



Lost Property & Evidence Handling Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the procedures for safely managing, recording, storing, and returning **lost property** as well as handling and securing **evidence** found on the premises. It supports:

- The Licensing Act 2003
- Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Police & Criminal Evidence Act (PACE)
- Best practice for licensed premises and security operations

The goal is to protect customers, staff, and the premises while ensuring proper handling of items that may have legal or evidential value.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (bar, floor, management)
- Door supervisors and security personnel
- Contractors and cleaners
- Any person authorised by the DPS

It covers:

- Customer lost property
 - Abandoned or unclaimed items
 - Items recovered during searches
 - Controlled drugs
 - Weapons
 - Evidence relating to incidents or crimes
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3. Definitions

Lost Property

- Items accidentally left behind by a customer or staff member.

Abandoned Property

- Items intentionally left, discarded, or placed without ownership claim.



Evidence

Any item that may assist in an investigation or relate to a crime or incident, including:

- Drugs
 - Weapons (knives, blades, improvised weapons)
 - Stolen goods
 - Fake IDs
 - Property involved in a complaint, assault, or spiking allegation
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4. Staff Responsibilities

Staff must:

- Immediately report lost or suspicious items to management or the duty manager.
 - Not search bags or coats unless following voluntary search procedures.
 - Log all found items in the **Lost Property & Evidence Register**.
 - Handle all evidence items using gloves where appropriate.
 - Not speculate about ownership, value, or criminal involvement.
 - Never keep, remove, or use property left by customers.
 - Follow police guidance when an item may be criminal or dangerous.
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5. Process for Lost Property (Non-Criminal Items)

5.1 When an item is found

Staff should:

1. Bring the item to the manager on duty.
2. Record in the Lost Property Register:
 - *Description of item*
 - *Exact location found*
 - *Time and date*
 - *Staff name*
3. Secure the item in the designated storage area.

5.2 Handling valuable items

Valuables include:

- Phones
- Wallets / purses
- Jewellery
- Watches
- Laptops / tablets

Additional requirements:

- Logged with serial numbers if present
- Stored in a locked cabinet or safe
- Access restricted to management only



5.3 Returning lost property

Items may be returned only when:

- The claimant provides accurate description
- They provide ID when appropriate
- Ownership is clear and verified

Staff must complete a “Returned Property” entry including:

- Name of person collecting
- ID type & number (if taken)
- Staff member returning the item
- Signature of claimant

5.4 Retention periods

Recommended retention:

- **14 days** for low-value items
- **28 days** for valuables
- **Immediately** if item appears stolen (handover to police)
- **24 hours** maximum for any item containing personal data before considering police involvement

6. Handling Evidence & Criminal Items

Some items must NOT be treated as normal lost property.

6.1 Drugs

If drugs are found:

- Do not touch with bare hands.
- Inform duty manager & security.
- Record and secure in a sealed evidence bag.
- Contact police for collection.
- Never dispose of drugs in toilets, bins, or sinks.
- Never store drugs in staff areas or pockets.

A staff member must *never* test, smell, or attempt to identify drugs.

6.2 Weapons

If a weapon is found (knife, blade, knuckle-duster, improvised weapon):

- Do not handle unless necessary for safety.
- Inform duty manager & security immediately.
- Secure the area if needed.
- Hand over to police as soon as possible.
- Record time, location, and how the weapon was discovered.



Staff must **not** attempt to use the weapon or show it to customers.

6.3 Evidence relating to incidents

This includes:

- Glasses involved in spiking allegations
- Clothing containing bodily fluids
- Items dropped during altercations
- Fake IDs
- Mobile phones connected to criminal behaviour

Procedures:

- Seal items in evidence bags
- Label with time, date, and staff name
- Maintain chain of custody
- Notify police if linked to a crime, assault, or safeguarding incident
- Preserve relevant CCTV footage

6.4 Stolen property

If staff reasonably suspect an item is stolen:

- Treat as evidence
- Notify police
- Do **not** return the item to anyone unless verified by police

7. Evidence Storage & Chain of Custody

A **chain of custody** must be maintained for all evidence items.

All evidence must:

- Be sealed in labelled evidence bags
- Be stored in a secure, restricted-access cabinet or safe
- Be logged in the Evidence Register
- Be handed to police against a signed receipt

The DPS should periodically verify evidence storage integrity.

8. Customer Complaints Involving Personal Items

If a complaint involves lost or stolen personal belongings, staff must:

- Show empathy and support
- Check the Lost Property Register
- Review relevant CCTV (management only)
- Provide police reference numbers if applicable
- Record details in the Incident Log



If foul play is suspected:

- Escalate to DPS
 - Preserve relevant evidence
 - Notify police if required
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9. Data Protection Requirements

Lost property may contain personal data, such as:

- Bank cards
- ID documents
- Passports
- Digital devices
- Letters or medical documents

Staff must:

- Avoid accessing or viewing personal data
- Report data breaches to management immediately
- Store items securely
- Avoid charging customer devices

After the retention period, items containing personal data must be:

- Returned to the issuing authority (e.g., passport office), or
 - Handed to police for disposal
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10. Disposal of Unclaimed Property

After the retention period and reasonable attempts to contact the owner:

- Low-value items may be disposed of responsibly
- Items containing personal data must be destroyed securely
- Valuables must **not** be claimed or used by staff
- Alcohol or age-restricted items must be destroyed, not consumed

Staff must never keep unclaimed property.

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or after any incident involving:

- Lost property complaints
- Drug finds
- Weapons
- Significant evidence handling
- Police involvement

12. Zero-Tolerance Statement

This premises operates a zero-tolerance policy toward:

- Theft
- Handling controlled drugs
- Possession of weapons
- Interference with evidence
- Staff misuse or removal of customer property

Any person suspected of criminal behaviour will be removed, banned, and reported to the Police.

Any updates will be communicated to all staff.