



# Stewardship of Company Assets

## *Part 4 - Actions for Success*

### Occasional Use

Although company property should only be used for company business, it is reality that some kind of personal use (however minor) may be inevitable. For these circumstances, there is the concept of “Occasional Use.” What this means is that some occasional limited personal use of company resources may be tolerated by your company. As you consider occasional use, you need to be very careful that your company allows such use and you abide by the following guidelines:

1. The use is incidental and of a reasonable duration.
2. It does not adversely affect your job performance.
3. You have authorization to do it.
4. It does not pose a distraction to others.
5. It does not support a personal business or aid a competitor.
6. It does not embarrass the company.
7. It is not offensive (involving sexually explicit, hateful, violent, or threatening material).
8. It does not involve illegal activity.

It is your responsibility to use good judgment and clearly define “occasional” between you and your employer. Do not assume anything or take chances. Ask your supervisor if you have any doubt about what occasional means.

### Employee Theft

Employee theft is a serious issue. It costs companies much more than shoplifting or any other kind of theft. Not only does it take a toll on the company’s bottom line, it destroys the trust between the employee and the employer and creates a suspicious, “us versus them” environment.

Of course, you may not intentionally stuff products in your jacket or walk away with company tools, but may have developed bad habits over the years about how you use company assets that may constitute theft.



Here are some examples of bad habits that may constitute theft...

- Using petty cash for personal expenses and repaying it later.
- Giving yourself unofficial “employee discounts” on products or services. Giving family, friends, or even “needy” people unauthorized discounts.
- Calling in sick or “skipping” out from work (this is theft of time).
- Abusing disability benefits.
- Using company samples or products rather than paying for them.
- Using company tools, equipment, facilities, and vehicles for personal use.
- Keeping surplus or discarded equipment without permission.
- Taking home office supplies for personal use or to supply a home office.
- Using company postage for personal letters.
- Pocketing the change from company expenses or overcharging meals and entertainment and keeping the money.

And the list goes on...

Make no mistake. If you are using company resources for your personal benefit, you are stealing. This behavior cannot be rationalized away as occasional use. If you have any of these bad habits, or have similar habits, you need to stop them immediately. You need to step back and see them for what they really are. Understand that the company will take a tough stance on theft of any size and you could be terminated or prosecuted criminally. Don't take the chance!

## Ethical Actions for Success

Start some good habits today.

1. Make honesty your BEST POLICY for all your activities.
2. Become a person who stands on principle.
3. Conduct your business with openness and transparency.
4. Maintain ethical consistency between your work and personal life.
5. Act as if you were being watched by your spouse, clergy, child, or respected friend.