DISTRIBUTED TEAMS / RECOVERY PLANNING

Remote return program

How to structure labels, tracking, data erasure, and exception handling for employee devices returning from many locations.

THE PROGRAM IN ONE SENTENCE

Connect **each return request** to its parcels, **each received device** to its serial, and **each outcome** to an approved record.

01

Enable

Issue the right kit, label, instructions, and deadline.

02

Reconcile

Match carrier events to device-level receipt.

03

Secure

Apply the approved route; verify and validate the result.

04

Resolve

Assign exceptions and document final outcomes.

FIRST DECISION

Agree who owns the return roster, who can view employee details, when shipping addresses are deleted, and who approves a device's next route.

01

Make the return easy to start

A return kit should tell the employee exactly what to send, how to pack it, where to hand it off, and how to get help. Keep the process consistent across locations.

BUILD ONE RETURN REQUEST PER HOLDER

Roster	Employee or contractor ID; contact and shipping address; expected devices and IDs; accessories; deadline. Limit address access and define its deletion point.
Kit	Prepaid label, suitable box and cushioning if needed, packing steps, support route, and return reference.
Label	Link every parcel tracking ID to the return reference, including replacement labels. One holder may need several parcels. Keep sensitive details off the box.
Message	Send a launch note, reminder cadence, receipt confirmation, and an escalation route for no-shows or address changes.

BEFORE GENERATING LABELS

- [ ] Confirm the address, country, carrier service, return window, and undeliverable-label owner.
- [ ] Provide a separate route for damaged or swollen batteries; do not ask employees to ship them under routine instructions.
- [ ] For each country, confirm carrier, customs, and battery rules. USPS [2] covers U.S. domestic mail only.

> CONTROL POINT
>
> The tracking number identifies a parcel. Receipt scanning identifies the device inside it.

02

Track the parcel and the device

Link each return request to every parcel tracking ID and every received serial. Allow multiple devices or parcels under one request; a carrier delivery scan cannot prove box contents.

THREE LINKED STATUS TRACKS

01 **Return request**

One record per holder and offboarding event.

`Opened / Active / Resolved`

Resolve only after each expected device has a final outcome; unresolved non-returns stay open in the exception queue.

02 **Parcel**

One record per issued label and tracking ID.

`Label issued / Accepted / Delivered / Reconciled`

Link voided and replacement labels. A delivery scan does not confirm box contents.

03 **Device**

One record per serial or media identifier.

`Expected / Received / Sanitized / Routed / Closed`

Close after data handling and final route are approved; hold unresolved device exceptions.

DAILY EXCEPTION QUEUE

No scan by deadline; stalled transit; delivery without intake; duplicate or replaced label; unexpected or missing device.

MINIMUM EVIDENCE

Return ID, holder reference, each label and tracking ID, carrier events, received serials, custody timestamps, owner, and next action.

03

Set the erasure gate

Choose the sanitization route before returns arrive. The device should not move to reuse, resale, or release until the approved method is completed and its result is recorded.

FOUR DECISIONS TO MAKE IN ADVANCE

01	**Policy**	Set the method by media type, information sensitivity, and intended destination. Use the current NIST SP 800-88 Rev. 2 program guidance. [1]
02	**Prerequisites**	Identify MDM, firmware, account, or activation locks; define who can release them and when. Preserve any required business data before sanitization.
03	**Assurance**	Record the device or media ID, method, tool and version, operator, date, verification result, and validation decision. Link removed media to its parent device.
04	**Failure**	Quarantine and document failed or incomplete attempts. Name the approver for retry, alternate method, destruction, or other disposition.

CLOSEOUT PROOF

Ask for a device-level erasure result and the agreed certificate or sanitization record. Review failures and exclusions separately. A certificate title alone does not show the method, verification, validation, or device coverage. [1]

04

Give exceptions a decision route

An exception is a held decision with a named owner, deadline, and approved next step. Define that route before the first employee is asked to ship a device.

COMMON EXCEPTION / FIRST RESPONSE / DECISION OWNER

No return or no scan	Confirm contact and address; reissue label only after checking for an existing parcel.	HR + IT asset owner
Parcel delivered, no device	Investigate intake, carrier proof, and package contents; preserve the record.	Program owner
Unmatched or extra device	Record serial and custody; hold for roster and ownership confirmation.	IT asset owner
Damage or missing parts	Photograph and record condition; review shipping and next-use criteria.	Program owner
Locked or erasure failed	Hold securely; route to authorized unlock, retry, alternate method, or destruction.	Security owner

CLOSE ONLY AFTER RECONCILIATION

Match the roster to returned serials, erasure results, and final routes. Keep unresolved non-returns and other exceptions open with an owner, due date, and next action; report them separately from closed devices.

> DECISION STANDARD
>
> No device record closes while its return, sanitization, or disposition exception remains unresolved.

05

Turn the plan into a scope

Type into this worksheet with the offboarding, security, and asset teams. Name one program owner and a delegate for each decision gate.

PROGRAM OWNER

RETURN ROSTER OWNER

POPULATION AND COUNTRIES

ESTIMATED DEVICES / CADENCE

EXPECTED DEVICE FIELDS

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION OWNER

KIT AND CARRIER ROUTE

RETURN DEADLINE / REMINDER CADENCE

ADDRESS ACCESS / RETENTION

NON-RETURN ESCALATION OWNER

INTAKE AND SERIAL-MATCHING OWNER

SANITIZATION POLICY / APPROVER

FAILED-ERASURE DECISION OWNER

ELIGIBLE NEXT-USE ROUTES

CLOSEOUT RECORDS / DUE DATE

EXCEPTION-REPORT RECIPIENT

LAUNCH CHECKS

- [ ] Roster supports multiple parcels and devices per holder, including replacement labels.
- [ ] Employee help route and damaged-battery route are documented.
- [ ] Erasure evidence and exception approvals have named recipients.

REFERENCE POINTS

[1] NIST SP 800-88 Rev. 2, Guidelines for Media Sanitization
[2] USPS Publication 52, Packaging Instruction 9D (U.S. domestic)