



TIP OF THE WEEK

Textbook Theft

When the decision is made to attend a post secondary school there is usually a complete and drastic change in the life of the new student. One of the biggest changes revolves around finances. After tuition is paid and textbooks have been purchased, there is usually very little money left to play with. Most people give up their jobs in order to concentrate on their studies, compounding the shortage of cash, and a large number of students rely on grants, bursaries, and student loans to make ends meet. By the time a diploma or degree is earned many people are deeply in debt.

Whether a student is far from home or not, the loss of textbooks can be devastating both emotionally and financially. Without them many classes cannot be attended and most textbooks are extremely expensive. Replacing a stolen book could mean that the victim is unable to buy groceries for a week.

Each year thousands of textbooks are stolen from unwary students across North America. In many large cities the theft of college and university textbooks has become an organized effort by gangs to help finance their activities. The stolen books are returned or resold to bookstores and / or unsuspecting students netting the criminals quick and easy cash.

There is, however, several ways for students to protect themselves. They include:

- Always keep your books with you. Never leave them sitting on a desk or table while you go out of the room.
- Carry your books securely on your arm, or in your backpack or satchel.
- Use the fasteners provided on your backpack to secure it to your body. Grip satchels tightly or place strap over the opposite shoulder in order to keep anyone from doing a grab and run.
- Never leave your backpack or satchel out of your sight. In a crowded cafeteria it could disappear from under a chair very easily.
- When in the restroom take your books in the stall with you, never leave them sitting on a counter or floor.
- Store your books, when they are not needed, in your locker. The best investment you could make at this point is a high quality lock. Make sure the lock is properly engaged when you leave the locker.
- As soon as you know that you have the right textbook for your course, put your name or some other readily identifiable mark on or in the book. This will aid authorities in recovering the stolen property. This is particularly helpful if the mark is not in an obvious place.
- Report the theft or loss of a textbook IMMEDIATELY after discovery. The quicker the loss is reported, the higher the chance of recovery. Call Protective Services at 780-471-7477. Give a complete description of the book, including any identifying marks, and the location of where it was lost, as well as any other information you may have. Be sure to leave your name and contact number in case the book is recovered.
- Report the theft or loss to NAIT Bookstore as well. When alerted the staff will be on the lookout for the stolen merchandise with the intent of keeping the book for the rightful owner and, if possible, apprehend the suspect. Dial 780-491-3110 and ask for the Customer Service Supervisor. Give a complete description of the book, including any identifying marks, as well as the location of where it was lost, as well as any other information you may have. Be sure to leave your name and contact number in case the book is recovered.
- If the Customer Service Supervisor is not available, inform the staff member who is handling your call about the loss.
- Monitor the Lost and Found at Protective Services on a regular basis.

The NAIT Bookstore is committed to helping reduce of textbook theft by monitoring textbook refund returns, and textbook buy backs. Because many textbooks are sold privately, or handed down to younger siblings, it is difficult to administer any sort of tracking system. They have, however, several policies that speak to this problem. They include:

- When returning a textbook for a refund, the student MUST produce the original receipt AND a current valid student ID. These transactions are electronically recorded and monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Although a receipt is not needed when a buy back is offered, the person offering the books must produce a current valid student ID and leave his name. These transactions are also electronically recorded and monitored on an ongoing basis.



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- All transactions, as well as general store activity, is recorded on a continual basis by a video surveillance system. These images have been successfully used to prosecute suspects.
- When a suspect is caught, Campus Security Services is contacted and, if necessary, the Edmonton Police Service. All suspects are prosecuted.
- NAIT's Registrars Office is informed of the suspected activity.
- If convicted, penalties could include a criminal record and / or termination from any NAIT sponsored program.

If you have information about a crime, contact Protective Services at 780-471-7477. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Your identity will remain anonymous, and if the information you provide leads to a conviction, you could eligible for a reward of up to \$2000.00.

Everybody benefits, except the criminal.