



National Crime Information Center

QUICK REFERENCE CARD

Article File

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Article File was established in 1967 as one of the first five NCIC Files. The purpose of the NCIC Article File is to aid in locating and recovering:

- Stolen items of value
- Lost or stolen law enforcement related equipment and items of identification

In addition, the file contains records of items that can assist in certain investigations.

Although the use of the NCIC System is voluntary, participation is vital. Information must be entered into the Article File before it can benefit law enforcement. The complete, accurate, and timely entry and maintenance of records ensures system integrity and keeps the NCIC System free of outdated and incorrect information. It is important to remember, an NCIC hit alone is not probable cause to arrest.



Record Entry

Entry of an item into the NCIC Article File depends on the monetary value, the item itself, and/or the investigative value.

- Stolen items are entered if individually valued at or above \$500, or a combined value at or above \$5000 in instances where multiple items were stolen during a single crime.
- Stolen office equipment, television sets, bicycles, and stolen and lost public safety, homeland security, or critical infrastructure items of identification or equipment are entered regardless of monetary value.
- Stolen items can be entered regardless of monetary value if an investigation indicates interstate movement of the property or the seriousness of the crime dictates the investigating agency should enter a record for investigative purposes.

Article File Fast Facts

- Electric bicycles and scooters are entered into the Article File and not the Vehicle File.
- Credit cards, bank drafts, ATM cards, and most checks should not be entered into any NCIC File.
- The only Article File records that require validation are those with type codes Q, T, or Z.
- Article File records with type codes Q, T, or Z are retained until canceled or cleared. All other records are retained for the remainder of the year entered plus one year.
- Querying the Article File using a type code Y or Z will search all Article File records and may aid in locating records for common items like cellphones.

When creating any NCIC File record, all available data should be included, even if it is not mandatory. If missing or additional data becomes available later, the record should be modified to include that additional information.

Type Codes of Special Importance

Q



Lost/stolen public safety, homeland security or critical infrastructure items of identification

T



Stolen toxic and hazardous chemicals

Y



Anything not already covered in the NCIC Code Manual

Z



Lost/stolen public safety, homeland security, or critical infrastructure items or equipment unrelated to identification

Miscellaneous (MIS) Field

The MIS Field is an optional data field, and although the data it contains isn't searchable with an online inquiry of the NCIC System, it is very valuable. The MIS Field should be used when:

- Data cannot be completely entered in its designated field based on established character limits or data type restrictions
- There is not a designated field to enter the data
- Data entered in another field requires further explanation
- When otherwise required or requested by NCIC policy

Locate, Clear, and Cancel Functions

Use of the following functions is critical in keeping the NCIC System free of outdated and incorrect information.



Locate

A locate must be placed on a record when an **agency that did not enter the record** recovers the item in the record.



Clear

A record must be cleared when the **record entering agency** recovers the item in the record.



Cancel

A record must be canceled when the **record entering agency** determines the record is invalid.

Check out the Article File e-Learning module in the NCIC Community on JusticeConnect accessed through the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP).

www.cjis.gov

Additional information is available in the NCIC Community of JusticeConnect or by contacting your CJIS Systems Agency.

For information regarding training, contact the NCIC Training Team:

Phone: 877-FBI-NCIC (324-6242) Email: ncictraining@fbi.gov

