

Equipment Repair, Disposal and Storage

October 2011

Summary:

This document provides information repairing computers and printers, the limits on the amount of money that be spent on local repairs, disposal of unusable equipment and the storage of equipment between tax preparation seasons.

Equipment Repair at the Local Level

IRS-owned, personally-owned, and site-sponsor-owned equipment should not be repaired with AARP Foundation Tax-Aide funds. The minor repair of AARP Foundation-owned equipment at the local level is an authorized “R” Code expense. Due to the high cost of e-file equipment repairs, special care must be taken before authorizing repair. *All equipment repairs above \$25 require prior written authorization by the TCS or SC.*

In view of the wide range of equipment being used at AARP Foundation Tax-Aide sites and the wide range of value of that equipment, definitive guidelines on all repair costs cannot be established. The TCS should evaluate and consider the cost of repairs against the value of the equipment being repaired. For example, it is usually not cost effective to replace a hard drive in an older computer unless it can be done by a volunteer with no labor charge, possibly using a hard drive from equipment that was surplus or was to be recycled.

For AARP-purchased computers no more than \$200 can be spent, and this expense should result in an anticipated life of at least three more years. Expenses greater than \$200 must be very carefully considered and require approval from the National Technology Manager (TaxAideTech@aarp.org). As a general rule, cosmetic issues should not be repaired.

Because printers are less expensive than computers, the repair limit is \$50. Printer repairs costing greater than \$50 should be carefully considered and require National Technology Manager approval.

The consumables vendor, GraceWorkz, repairs and replaces broken printers. Please check with them PRIOR to spending any money on printer repairs. Also, please remember to have printers repaired before the end of the season. **The contract with GraceWorkz to have printers repaired should mean that there are very few printers if any printers that need to be replaced at the end of the season.** You can reach them via the Consumables primary or secondary contacts in your state. If you don't know who these contacts are, ask your SC, TCS, or the National Office (TaxAideTech@aarp.org). Only equipment that was listed as “OK” on the May 15, 2010 inventory or was purchased after that date may be sent to GraceWorkz for repair.

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If the broken printer is one supplied to Tax-Aide by the IRS, remember some of the IRS Territory Offices have technical staff that may be able to assist with troubleshooting and repairs. The TCS should contact the IRS Territory Manager to determine the availability of such help.

IRS Depot computers should be returned to the Depot for repair and replacement. The Depot has an Enterprise Service Desk for troubleshooting. The IRS support number is provided with laptops when they are shipped from the Depot.

Each split state should have a computer-knowledgeable (technical) person volunteer to provide basic computer failure diagnostics and simple low-cost repairs when possible. If possible each district should have such a technician.

Unusable Equipment Disposition:

The TC should notify the TCS as soon as any equipment becomes unusable. Unusable IRS Depot laptops should be returned to the IRS Depot. Any other equipment with a "Property of the IRS" bar code label should be returned to the IRS Territory Office to be surveyed, unless IRS instructions are to the contrary.

AARP Foundation-purchased computers (HP -6110, 6310, 6715b, 6735s, NC 6000, NC 6120 Dell Vostro 1520, Dell Vostro 3500) that are not working and not under warranty should be returned to the National Office. They should not be kept locally for spare parts. TCs should contact their TCS for specific instructions, as some TCSs may be able to get the units fixed locally.

Disposition of other non-working or obsolete AARP Foundation equipment should occur at low or no cost to the program. If the equipment is useable, donation to another organization may be appropriate. Recycling is highly recommended when possible. Mark the equipment as **EX** on the inventory list.

Note: It is essential that hard drives be 'wiped' clean of all programs and data before they are disposed of.

Simply reformatting the drive is not sufficient. Use of a program that will overwrite with random data several times before a hard drive is disposed of is acceptable. If wiping the drive in this manner is not feasible, then it should be smashed with a sledge hammer to insure that it is not usable.

When practical, usable parts, such as hard drives, power supplies, memory and floppy disk drives should be removed from equipment before the equipment is disposed of. These parts might be useable to repair other inoperable equipment.

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E-File Equipment Storage

Districts are responsible of the adequate storage of their equipment. Equipment is typically stored by the volunteer who uses that equipment during tax season.

The equipment must be properly stored while it is not being used during the non-tax season. TCSs, TCs and equipment should use the equipment for AARP Foundation Tax-Aide training purposes between tax seasons.

The guidelines for storage of e-file equipment are:

Computers: Temperature 0 to 120 degrees / Humidity 10% - 80%

Printers: Temperature 32 to 89 degrees / Humidity 40% - 70%

Toner cartridges: Temperature 32 to 95 degrees / Humidity 35% - 85%

Equipment should not be placed on the floor or stacked near the ceiling of uncontrolled temperature facilities (e.g., garage, shed, rented storage facility).

After storing, computers and printers must reach room temperature before being turned on. This usually requires the equipment sit overnight at room temperature.

Do not store laser printers with toner cartridges installed. Partially-used cartridges should be removed and sealed in a dark, airtight bag. A tightly wrapped green/brown/black plastic trash or lawn bag works well for this.

Advance approval of the State Coordinator and Regional Coordinator is required before e-file funds (Category "S" expenses) may be used for rental of storage facilities. These storage costs will be deducted from the funds allocated to your state for new equipment purchases for the next filing season.