



Stewardship of Company Assets

Part 1 - Ethical Issues and Problems

Company Assets

You are expected to respect and protect your company's assets. Every employee has control over some kind of company asset. Whether that asset is a piece of office equipment, computer, vehicle, or a trade secret, it is expected that you will do everything in your power to protect the company's assets from theft, loss, or abuse.

What is company property? Company property refers to a broad range of assets that include all property that is in the company's position either by direct ownership, lease, or loan. In practical terms, company property includes every item in your workplace from the paperclips to computers to its trade secrets.

Kinds of Assets

The kinds of assets in your workplace are divided into four types. They include...

1. Physical Property (the "stuff" that the company owns)
2. Intangible Property (ideas, formulas, inventions, network bandwidth, etc.)
3. Funds (cash, credit cards, budgets, financial accounts, etc.)
4. Records (customer data, time sheets, expense reports, etc.)

Assets can include:

- Facilities
- Computers
- Inventory
- Proprietary information and trade secrets
- Patents, trademarks, and copyrights
- Office supplies
- Equipment
- Products
- Confidential information

And much more!



Ethical Principles for Using Company Assets

Company assets are not yours. Everyone in the company has a stake in how employees take care of company assets.

Fundamental Ethical Principles:

1. You should not use company assets, or the assets of others, for your personal benefit.
2. You must protect company assets from abuse and misuse.
3. You must report any theft, abuse, or misuse of company assets immediately.

You are personally responsible for the company assets under your control. It is a moral and ethical imperative to take the best care of company property as possible. Understand that misuse of company assets increases costs and reduces profitability. These costs are directly related to the jobs and livelihood of everyone involved in the company.