

**Chapter 63.42 RCW**  
**UNCLAIMED INMATE PERSONAL PROPERTY**

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**RCW 63.42.010 Legislative intent.** It is the intent of the legislature to relieve the department of corrections from unacceptable burdens of cost related to storage space and manpower in the preservation of inmate personal property if the property has been abandoned by the inmate and to enhance the security and safety of the institutions. [1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 1.]

**RCW 63.42.020 Definitions.** Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

- (1) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of corrections or the secretary's designees.
- (2) "Personal property" or "property" includes both corporeal and incorporeal personal property and includes among others contraband and money.
- (3) "Contraband" means all personal property including, but not limited to, alcoholic beverages and other items which a resident of a correctional institution may not have in the resident's possession, as defined in rules adopted by the secretary.
- (4) "Money" means all currency, script, personal checks, money orders, or other negotiable instruments.
- (5) "Owner" means the inmate, the inmate's legal representative, or any person claiming through or under the inmate entitled to title and possession of the property.
- (6) "Unclaimed" means that no owner of the property has been identified or has requested, in writing, the release of the property to themselves nor has the owner of the property designated an individual to receive the property or paid the required postage to effect delivery of the property.
- (7) "Inmate" means a person committed to the custody of the department of corrections or transferred from other states or the federal government.
- (8) "Institutions" means those facilities set forth in RCW 72.01.050(2) and all community residential programs under the department's jurisdiction operated pursuant to chapter 72.65 RCW.
- (9) "Department" means the department of corrections.
- (10) "Illegal items" means those items unlawful to be possessed.
- (11) "Nonprofit" has the meaning prescribed by state or federal law or rules. [1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 2.]

**RCW 63.42.030 Personal property presumed abandoned—Illegal items retained as evidence or destroyed.** (1) All personal property, and any income or increment which has accrued thereon, held for the owner by an institution that has remained unclaimed for more than six months from the date the owner terminated without authorization from work training release, transferred to a different institution, or when the owner is unknown or deceased, from the date the property was placed in the custody of the institution, is presumed abandoned: PROVIDED, That the provisions of this section shall be extended for up to six months for any inmate, transferred to another institution, who has no recorded next of kin, or person to whom the unclaimed property can be sent.

(2) All personal property, and any income or increment which has accrued thereon, the inmate owner of which has been placed on escape status is presumed abandoned and shall be held for three months by the institution from which the inmate escaped. If the inmate owner remains on escape status for three months or if no other person claims ownership within three months, the property shall be disposed of as set forth in this chapter.

(3) All illegal items owned by and in the possession of an inmate shall be confiscated and held by the institution to which the inmate is assigned. Such items shall be held as required for evidence for law enforcement authorities. Illegal items not retained for evidence shall be destroyed. [1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 3.]

*Property of deceased inmates: RCW 11.08.101, 11.08.111, and 11.08.120.*

**RCW 63.42.040 Disposition of property presumed abandoned—Inventory—Notice.** (1) All personal property, other than money, presumed abandoned shall be destroyed unless, in the opinion of the secretary, the property may be used or has value to a charitable or nonprofit organization, in which case the property may be donated to the organization. A charitable or nonprofit organization does not have a claim nor shall the department or any employee thereof be held liable to any charitable or nonprofit organization for property which is destroyed rather than donated or for the donation of property to another charitable or nonprofit organization.

(2) Money presumed abandoned under this chapter shall be paid into the revolving fund set up in accordance with RCW 9.95.360.

(3) The department shall inventory all personal property prior to its destruction or donation.

(4) Before personal property is donated or destroyed, if the name and address of the owner thereof is known or if deceased, the address of the heirs as known, at least thirty days' notice of the donation or destruction of the personal property shall be given to the owner at the owner's residence or place of business or to some person of suitable age and discretion residing or employed therein. If the name or residence of the owner or the owner's heirs is not known, a notice of the action fixing the time and place thereof shall be published at least once in an official newspaper in the county at least thirty days prior to the date fixed for the action. The notice shall be signed by the secretary. The notice need not contain a description of property, but shall contain a general statement that the property is unclaimed personal property of inmates, specifying the institution at which the property is held. If the owner fails to reclaim the property prior to

the time fixed in the notice, the property shall be donated or destroyed. [1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 4.]

*Property of deceased inmates: RCW 11.08.101, 11.08.111, and 11.08.120.*

**RCW 63.42.050 Chapter not applicable if prior written agreement.**

This chapter does not apply if the inmate and the department have reached an agreement in writing regarding the disposition of the personal property. [1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 5.]

**RCW 63.42.060 Application of chapters 63.24 and 63.29 RCW. (1)**

The uniform unclaimed property act, \*chapter 63.29 RCW, does not apply to personal property in the possession of the department of corrections.

(2) Chapter 63.24 RCW, unclaimed property in hands of bailee, does not apply to personal property in the possession of the department of corrections. [1985 c 7 s 127; 1983 1st ex.s. c 52 s 6.]

**\*Reviser's note:** Chapter 63.29 RCW was repealed in its entirety by 2022 c 225 s 1505, effective January 1, 2023. For later enactment, see chapter 63.30 RCW.