First steps for any theft

What was stolen? First steps for any theft. Work down the list in order and tick each step as you finish it. The full guide, with the reasons behind every step, is at confirmedstolen.com/stolen-property/.

Right away

- [ ] **Make sure you and others are safe before anything else**
  If the theft is in progress, a suspect may still be nearby, or anyone is hurt or threatened, call 911. Property can be replaced; people cannot.
- [ ] **Leave the scene as it is where you can**
  Avoid cleaning up or handling broken locks, windows or packaging until police say whether they want to see or photograph them.
- [ ] **Write down what happened while it is fresh**
  Note when you last saw the item, when you noticed it missing, where it was, and anything unusual you saw or heard. Save any doorbell or security camera footage before it is overwritten.

Within 24 hours

- [ ] **Report the theft to police and get the report number**
  Use the non-emergency line or online reporting if your department offers it. Ask for the report or case number, the officer's name, and how to get a copy. For crimes committed online, also file with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov/).
- [ ] **Cancel or lock anything the stolen item gives access to**
  Cancel cards, lock or remotely erase phones and laptops, and change passwords for accounts the device was signed in to. If identity documents were taken, follow the steps at IdentityTheft.gov (www.identitytheft.gov/).
- [ ] **Notify your insurer and ask what it needs**
  Contact your homeowners, renters, auto or business insurer. Ask about the claim deadline, the documents required and whether the police report number is needed.
- [ ] **List every missing item with serial numbers and photos**
  Record make, model, serial number, color, distinguishing marks and approximate value for each item. Gather receipts, order confirmations and photos that show the item in your possession.
- [ ] **Give the serial numbers to police**
  A serial number lets police enter an item into law-enforcement stolen-property systems. Without one, a recovered item is hard to trace back to you.

This week

- [ ] **Check online marketplaces and pawn listings, but do not confront anyone**
  Search local listings for your item using its make, model and distinctive features. If you find it, save screenshots and the listing link and send them to the officer on your case.

- [ ] **Search the official lookup tools for your type of property**
  Vehicles, phones, bicycles, artworks and domain names each have their own registries. See how to check if something is stolen (confirmedstolen.com/check-if-stolen/).

- [ ] **Register the theft with item-specific registries**
  Mark a registered bicycle as stolen on its registry, ask your wireless carrier to block a stolen phone, and ask police whether other items can be entered by serial number.

- [ ] **Start a written log of every contact**
  Record the date, person, agency or company, reference number and what was said for every call, email and form. The log keeps a long claim or investigation on track.

Follow up

- [ ] **Send new information to the officer on the case**
  Pass along listings, sightings, tracking data or footage as you find them, and quote your report number each time.

- [ ] **Follow up on the insurance claim in writing**
  Confirm what the insurer has received, what is still outstanding and when to expect a decision. Keep copies of everything you submit.

- [ ] **Tell police and registries if the item is recovered**
  Report a recovery so the item is removed from stolen-property records and you are not later treated as holding stolen goods. Tell your insurer as well.

- [ ] **Record serial numbers and photos of what you still own**
  Build the inventory now, store it outside your home and devices, and register items such as bicycles and vehicles where registries exist.

Your case record

What was stolen

Police report number and officer

Insurance claim number

Serial numbers recorded

Registries notified

Notes

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