



Policy Chapter: Chapter 12 Campus Safety and Security

Policy Number and Title: 12.002 Management & Disposal of Found & Abandoned Property

I. Policy Statement

To establish the policy and procedure for the returning and disposing of abandoned and unclaimed personal property coming into the possession of UNT, including the University Police Department (UPD) and University Union, as authorized by section 51.213 of the Texas Education Code. This policy does not apply to property seized by the UPD, which is subject to the provisions of Chapter 59, Forfeiture of Contraband, of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures.

II. Application of Policy

University Police and University Union staff

III. Policy Definitions

A. Abandoned Property

“Abandoned Property,” in this policy, means any unclaimed personal property coming into the possession of the University. This can include lost and mislaid property.

B. Lost Property

“Lost Property,” in this policy, means personal property that the owner involuntarily parted with through neglect, carelessness, or inadvertence.

C. Mislaid Property

“Mislaid Property,” in this policy, means personal property that the owner stores in a location with the intent to return and retrieve it, but then forgets to retrieve it.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. Disposal of Personal Property

1. UNT, including the UPD and University Union, may dispose of abandoned and unclaimed personal property that comes into its possession and remains unclaimed for a period of thirty (30) days. This property includes, but is not limited to, currency, abandoned motor vehicles, bicycles, books, clothing, and electronic devices. Property held as evidence will be presumed abandoned after it is no longer valuable as evidence and is not claimed by its rightful owner.
2. The UPD may dispose of abandoned and unclaimed motor vehicles by impounding them under Chapter 683 of the Texas Transportation Code. Abandoned motor vehicles include vehicles impounded by the UPD and unclaimed by their owners, and vehicles that meet the definition of abandoned vehicles contained in Chapter 683 of the Texas Transportation Code.
3. Money that is abandoned or found in abandoned property shall be deposited in an appropriate University Abandoned Property Account managed by the Chief of the UPD

or a University scholarship fund account designated by the Vice President for Finance & Administration (VPFA) or VPFA's designee. These funds may be used for administrative and technical support purposes, or other purpose beneficial to the University, as determined by the VPFA.

4. Funds generated by the sale or auction of abandoned property will be deposited into the account authorized in paragraph IV.A.3. directly above.

B. Reporting, Claiming, Assessing Claims, and Returning Abandoned Personal Property

An individual who finds abandoned personal property on the University campus or is seeking to claim abandoned personal property should follow the guidelines set forth below.

1. Reporting Property

The individual who finds lost or unclaimed property should turn in said property to UNT.

2. Identifying Property Owners & Disposing of Property

UNT will make a good faith effort to notify the actual owner if their abandoned personal property comes into UNT's possession. The rightful owner has thirty (30) days, beginning from the time UNT comes into possession of the personal property, during which the owner can claim the property. At the end of the holding period, all personal property in UNT's possession may be disposed of.

3. Unclaimed Cash

- i. *Cash Valued under \$500*

Unclaimed cash with an aggregate value of less than five hundred dollars (\$500) may be returned to the finder, if a written claim form is submitted to and approved by the Chief of the UPD or Chief's designee.

- ii. *Cash Valued at \$500 or More*

Unclaimed cash with an aggregate value of five hundred dollars (\$500) or more may be returned to the finder, if a written claim form is submitted to and approved by the UNT System Office of General Counsel (OGC).

4. Third-Party Claims

A third-party, i.e., someone other than the rightful owner, especially the person who found the property, may claim abandoned cash. To do so, the individual must submit a claim form no later than thirty (30) days after the holding period expires.

5. Processing of Cash Claims

If the documentation is sent to the OGC, they will forward a legal opinion to the Chief of the UPD or Chief's designee within fifteen (15) business days from the date of receipt of the documentation. If a third party is determined by the OGC to have a right to the found cash, the OGC will provide a waiver and release agreement to be signed by the claimant prior to processing the payment. If the Chief of the UPD or Chief's designee is

the party responsible for review of the claim, the Chief of the UPD or Chief's designee will complete their review within fifteen (15) business days from the date of receipt of the claim form.

6. Notification of Determination

The UPD or Asset Management Department will notify the claimant within fifteen (15) business days of completion of the review of the: (i) review's outcome; and if the claim is approved, the (ii) method of receipt of the funds or property; and (iii) location, hours, and contact information of the department holding the property, when applicable.

7. Processing of Payment & Other Property

If payment of money is approved to the claimant, the UPD or Asset Management Department will process a request for payment from the account earmarked for Abandoned Property within fifteen (15) business days from the date the determination is made by the Chief of the UPD or Chief's designee, or the OGC's opinion is received. If a signed waiver and release agreement is required, the UPD or Asset Management Department will process a request for payment within fifteen (15) business days from the date the signed waiver and release agreement are received from the claimant.

8. Undelivered and Unclaimed Property

If delivery of other property (non-cash) to the claimant is approved, the claimant will then have thirty (30) days to visit the location of the property and take possession of it. If the claimant does not take such possession of the property within this timeframe, UNT may dispose of the property.

V. Resources/Tools/Forms

[UNT Police Abandoned Property List](#)

VI. References and Cross-References

[Texas Education Code § 51.213](#)

[Texas Code of Criminal Procedures, Chapter 59, Forfeiture of Contraband](#)

[Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 683](#)

VII. Revision History

Policy Contact:	Chief of Police
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