

RCW 63.40.010 Methods of disposition—Notice—Sale, retention, destruction, or trade. Whenever any personal property, other than vehicles governed by chapter 46.52 RCW, shall come into the possession of the sheriff of any county in connection with the official performance of his duties and said personal property shall remain unclaimed or not taken away for a period of sixty days from date of written notice to the owner thereof, if known, which notice shall inform the owner of the disposition which may be made of the property under this section and the time that the owner has to claim the property and in all other cases for a period of sixty days from the time said property came into the possession of the sheriff's office, unless said property has been held as evidence in any court, then, in that event, after sixty days from date when said case has been finally disposed of and said property released as evidence by order of the court, said county sheriff may:

(1) At any time thereafter sell said personal property at public auction to the highest and best bidder for cash in the manner hereinafter provided;

(2) Retain the property for the use of the sheriff's office subject to giving notice in the manner prescribed in RCW 63.40.020 and the right of the owner, or his or her legal representative, to reclaim the property within one year after the receipt of notice, without compensation for ordinary wear and tear if, in the opinion of the county sheriff, the property consists of firearms or other items specifically usable in law enforcement work: PROVIDED, That at the end of each calendar year during which there has been such a retention, the sheriff shall provide the county's executive or legislative authority and retain for public inspection a list of such retained items and an estimation of each item's replacement value. At the end of the one-year period any unclaimed firearm shall be disposed of pursuant to RCW 9.41.098(2);

(3) Destroy an item of personal property at the discretion of the county sheriff if the county sheriff determines that the following circumstances have occurred:

(a) The property has no substantial commercial value, or the probable cost of sale exceeds the value of the property;

(b) The item has been unclaimed by any person after notice procedures have been met, as prescribed in this section; and

(c) The county sheriff has determined that the item is unsafe and unable to be made safe for use by any member of the general public;

(4) If the item is not unsafe or illegal to possess or sell, such item, after satisfying the notice requirements as prescribed in RCW 63.40.020, may be offered by the county sheriff to bona fide dealers, in trade for law enforcement equipment, which equipment shall be treated as retained property for purpose of annual listing requirements of subsection (2) of this section; or

(5) If the item is not unsafe or illegal to possess or sell, but has been, or may be used, in the discretion of the county sheriff, in a manner that is illegal, such item may be destroyed. [1988 c 223 § 4; 1988 c 132 § 3; 1981 c 154 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 44 § 4; 1961 c 104 § 1.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 1988 c 132 § 3 and by 1988 c 223 § 4, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section pursuant to RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).