

### Office Theft: More Common Than Many Think

(NAPSA)—The good news: Many workers feel quite at home in the office. The bad news: Some of them feel so much at home, they take the office home with them in ways they shouldn't. In fact, 58 percent of office workers have taken office supplies for their personal use, according to a new survey conducted by Harris Interactive and lawyers.com. These people should know they're putting themselves at risk of being fired and of possible legal consequences for taking home company property, even something as small as a stapler or a pen.

Among those who admit to taking office supplies for personal use, the most commonly stolen office supplies include pens/pencils (77 percent), followed by self-adhesive "sticky" notes (44 percent) and paper clips (40 percent). Two percent of workers even take decorations such as plants, paintings and office furniture.

It can happen more easily than you may realize. "People often forget that workplace resources are not their own and are actually considered company property," said attorney Alan Kopit, legal editor of LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell's lawyers.com, which is considered the most comprehensive and trustworthy online resource for finding lawyers. "We are not just talking

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about pens and paper here; employees are also stealing expensive things, too, like computers, software and books." Kopit suggests employees review their office policy and be sure their behavior follows the regulations.

Employee theft costs small businesses billions of dollars a year—costs passed on to consumers in terms of higher prices and to other workers in terms of lower wages and fewer benefits. After all, in addition to pens and paper, some people also steal resources directly related to the productivity of the business, such as classified information, patents, corporate contacts, case studies and periodicals.

For more information about office theft, consult an attorney or visit [www.lawyers.com](http://www.lawyers.com).