

Recording Your Personal Property

When an item is recovered by the police department every effort is made to locate the owner. In many situations this is attempted primarily by checking the item for **identifying marks** and checking the **serial number** in the computer to determine if the item has been reported stolen. When an owner reports an item stolen to the police and they do not have the serial number(s), the item *will not be traceable* via the serial number to the owner. **However**, if an owner **has the serial number** of the stolen item and this number is checked in the computer by law enforcement officers, this item will show up as a stolen item with owner information. This will allow us to return items to their rightful owners and aid in the prosecution of defendants.

If your property does not have a serial number, you can engrave the item with an OAN (owner applied number) that is used as an identifying number like a serial number. Another way is to use your last name and your postal zip code (ChongXXXXX-XXXX). You can add your zip code (or the nine digit extended zip code) so you won't be giving out any private information. (This tip comes from Lieutenant Charles Chong with the Honolulu Police Department). Some valuables such as jewelry, antiques, furs, and silverware cannot be engraved without reducing their value and should be photographed or videotaped. Don't wait until you become a victim to protect yourself. Engraving your property should be in addition to keeping a record of serial numbers and model numbers.

Which items should I Mark?

Anything of value that a thief could carry away except guns or items that will be reduced in value -- write down serial numbers on those items. Many items like jewelry will have an inscription like, "To Martha With all My Love" - that is listed as a OAN (Owner Applied Number) and is just as good as a serial number in many instances. Make sure that information is listed on any report taken.

- Bicycles, Radios, Cameras, Televisions, Binoculars, VCR, Watches, Stereos
- Hand and Power Tools, Computers, Gardening Tools, Typewriters
- Kitchen Appliances, Musical Instruments, Sports Equipment

In addition to engraving your property, it is extremely important for you to keep a written inventory. This should include Model numbers, Serial numbers, and a complete description of the item.

Write down the serial numbers of any and every firearm you own. You can get it back if it's stolen and recovered if you record the serial numbers, model and brand name. Smith & Wesson Model 3903 - 9mm serial number 15R45678 for example. Everything electronic, VCRs, Computers, Monitors, Cameras, Radios and the like. Engrave numbers

on power tools as they may have non-unique numbers. When you buy something, put the manuals and registration cards to your items in the same box or bag in one place. When items are stolen, make SURE the officer or the person taking the report over the phone gets the serial numbers. You can get your property back if it's recovered if you have this proof. If police arrest people trying to sell your valuables, you will get them returned once the property is no longer needed as evidence.

IDENTIFY YOUR PROPERTY

One of the best ways you can assist the police in recovering your stolen property is by keeping records. Record this information on a property record sheet (see link below). Be sure to use additional sheets if necessary.

WHAT IF YOUR PROPERTY IS STOLEN?

Contact the Police Department at 615-862-8600. Be prepared to provide the police with the serial and model numbers along with descriptions of your property. Every year, police recover hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of stolen goods. Often, the owners have no proof that the property is theirs. A record of your property will solve this problem.

Print out the [RECORD-OF-VALUABLE-PROPERTY-FORM.doc](#) , fill it in and store it in a safe place. You will have a good chance to find your recovered property if your property is ever stolen.