

Investigations/Property and Evidence Unit



West Linn Police Department Investigations / Property and Evidence Unit

It is the duty of the Property and Evidence Unit to maintain the integrity and security of evidence that is seized by officers including abandoned property, found property or stolen property. The Police Department is responsible for establishing policies and procedures which serve to insure property seized from the public is efficiently processed, secured, and maintained for admissibility in court until returned or disposed of in accordance with state law. The Property and Evidence Unit processes, stores and disposes of property, which may constitute evidence in criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The Evidence Unit

The Evidence Unit responds to crime scenes for the police department and the team that responds to major crimes within Clackamas County, better known as the Clackamas County Inter-Agency Major Crimes Team. At the crime scene the technician takes photos, lifts latent prints, trace evidence, seize blood or body fluids, create diagrams, and whatever else may be needed to assist other units.

The Property Unit

The Property Unit will need to have received a release from the appropriate court for any and all property that has been held as evidence for a Court proceeding. When authorization to release property is received, the owner of the evidence is contacted by the Property/Evidence unit by mail.

Unclaimed Property

Unclaimed property means personal property that was seized by a police officer as evidence, abandoned property,

found property or stolen property, and that has remained in the physical possession of the police department for a period of more than 90 days following conclusion of all criminal actions related to the seizure of the evidence, abandoned property, found property or stolen property, or conclusion of the investigation if no criminal action was filed.

Unfortunately, some property stored in Property and Evidence can never be returned to its owner. Property found or recovered with no owner identification will ultimately be destroyed or auctioned unless an owner can be established.

The chances of recovery for a victim of lost or stolen property are greatly increased when they have etched their driver license number or identification number on their property of value. Property marked in this manner is easier to return to owners, and is more difficult to alter.

Retrieving Property Held

Property is released by appointment only.

Property listed on a property receipt issued to an individual for evidence seized in a crime, found or stolen property is currently under the protection of the West Linn Police Department. Individuals can call the Property and Evidence Unit at, (503) 655-6214, to inquire about property held and to request an appointment for release. Business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Weapons: Seized weapons are not automatically returned to individuals. Federal law requires officers run a weapons check before releasing firearms. When a weapon is for safekeeping and it involved a suicide or domestic disturbance an automatic 30-day waiting period is placed before the weapon is returned. In the case of first time seizures with no other police history, the weapon can be returned after 48 hours or it will be disposed of if not claimed within six months. Prior to any weapons being released, a background check will be performed to ascertain your eligibility to receive these weapons.

Evidence: Individuals can contact Property and Evidence Unit after adjudication of a case for release information. If your name and your correct address were provided to the officer at the time of the receipt, you should receive a notification letter. If you have items that were seized for forensic testing or fingerprinting, contact the Property and Evidence Officer for information about reclaiming those items.

Safekeeping: Items will be held for an owner no longer than 30 days. After 30 days, the items will be destroyed.

Found or Recovered Stolen: The Property and Evidence Officer will make every attempt to contact the owner of found or recovered stolen property. If no identifying owner is known the items will be disposed of after 60 days.

Rights and Duties of Finders and Owners Oregon Revised Statutes

ORS 98.005 Rights and Duties of Finder of Money or Goods. (1) If any person finds money or goods valued at \$100 or more, and if the owner of the money or goods is unknown, such person within 10 days after the date of the finding, shall give notice of the finding in writing to the county clerk of the county in which the money or goods was found. Within 20 days after the date of the finding, the finder of the money or goods shall cause to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county a notice of the finding once each week for two consecutive weeks. Each such notice shall state the general description of the money or goods found, the name and address of the finder and final date before which such goods may be claimed.*

(2) If no person appears and establishes his ownership of the money or goods prior to the expiration of the three months from the date of the notice of the county recorder under subsection 1 above, the finder shall be the owner of the money or goods.

** Mail a notice of finding to the Office of County Clerk, Second Floor, 2051 Kaen Road, Oregon City, OR 97045*
ORS 98.015 Liability of Noncomplying Finder; Forfeiture to County of Unreclaimed Money or Goods. If any person who finds money or goods valued at \$100 or more fails to comply with ORS 98.005, the person shall be liable, upon conviction or violation of ORS 164.065, to the county for the money or goods or the full value of the money or goods. The county treasurer shall hold the money or goods or their value for owner thereof and shall publish notice of the finding of the money or goods in the manner provided in ORS 98.005. If the owner has not reclaimed such money or goods within three months after the date of the first publication of notice by the county treasurer, the owner shall forfeit the rights of the owner to the value of such money or goods and the value of such money or

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goods shall be placed in the general fund of the county to be used for the payment of the general operating expenses of the county.

ORS 98.025 Rights of the owner. If an owner of money or goods found by another person appears and establishes his claim to such money or goods within the time described by ORS 98.005 or 98.015, whichever applies, he shall have restitution of such money or goods or their value upon payment of all costs and charges incurred in the finding, giving of notice, care and custody of such money or goods.

For additional information or to make an appointment for the release of property, please call (503) 655-6214, Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, except holidays. The West Linn Police Department is located at 22825 Willamette Falls Drive, West Linn, Oregon 97068.

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