the owner or finder

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### Items that mustn't be restored to a finder

You mustn't restore the following items to finders:

- any item where possession is an offence
- items where the owner is known and it has not been possible to restore it to them within the time limit
- cheques, credit cards and similar items
- correspondence
- passports and official documents
- keys
- firearms, knives and other offensive weapons
- mobile phones
- computers or any equipment with computerised memories that hold data, including digital photographs or video
- military uniforms or equipment, (unless of historic value only and clearly part of a collection of 'militaria').

If removing a memory card from an item removes all its data, you can restore the item to the finder. The memory card should then be submitted to Criminal Exhibit Services for secure disposal.

### Restore an item to the finder

Before giving the item to the finder, get them to sign a [found property receipt](#).

When you've given it to them, get them to sign a Book 110 receipt, which is a printed receipt book that should be in your stationery supplies.

You must only restore property to minors in the presence of their parents or guardians.

## Restore found items to their owner

Only restore an item to an owner if they can prove they own it. You could get them to:

- describe the contents of a wallet or bag
- quote the serial number of an item
- describe the distinguishing feature of an item.

If the item is still in the station:

1. Open the evidence bag in front of the owner.
2. Check the contents against what's listed in the Book 89 form.
3. Give them the item (but not the evidence bag).
4. Get them to sign the Book 89 form to confirm receipt.

If the item has been taken to your local borough exhibit store, direct them there.

If you're a criminal exhibits officer giving back an item from an exhibits store, follow the same procedure, but update your TOAST record to show that the item has been given back.

### Restore items by post

If the owner can't pick up the item themselves, you can send it to them.

- Ask them to send you the predicted postage stamps needed (unless the item is cash, in which case ask their permission to use some of the cash to pay for postage).
- Pack the item, including a Book 110 receipt, and a pre-paid return envelope.
- Explain that you'd like them to send the receipt back in the pre-paid envelope.

If the item is valued at over £50, use recorded delivery and attach the certificate of posting to your Book 89 form.

### If an item has been sold or destroyed

After six weeks, the Met sells valuable found items to cover costs, and destroys items that can't be sold.

If someone claims ownership of an item that has been sold, offer them the amount the Met received at auction. Organise payment via your finance officer.

If they are not satisfied with this, advise them to instruct a solicitor.

If the item has been destroyed, tell the claimant. If they claim compensation, send their letter and a full report to the [Civil Actions Unit](#).