YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

**Protect It**  Never leave your laptop in a public area or space.

**S.T.O.P.**  Utilize the S.T.O.P. plate program or other anti-theft devices to deter theft of your laptop.

**Delete It:** If at all possible, don't keep any restricted data on your laptop. Restricted data includes things like social security numbers, credit card account numbers and other personally identifiable information. You'd be surprised how easy it is to forget that this information is stored on your computer. Never set your computer to remember your passwords or otherwise record passwords on it.

**Encrypt It:** We recommend that you search your computer for restricted data and delete it. If that's not possible, then be sure you protect it by encrypting your laptop.

**Back It Up:** And regardless of what's stored on your computer, you should always keep a back up of important files in the event your laptop is lost or stolen. Your thesis, research or other work files may be irreplaceable. Be sure to back it up regularly to portable media (e.g., thumb drive, DVD) Personal and confidential information, research, and expensive software are now in the hands of thieves. Prevent others from accessing the information by password protecting your computer.

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Laptop Theft

Safety on Campus

The University of Toronto Scarborough (UTS) Campus Police Services is dedicated to creating a safe, secure and equitable environment for students, staff, faculty and visitors.

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UTS CAMPUS POLICE SERVICES

University Of Toronto Scarborough
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Science Wing, Room SW 304
Toronto, Ontario, M1C 1A4

Phone: 416-287-7398
Emergency: 416-287-7333
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Theft of computer equipment is a serious problem that can be reduced, even eliminated when everyone works together. In addition to the capital loss of equipment, and the related down time until it is replaced, the loss of sensitive and confidential information will have long-term consequences.

Never assume your laptop will be safe just sitting around. Treat as if it were $1,000 in cash lying around. The easiest way to protect your computer is to ensure that it is never left unattended in an unlocked area. This includes student spaces such as lounges, dorm rooms and University libraries. If taking a laptop into an office or public study area, or simply leaving it on your desk while you go to class, it's a good idea to attach a laptop lock. Laptop locks not only make theft more difficult, but act as a powerful deterrent against attempting a theft to begin with.

Thieves look for opportunity. Physically locking down your equipment to a fixed object in your office or room makes it difficult to steal. Purchase equipment that can be physically secured, or have the capability to be secured.

Remember however the true value of this theft is not the cost of replacing the laptop, but rather in the loss of your assignments, term notes, research, and personal information.

The vast majority of laptop thefts occurring at the UTSC campus happen when the owner leaves the laptop unattended in a public place. Thefts have been reported when the property has been left alone for less than a minute. Reasons for leaving the laptop generally include getting a drink or something to eat, talking to a friend, or using the washroom facilities.

Do not ask another student to watch your computer. That student will generally be immersed in his/her own work, and therefore will not be able to pay full attention to your property.

Empty cartons and old equipment left in the hallway or on the loading dock advertise new equipment on site. Do not leave packaging or equipment out where it is visible. Discard all waste packaging by breaking it down and taking it to a recycling area.

Equipment that can be traced is not attractive to thieves. All equipment should be permanently marked with an identification number that can be traced by police. UTSC campus police recommend the use of the S.T.O.P. plate which can be purchased at the book store.

If theft of equipment does occur, police will need detailed information on make, model, and serial number and any distinctive markings. This information is put on a central database in Ottawa which all police services in North America have access to. Store this information in a safe location separate from the equipment.

Many laptops and handhelds are stolen from vehicles. If you must leave your equipment in an unattended vehicle, lock it out of view in the trunk before you reach your destination.

The STOP security plate is a patented, permanently affixed and bar-coded metal tag that actively deters equipment theft. STOP security plates mark equipment with a verifiable registration number, clear warnings, and indelible identification as stolen equipment that renders the equipment useless to a thief. It eliminates the reason for most theft: Resale value.

The simplest, most cost-effective protection available, STOP security plates quickly and easily provide a lifetime of protection for your valuable equipment. By credibly delivering warnings against theft and verifiable weapons against its rationale, STOP security plates remove all incentive to steal your property. Further, inclusion of a 24-hour recovery hotline telephone number, provides an easy way for anyone who encounters stolen equipment to “do the right thing” and return protected items to their rightful owner.

These plates are available at the UTSC Bookstore.