

HOME INVENTORY F.A.Q.
Minneapolis Police Department
5th Precinct Community Crime Prevention/SAFE



Questions answered in this file:

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1. HOW DO I FILL OUT MY HOME INVENTORY FORM?

Most valuable items have what is called a make, model and serial number. The make is the brand, the model is the type and is often a combination of numbers and letters, and the serial number is the identification sequence for your specific item.

As an example, you could have a Gateway laptop computer. The make would be "Gateway," the model would be a number such as "M-152S," and the serial number could be something like "ABC-12345." The length of the model and serial number depends on the item.

2. WHERE DO I FIND THE MAKE, MODEL AND SERIAL NUMBER?

In most cases, the model and serial number are located on the bottom or back of the item. Laptops often have them on the bottom whereas televisions may have them in the back. It will usually identify the numbers by prefacing the model number with something like "Model No:" and serial numbers with something like "Serial No:."

It's very important to record the make, model and serial number on all valuables, and don't forget items such as bicycles! The location of the serial number changes according to the bicycle. However, it should be on the main bicycle frame, sometimes around the back tire, sometimes closer to the handlebars. Search on the main frame of your bicycle and you should find your serial number.

Don't forget that some of the valuables you use every day may be comprised of several items, each of which could have an individual make, model and serial number unless they came as one unit. For instance, if you own a desktop computer, your monitor, keyboard, mouse, external speakers, and computer tower could each have their own make, model and serial numbers.

3. WHAT ABOUT VALUABLES WITHOUT MAKE, MODEL OR SERIAL NUMBERS, LIKE JEWELRY?

If you have items which are valuable to you but can't be recorded by make/model/serial number, it's a good idea to still record all the distinguishing features and general information about the item that you can.

You can also take photographs of the item. If you are technically savvy, you could save the pictures as small enough files to store on this jump drive. (Consider "Save For Web") Otherwise, consider getting them printed or developed and storing someplace safe (see question below).

Just remember: if you will be developing the pictures at a physical location (i.e., you aren't just keeping digital copies electronically that you personally put on your computer), then make sure you do not put your home address on the information you fill out at the store. Although it is not likely this will happen, that will reduce the

opportunity of someone at the store noting which valuables they would like to steal and knowing which address to get them at. Consider using your business address or another neutral address instead.

4. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY HOME INVENTORY LIST ONCE IT'S FINISHED?

It's important to keep your home inventory list in a safe, secure place. It's best not to keep the list in your home for multiple reasons; you may need the make/model/serial numbers for the insurance company or local Police Department and if, for instance, there is a fire in your home you may lose the list.

Recommendations for storing the list in a safe place are as follows. It's important to do what you are most comfortable with and makes sense for you and your family.

Bank deposit

If you have a bank deposit box, you can keep the jump drive and/or a printed copy of the list there. This way, regardless of what may occur at your home, you will always have access to the information.

Online – Emailing

If you are technically savvy, one of the best solutions may be to zip, rar, or somehow archive the list. Many programs that zip files will give you the option of password or pass-phrase protecting the item. Choose a password or pass-phrase that you will remember but that is not obvious (obvious passwords often include birth dates of you or loved ones, names of loved ones or pets, etc).

If you have an email address that you trust or feel is secure, then email that protected file to yourself. If someone wanted to steal your home inventory list, they would first have to know your email address, the password for your email, know that you had the list there, know where to find it in your email system, *and* know the pass-phrase on the archived file. As most burglars are opportunists, it's unlikely that anyone would recover that file except you or someone close to you. At the same time, because this is online, you can access your list regardless of where you are as long as you have internet connection, and it wouldn't matter what happened at your house or bank.

Keep in mind: if you are using a free email system, some of them will delete your account after a period of inactivity. Make sure you don't keep your only copy of the file available on an address that you may lose or you think is somehow compromised.

A trusted friend's house

If you do not have a bank deposit box and are uncomfortable with keeping the file somewhere in a secured online system, consider keeping the list at a trusted friend's or loved one's house. Keep in mind that if something happens at that friend's house, you may lose your list.

It is best to keep the list in a secured and safe area that is not in your home.

5. QUESTIONS ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION

If you would like more information about crime prevention tips, please visit

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/crime-prevention/> or call 311 (612.673.3000) or visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/outreach/docs/safe-staff-map.pdf> to locate the Crime Prevention Specialist and Sector Lieutenant for your neighborhood.