



## Proper Handling of Tenants' Abandoned Belongings

Occasionally, tenants leave supportive housing developments without first notifying the owner or manager. It is important to preserve the tenants' rights to their belongings, particularly if they might return in the future to reclaim their property.

The building manager should direct the legal and respectful storage or disposal of any personal belongings left by the former tenant. If the tenant moves out, the owner can enter the unit without notice. Sometimes it is unclear whether the tenant has abandoned the unit - the tenant may be away on a trip or staying with someone else. Where it appears the tenant may have abandoned the unit, the law requires the provider to post a *Notice of Belief of Abandonment* (see [sample](#) attached) on the tenant's door for a period of fourteen days before removing any furniture or belongings that the tenants has left behind.

Owners are also required by law to store any items that have more than nominal value for a period of time in case the tenant should return. The provider should get competent legal advice if the unit appears to have been abandoned, but furniture and other items were left behind. Proper procedures include providing the tenant with notice that personal property has been left on the premises, affording the tenant the opportunity for a limited period of time to reclaim the property, and disposing of the property or storing it in accordance with certain procedures, as directed by applicable local or state law.

Any removal of items that have more than nominal value should be documented with an inventory list that is then signed by staff members handling the items.

A sample *Notice of Belief of Abandonment* is attached.

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Note: This document is included within the *Housing Operations* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at [www.csh.org/toolkit2](http://www.csh.org/toolkit2). This document has been adapted from CSH's *Supportive Housing Property Management Operations Manual*, which is available at [www.csh.org/publications](http://www.csh.org/publications).



**Notice of Belief of Abandonment**  
[Enter Civil Code Citation here]

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Manager for Landlord  
Address  
Telephone Number

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