



OPERATION IDENTIFICATION

WHAT IS OPERATION IDENTIFICATION?

Operation Identification is a theft prevention and property recovery program that involves marking property with unique/owner specific information to alert thieves that all valuables in the home are marked for identification purposes. This program also assists law enforcement in getting the property back to the rightful owner should it be recovered. Operation Identification is an excellent community project which promotes neighborhood cooperation and citizen awareness of crime prevention strategies.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION IDENTIFICATION?

When an item is recovered by the police department every effort is made to locate the owner. In many situations this is attempted primarily by checking the item for identifying marks and checking the serial number in our database to determine if the item has been reported stolen. When an owner reports an item stolen to the police and he does not have the serial number(s), the item will not be traceable via the serial number to the owner. However, if an owner has the serial number of the stolen item and this number is checked in the computer by law enforcement officers, this item will show up as a stolen item with owner

information. This will allow us to return items to their rightful owners and aid in the prosecution of defendants.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

The Columbus Police Department has an engraving tool that can be used to mark most property with unique/owner specific information.

You can check out the engraver from the police department during normal business hours – subject to availability. If the engraver is already checked out by someone else, we can reserve it for you. We suggest you call ahead for availability.

The engraver can be checked out for up to 2 days at a time. Should you need it longer, please contact us ahead of time for special arrangements.

You will also be offered a Record of Personal Property Form (RPP). This form can be used to log your property and kept by you.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I ENGRAVE ON MY PERSONAL PROPERTY?

Do not use your Social Security Number. Law Enforcement generally doesn't have access to SS#'s and this number could be used in identity theft or financial crimes against you.

Your driver's license number is the best information to use. Law Enforcement has access to all 50 state's database. **NOTE: Include the two letter state abbreviation for the state in which your license was issued.**

You may want to include your name and address to assist law enforcement in rapidly identifying the owner of the property. However, addresses can change often so a name or initials may be more practical.

WHICH ITEMS SHOULD I MARK?

Anything of value that a thief could carry away except guns or items that will be reduced in value if marked – keep a personal log and write down serial numbers on those items. Many items like jewelry will have an inscription like, "To Susan With all My Love" - that is listed as an OAN (Owner Applied Number) and is just as

good as a serial number in many instances. Make sure that is listed on any report taken. Common items to mark:

- Bicycles, Radios, Cameras, Televisions, Binoculars, VCR, Watches, Stereos
- Hand and Power Tools, Computers, Gardening Tools,
- Kitchen Appliances, Musical Instruments, Sports Equipment

In addition to engraving your property, it is extremely important for you to keep a written inventory. This should include Model numbers, Serial numbers, and a complete description of the item.

You may want to check with the manufacturer or retailer of a particular item to see if applying or engraving information on it voids any warranties. Items like cell phones that may be turned in or exchanged every so often may not be appropriate for engraving or marking either. In this case, keep a personal inventory of these items.

Write down the serial numbers of any and every firearm you own. There is a better chance of getting it back if it's stolen and you have recorded the serial numbers, model and brand name. For example:

Remington
Model 770 Rifle
Caliber .308
Serial # xxxxxxxx

or...

Glock
Model 17 Pistol
Caliber 9mm
Serial # xxxxxxxx

Everything electronic – DVD players, Computers, Monitors, Cameras, Radios and the like. Engrave numbers on power tools as they may have non-unique numbers. Take the manuals and registration cards when you buy something and put everyone in the same box or bag in one closet - in one place. When items are

stolen - make SURE the officer gets the serial numbers. You have a much better chance of getting your property back if recovered if you have this proof.

KEEP ACCURATE RECORDS

One of the best ways that you can assist the police in recovering your stolen property is by keeping records. Record this information on a property record sheet which is available from the police department. Keep this form in a safe place.

Taking photos of your property may be of assistance too. It may assist you in recalling the color or a specific feature of your property. Photos may also be of assistance to your insurance company in the event you file a loss claim.

Make sure you update your records as property changes.

WHAT IF YOUR PROPERTY IS STOLEN?

Contact the Police Department at (920) 623-5919. Be prepared to provide the police with the serial and model numbers along with descriptions of your property. Every year law enforcement agencies recover hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of stolen property. Often the owners have no proof that the property is theirs. A record of your property will assist law enforcement in getting it back to you.

Print out the Record of Personal Property form (RPP), fill it in and store it in a safe place. You will have a better chance to find your recovered property if your property is ever stolen.