

## Departmental Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What items go to Surplus?**

A: Once you determine an item owned by OSU to be surplus, it must go through our department. This includes items purchased by your department but it also includes items that are donated.

**Q: Sometimes you pick up items in a few days and sometimes it takes almost a month. How come?**

A: Warehouse space. We have at least one used store and usually an auction every month. Before an auction, it is usually quite full; after an auction, the warehouse is almost completely empty. When the warehouse becomes full, we don't have anywhere to put your items—so there may be a delay in pickup and our SPRs become backlogged. Conversely, after an auction, the pace is quite hectic as we catch up on the backlog of SPRs.

**Q: What happens to the money from items you sell?**

A: For items under \$20, the entire amount is retained by Property Services to cover moving and sales cost. For items over \$20, based on a sliding fee, on average, seventy percent is returned to owning department.

**Q: How much money are we talking here?**

A: Last year, we returned a quarter of a million dollars back into “the system,” most of which went back to original owning departments.

**Q: Can we sell surplus to another department or agency without going through you?**

A: Yes—sort of. We don't have to become “involved” but we do have to know to whom you are selling and what equipment is being sold. We have a list of persons, departments, and agencies that are allowed to buy items. We are also aware of certain conditions some equipment cannot be sold or transferred even to “proper” agencies. There is no charge for you to run your sale past us—please call.

**Q: We have a lot of old video equipment—can we hold a garage sale and sell this stuff to students and staff or do we have send it to you? Can we put it in the hall and hang “Free—take me” signs on it?**

A: No, absolutely not! You cannot sell anything to the general public at any time, nor can you give it away. This will violate state statute and put you in hot water. We know these regulations and we know how to market your surplus—please let us do our job.

**Q: We have a bunch of old computers and we would like to donate them to a public school. Can we do this?**

A: Yes—if we approve. To whom you can donate computers or any state-owned equipment to is regulated by the state—just as the sale of items are- and we are the experts on how this is done.

Not all public schools, for example, are qualified to receive surplus property—we have to make sure their status is current.

We would be happy to assist you—but donations are handled in the same fashion as surplus equipment. Please call for assistance.

### **Filling in the Surplus Pick-up Request (SPR) form**

Follow the guidelines in the handbook—and of course, please call us if you have any questions. Here are some quick questions and answers presented below:

**Q: All of this stuff is junk—do I send it to you?**

A: Up to a point, yes. Obviously some items are trash and can be handled and disposed of properly. However, many times you may think an object is “junk” but we are able to find a buyer for it, or we can combine it with other items to make a sale. An old circuit card, for example, may have no value by itself, but a bin full of circuit cards is worth \$50.

**Q: Okay, then, how do I know the difference between “junk” and “surplus?”**

A: Your safest bet is to call and ask if there is any question.

**Q: When filling in the form, how descriptive should I be?**

A: Just enough and not any more... we should be able to look at your description and be able to tell what it is from that description. “Computer” is not long enough. “Computer, AST” is better; “Computer, AST 486/66” is perfect. We no longer need serial numbers, though your department or agency may require that you provide them. Your description, ideally, should “stand alone”—so if someone were scanning the database, as you can do now, they would have some idea of what the item was.

By far, the worst description we frequently see is “Box of miscellaneous stuff.”

**Q: How thorough do I have to make my SPR? Do I need to list “everything?”**

A: Use “common sense.” We once received a stack of SPRs that included six pages solid where every line was “mouse, Apple,” and included a serial number. This is **too** thorough. To us, a “computer” is a CPU, a monitor, a keyboard, a mouse, and cabling. Most office supplies end up on the surplus free table (for departmental use)—so do not count binders, staplers, and whole punches when you can say “office supplies, one lot”.

Sometimes, if they are not on inventory, many like items can be lotted as a single item. If you have twenty items and you are certain (absolutely certain) that none are on inventory, you can usually list those items as a lot. Your best bet though, is to make a phone call and ask. We are here to help you get your surplus to us and will let you know when you can take the short cut.

However—an item must be listed if it has an inventory number (if you see a orange or a orange and white sticker). If it has multiple inventory numbers, then you can use one line to list the item, and use the next line to include all the inventory numbers. Inventory numbers are very important

and cause headaches when they disappear from inventory—don't count on our department to spot these stickers. We can catch most of them, but not all of them.

**Q: I have a lot of computers and they have inventory stickers. I know for a fact that they are no longer on inventory. Do I still have to list them separately?**

A: Yes.

**Q: After I've filled out the Surplus Pickup Request (SPR) form, then what? Who picks up the surplus? Can we bring it to you?**

A: After we receive the SPR, we check the inventory numbers to be sure we can sell the items. We then schedule the items for pick up. This can be in just a few days or as long as three weeks, depending on warehouse space availability. We put your request in a queue and generally speaking, it's first come, first serve. Though, we may often expedite the pick up if we are in the area.

Yes, you can bring it to us—thank you very much—but please call first, especially if your items require special handling and, as mentioned above, we do need to know beforehand as the warehouse may be full.

## **Store Questions**

**Q: When can I come look at stuff in your warehouse? What are your hours?**

A: If you are doing departmental shopping, you can come any time from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday- with one exception: we are closed on the day of an OSU Used Sale (usually on a Wednesday, and usually just once a month).

**Q: I can't make it over every week. Is there a "best" time to shop?**

A: You can come whenever you please or when you need an item—however, if you want to come on our "best" days, you should come on a Tuesday before a public sale or auction. By then, we have as many items as we are going to have for that cycle. Look at our schedule and arrive just before the sale.

You can also subscribe to the Scrounge email service (on our home page) and get a reminder just before a sale occurs.

**Q: Who determines the price of an item? How is this done?**

A: The surplus property coordinator and others on the surplus property team. Over the course of several years and over one hundred public auctions, we have pretty much seen everything and know what prices we can expect. However we are happy to take suggestions, and your assistance on those items that we are not familiar with is welcomed.

**Q: Who can shop at your warehouse during departmental shopping hours?**

A: Qualified buyers—for the most part, you should know if you are a qualified buyer already. If you are buying an item for your department using a departmental index card, you are an approved buyer. If you are from a state agency and your are buying an item using agency funds, you are an approved buyer. If you are an approved non-profit and are using a purchase order to buy an item for your agency, then you are a qualified buyer.

**Q: Non-profit? I haven't made money in years, am I a non-profit? Am I a qualified buyer?**

A: The state determines who is a qualified buyer and sends us a list. If you aren't on the list, you can't shop here during departmental hours.

**Q: How do I get on this approved buyer list?**

A: You must be approved by the state DAS in Salem. They maintain the guidelines and they make the approvals; we aren't sure what these guidelines are. If you want to become an approved buyer, your contact person is: Carlene Nollen (503) 378-4711, x:306.

**Q: Can I buy using grant money?**

A: Short answer: not usually. Long answer: sometimes but rarely.

We deal almost exclusively with index numbers and purchase numbers. We do take grant numbers under a very limited number of circumstances, all of which involve approval of your research accountant. If you want to buy something from us using a grant number, please let us help you determine if you can do this before we load the item on the back of the truck.