

Eco-Tip for 10/15/17

Avoid Waste: Get Back That Lost-and-Found

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Lost items are usually found, but often not reunited with their former owner. Establishing a lost-and-found location at your business, venue, or other publicly accessed location is a popular customer service and employee-relations practice, and donating unclaimed lost-and-found items to thrift stores reduces waste.

For example, items lost on County property, such as the Ventura County Government Center, are held for 90 days on site while a contracted security company waits for a matching claim, and then unclaimed items are donated to a thrift store.

Not all businesses make the effort to donate to thrift stores, and many lost items have more sentimental value than resale value, so they end up disposed. To avoid waste, claim your lost item promptly, and go pick it up.

Chargerback.com is a web site designed to ease the processes of making claims, matching items to claimants, and returning items. On their web site, you can use drop-down menus to select the place where you lost your item and the date of loss. You describe your item and provide contact information. The locations on their drop-down menus are Chargerback partners, providing lost items to the company rather than handling the administrative burden of managing a lost and found department themselves.

Named for phone chargers, one of the most common items left in hotel rooms, the site has far more partnerships with hotels than with other locations. However, various other choices on the web site's first "location" drop-down menu show Chargerback intends to add airlines, rental car companies, restaurants, amusement parks, and other partners.

In an article on the Fox News Travel web site (reprinted from an article originally on the Budget Travel website), a former airline lost and found agent provides useful warnings and tips. Robert Lehr, the Manager of Central Baggage Services at Southwest Airlines, says wallets, glasses, and cell phones are the most commonly lost and recovered items. Coats are often lost and not recovered. He therefore advises travelers to always check the seat pocket in front of them and their overhead compartment before leaving a plane, train, or bus.