

PAWNBROKERS (EXCERPT)

Act 273 of 1917

446.212 Misappropriated property; effect of written hold order; delivery of property to person claiming ownership; return of property to pawnbroker; liability; "appropriate law enforcement official" defined.

Sec. 12. (1) If an appropriate law enforcement official has probable cause to believe that property in the possession of a pawnbroker is misappropriated, or if a person files an official police report alleging misappropriation of property, the official may place a written hold order on the property. All of the following apply to a written hold order under this subsection:

(a) The hold order shall specify a holding period. The length of the holding period shall not exceed 90 days, unless extended by court order.

(b) The appropriate law enforcement official who placed the hold order may rescind it in writing.

(c) An appropriate law enforcement official may place only 1 hold order on a particular item of property.

(d) The hold order must include all of the following information:

(i) The name and mailing address of the pawnbroker.

(ii) The name, title, and identification number of the appropriate law enforcement official who placed the hold order and, if applicable, the number assigned to the claim or report relating to the property.

(iii) A complete description of the property in the possession of the pawnbroker, including model number and serial number, if applicable.

(iv) The name of the person that reported that the property was misappropriated, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

(v) The expiration date of the holding period specified under subdivision (a).

(2) An appropriate law enforcement official must sign and date a copy of a written hold order he or she placed on an item of property under subsection (1) as evidence that he or she placed the hold order and of the date the holding period specified under subsection (1)(a) begins.

(3) On the tenth day after a hold order placed under subsection (1) expires, if the pawnbroker has not received notice from a court that it has granted an extension of the hold order on the property, title to the property vests in and is considered conveyed by operation of law to the pawnbroker, free of any liability for claims but subject to any restrictions contained in the pawn transaction contract and subject to the provisions of this act.

(4) A court shall not grant an extension of a hold order placed on property under subsection (1) unless a person that claims an interest in the property that is adverse to the pawnbroker or pawner has filed a report with a law enforcement agency and provided a copy of the report to the court and a copy of that report accompanies the notice from the court that it granted the extension described in subsection (3).

(5) Except as provided in subsection (6), a pawnbroker shall not release or dispose of property that is subject to a hold order under this section except pursuant to a court order, a written release from the appropriate law enforcement official, or the expiration of the holding period of the hold order described in subsection (1)(a).

(6) While a hold order is in effect, on request, the pawnbroker must release the property that is subject to the hold order to the custody of the appropriate law enforcement official that placed the hold order for use in a criminal investigation or proceeding related to the ownership claim. The release of the property to the custody of the appropriate law enforcement official is not considered a waiver or release of the pawnbroker's property rights in, interest in, or lien on the property.

(7) A law enforcement official or any other person that obtains custody of property under this section shall not deliver the property to any person that claims ownership of the property unless both of the following are met:

(a) The property is delivered after a hearing at which a court determines the merits of the claims to the property.

(b) If the court finds against the pawnbroker, the court orders the pawner or seller of the item that was pawned or pledged to make restitution to the pawnbroker for all money that the pawnbroker advanced, and the total interest and charges accrued since the pawnbroker first advanced that money, together with reasonable attorney fees and costs that the pawnbroker incurred in defending the action related to the disputed property.

(8) If the court after a hearing described in subsection (7)(a) finds in favor of the pawnbroker, the property must be returned to the pawnbroker.

(9) A pawnbroker is not liable to any person for any property that is seized from the pawnbroker based on the pawnbroker's inability to return the property to that person because of the seizure.

(10) As used in this section, "appropriate law enforcement official" means a sheriff or sheriff's deputy of a sheriff's department in this state; village or township marshal of a village or township in this state; officer of the police department of any city, village, or township in this state; or officer of the Michigan state police.

History: Add. 2018, Act 345, Eff. Jan. 14, 2019.

Compiler's note: Former MCL 446.212, which pertained to disposition of surplus money resulting from sale, was repealed by Act 233 of 1998, Imd. Eff. July 3, 1998.