

**DISPOSITION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY ON VACATED
PROPERTY**

2013 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Gage Froerer

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends the rights of a property owner in disposing of abandoned personal property left by a former tenant or occupant.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ requires a property owner to give notice to a former tenant of abandoned personal property before it is sold or donated;
- ▶ allows a tenant to recover abandoned personal property under certain requirements;
- ▶ provides that a property owner is not required to store certain hazardous or dangerous abandoned personal property; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

78B-6-812, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2008, Chapter 3

78B-6-816, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2008, Chapter 3



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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **78B-6-812** is amended to read:

78B-6-812. Order of restitution -- Service -- Enforcement -- Disposition of personal property -- Hearing.

(1) Each order of restitution shall:

(a) direct the defendant to vacate the premises, remove [~~his~~] the defendant's personal property, and restore possession of the premises to the plaintiff, or be forcibly removed by a sheriff or constable;

(b) advise the defendant of the time limit set by the court for the defendant to vacate the premises, which shall be three calendar days following service of the order, unless the court determines that a longer or shorter period is appropriate under the circumstances; and

(c) advise the defendant of the defendant's right to a hearing to contest the manner of its enforcement.

(2) (a) A copy of the order of restitution and a form for the defendant to request a hearing as listed on the form shall be served in accordance with Section 78B-6-805 by a person authorized to serve process pursuant to Subsection 78B-8-302(1). If personal service is impossible or impracticable, service may be made by:

(i) mailing a copy of the order and the form to the defendant's last-known address and posting a copy of the order and the form at a conspicuous place on the premises; or

(ii) mailing a copy of the order and the form to the commercial tenant defendant's last-known place of business and posting a copy of the order and the form at a conspicuous place on the business premises.

(b) A request for hearing by the defendant may not stay enforcement of the restitution order unless:

(i) the defendant furnishes a corporate bond, cash bond, certified funds, or a property bond to the clerk of the court in an amount approved by the court according to the formula set forth in Subsection 78B-6-808(4)(b); and

(ii) the court orders that the restitution order be stayed.

(c) The date of service, the name, title, signature, and telephone number of the person serving the order and the form shall be legibly endorsed on the copy of the order and the form

59 served on the defendant.

60 (d) The person serving the order and the form shall file proof of service in accordance
61 with Rule 4(e), Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

62 (3) (a) If the defendant fails to comply with the order within the time prescribed by the
63 court, a sheriff or constable at the plaintiff's direction may enter the premises by force using the
64 least destructive means possible to remove the defendant.

65 (b) Any personal property of the defendant may be removed from the premises by the
66 sheriff or constable and transported to a suitable location for safe storage. The sheriff or
67 constable may delegate responsibility for inventory, moving, and storage to the plaintiff, who
68 shall store the personal property in a suitable place and in a reasonable manner.

69 (c) The personal property removed and stored shall be ~~[inventoried by the sheriff or~~
70 ~~constable or the plaintiff who shall keep the original inventory and personally deliver or mail~~
71 ~~the defendant a copy of the inventory immediately after the personal property is removed.]~~
72 considered abandoned property and subject to Section 78B-6-816.

73 ~~[(4) (a) After demand made by the defendant within 30 days of removal of personal~~
74 ~~property from the premises, the sheriff or constable or the plaintiff shall promptly return all of~~
75 ~~the defendant's personal property upon payment of the reasonable costs incurred for its removal~~
76 ~~and storage.]~~

77 ~~[(b) The person storing the personal property may sell the property remaining in~~
78 ~~storage at a public sale if:]~~

79 ~~[(i) the defendant does not request a hearing or demand return of the personal property~~
80 ~~within 30 days of its removal from the premises; or]~~

81 ~~[(ii) the defendant fails to pay the reasonable costs incurred for the removal and storage~~
82 ~~of the personal property.]~~

83 ~~[(c) In advance of the sale, the person storing the personal property shall mail to the~~
84 ~~defendant's last-known address a written notice of the time and place of the sale.]~~

85 ~~[(d) If the defendant is present at the sale, he may specify the order in which the~~
86 ~~personal property shall be sold, and only so much personal property shall be sold as to satisfy~~
87 ~~the costs of removal, storage, advertising, and conducting the sale. The remainder of the~~
88 ~~personal property, if any, shall be released to the defendant. If the defendant is not present at~~
89 ~~the sale, the proceeds, after deduction of the costs of removal, storage, advertising, and~~

90 conducting the sale shall be paid to the plaintiff up to the amount of any judgment the plaintiff
 91 obtained against the defendant. Any surplus shall be paid to the defendant, if the defendant's
 92 whereabouts are known. If the defendant's whereabouts are not known, any surplus shall be
 93 disposed of in accordance with Title 67, Chapter 4a, Unclaimed Property Act.]

94 [~~(e)~~ The plaintiff may donate the property to charity if:]

95 [~~(i)~~ the defendant does not request a hearing or demand return of the personal property
 96 within 30 days of its removal from the premises; or]

97 [~~(ii)~~ the defendant fails to pay the reasonable costs incurred for the removal and storage
 98 of the personal property; and]

99 [~~(iii)~~ the donation is a commercially reasonable alternative.]

100 [~~(f)~~ If the property belonging to a person who is not a defendant is removed and stored
 101 in accordance with this section, that person may claim the property by delivering a written
 102 demand for its release to the sheriff or constable or the plaintiff. If the claimant provides
 103 proper identification and evidence of ownership, the sheriff or constable or the plaintiff shall
 104 promptly release the property at no cost to the claimant.]

105 [~~(5)~~] (4) In the event of a dispute concerning the manner of enforcement of the
 106 restitution order, the defendant [~~or any person claiming to own stored personal property~~] may
 107 file a request for a hearing. The court shall set the matter for hearing within 10 calendar days
 108 from the filing of the request, or as soon thereafter as practicable, and shall mail notice of the
 109 hearing to the parties.

110 [~~(6)~~] (5) The Judicial Council shall draft the forms necessary to implement this section.
 111 Section 2. Section **78B-6-816** is amended to read:

112 **78B-6-816. Abandoned premises -- Retaking and rerenting by owner -- Liability**
 113 **of tenant -- Personal property of tenant left on premises.**

114 (1) In the event of abandonment, the owner may retake the premises and attempt to rent
 115 them at a fair rental value and the tenant who abandoned the premises shall be liable:

116 (a) for the entire rent due for the remainder of the term; or

117 (b) for rent accrued during the period necessary to rerent the premises at a fair rental
 118 value, plus the difference between the fair rental value and the rent agreed to in the prior rental
 119 agreement, plus a reasonable commission for the renting of the premises and the costs, if any,
 120 necessary to restore the rental unit to its condition when rented by the tenant less normal wear

121 and tear. This Subsection (1) applies, if less than Subsection (1)(a), notwithstanding that the
122 owner did not re-rent the premises.

123 (2) (a) If the tenant has abandoned the premises and has left personal property on the
124 premises, the owner is entitled to remove the property from the dwelling, store it for the tenant,
125 and recover actual moving and storage costs from the tenant.

126 (b) (i) The owner shall ~~[make reasonable efforts to notify the tenant of the location of~~
127 ~~the personal property.]~~ mail to the last known address for the tenant a notice that the property is
128 considered abandoned.

129 (ii) The tenant shall recover the property within 15 days from the date the notice was
130 sent, including payment of any costs of inventory, moving, and storage.

131 ~~[(ii) If]~~ (iii) Except as provided in Subsection (5), if the property has been in storage
132 for ~~[over 30]~~ at least 15 days and the tenant has made no reasonable effort to recover it from
133 the date notice was sent and the tenant fails to recover the property, pay the costs associated
134 with the inventory, removal, and storage and no court hearing on the property is pending, the
135 owner may:

136 (A) sell the property at a public sale and apply the proceeds toward any amount the
137 tenant owes; or

138 (B) donate the property to charity if the donation is a commercially reasonable
139 alternative.

140 (c) Any money left over from the public sale of the property shall be handled as
141 specified in Title 67, Chapter 4a, Part 2, Standards for Determining When Property is
142 Abandoned or Unclaimed.

143 (d) Nothing contained in this act shall be in derogation of or alter the owner's rights
144 under Title 38, Chapter 3, Lessors' Liens~~[-]~~, or any other contractual liens or rights.

145 (3) If abandoned property is determined to belong to a person who is the tenant or an
146 occupant, the tenant or occupant may claim the property by delivery of a written demand with
147 evidence of ownership of the personal property within 15 days after the notice described in
148 Subsection (2)(b) is sent. The owner may not be liable for the loss of the abandoned personal
149 property if the written demand is not received.

150 (4) A tenant has no recourse for damage or loss if the tenant fails to recover any
151 abandoned property as required in this section.

152 (5) An owner is not required to store the following abandoned personal property:
153 (a) chemicals, pests, potentially dangerous or other hazardous materials;
154 (b) animals, including dogs, cats, fish, reptiles, rodents, birds, or other pets;
155 (c) gas, fireworks, combustibles, or any item considered to be hazardous or explosive;
156 (d) garbage;
157 (e) perishable items; or
158 (f) items that when placed in storage might create a hazardous condition or a pest
159 control issue.

160 (6) Items listed in Subsection (5) may be properly disposed of by the owner
161 immediately upon determination of abandonment. A tenant may not recover for disposal of
162 abandoned items listed in Subsection (5).

163 (7) Notice of any public sale shall be mailed to the last known address of the tenant at
164 least five calendar days prior to the public sale.

165 (8) If the tenant is present at the public sale:

166 (a) the tenant may specify the order in which the personal property shall be sold;

167 (b) the owner may sell only as much personal property necessary to satisfy the amount
168 due under the rental agreement and statutorily allowed damages, costs, and fees associated with
169 the abandoned items; and

170 (c) any unsold personal property shall be released to the tenant.

171 (9) If the tenant is not present at the public sale:

172 (a) all items may be sold; and

173 (b) any surplus amount over the amount due to the owner shall be paid to the tenant, if
174 the tenant's current location is known. If the tenant's location is not known, any surplus shall
175 be disposed of in accordance with Title 67, Chapter 4a, Unclaimed Property Act.

Legislative Review Note
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Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel