

80.39 Disposition of personal property.

1. Personal property, except for motor vehicles subject to sale pursuant to section 321.89, and seizable property subject to disposition pursuant to chapter 809 or 809A, which personal property is found or seized by, turned in to, or otherwise lawfully comes into the possession of the department of public safety or a local law enforcement agency and which the department or agency does not own, shall be disposed of pursuant to this section. If by examining the property the owner or lawful custodian of the property is known or can be readily ascertained, the department or agency shall notify the owner or custodian by certified mail directed to the owner's or custodian's last known address, as to the location of the property. If the identity or address of the owner cannot be determined, notice by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the property was found is sufficient notice. A published notice may contain multiple items.

2. The department or agency may return the property to a person if that person or the person's representative does all of the following:

a. Appears at the location where the property is located.

b. Provides proper identification.

c. Demonstrates ownership or lawful possession of the property to the satisfaction of the department or agency.

3. After ninety days following the mailing or publication of the notice required by this section, or if the owner or lawful custodian of the property is unknown or cannot be readily determined, or the department or agency has not turned the property over to the owner, the lawful custodian, or the owner's or custodian's representative, the department or agency may dispose of the property in any lawful way, including but not limited to the following:

a. Selling the property at public auction with the proceeds, less department or agency expenses, going to the general fund of the state if sold by the department, the rural services fund if sold by a county agency, and the general fund of a city if sold by a city agency; however, the department or agency shall be reimbursed from the proceeds for the reasonable expenses incurred in selling the property at the auction.

b. Retaining the property for the department's or agency's own use.

c. Giving the property to another agency of government.

d. Giving the property to an appropriate charitable organization.

e. Destroying the property.

4. Except when a person appears in person or through a representative within the time periods set by this section, and satisfies the department or agency that the person is the owner or lawful custodian of the property, disposition of the property shall be at the discretion of the department or agency. The department or agency shall maintain the receipt and disposition records for all property processed under this section. Good faith compliance with this section is a defense to any claim or action at law or in equity regarding the disposition of the property.

84 Acts, ch 1154, § 1; 85 Acts, ch 201, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1140, § 1; 86 Acts, ch 1237, § 4; 96 Acts, ch 1133, §39; 2000 Acts, ch 1203, §1