



SECURITY OF LOST PROPERTY AT LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD LOST AND FOUND OFFICE

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OVERVIEW

For almost 20 years, the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), has maintained a Lost and Found Office (LFO) to facilitate the return of property. For the convenience of those who lost property on LIRR trains and in its facilities, the LFO is centrally located in Penn Station. In 2013 alone, the LFO accepted over 15,500 items ranging from paperback books to diamond jewelry.

In early 2014, the Office of the MTA Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint from an LIRR customer who had lost his wallet on a train. Upon receiving positive confirmation from a LIRR employee that the item was in the LFO, the customer went to retrieve it but the wallet could not be located by LFO staff. After a protracted search, the contents of the wallet were eventually found on the floor, missing two gift cards having a combined value of over \$200. The customer later learned from the MTA Police that an unknown individual had used one of the gift cards at a store in Long Island. Neither the MTA Police nor LIRR was able to determine when the gift cards had been removed from the wallet or by whom.

In response to this incident and other complaints received about lost property, OIG conducted a review to determine the adequacy of security and protection of property at the LFO.

Summary of Findings

The defining responsibility of a Lost and Found operation is to safeguard the property in its custody and facilitate its return to the rightful owner. For the LFO to accomplish these goals, its storage space must be properly organized and managed, its information retrieval system must be up-to-date, and its overall operation must be secure. The following findings reflect the need for improvement:

- Although the door to the LFO storage space is locked, access is not monitored by cameras, an electronic keycard system, or a formal sign-in process to document arrivals and departures.
- The inside of the storage area is not monitored by a video surveillance system or otherwise secured. Many high-value items, including jewelry, and high-risk identity documents, including driver licenses and passports, are stored in unlocked bins.
- Property in the LFO is at risk of avoidable misplacement or theft. We selected a sample

of 20 items that should have been on the premises, according to the LFO database, but staff was unable to locate eight of them (40 percent).

- Many inexpensive items are retained for much longer than required by law before their eventual disposition, thereby increasing overcrowding and the risk of misplacement or loss of more recently-recovered property. Indeed, we found that of the auctioned or discarded items valued at less than \$100—the category for 87 percent of all items received by the LFO—the average retention for items in this group was 254 days, nearly triple the required 90-day period.
- Information maintained in the LFO database is frequently inaccurate, outdated, and/or incomplete. Therefore, staff cannot readily track the location of property or the length of its retention.
- When one of the LFO’s three permanent, full-time staff members is absent, problems with data-entry and property storage are exacerbated by the inexperience of their temporary replacements.

Summary of Recommendations

For the LFO to safeguard and facilitate the return of property to its rightful owner, it must better document the entry of individuals into the LFO’s non-public outer storage area; control access to the interior of the storage room; and secure property particularly at risk of theft, including jewelry, computer tablets, smart phones, and identity documents. To ensure the timely and appropriate disposition of property, reduce clutter, and better comply with law, management must bring the LFO into compliance with the legally-mandated retention periods and make the data retrieval system more accurate, up-to-date, and complete. Management must also ensure that unclaimed property is disposed of in accordance with law. Finally, management should evaluate options for stabilizing the staff coverage of the Lost and Found Office.

Summary of Agency Response

LIRR agreed with our recommendations, and is in the process of implementing them. In its response, the agency wrote that “the LFO shares your interest in safeguarding and facilitating the return of lost property... [T]he LIRR recognizes it can further strengthen its operation, and your audit will assist us in that effort.”

BACKGROUND

New York State law requires that any person who finds or comes into possession of lost property with a value of twenty dollars or more must follow certain rules.¹ Basically, the finder must return it to the owner (if known), bring it to the police, or deliver it to an authorized agent on the premises where it was found (including the facilities of a transportation company such as the LIRR), which must in turn deliver it to the police in timely fashion. This law also sets forth the duties of the police with respect to found property, and establishes four minimum Retention Periods based on the item's value:

Property Value	Retention Period
\$0-\$99	3 months
\$100-\$499	6 months
\$500-\$4,999	1 year
\$5,000 or more	3 years

Subject to these periods, the law provides for disposition of the property, including by return to owner or, failing that, by delivery to the finder or by sale.

Complying strictly with these provisions would involve complex arrangements among LIRR, the MTA Police, and many local police departments throughout its large service area, presenting a significant challenge both to LIRR and customers uncertain of where their lost property might have been stored.² To help provide a more convenient and efficient system, in 2008 the MTA Police Department, by mutual agreement, delegated this custodial duty to the LIRR and other MTA agencies.³ Accordingly, the LIRR established its LFO as “custodian for the receipt, retention and disposition of lost property.”⁴ As custodian, the LFO is obligated to take steps outlined in the law to facilitate the return of items to their owners.

Acquisition of Property by the LFO

The LFO acquires property at its location in Penn Station from train crew members, ticket station agents and clerks, personnel at shops and yards, and other employees throughout the LIRR system who find or accept delivery of lost property.⁵ Field personnel are responsible for noting

¹ Personal Property Law (PPL) Article 7-B.

² Pursuant to Public Authorities Law (PAL) 1266-h, the MTA established and maintains its own police department and police force having jurisdiction over the “MTA commuter transportation district” (defined in PAL 1262) .

³ May 9, 2008 memo from MTA Police Department “Re: Metropolitan Transportation Authority . . . Operating Subsidiaries – Letter of Designation – Lost Property.”

⁴ LIRR Corporate Policy & Procedure PS-001, *Lost & Found Property*, September 2013.

⁵ In 2007, OIG issued an audit report entitled *The Long Island Rail Road's Lost Property Process* (MTA/OIG #2007-22). That audit's primary objective was to determine whether LIRR's procedures resulted in items being promptly forwarded from the field to the LFO and made available for claim.

basic information about the object in the LFO database (the Database) and on a property tag that they attach to the item. They then place the item in a large canvas bag—along with a shipping manifest listing all the articles in the bag—and send the bag to the LFO. They may also deposit property in station drop boxes for later retrieval by LFO staff. Members of the public also bring lost items directly to the LFO.

The LFO Premises

LIRR's Lost and Found operation takes place in three distinct areas: a public reception area; the non-public main storage space, which is accessible only through reception; and a third room with a separate entrance, unconnected to the other two, used solely to hold boxes of unclaimed items destined for off-site auction.

Customers arriving on the premises in search of their lost property enter reception, where the clerks work behind a glass window. LIRR maintains a computer station in this area for customers to complete an online inquiry form detailing their contact information, a description of their property, and information about when and where the property was lost. Next to the clerks' window is a locked door, the only entrance to main storage.

Inventory

According to LIRR policy, staff members are responsible for inventorying all property arriving at the LFO. They must ensure the property has been tagged correctly by LIRR field personnel and must complete a tag for each item delivered directly by members of the public.

Corporate policy also requires staff to enter data into the Database and use that system to maintain a record and track the status of found property for the duration of an item's presence on the premises.⁶ This data should include, but is not limited to, the date an item of property arrived in the office; the location where the property was found; an estimate of its value; a detailed listing and description of the property; a record of customer inquiries about property; a record of LIRR's attempts to contact property owners; and the final disposition of the property. When an item is successfully claimed, the staff is responsible for entering that disposition into the Database along with the date of disposition (Close Date).

Additional procedures govern the handling of money contained in a wallet or purse: The LFO clerk must count the cash by hand, enter the amount in the Database, and take the cash to an LIRR ticket window (located outside of the LFO), where a ticket clerk receives the cash and generates a receipt. The LFO clerk should then staple the receipt to the property tag before storing the item. The storage system consisting of shelving units, various bins, and one safe—is described in detail in the Findings section below.

⁶ The LFO Database was established following a recommendation in OIG's 2007 audit (see footnote 5).

FINDINGS

LFO Staff Could Not Locate Many Items Referenced in the Database

The main storage area has approximately 1,000 square feet in which to store thousands of items of various sizes.⁷ As Figure 1 illustrates, the space is cramped and cluttered with no apparent organizational plan.

Figure 1



To determine whether items are properly secured in the office and can be easily located, OIG asked LFO staff to locate a sample of 20 items selected from the Database. Because the items were within the Retention Periods and the Database reflected no Close Date, they should have been on the premises.

Nevertheless, eight of the 20 items (40 percent) could not be located. The missing items consisted of two iPad computer tablets; two Samsung smartphones; a backpack; a bag containing a personal gaming device; a pair of sunglasses; and a passport. LFO staff could not explain how these items had been misplaced but suggested that some may have been prematurely sent to the auction vendor without notation in the Database. There was no significant difference, in type or value, among the eight missing items and the 12 that were found; all 20 should have been stored in approximately the same locations.

Even for the 12 items the staff eventually located, the process was time-consuming; for some items the staff had to search for as long as 30 minutes. While a few minutes seems reasonable for a customer to wait when retrieving an item identified as being on-site, waiting 30 minutes for

⁷ As compared to Metro-North Railroad (MNR) and New York City Transit (NYC Transit), the intake at and the size of the LFO at LIRR is relatively small. MNR and NYC Transit each receive about 66 percent more lost items than LIRR and, accordingly, dedicate more space and other resources to handling this property. Both MNR and NYC Transit also assign more full-time permanent staff members to this function: five and eight respectively, compared to LIRR's three.

retrieval seems excessive.

The LFO Has Not Adequately Secured its Storage Facility

Only certain LIRR employees have a key to the locked door to the main storage space, which they must open to allow others to enter. This limitation on access is certainly one layer of protection against unauthorized entry. However, because individuals are not required to sign in, and because the doorway is not equipped with an electronic access card or video monitoring system, LIRR has no record of who has entered the storage area.

Also, during our fieldwork we observed that after LFO staff opened the storage room door for maintenance workers or other individuals, the staff left them unattended inside. Additionally, we found LIRR employees present in the vicinity of the storage room although they were not assigned to work in the LFO and did not appear to be delivering any found property. Neither LIRR corporate policy nor LFO internal procedure currently prohibits access by unauthorized individuals or requires visitors to be escorted while in non-public areas.

Inside the locked storage area, property is not additionally secured, with the exception of some jewelry kept in the office's only safe. At the time of our observation, however, the safe was filled to capacity with previously-received jewelry, without regard to value. Indeed, LFO staff store newly-arriving jewelry, including more valuable items, in unlocked plastic drawers above the safe. See *Figure 2*.

Figure 2



Passports and other identity documents are also not locked away. Rather, they are kept in small open bins on top of the drawers holding jewelry. Although the theft of such documents can have

serious consequences, neither LIRR corporate policy nor LFO internal procedures include any guidelines regarding handling of identity documents. In the absence of such formal direction, LFO staff follow an informal and unwritten practice of shredding unclaimed identity documents on an irregular basis. In contrast, MNR and NYC Transit’s Lost and Found staff keep passports under lock and key. Additionally, given the sensitivity of these documents and the absence of any established Retention Period, both of those agencies limit their retention of passports—to 10 business days at NYC Transit and 90 days at MNR—after which they mail those still unclaimed to the U.S. State Department.

Figure 3



Figure 4



Articles other than jewelry and passports are stored on labeled shelves and in bins, nominally grouped according to arrival date: current month, previous month, and the month before last. Behind the clerks’ workstation are shelves holding small storage bins for cell phones and wallets received during the current month. Items remaining more than one month are moved to the “previous month” shelves, depicted in Figure 3 above, to make room for newly arriving property. Nearby are several larger shelving units—pictured in Figure 4—for backpacks, shopping bags, and suitcases, also generally stored by arrival month.

As evidence of the vulnerability of property kept in the storage area, besides the rifled wallet described in the Overview to this report, two recent incidents stand out. In July 2014, the LFO supervisor reported to the MTA Police a theft of four bracelets. He found that four small manila envelopes containing the bracelets had been ripped open and emptied. The envelopes were in the unlocked drawers that hold recently lost jewelry. Another instance of likely theft was revealed when we asked LFO staff to find a particular diamond ring listed in the Database. Following a

search, the staff found only the property tag; at some point while in the storage room the ring was separated from its tag and never located again. Further, there was no notation in the Database evidencing any disposition of the property. Because, as previously described, access to the storage area is not strictly controlled, there is ample opportunity for theft with virtually no ability to recover the stolen items or identify the thief.

Because MNR and NYC Transit have similar responsibilities, OIG staff interviewed their Lost and Found supervisors and managers and observed their operations to identify any procedures that might prove helpful to LIRR. We noted that MNR's lost property storage area has cameras covering the entryway, the entire interior space, and each workstation. The cameras supply a live feed to video monitors at the supervisor's desk and, according to MNR management, act as a deterrent against the mishandling of property. While NYC Transit does not use cameras in its Lost and Found area, entry to the space is restricted and its staff stores all property in locked cabinets; nothing is stored on the floor or on open shelves. *See Figure 5.*

Figure 5



NYC Transit Lost Property Unit

As a result of discussions with the OIG, LIRR managers recognized the need for cameras inside the locked storage area and at its entry door and informed us that they would take steps to obtain them.

The LFO Is Not Complying with Statutory Retention Periods

The law gives owners ample time to collect their belongings. Indeed, by analysis of the Database, we confirmed that since 2008, 98 percent of the items recorded as having been successfully claimed at the LFO by their owners (or legitimate finders) were claimed within the statutory period.

On the other hand, our analysis also revealed that the LFO holds many unclaimed items far longer than required. Indeed, we found that of the auctioned or discarded items valued at less than \$100—the category for 87 percent of all items received by the LFO—75.8 percent had been held 30 days or more following the end of the Retention Period. Far more troubling, though, is that the average retention for items in this group was **254 days**, nearly triple the required 90-day

period.

In further analyzing the LFO's time-to-disposition process by item category, rather than value, we found that 64 percent of larger items such as bags and luggage were kept more than a month past the Retention Period.

Although keeping so many articles past their Retention Period is not a violation of law, the significant downside to this practice in such a confined space is that it causes shelves, drawers, and bins to be filled beyond normal capacity. As Figure 6 shows, larger items spill out onto the floor, which may result in damage to the property or injury to anyone in the area who trips or falls over it. This disorganization complicates retrieval and facilitates misplacement or theft with minimal risk of detection.

Figure 6



In contrast to the excessive retention of property, our analysis of the Database also revealed that the LFO had auctioned or discarded many items before their legal Retention Period had ended. This non-compliance varied by value category and was greater for higher-valued items. Of the auctioned items valued at \$500 and above, 90 percent were removed from the LFO before the mandated one-year period ended. These high-value items mainly consisted of laptops, digital cameras, cell phones, and a few pieces of jewelry. For items worth \$100-\$499, 42.9 percent were disposed of before the required 180-day period expired. By disposing of property prematurely, the LFO is not in compliance with Personal Property Law Article 7-B.

LFO Does Not Adequately Safeguard Property During Preparation for Auction or Disposal

If property is not claimed by the end of its Retention Period, agency policy requires the staff to dispose of it in accordance with law.

Unclaimed items with some resale value are packed into boxes and moved into the separate room for eventual removal from Penn Station for auction. The staff sends high-value unclaimed items, including computer tablets, smartphones, and jewelry, directly to the auction vendor via FedEx.⁸ Items without resale value are discarded or destroyed depending on the nature of the property.⁹ For example, while a cheap souvenir may simply be put out with the trash without fear of misuse, passports, driver licenses, and even credit cards, though having no monetary value *per se*, are invitations to steal identity and property if they fall into the wrong hands. The LFO approach is to gather and shred such documents at the end of the Retention Period for the wallet or bag containing them. Importantly, though, we found that this protective measure exists only as an unwritten practice, not as an LFO procedural requirement. Further, it is worth recalling that both NYC Transit and Metro-North keep passports under lock and key and mail them to the U.S. State Department within 10 and 90 days respectively (see page 6).

We also found that tags removed from property destined for auction or disposal are placed by an LFO supervisor on a shelf holding other lost items. The supervisor explained to us that the clerks would “eventually” use these tags to close records with the appropriate disposition and Close Date.¹⁰ As we later learned, however, these closing entries were often not made, perhaps because the tags were not stored in a more organized manner reflecting their significance.

The LFO supervisor is responsible for boxing up unclaimed property and isolating the boxes in a separate room for eventual removal off-site. During our visit to that room, however, we discovered the following items unsecured on top of a box: a driver license, a credit card, a commuter rail pass, and a digital camera with no property tag. The LFO’s informal practice of shredding identity documents at the end of the Retention Period had not been followed and, according to LFO procedures, the camera should have been placed in a sealed box while awaiting auction. The supervisor could not explain the lapses in procedure.

The Database Does Not Support Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency

LFO’s Database should assist staff in creating a detailed inventory of incoming property, determining whether particular property is on-site, locating it in the storage area, tracking the length of its retention in the LFO, and facilitating its appropriate disposition. The Database should also include security controls to protect the integrity of the data. Additionally, management at all levels, including the LFO supervisor and upper-level customer service

⁸ The vendor pays LIRR for each box of items and then sells or auctions the property and retains the proceeds.

⁹ Separate from the definition of “Property” (PPL 251[1]), PPL 251(2) defines the term “Instrument” as used regarding lost and found property to mean “a check, draft, promissory note, bond, bill of lading, warehouse receipt, stock certificate” or “other paper or document. . . evidencing, representing or embodying a . . . right . . .”. And unlike “Property,” the rule regarding the disposition of Instruments specifically prohibits their destruction or sale (PPL 255[2]).

¹⁰ While the LFO keeps property tags for three years, it keeps for six years the cash claim forms filled out by customers to document the amount of money lost.

managers, should be able to generate reports regularly and on-demand, to help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the LFO and identify problems if they occur. During our audit, we found the Database does not fully support these needs.

OIG performed analyses using LFO data to determine LIRR's compliance with the Personal Property Law and to evaluate the data's quality and completeness. When we shared our results with LFO managers, they told us that although such analyses would be helpful to them, no process for similar analysis or reports had been established. They planned to consult with LIRR's technology staff to include new types of information on the monthly LFO report. In essence, our analysis identified the following areas as needing improvement:

- Recorded Property Descriptions are Incomplete and Inaccurate

Some Database records conflict with information on items' property tags. For example, we found that the electronic record for a men's wallet in our sample included an incorrect figure for the amount of cash the wallet had contained, while the amount on the property tag was correct as evidenced by the accompanying receipt from the LIRR ticket clerk. Other Database entries or property tags lacked a detailed description of the item's appearance or contents. The absence of such information impedes the staff's ability to locate an item quickly in the storage area—for return to its owner or other disposition—and eventually close the record.

- A Significant Number of All Records Do Not Reflect Disposition

At the time of this review, over 25,000 of the 94,000 articles recorded since 2008 (27 percent) lacked a disposition and Close Date. Despite the critical importance of this information, LFO procedures currently include no timeframe for entering it. And despite the critical importance of the property tag information in measuring LIRR's compliance with the Retention Periods, LFO staff members, when removing property tags from items being prepared for disposal or auction, place the tags haphazardly on a shelf holding unrelated items rather than promptly entering the information in the Database.

- Records Can Be Deleted without Authorization

The LFO supervisor has the ability to delete an item's record from the Database without upper management's knowledge. In fact, we learned that the supervisor deleted records for three of the four missing bracelets described earlier because he believed the items were no longer in the office. Such deletion may be in violation of New York State law governing the retention of MTA records, which requires that official records be destroyed only with the approval of the appropriate officer.¹¹ We learned that although management has access to a "Deleted Items" report, which lists any Database records that have been deleted, neither LFO staff members nor managers were familiar with the report.

¹¹ New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, Article 57-a, §57.25 (Records retention and disposition).

In an additional security weakness regarding “missing” items, the system lacks codes for items that may still be on the premises but could not be readily located upon request, let alone those items reasonably believed to have disappeared from the LFO, including the bracelets and diamond ring noted earlier. Such coding would alert the supervisor and managers to missing items, which in turn should lead to better understanding of the disappearances and help in their recovery.

- Records Can Be Entered, Changed, or Deleted without an Audit Log

LFO employees do not receive individualized log-in identifiers and passwords that would enable management to ascertain who might have created or changed property records and why. The lack of such basic internal controls both enables poor recordkeeping and prevents management from identifying performance weaknesses and training needs on an individual basis.

At MNR and NYC Transit, Lost and Found staff members are responsible for creating a detailed electronic inventory of incoming property, including every document contained in every wallet, purse, backpack, and the like, which results in a more complete data record. We also observed features of their databases that enhance data quality and improve accountability. For example, staff members at both agencies have unique log-in credentials, and their systems generate reports on a regular basis to meet specific managerial needs. The database used by MNR, but not NYC Transit, is web-based and integrated with barcode technology to generate unique property tags and automatically create property records.

LFO Staffing Needs to be Addressed

According to managers overseeing the LFO, when one of the LFO’s three permanent, full-time staff members is absent, problems with data-entry and property storage are exacerbated by the inexperience of their temporary replacements

The LFO staff consists of the supervisor, two full-time clerks, one clerk who works one day per week and another who works one day per week in the summer. The staff is responsible for inventory, customer contact, locating and delivering property that has been claimed, and disposing of unclaimed property.

Importantly, given the nature and significance of these responsibilities, we found that when a permanent staff person is temporarily absent, an additional clerk known as an “extra”—who may have received little to no specialized training—is assigned to the LFO on a short-term basis; several extras might rotate through the LFO in a single month. While changing the staffing plan for the LFO may be constrained by budget limitations and collective bargaining requirements, the frequent rotation of temporary staff into the LFO is a problem that needs to be solved. Management should evaluate options to reduce both the frequency of temporary assignments to the LFO and the number of individuals eligible for such assignment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. To better secure the physical environment, LIRR should:

1. Install video cameras and monitors in the main storage area.

Agency Response:

Accepted. LFO staff and management met in June to discuss needs, costs, and the potential installation of video cameras. A formal recommendation will be made to senior management later in 2015.

2. Prohibit access by unauthorized individuals in non-public areas.

Agency Response:

Accepted. A sign-in sheet was created in June to capture all employees entering the storage area of the LFO until a more robust security system can be installed. LFO management will complete its assessment of the feasibility of installing a swipe entry system by end of 2015, after which a formal recommendation will be made to senior management.

3. Install a locked storage container for jewelry and other small, high-value items to which only permanent staff members have access.

Agency Response:

Accepted. Two locked cabinets have been installed in the LFO for jewelry and laptops respectively.

4. Conduct periodic tests to locate selected items and to evaluate the quality of Database entries by reconciliation with property tags and other applicable records.

Agency Response:

Accepted. Periodically, management will randomly choose items to determine proper entry and possession of chosen items.

5. Evaluate options to reduce both the frequency of temporary assignments to the LFO and the number of individuals eligible for such assignment.

Agency Response:

LIRR has accepted the recommendation to evaluate its options regarding LFO staffing levels. The agency explained that it cannot reduce the frequency of temporary assignments because these practices are governed by existing Collective Bargaining Agreements. However, the agency reported that it is exploring the option of increasing permanent staffing depending on the resulting cost-benefit analysis.

6. Bring the LFO into compliance with the Retention Periods established by law and address the backlog of items in the LFO that have been kept far longer than required.

Agency Response:

Accepted. LIRR is in the process of overhauling the LFO's physical inventory to bring it into compliance with the records retention policy.

7. Determine why items are being disposed of before the expiration of their Retention Periods, and adjust procedures going forward to prevent such premature disposition of property.

Agency Response:

Accepted. LIRR is working with MTA Information Technology (MTA IT) to develop a feature in the current database that will alert staff of expiration dates for items based on their retention periods.

- B. To prevent items from being vulnerable to misplacement or theft during preparation for auction and disposal, LIRR should:
8. Direct that unclaimed passports are mailed to the U.S. State Department within a defined period after the documents arrive at the LFO.

Agency Response:

Agreed and enhanced the protocol by arranging for State Department staff to pick up unclaimed U.S. passports at Penn Station on a regular basis (as opposed to mailing). The LFO also implemented a 14-day retention period for these passports and will include non-U.S. passports in the policy disposition discussed under Recommendation 9 below,

9. Ensure that unclaimed identity documents and credit/debit cards are shredded securely in a timely fashion, and establish written guidelines to replace "unwritten practices" to further ensure that the process complies with law.

Agency Response:

Accepted. LIRR is in the process of updating its policy and procedures to ensure that unclaimed identity documents (including non-U.S. passports) are appropriately accounted for and shredded. LIRR expects to finalize this policy by the end of 2015.

10. Require that boxes of unclaimed items be sealed before removal from the LFO, and prohibit unboxed items from being placed in the separate room for off-site storage.

Agency Response:

Accepted.

- C. To improve the accuracy of the LFO Database and its reports, LIRR should :
11. Ensure that property tags from items being prepared for disposal or auction are safeguarded and the tag information entered into the database in a timely manner.

Agency Response:

Accepted. Further, LIRR will evaluate other systems with MTA IT to improve overall efficiency in the LFO.

12. Enhance the functionality and security of the Database by adding, at a minimum: (1) unique log-in identifiers for staff members permanently assigned to the LFO; (2) codes for items that may still be on the premises but could not be readily located upon request, as well as those reasonably believed to have disappeared from the LFO; (3) an electronic audit capability to record the entry, alteration, and deletion of data, with the name of the staff member responsible for each action; and (4) the ability to run reports on items eligible for disposal in accordance with New York State Personal Property Law.

Agency Response:

Accepted. LFO staff met with MTA IT for the purpose of strengthening LFO's existing database by creating a more formal audit process and purging it of old items. LIRR is also exploring whether it can replicate the system used by MNR or other entities tasked with Lost and Found management. LIRR will meet with MNR, NYC Transit, MTA IT, and the MTA Office of Security to discuss this and other recommendations identified during this audit.