

A Guide to Retrieving a Decedent's Property



Presented by the
Columbus, Ohio
Division of
Police

Every day the Division of Police takes vehicles and property into custody. Sometimes the property is held as evidence in the investigation of a crime. Other times the property is held for safekeeping until it can be claimed by the owner.

Occasionally, the property belongs to someone who has died. When this happens, the Division of Police is responsible for caring for the property until the Probate Court issues an order appointing a legal representative of the estate. Legally, the Division can only release property to the named representative. This can cause confusion and frustration for the family of the deceased person. This pamphlet is designed to help surviving family members in this most difficult time.

The next of kin, or legal representative of the deceased person should follow these steps:

Step 1:

If the death was the result of a motor vehicle accident, call the Accident Investigation Unit at 614-645-4767. For all other incidents, call the Investigative Duty Desk at 614-645-4624. You will be referred to the investigating detective who will determine if the property you are seeking is being held for evidence or safekeeping. If it's being held for evidence, it will not be released until so ordered by the Court. If the items

being held are no longer needed by the criminal court or are being held for safekeeping, the assigned detective will forward a completed "Property Disposition" form to the Property Control Unit that says "Release to the Estate of (name and address of the deceased)." The assigned detective will also provide a copy of this form via e-mail or US mail to the legal representative.

Step 2:

Take the copy of the Property Disposition form and a copy of the Death Certificate to the Probate Court located at 373 S. High St., 614-525-3894. The Court will also require a picture identification of the representative. The Court may then issue a Release From Administration or Letter of Authority granting the representative permission to take custody of the property.

Note: The entire estate must be presented for probate at this time.

Step 3:

For property other than a motor vehicle, go to the Police Property Room located at 724 E. Woodrow Ave., 614-645-4736, Monday-Friday, between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm. Present a picture identification, the Property Disposition form, and Probate Court Order to the Property Room Supervisor. If approved, all items (excluding firearms) will be released. If the item is a firearm

the representative will be subject to a criminal background check. This check may take additional time to process and the legal representative will be advised by mail when to return to the Property Room.

Note: Legal representatives with a federal or state firearm disability will not be permitted to take control of any firearm.

Step 4:

To retrieve a motor vehicle, coordinate a release date with the investigating detective after obtaining the Probate Court order. Go to the Police Impound Lot located at 2700 Impound Lot Rd., 614-645-6400, Monday-Saturday between 9 am and 7 pm. Present a picture identification and the Probate Court order. If the vehicle will be driven from the Impound Lot, a valid driver's license must also be presented.

We at the Division of Police hope this information has been helpful to you.