

County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health

Lost and Found Procedure

Effective Date 07/01/94
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Allan Rawland, Director

Purpose To provide staff with a consistent and lawful method for handling lost and found items discovered in Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) facilities.

Basic Procedure Follow the procedure below to take action on lost and found items in a DBH facility.

Note: This procedure does not apply to inpatient facilities, where internal lost and found protocols are required.

Step	Action								
1	<p>The Clinic Supervisor (CS) or Program Manager (PM) will assign a staff member to handle lost and found items.</p> <p>Note: Responsibility for lost and found items may be assigned to the Building Manager.</p>								
2	<p>The assigned staff member handling lost and found items receiving a lost item will obtain this initial information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the item was found • Exact location where the item was found • To whom the item belongs, if identifiable 								
3	<p>Determine the next step as follows:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">If</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Then</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ownership of the item(s) is that of a client,</td> <td>Proceed to the Handling Client Owned Items section below.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ownership of the item(s) is non-client but identified,</td> <td>Contact the person to request retrieval of the item(s). If not retrieved, proceed to the Securing Unclaimed Items section below.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ownership of the item(s) is unknown,</td> <td>Proceed to Step four (4).</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	If	Then	Ownership of the item(s) is that of a client,	Proceed to the Handling Client Owned Items section below.	Ownership of the item(s) is non-client but identified,	Contact the person to request retrieval of the item(s). If not retrieved, proceed to the Securing Unclaimed Items section below.	Ownership of the item(s) is unknown,	Proceed to Step four (4).
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Ownership of the item(s) is unknown,	Proceed to Step four (4).								
4	<p>The assigned staff member will send an email blast and/or public announcement to facility occupants, when the owner is not known, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a general term to describe the found item, such as “ring” rather than “diamond ring in a platinum setting” • Describe the location where the item was found in general terms, such as “restroom” rather than “west side women’s restroom” 								

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County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health

Lost and Found Procedure, Continued

Basic Procedure
(continued)

Step	Action
5	The assigned staff member will secure any unclaimed items as described in the Securing Unclaimed Items section below. Note: Staff searching for personal lost items should refer to County Policy No. 06-07: Employee Personal Property Loss Reimbursement .
6	The assigned staff member will request anyone claiming the item to describe the item and the exact location where it was lost, if the location is known, before relinquishing item possession.
7	The assigned staff member will send a reminder email blast and/or public announcement after one (1) month has expired to ensure staff unable to receive the first notification has a second opportunity to receive the information.
8	Follow the steps in Dispersing Unclaimed Items section below for items unclaimed after ninety (90) days have expired.

Handling Client Owned Items

Lost items found which are established as belonging to a client will be handled by the staff member responsible for Lost and Found items as follows:

Step	Action
1	Secure the item as described in the Securing Unclaimed Items section below.
2	Locate the client's telephone number and call the client to advise the item was found and is now being securely held for pickup.
3	Immediately follow the telephone call with a Client Notification Letter (Spanish) in the client's primary language advising the item has been found and is being securely held for pick up at the client's next appointment, or until ninety (90) days have expired and no longer.
4	Note on the client's next appointment in the Scheduling Tool that the found item is to be returned to the client at the time of check-in.
5	Follow the steps in Dispersing Unclaimed Items section below for all items unclaimed after ninety (90) days have expired.

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Lost and Found Procedure, Continued

Securing Unclaimed Items

Follow the steps below to secure unclaimed found items:

Step	Action
1	Place the found item in an envelope or plastic bag suitable to the type/size of the item.
2	Note on the envelope or on a note to be placed in the plastic bag the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The date the item was found ○ The location where the item was found ○ The date the item was turned in, if different from the date found
3	Record found items on the Found and Saved Property Log .
4	Seal the envelope or bag and store the found item in an already existing locking drawer or closet as appropriate to the size of the item. Found Protected Health Information (PHI) or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be stored in a secured area according to the guidelines found in Medical Records Security Policy for Outpatient Services , as appropriate to the type of item found. Note: Facility security services are not contracted to be responsible for or store Lost and Found items.
5	Keys to the locking drawer or closet will be issued to the following, as determined by the CS or PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS or PM • Supervising Office Specialist (SOS) • Staff member assigned to handle Lost and Found items
6	No staff member may have access to stored PHI/PII found items without the purpose of treatment, payment or operations, with the exception of retrieving a found item to return it to the owner.

Dispersing Unclaimed Items

The staff member assigned to handle Lost and Found items will notify the CS or PM of all items unclaimed after ninety (90) days have expired. The CS or PM will assign a staff member to disperse all unclaimed items as follows.

Items Valued at \$100 or More

Items with an approximate value of \$100 or more will be taken to the local law enforcement agency or County Sheriff in accordance with Civil Code Section 2080. The following actions will be taken prior to the dispersal.

- The CS of PM will determine the approximate value of items other than cash.

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Lost and Found Procedure, Continued

Dispersing Unclaimed Items (continued)

- The CS, PM or designee will complete an [Affidavit of Found and Saved Property](#). The affidavit contains the following information:
 - Item name
 - From where and how the item was saved or found
 - Whether the owner of the item is known
 - Declaration that no part of the item was withheld or disposed of
 - Description of the item
 - Signature
- The CS or PM will sign the completed [Affidavit of Found and Saved Property](#)
- The CS or PM will have the assigned staff member in charge of Lost and Found items document item dispersals in the last column of the [Found and Saved Property Log](#).

Items Valued Under \$100 (<\$100)

- The CS or PM will arrange to have unclaimed cash under one hundred dollars (<\$100) taken to a nearby DBH Clubhouse
- The CS or PM will arrange to have unclaimed items other than cash and with an approximate value under one hundred dollars (<\$100) taken to the DBH Homeless Program
- The CS or PM will have the assigned staff member in charge of Lost and Found items document the dispersals in the last column of the [Found and Saved Property Log](#).

Note: PHI or PII documents having a known owner and unclaimed after ninety (90) days will be placed in an appropriate shredder bin. Otherwise, cash and other items will be dispersed as described above.

Reference

California Civil Code, Section 2080 et seq.
County of San Bernardino Policy No. 06-07: [Employee Personal Property Loss Reimbursement](#)
DBH Standard Practice Manual:

- COM0904: [Medical Records Security Policy for Outpatient Services](#)
- COM0905: [Client Privacy and Confidentiality of Protected Health Information](#)
- COM0907: [Unauthorized Access of Confidential Medical Records Policy](#)
