

Doing the FLIPL Investigation the Right Way

1. Being a FLIPL Investigating officer (IO) is an important duty. Your primary duty is one of fact finding-determining what happened to a missing or damaged item, what is the loss to the government, and recommending if anyone should be held liable for the loss. These factual findings need to be backed up by documents such as hand receipts, witness statements, etc. It does no good to the reviewing and approval official if all the facts are in your head but not documented in your investigation. What is crucial are the facts of what happened and, not simply your bottom line conclusion or opinion. You are telling a story of what happened, 0-6 approval authorities don't like to have to flip through all the exhibits to find out what happened, you need to tell them in your findings.
2. There are a lot of resources on how to do a proper investigation and how to document it. Your primary sources are DA PAM 735-5 and AR 735-5, Chapters 12, 13, and 14, and Appendix B. There is also a FLIPL IO Guide. Before conducting your investigation speak with an attorney at the legal office, if not you may end up having to redo parts of your investigation after you think it is completed. Make an appointment to speak with an administrative law attorney.
3. Remember there are strict timelines for conducting your investigation, so plan accordingly; it will take longer than you think. You will need to interview witnesses, obtain documents, write up your findings. If you intend to hold someone liable you will need to provide notice in writing to that individual and give them an opportunity to review the evidence and submit a rebuttal. Generally individuals have 10 to 30 days to submit a rebuttal depending on whether they are on in country or not. If you have to send by mail make sure you send certified mail so you have proof of delivery. You generally will need to get a legal review before submission to approval authority so plan ahead and do not wait until the last day to bring it for a legal review. Normally it takes 3 to 5 days for a legal review to be completed. When you are ready to turn in the FLIPL for review please contact the legal office to set up a date and time.
4. For missing items your first objective is to try and find the item. Not only will finding the item save the government money but it will save you the hassle of doing the rest of the investigation so you can get back to your other duties. If you find it then you need to do a memorandum to that effect and send to the accountable officer and document the memorandum in your report. If you can't find the item you will be tracking hand receipts to see who signed for the missing item. If there are no hand receipts then you need to determine how accountability was lost for the item and who was responsible for maintaining accountability. Remember losing accountability is the same thing as lost of the item and individuals can be held liable for losing accountability. You will need to interview and obtain written statements from the hand receipt holders and the last known people to use or see the item and from anyone else responsible for accountability or safeguarding of that item.
5. You also need to determine the value of any missing items. Most items are depreciated based on the age and use of the item, so you will need to obtain documents showing when the item was received. You also need to find out the current replacement cost of the item in FEDLOG or

other reference. Appendix B of AR 735-5 tells you how to determine the amount of depreciation to deduct from the replacement cost. Some items may be obsolete and have little if no value.

6. For damaged items you will need to physically examine the damaged item. If damage was caused by traffic accident obtain the MP accident report and SF 91 (accident report prepared by driver and supervisor). If you have trouble getting these documents contact the legal office. You will need to interview the driver and passengers and any other witnesses and law enforcement who responded. You may also need to visit the accident scene to get a good idea of what happened. You will need to find out about any contributing factors to the accident such as weather conditions. You will need to find whether the driver had proper driving licenses for the type of vehicle operated and was he following applicable instructions and policies such as using a spotter or ground guide