

XIII.2.3a Asset Accountability Policy

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10 Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to define the basis and steps pursuant to which everyone who works in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) will be held accountable for losses, thefts and damage to PAHO property or equipment when these losses, thefts or damage occur as a result of negligence or willful misconduct on the part of the person(s) concerned.

20 Scope: This policy is applicable to everyone who works for PAHO (PAHO personnel), irrespective of type or duration of contract. PAHO personnel are provided, on a temporary basis, the necessary tools and equipment to achieve their work objectives and the goals of the Organization. PAHO personnel are expected to take all reasonable precautions to protect this property, as if it were their own.

30 Policy and essential procedures:

30.1 PAHO personnel who are entrusted with property or equipment belonging to the Organization must take the necessary safeguards to protect this property from loss, theft or damage. Those who fail to do so will be held financially responsible for lost or damaged property and will be required to reimburse the Organization.

30.2 Safeguarding PAHO's assets:

30.2.1 PAHO personnel must exercise due diligence and care to protect from loss, theft and damage the Organization's property and assets, including credit cards, vehicles, office equipment and supplies, computers, cameras, cellular telephones and other mobile communication devices. These assets, while belonging to PAHO, must be safeguarded in the same manner that people would ordinarily use to protect their own personal property.

30.2.2 As indicated in *PAHO Code of Ethical Principles and Conduct*, PAHO personnel must be extremely careful and vigilant when using the Organization's property and resources. Such property, which may be used for authorized purposes only, must be properly operated and maintained, appropriately safeguarded and returned to the Organization in the same condition as it was received, except for normal wear and tear.

30.2.3 In view of the obligation of PAHO personnel to take all reasonable safeguards to protect the Organization's property, payment for the repair or replacement of any property lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged as a result of negligence or willful misconduct may be required from the person(s) determined to be responsible for such loss or damage.

30.2.4 Property lost or damaged through no fault of the person concerned will not result in any personal responsibility and will be repaired or replaced, if necessary, using PAHO funding and normal budgetary procedures.

30.3 Loss, Theft or Damage to assets:

30.3.1 A loss, theft or damage to the Organization's assets may be the result of accidental loss or damage, or unavoidable theft or robbery. Alternatively, it may be due to circumstances within a person's control, such as simple negligence, gross negligence or willful misconduct on the part of individuals or groups of individuals.

- **Simple negligence** is a failure to act as a reasonably prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.
- **Gross negligence** is a failure to exercise even a slight degree of care, or an extreme departure from the course of action expected of a reasonable person, all circumstances considered.
- **Willful misconduct** is an intentional or deliberate violation of rules or policies, including fraud and dishonesty.

30.4 Essential procedures:

30.4.1 PAHO personnel have an individual responsibility to prevent losses and promptly notify the Investigations Office (INV) when a theft or loss occurs. Incidents of material damage to or destruction of the Organization's property should also be reported to GSO and INV for review. GSO may be contacted via the online Service Request System using the descriptor "PMIS/GSO – Assets location tracking", INV may be contacted at investigations@paho.org or through the PAHO Helpline at www.pahohelpline.org.

30.4.2 GSO will determine the applicable value of the missing property and INV will ascertain the circumstances surrounding the theft, loss, damage or destruction of the Organization's property and will submit its findings and conclusions to the Director of Administration (AM). AM will decide if the incident was outside the person's control or whether it was due to negligence or willful misconduct. If it resulted from negligence or misconduct, AM will then determine whether such negligence or misconduct was the proximate cause of the loss and, if so, will assess financial responsibility.

30.4.3 The AM will then notify the person concerned whether he or she will be held financially responsible for the damage, loss or theft of the Organization's property or is absolved from responsibility.

30.4.4 Persons reporting losses, damage or destruction of PAHO property committed by others are protected from reprisal pursuant to PAHO/WHO E-Manual Provision [III.11.3, Whistleblower Protection](#).

30.5 Financial responsibility:

30.5.1 PAHO personnel may be held personally responsible for loss or damage caused through negligence or misconduct. The level of responsibility and reimbursement will depend on whether the loss or damage was due to simple negligence, gross negligence or willful misconduct and whether there are extenuating or mitigating factors.

30.5.2 In cases of loss or destruction due to simple negligence, the amount of reimbursement will be the fair market value of the asset or equipment.

30.5.3 When an asset or piece of equipment has been damaged due to simple negligence, the amount of reimbursement will be the total cost of repair or the fair market value of the asset or equipment, whichever is lower.

30.5.4 In cases of loss or destruction due to gross negligence or willful misconduct, the amount of reimbursement will be the current replacement cost of the asset or equipment.

30.5.5 When an asset or piece of equipment has been damaged due to gross negligence or willful misconduct, the amount of reimbursement will be the total cost of repair or the current replacement cost of the asset or equipment, whichever is lower.

30.5.6 Reimbursement will be made in accordance with subsection 30.4 of PAHO/WHO E-Manual Provision [III.3.15a, Recovery of Overpayments and Underpayments](#).

30.6 Other measures:

30.6.1 When warranted due to willful misconduct or gross negligence, the Organization may also take disciplinary action, including termination of contract or appointment, in accordance with the applicable regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

40 Responsibilities: Questions regarding the application of this policy should be referred to ETH, as Secretary of the Standing Committee on Asset Protection and Loss Prevention (APLP).