



Recovering Stolen Property

Property Used as Evidence

Items of personal property may have been used as a weapon or prop during a crime. Property may have been the focus of the crime. Property may contain evidence that will assist in identifying the offender. Property as evidence can play a critical role in the prosecution of a case.

The importance of the property as evidence often determines when it can be released or returned. Approval for release of property from the investigator or prosecutor may be required before its release. In some cases, the prosecutor may feel that the release of the property may harm prosecution of a crime and not agree to release the property. In other cases, prosecutors may allow photographs to be taken of the property and then release it to the owner.

Many counties have policies on when property can be released and returned. Any questions about return policies should be directed to the prosecutor or the law enforcement officer investigating the case.

Release of property to the owner should be completed by the conclusion of the time period for filing an appeal or the completion of an appeal of the case.

Stolen Property Return

Stolen property which is recovered is stored in the law enforcement property room in the jurisdiction where the crime was reported. Contact the law enforcement agency about their procedures for the return of personal property.

Stolen vehicles such as cars, trucks, motorcycles and snowmobiles, are kept at municipal impound lots. The law enforcement agency which recovers the stolen vehicle must promptly inform the law enforcement agency that received the theft report that the vehicle has been recovered, where it is located and when it can be released to the owner. Minnesota law requires that victims who report the theft of their vehicles be notified within 48 hours of the recovery of the vehicle.

Property Left at Medical Centers

Victims of crime who require medical attention may accidentally leave personal property at medical centers or may have personal property taken from them following treatment for their condition. Most hospitals and coroners will automatically forward all property associated with a crime to the police for possible use as evidence. Upon approval from the investigator or prosecutor, victims and owners may claim personal property from the law enforcement property room.

To assist in the process, you will need certain information:

- ▶ The case number from the police report
- ▶ A detailed description of the property (size, color, etc.)
- ▶ Serial numbers for the stolen property (to speed the reporting, recovery and return process).

Personal **property** may be **taken** during a crime. Once recovered, the **police** may hold the **stolen** personal property for **evidence** or for use in the case.

Victims suffer **inconvenience** and **loss** of income when personal **property** is held. They may be frustrated to **learn** that although their property has been **recovered**, it may take some **time** for it to be **returned**.

This **information** is offered to provide **understanding** about the **process** of recovering **personal** property.



Minnesota Office of Justice Programs

445 Minnesota Street
Suite 2300
St. Paul, MN 55101
Ph. 651-201-7300 or 1-888-622-8799
Fax 651-205-4808 • TTY 651-205-4827
www.ojp.state.mn.us