



Madison Police Department

"Policing in Partnership with our Community"

Processing of Stolen/Found/Abandoned Bicycles

The Madison Police Department has one civilian assigned as a Bicycle Recovery Specialist (BRS). The BRS has the responsibility for the majority of work related to the recovery and return of bicycles. The BRS is an hourly position averaging approximately 12 to 20 hours per week. The BRS schedules his time based on various factors (season, weather, requests etc).

Reporting Stolen Bicycles- Citizens should be referred to the self-report line to report stolen bicycles. A case number will be established which will be utilized by the citizen's insurance company in the event an insurance claim is filed. If the citizen can provide the serial number and bicycle registration number, a copy of the report goes to data. If any of the following circumstances are present, the citizen should be referred to dispatch to request that an officer be dispatched to complete an investigation and report the incident:

- *The theft just occurred (as a general rule within the past half hour).
- *The complainant has information to identify the suspect(s) in the incident.
- *The bicycle was stolen in the course of a burglary.
- *The bicycle was taken from the victim by force or threat of force.
- *A copy of the officer's report or citizen's self-report will be routed to the BRS.

Found/Abandoned Bicycles- The BRS will respond to citizens' calls (including managers of retail establishments) to investigate bicycles that have been reported abandoned or found. A notice will be placed on the bike informing the owner that it appears the bicycle has been abandoned and will be subject to seizure if not removed within 48 hours. If after 48 hours the bicycle is still present, it will be seized by the BRS and he will proceed to research all available records in an attempt to identify the owner the bike. The BRS will check the Transaction Information for Management of Enforcement (TIME) system by entering the serial number to see if the bike is registered as stolen and/or check with *Progress* (the city bicycle registration software) to see if the owner has registered the bike.

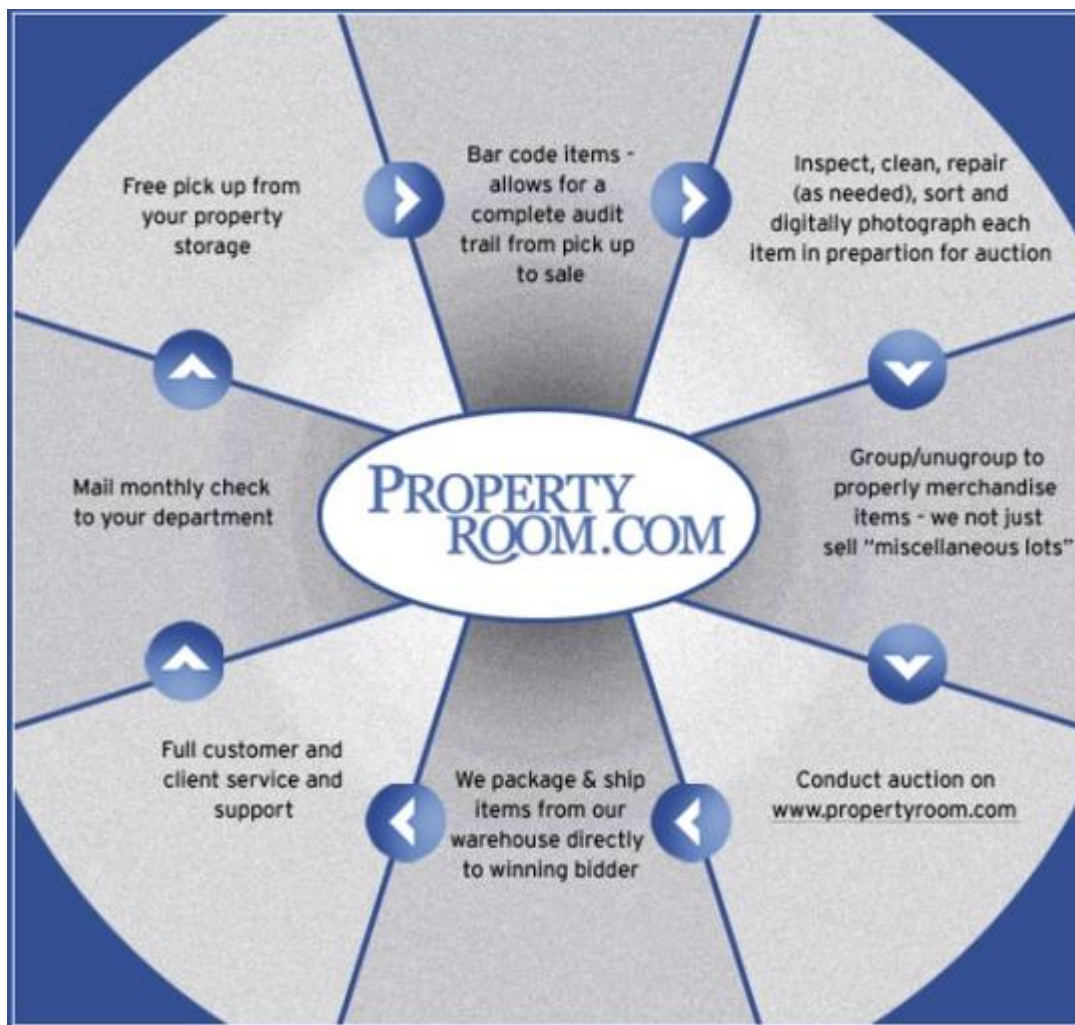
Disposal of Bicycles- If the BRS is unable to locate an owner of a bicycle, the bicycle will be held in storage for 30-45 days. If there is no inquiry by the owner during this time period, the bicycle will be designated for auction via PropertyRoom.com, or authorized for destruction if the bike is determined to be in need of extensive repairs and not auction quality.

PropertyRoom.com- Founded in 1999 by former police officers, PropertyRoom.com is a web-based auction site specializing in the auction of stolen, seized, found and surplus items (including vehicles). They have distribution and service centers nationwide serving over 1,500 law enforcement and other public agencies nationwide.

PropertyRoom.com handles all of the processing required which includes transport, sorting, evaluating, cleaning, testing, listing description, research, photographs, storage, online auction, customer service, pick/pack and ship, collections and monthly checks and reports to MPD.

In addition to the auction features, PropertyRoom.com has established **StealitBack.com** which is a national registry of stolen goods. Private citizens have the ability to register on **StealitBack.com** any items with serial numbers they have lost and reported stolen to the MPD. Upon researching its database, and a match can be made, they will return the item to the MPD so that it may be returned to the owner free of charge.

Below is a chart obtained from the PropertyRoom.com which indicates how they operate:



Bicycle Records- We are able to ascertain the total number of bicycles tagged and/or disposed of in a year, but not in specific terms (i.e. how many bicycles recovered were registered). At this time, this information would have to be processed manually. With so few hours allowed for the BRS position, the time and effort needed to compile these statistics would impact the time needed by the BSR to investigate bicycle concerns. The MPD has commenced with the process of updating the record management system currently used. An improved system will allow us to utilize better tracking features.

Bicycle Registration- The reality is that very few recovered bikes are registered or the registration is not updated to reflect the most current owner information. This obviously hinders the process of finding the owner and returning the bicycle. The issue of bicycle registration has been discussed between Julie Beauchamp, Property Room Supervisor and John Rider, the City of Madison Bicycle Registration Coordinator. Both discussed the idea that it should be a requirement before a recovered un-registered bicycle is released by Property staff, the owner of said bicycle must register their bike. Currently when a bicycle is released to an owner, they are provided the necessary registration form and encouraged by Property Staff to complete the registration process.

FAQ

Should a stolen bicycle be reported to the police? Yes, to the Self-Reporting Unit (see above) and/or contact the Bicycle Recovery Specialist. These numbers are listed on the MPD website.

How do I report an abandoned bike? Call the Bicycle Recovery Specialist at 608 267-8611.

How long does it take to have a bike removed? The BRS will place a 48-hour notice on the bicycle in order to allow the owner an opportunity to remove the bicycle. Once the BSR has “tagged” the bicycle, it will take a minimum of two days to have the bicycle removed.

How do I find out if MPD took my bike? Contact BRS and be prepared to provide the make, model, color, serial number and/or registration number of the bicycle.

How do I find out if a bike is registered? Contact the BRS and he will check the computerized Registration application.

What information does the MPD need to check for a bicycle? The registration number and/or serial number. If these are not available, provide the make, model and color.

How long does it take for a removed bike to be logged in to Property? The bicycle will be entered into the system the same day it is picked up.

Does the MPD automatically check registrations of found/recovered bikes? Yes. How long does that take? The BRS checks the status of recovered bicycles the same day they are found/recovered.

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What is the procedure if the bike is not registered? The BRS will run the bicycle information through the (TIME) system to see if it has been reported and entered as a stolen bicycle.

Now that bikes are being sent to auction, how can someone see if MPD picked it up? Call the BRS and he will be able to check the manifest of bicycles that have been picked up for auction.

How long are bikes held before being sent to auction? 30-45 days

What criteria is used to decide that a bike will not be able to be reunited with its owner, and therefore should be sent to auction? If the bicycle is not registered and an owner unable to be located and there have been no inquiries about the bicycle, it will be designated for auction.

Are there records kept after the bike leaves MPD possession in case the owner reports the bike later? Yes.