

Property Services

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Caltech's definition of equipment?
2. How should separate charges related to equipment purchases be classified and tracked?
3. How do I know which expenditure type to use?
4. When is equipment tagged?
5. What is the procedure for moving equipment?
6. What do I do if my Principal Investigator (PI) decides to leave Caltech?
7. What do I do if my division gets a new Principal Investigator (PI)?
8. Can I purchase equipment with my PCard?
9. How do I find out who owns the title of equipment?
10. Are there differences between JPL and Caltech equipment?
11. What are the impacts of acquiring Government owned equipment?
12. How are donations of equipment handled at Caltech?
13. What do I do when someone loans equipment to Caltech?
14. What do I do If Caltech wants to loan equipment to another institution?
15. How do I dispose of Caltech owned equipment?
16. How do I dispose of Government owned equipment?

1. What Is Caltech's Definition Of Equipment?

Caltech defines equipment as an item that meets all of the following criteria:

- **Has an acquisition cost of \$10,000*, or more**

Includes: Invoice amount, sales tax, freight costs, installation costs, import duties, costs for the initial complement of supplies needed to place the asset into service, accessory and auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it was acquired; less trade or trade in discounts and/or educational allowances

Excludes: Federal Excise tax., insurance, maintenance and warranty costs

And

- **Is a standalone item**

The item is not permanently attached to or integrated into a building or structure.

Occasionally, when government or other sponsors retain title to assets they impose a lower threshold for tagging and tracking assets. The award document and the award resume prepared by the Office of Sponsored Research will specifically state if a threshold other than \$5,000 applies.

2. How should separate charges related to equipment purchases be classified and tracked?

If separate charges are part of acquiring equipment, they may be classified under Equipment (Caltech, Government, or Other). These charges may include shipping costs, import duties, U.S. customs duties, entry fees, and similar expenses. It is the requisitioner's responsibility to track and document these separate charges. To ensure proper classification, an expenditure type change request may be submitted.

3. How do I know which expenditure type to use?

Expenditure type clarification for computer purchases

Please refer to memorandum [[click here](#)]

Determining which expenditure type to use

Equipment expenditure type matrix [[PDF](#)]

Equipment expenditure types

Please view [[PowerPoint Presentation](#)]

4. When is equipment tagged?

Caltech Owned Equipment

Property Services is automatically made aware that Caltech owned equipment has been acquired when the invoice is paid. Unless the division or department has requested alternative arrangements, Property Services contacts the individual listed on the purchase requisition to arrange a mutually convenient time to tag the asset. (To make alternative contact arrangements call Property Services at ext. 3911).

Government Owned Equipment

Caltech is required to assign a tag to government owned equipment as soon as it is received on Campus. As equipment is generally received before the invoice is paid, the process used for Caltech owned equipment is not suitable for government owned equipment. Property Services runs a weekly report listing all purchase orders that have used equipment – government expenditure type in the last week. The individual listed on the requisition is contacted by e-mail and requested to contact Property Services as soon as the asset is received. In addition, Property Services tracks the 'date needed' information listed on the purchase order and calls the requisitioner on that date to determine if the equipment has been received and to arrange a time to tag the asset.

Please contact Property Services on ext. 4181 as soon as you receive government owned equipment.

5. What is the procedure for moving equipment?

Transferring equipment to another location Federal regulations require that every time an asset is moved to a new location, we must update the equipment location information in our Fixed Asset database. In addition to moving equipment on and off campus, transferring location includes moving the equipment to a different room within the same building or moving it to a different building on campus. The best method for making Property Services aware of a transfer is by submitting a completed [Equipment Transfer Certification Form](#).

6. What do I do if my principal investigator (PI) decides to leave Caltech?

PI's Leaving Caltech

PI's leaving Caltech may want to take equipment with them. The Division Chair and the Office of Sponsored Research will be involved in this negotiation process. In addition, Property Services should be advised so that the Institute's Fixed Asset database may be updated. Even if the PI does not take any equipment it is still important to contact Property Services so that the assignee and location information for any equipment that remains at Caltech may be updated.

7. What do I do if my division gets a new principal investigator (PI)?

PI's coming to Caltech

Often PI's coming to Caltech will bring equipment with them. Property Services should be contacted so that we can plan to tag and track this equipment.

8. Can I purchase equipment with my PCard?

Purchasing equipment with a PCard

In general equipment cannot be purchased on a PCard because most PCard thresholds are set at less than \$5,000 (the equipment threshold). Occasionally, a user may have a higher PCard limit and in those circumstances, equipment may be acquired. The appropriate equipment expenditure type must be used when the PCard statement is submitted. Except in emergency situations, Pcards should not be used to purchase government owned equipment. Caltech is required to tag government owned equipment as soon as it is received on campus. The lead-time provided to reconcile PCard statements prevents Property Services from meeting this requirement. **In cases of emergency when a PCard is used to purchase government owned equipment the user must contact Property Services immediately to have a tag assigned.**

9. How do I find out who owns the title of equipment?

Who has title to equipment?

The following resources can provide information on who retains title to equipment purchased under specific awards:

1. Oracle
Enter award number
 - Click Find PTA Short Info
 - Click on the award number
 - Scroll down to Equipment Title Information
2. Award document/Resume

10. Are there differences between JPL and Caltech equipment?

JPL funded equipment

3. JPL requires that all equipment with an acquisition cost of \$1,000 be controlled (i.e. tagged and tracked) – use the “equipment govt” expenditure type
4. If **any** JPL funds are being used to purchase items (even if JPL is not the major source of funding) then the item will be government owned and the JPL threshold will apply
5. Additionally, ‘sensitive’ items between \$100 - \$999 purchased with JPL funds must be tagged and tracked – use “equipment govt” expenditure type (click [here](#) for a printable copy of the JPL sensitive equipment listing)
6. JPL funded equipment and sensitive assets are subject to an annual inventory (Caltech performs a biennial inventory)

11. What are the impacts of acquiring Government owned equipment?

Impact of acquiring Government owned equipment

7. Government owned equipment is subject to more stringent regulations on use, reporting and disposal. It is also subject to more frequent audits. Annual property reports required listing all equipment acquired and disposed of during the period (this includes subcontractor equipment)
8. Government owned equipment must be tagged and recorded in Caltech’s Fixed Asset database within a reasonable period of being **received**.
9. It cannot be used on any other projects without first obtaining prior approval from the funding agency
10. Loss or damage must be reported to the Government agency. Property Services will assist in preparing this documentation. We are required to include an explanation of the time and origin of the loss, destruction or

damage and we must be able to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that it was not as a result of willful misconduct or lack of good faith to establish and administer a system for safeguarding government property.

11. When no longer required on a project Caltech must request either title or disposition instructions from the awarding agency/cognizant officer

12. How are donations of equipment handled at Caltech?

Donations

The dollar threshold for treating donations as equipment is \$5,000. All donations, without exception, are Caltech owned. Donations are not considered the personal property of faculty, staff or students, even though they may have been used as the primary contact, delivery recipient or the designated end user.

Caltech's Development Office advises all internal departments that will have a stake in the item of its receipt. Upon notification, Property Services will arrange to tag the asset and enter it into Caltech's Fixed Asset database.

If you are aware of a donation that may not have been tagged, please contact Property Services at ext. 3911.

Donation of money for the purpose of acquiring equipment

When money is donated to Caltech, the money is the gift, not the equipment subsequently purchased with the funds. Equipment purchased with donated funds is owned by Caltech.

Equipment provided as part of a grant

Equipment provided in conjunction with, or as part of, a grant is not a donatio

13. What do I do when someone loans equipment to Caltech?

Equipment loaned to Caltech

If another Institution or entity loans equipment to Caltech we are required to safeguard that asset for as long as it is under our control. Property Services will assign a tag number to the asset, track it in our database and include it in our inventory process. Please contact Property Services if you become aware of equipment being loaned to Caltech. Property Services can assist with the preparation of the necessary *paperwork* [\[PDF\]](#) documenting the loan. Normally the lending Institution will require us to complete paperwork to support the loan. Property Services is available to assist with this paperwork.

14. What do I do if Caltech wants to loan equipment to another institution?

Occasionally Caltech will loan items of equipment to other Institutions or entities. Especially if the equipment is Government owned or funded, it is important to ensure that the loan is permissible under the terms of the award that funded the equipment and to secure any necessary approvals before the equipment is transferred. Please contact Property Services if you are loaning an item of equipment to another Institution or entity. In addition to recording the location and assignee information in the Fixed Assets database, Property Services can assist with the preparation of the necessary *paperwork* [\[PDF\]](#) documenting the loan.

15. How do I dispose of Caltech owned equipment?

Please submit completed an Equipment Disposal Certification (EDC) form [\[PDF\]](#) to Property Services. Submit the required supporting documents with the EDC. Property Services will review the documents, and, if there are no issues with the equipment disposal, Property Services will record the disposal in Oracle. We will send you an e-mail with confirmation that we have processed the form.

16. How do I dispose of Government owned equipment?

Under no circumstances should Caltech dispose of government owned equipment. Please contact Property Services if you have government owned equipment that you would like to retire. We will work with the funding agency to request title or disposition instructions.

If you become aware of government owned equipment that may have been disposed of without going through this process please contact Property Services and we will work with you to request relief of accountability from the funding agency.