



ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

CARE OF COUNCIL OWNED EQUIPMENT

Covers:

- **Employee's responsibilities**
- **Steps to take**

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CARE OF COUNCIL OWNED EQUIPMENT

1. Introduction

Many council employees are issued with items of equipment owned by the council for use as part of their day to day responsibilities. This will include equipment for use within council buildings, as well as out of the office on council business and working at home. Some items may be of significant value such as mobile telephones, laptop computers, portable LCD's etc. As many of these items are portable they are highly desirable to thieves.

The council is working closely with the local Police through its Community Safety initiative to reduce the level of theft of such items in the borough. This policy sets out the expectations of the council in relation to the care of such items and the responsibilities of staff.

2. Employee's responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility for the safety and security of council equipment. This applies as much in and around the office/work environment as it does when working out of the office. Everyone needs to be security conscious and follow these common sense rules:

- Do not leave valuable items e.g. mobile 'phones, laptops etc on display in unattended offices.
- Secure valuable items away in locked cabinets or drawers when not in use.
- Do not leave security doors/fire doors or windows open when the office is empty or at the end of the day.
- Always wear your identity badge when you are on council business or in council buildings.
- If you see anyone in council buildings without an identity badge ask them to identify themselves or escort them to reception.
- Try to escort visitors around the building whenever possible.

These rules can be applied equally well to safeguarding personal items as well as council equipment.

Employees are expected to exercise reasonable care with council equipment whilst it is in their possession.

The following additional common sense precautions should be taken when equipment is used off site:

- Do not leave equipment unattended when you are in a public place.
- Ensure that equipment is only used by council employees for council business.

The theft of portable items from motor vehicles is a particular problem. The council has a separate policy with regard to the prevention of this type of theft, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Staff need to remember that not only will they experience considerable disruption to their work if equipment is lost or stolen, but that they are also responsible for ensuring that any information held on the equipment (e.g. laptops) remains confidential. Please refer to the IT security policy.

The council has limited insurance cover for portable equipment such as laptops, whilst on council premises. Claims for theft can only be made where there is evidence of a forcible entry or exit. An excess applies (refer to the Insurance & Risk team). Refer to the Prevention of Theft from Motor Vehicles policy for further guidance on insurance of laptops when in vehicles.

If a laptop is stolen from an employees' home, it may be possible for a claim to be made under their household contents insurance policy. Employees should check the wording of their home insurance to clarify whether such work equipment would be covered in the event of loss or damage.

In the event of theft or damage to equipment resulting directly from an employee's recklessness or gross carelessness with regard to their responsibilities outlined in this policy, the matter may be investigated under the council's Disciplinary procedure and if appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken. In cases where recklessness or gross carelessness is proven the council reserves the right to ask staff to pay a reasonable contribution towards the repair or replacement of the item.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff issued with valuable equipment complete the Care of Council owned equipment – Issue Record Form.

Following a theft of council equipment or assets from either themselves, or their staff, managers must raise a Police Theft Report, for example, see the [Thames Valley Police](#) website and obtain a Crime Reference Number.