

Proposed policy statement on loss of personal property sustained at work

From time to time, employees of the Huntsman School of Business (HSB) will sustain losses of personal property that occur in conjunction with (or proximately related to) their work duties. One example is damages to a car from a car wreck that occurs while commuting to or from work, or while traveling in conjunction with a work assignment. Another example is having a personal cell phone or computer stolen from the office or while traveling abroad with students. On rare occasion, an actual theft of cash may occur (e.g., wallet snatching).

While some may wish to equate these personal property losses with the conduct of their duties as an employee and seek reimbursement (e.g., "I would not have had the wreck if I was not on the way to my job", etc.), the loss of personal property is generally personal in nature. To conclude otherwise opens the HSB to extensive obligations unrelated to the conduct of the business of the School, and fundamentally beyond its control. As a generalization, the HSB will not assume responsibility for the loss of personal property.

Equally important to note is that when a loss has occurred, reimbursement does not mitigate the loss, it simply transfers the loss. There remains a fiduciary duty to represent the State of Utah (HSB) despite it having a faceless persona, and fairly established principles should thusly apply. With that in mind, and for the sake of clarity and uniformity, the following specific policies are hereby adopted:

For any damages to personal vehicles used in support of an approved USU-related trip, the mileage allowance covers all operating costs of the vehicle including gas and insurance. Repair costs are not reimbursable, whether they result from the traveler's acts or the acts of others. No costs or losses will be reimbursed for travel related to getting to and from work.

No costs or losses will be reimbursed for damages or theft of personal computers, cellphones, and other electronic devices. If the employee's job duties require the use of such equipment, and such equipment is not otherwise provided by the HSB, the employee's reasonably necessary costs of ownership and operation proportionately related to the HSB purpose are eligible for reimbursement.

Whenever an employee loses personal cash money, whether by theft or accident, HSB is under no obligation to replace the same. When an employee loses cash money belonging to HSB (such as when acting as a courier for HSB funds or having received a cash advance for a trip), the loss will be borne by the HSB provided the employee can show that (1) the loss was not due to their negligence, (2) the loss is a nonrecurring event, (3) the loss does not exceed \$500, and (4) the lost funds were not comingled with personal funds at the time of the loss. Therefore, employees who volunteer to take custody of HSB monies should limit their exposure to risk by not carrying more than \$500 of HSB cash, and maintaining those funds in a separate wallet. Employees are strongly discouraged from carrying excess cash, especially when traveling abroad. The per diem reimbursement is intended to additionally cover ATM fees and the like when traveling abroad. It is therefore strongly advised that employees utilize every opportunity to minimize the potential for loss of cash. In the unlikely event that a significant amount of cash is needed for a HSB event, thereby necessitating an unusual amount of ATM fees, the employee may additionally request reimbursement for those extraordinary charges.

Employees are additionally advised to refer to the terms and conditions of their personal insurance policies, including homeowner's coverage and auto insurance, which sometimes provided benefits offsetting losses away from home. USU also has policies on workers' compensation, as described at USU Policy Section 364.