

CHAPTER 645

RECOVERY OF MERCHANDISE OR DAMAGES

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645.1 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Mercantile establishment*” includes any place where merchandise is displayed, held, or offered for sale, either retail or wholesale.
2. “*Merchandise*” includes any object, ware, good, commodity, or other similar item displayed or offered for sale.
3. “*Owner*” means an owner of a mercantile establishment and includes a designated representative of the owner.

[89 Acts, ch 99, §1](#); [97 Acts, ch 97, §1](#)

645.2 Actions for merchandise or damages.

1. An action for recovery of merchandise or the purchase price, damages, and costs may be brought by an owner pursuant to [this chapter](#) in any court of competent jurisdiction, including a court of small claims if the claim does not exceed jurisdictional limits.
2. A conviction under [chapter 714](#) is not required as a condition precedent to the maintenance of an action pursuant to [this chapter](#).

[89 Acts, ch 99, §2](#); [2021 Acts, ch 76, §150](#)

645.3 Liability.

1. A person who knowingly and without claim of right wrongfully appropriates, takes possession of, or alters the price indicia of merchandise of a mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner and with the intent to convert the merchandise to the person’s own use without having paid the full purchase price for it, is liable for:
 - a. The return of the merchandise or the purchase price of the merchandise, provided that the merchandise is not evidence in a criminal proceeding under [chapter 714](#).
 - b. Actual damages for any decrease in value of the merchandise returned.
 - c. The greater of fifty dollars or actual costs, not to exceed two hundred dollars, incurred by the owner in recovering the merchandise or damages pursuant to [this chapter](#).
2. Damages awarded under [this section](#) shall be reduced by any amount received by the owner pursuant to court ordered restitution under [chapter 232A](#) or [910](#).
3. The parent or parents of an unemancipated minor child under the age of eighteen years are liable for any judgment awarded against the child pursuant to [subsection 1](#) in accordance with, and subject to the limits established in, [section 613.16](#).

[89 Acts, ch 99, §3](#)