

### 3.07 Lost, Stolen and Damaged Food Instruments

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#### **POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the replacement of food instruments according to defined parameters.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

##### **A. Instruction for the WIC Payee/Proxy**

1. The payee/proxy will be informed to treat food instruments with care. The WIC clinic must post the **Notice to WIC Participants (see Attachment #1 3.07)** in the clerical area to assist the clerk in educating the payee/proxy of the policy.
2. The payee/proxy will be informed to report lost, stolen or damaged food instruments to the WIC clinic. The payee will not be sanctioned if food instruments are not reported as lost.
3. The payee/proxy must be advised that no replacements will be issued for food instruments reported as lost or stolen.
4. The payee/proxy must be advised prior to the first food instrument issuance of the documentation that is needed in order to have damaged food instruments replaced.
  - < Damaged food instruments may be replaced in the event of a natural disaster (flood, fire, hurricane or tornado), or when made unusable because of water damage or accidental tearing. Documentation that is required for replacement of damaged food instruments could include: identifying pieces of the food instruments to be replaced, a newspaper article about fire/flood at their address, a signed police report or an insurance claim form.
  - < Replacement may be issued of food benefits that have been redeemed but lost in isolated destructive incidents with appropriate documentation.
5. The payee/proxy must be informed that replacements will not be issued for food instruments that have expired and, in some cases, redeemed.
6. The payee/proxy must be instructed **not** to spend food instruments reported as stolen or damaged if they are found. If found, the payee/proxy is to return the found food instruments to the WIC clinic. The payee/proxy must be informed that spending food instruments that have been reported as damaged may result in the termination of WIC benefits.

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#### **B. Replacement of Food Instruments**

1. WIC personnel must contact the State Agency prior to replacement of food instruments for verification that food instruments reported as damaged have not been redeemed.
2. Food instruments may be issued as replacement of food benefits that have been redeemed but lost in isolated personal misfortunes where one or a few households might be affected by some destructive incident such as a gas line explosion, water main break or house fire. The food benefit replacement does not apply to mass disasters where emergency feeding services are available (**see Policy 1.10, Disaster Policy and Coordination**).
3. The payee/proxy will be given an appointment time for replacement of food instruments.
4. Replacement food instruments **will not** be mailed.
5. The food instruments will be reprinted to issue a replacement food package with the original dates of issuance. The STORC system automatically voids the original food instruments when the reprint code is used.
6. The food instruments printed for replacement of food benefits that have been redeemed will be voided as “R”, Replacement Draft, in the **STORC Food Instrument Screen** to prorate the replacement package.
7. Food instruments will not be replaced for the same payee more than one (1) time during a certification period or more than two (2) times in a calendar year.
8. Food instruments that are lost, stolen or damaged at the WIC clinic prior to issuance to the payee/proxy will be replaced. Refer to the **STORC Users Guide** or call the State Agency Help Desk for correct replacement procedures. Lost or stolen food instruments must be reported to the State Agency for the purpose of inquiring into the location of the missing food instruments.
9. WIC personnel may contact the State Agency for replacement approval in the event of a circumstance not listed or an extreme hardship situation.

#### **C. Documentation of Lost, Stolen and Damaged Food Instruments**

1. A copy of the required documentation/proof of damage is to be filed in the participant chart. The original must be sent to the State Agency within five (5) days.

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2. WIC personnel will complete the **Lost or Stolen Food Instrument Report (WIC-04)** for all food instruments reported to be lost, stolen or damaged and do the following with the three (3) copies:
  - < File a copy (white) in the participant's chart;
  - < Send a copy (canary) to the State Agency within five (5) days; and
  - < Issue a copy (pink) to the payee/proxy;
3. The beginning and ending serial numbers requested on the **Lost or Stolen Food Instrument Report (WIC-04)** may be determined by questioning the payee/proxy and using the Inquire in **STORC Food Instrument Screen** to find the numbers of the food instruments issued.
4. The void code reason for food instruments reported as stolen or damaged will be documented in the **STORC Food Instrument Screen** prior to issuance of replacements.
5. Food instruments reported as lost will be systematically voided by STORC.

#### **REFERENCES:**

1. WIC Regulations 246.12, Food Delivery Systems
2. SFP 95-067, WIC Disaster Policy and Coordination
3. SFP 95-135, Revision to WIC Disaster Policy and Coordination
4. SFP 96-035, Revision of WIC Disaster Policy
5. SFP 96-042, Addition of Cross Reference to SFP 96-035

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Notice to WIC Participants