

General Information

UCP Guide

What is Unclaimed Property?

Unclaimed property is money or intangible property owed to an individual or business. Property is considered unclaimed after it is held for an extended period of time with no owner contact and a “good faith” effort has been made to locate the owner. Abandoned property is turned over to the Washington State Department of Revenue from many sources, including banks, credit unions, corporations, utilities, insurance companies, governmental entities and retailers throughout the United States.

Examples of unclaimed property include:

Deposits at financial institutions	Uncashed checks
Wages	Patient refunds
Travelers checks	Account credits
Utility deposits	Insurance proceeds
Stocks	Bonds
Dividend payments	Delinquent safe deposit box contents

Uniform Unclaimed Property Act 1983

The Washington Unclaimed Property Act protects unclaimed property until it is returned to its rightful owners or their heirs. The Department of Revenue acts as custodian of the property and administers a program to locate the owners. Once reported to the Department, unclaimed property is available for refund to the owner or their heirs indefinitely.

Washington State law requires businesses and other organizations to review their records each year to determine whether they hold any funds, securities or other property that have remained unclaimed for the required abandonment period. Holders file an annual report and transfer the

property to the state. The holding period before property is considered unclaimed varies by type of property.

Businesses must report unclaimed property to the state of Washington if the owner's:

1. Last known address is the state of Washington.
2. Address is unknown or the owner is unidentified and Washington is the state of corporate domicile.
3. Property is not reportable to another state and the property transaction arose in Washington.

Revenue's Role

The Department administers the unclaimed property as a consumer protection program. The program has two main purposes:

1. To safeguard and return unclaimed property to the rightful owners or their legal heirs.
2. To place any "windfall from" unknown or unidentified unclaimed property with the state to benefit the citizens of Washington.

The public may search reported owner names and addresses on our Internet site. Reported funds are deposited into the State General Fund and are available for state purposes until claimed. We keep a trust fund of \$750,000 to pay claims and program expenses.

Important Points

- There is no time limit to claim reported property
- Owners are not charged a fee to reclaim their property
- Interest-bearing accounts earn interest as reported for up to ten years
- Holders are covered against liability on claims for reported property

Holder Education & Audit Program

We provide reporting and compliance education to the companies through:

- reporting guide series which includes common industry and property questions
- on-site consultation visits
- holder education workshops

We perform audits to verify that companies are complying with the law. Interest charges and penalties apply if a company fails to report timely and deliver unclaimed property.

Finding Owners

Each year, we make significant efforts to locate the owners of unclaimed property. Our efforts include:

- Advertising reported owners with \$75 or more in newspaper ads
- Mailing a claim form to the last known address of each owner with \$75 or more
- Issuing news releases about unclaimed property to television and radio stations
- Maintaining a searchable online owner database at <http://ucp.dor.wa.gov/>
- Accepting toll-free inquiries in Washington State at **1-800-435-2429**
- Locating owners using trained investigators with advanced search tools

Who Must Report

The following are required to report:

1. Banking and Financial Organizations including:

State or federally chartered banks	Trust companies	Savings banks
Private bankers	Savings and loan associations	Credit unions and investment companies.

2. Business Associations wherever located, domiciled or incorporated, such as:

Corporations	Joint stock companies	Business trusts
Partnerships	Cooperatives or other business associations	Insurance companies

3. Utilities owned or operated for public use for services such as:

Communications	Electricity	Gas
Water	Steam	Solid waste collection

4. Other Legal Entities including:

State, county and city governments	Public corporations	Political subdivisions public authorities
Nonprofit organizations	Estates	Trusts or other legal or commercial entities

Businesses located in Washington or another state, need to report any unclaimed property they hold that is due an owner with a last known address in Washington. All holders are responsible for filing reports on behalf of their branches, divisions or other affiliated entities.

What to Report

The Property Category Code Table in the *Unclaimed Property Reporting Booklet* provides examples of the types of property that are reportable as unclaimed property.

Report all abandoned property that you owe to a Washington resident or corporation. Washington corporations should report unknown owners, items with no address, and property where the last known address of the owner is in a foreign country to the state of Washington.

Except for Washington companies reporting via reciprocity agreements, report abandoned property to the state of the owner's last known address. Traveler's checks and money orders are reportable to the state where they were purchased.

Reciprocity

Washington companies may report all unclaimed property, except safe deposit box contents, stock, traveler's checks, and money orders, to Washington unless you have received specific instruction to report to another state. The Department will automatically forward this property to the appropriate state based on the last known address. If you report another state's property to Washington, you need to report using that state's abandonment period. You must notify that state of your intent to report to Washington prior to sending the funds to our state.

Exceptions to the Reciprocity Agreement Program:

- **Traveler's checks and money orders:** This property is reportable to the state where it was purchased. Our current information system is unable to identify and transfer this kind of property to another state.
- **Safe Deposit Boxes:** Contents of safe deposit boxes are reported in November and delivered within six months if accepted by the Department. Because of each state's special handling and acceptance rules, holders need to report safe deposit box contents directly to each state.
- **Stock:** At this time, we are unable to transfer shares of stock to other states. Report unclaimed or underlying shares of stock to the state of last known address.

When to File

ALL HOLDERS

Report forms are automatically mailed to all active holders each year. Reports are due from all holders before November 1. You must include all property that has remained unclaimed for the required dormancy period, as of the preceding June 30 of the current reporting year.

Our Report Year Conversion Table may help determine what property needs to be reported. You can find the table in the *UCP Reporting Booklet and Uniform Law Pamphlet*, and on our web site.

NEGATIVE (ZERO) REPORTS

Holders with nothing to report who receive a booklet should file a *negative (zero) report*. Negative reports may be faxed to (360) 586-2163.

ACCOUNT CLOSING OR INACTIVE

If your business is closing or if you do not expect to report in the foreseeable future, you may check the appropriate box on the *Summary Report Form*.

EARLY REPORTING

A holder may call to request approval to report and deliver property early. Before an early report will be allowed, a holder must have held the property at least 90 days and made a good faith attempt to locate the lost owners.

REMITTANCE AT TIME OF REPORT

Remit all reported property, except safe deposit box contents, with the report before November 1.

SECURITIES

Must be registered in the name of the state of Washington, Department of Revenue (FEIN: 91-6001118) and may be sent in certificate form or via DTC (#201, account #243072549001). Shares held in reinvestment plans should be registered in an account under the state's name and confirmation should be sent with the report.

SAFE DEPOSIT BOX CONTENTS REPORT

There are special reporting forms available to report safe deposit and safekeeping contents. Send the completed safe deposit box content reports showing a complete inventory of the property and listing the unpaid charges.

Common Terms

The following definitions are helpful when reporting unclaimed property to the state of Washington. These definitions are an aid and not a substitute for legal advice.

ABANDONED PROPERTY

Tangible or intangible property unpaid or undelivered to the rightful owner for the time period specified by law. Also referred to as unclaimed property.

ACTIVITY

Action taken on property by the owner including making a deposit or withdrawal, or a written memorandum to the holder. It does not include automatic transfers, payments, or charges.

AGGREGATE

A group of related property type items reported as a single line item. The owner names and addresses are not included with the report. Property valued less than \$50.01 may be aggregated when reporting to Washington State.

CLAIMANT

A person believing they are legally entitled to abandoned property. The claimant is not always the actual "owner" of the property. A claimant could be an heir, or someone who has a legal right to claim the property on the owner's behalf (i.e., Power of Attorney).

CUSTODIAN

A "custodian" holds property for the benefit and care of the rightful owner until the property can be delivered to the rightful owner. Most states' laws make the abandoned property division a custodian of the abandoned property remitted to the state. (Compare to "escheat")

DEPARTMENT

Washington State Department of Revenue.

DORMANT OR INACTIVE PERIOD

The time period during which an owner of property does not take action on his or her property.

DUE DILIGENCE

The degree of effort a holder must use to find the rightful owner of abandoned property before delivering the property to the state.

ESCHEAT

A transfer of property that makes the state the legal owner. The state of Washington does not escheat abandoned property but holds it in trust for the owner in perpetuity.

HOLDER

The entity that controls abandoned property until transferred to the owner or the state.

HOLDER REPORTING NUMBER

The Unclaimed Property Section assigns this number to a holder. If you have not reported in the past, your holder number is assigned when we receive your first report. Once assigned, please use this number in all correspondence with the Unclaimed Property Section.

NEGATIVE REPORT

An unclaimed property report filed when no property was abandoned during the current reporting period. Also referred to as a "zero" report.

OWNER

The person to which the property originally belonged as reported by the holder of the property. Report the payee as the owner for money orders, gift certificates, and cashier checks.

INTANGIBLE PROPERTY

Property that represents or is negotiable to cash. Items such as a stock certificate represent ownership interest in a company or a savings bond represents an obligation to pay a certain amount. Both are convertible to cash and represent cash values.

TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal property that is represented by itself. Examples include a diamond ring and a silver coin.

REAL PROPERTY

This is real estate and fixtures. Unclaimed Property does not cover abandoned land, houses, boats, or automobiles. In the case of abandoned rental storage property, repossessed cars, or boats abandoned at a state dock, any unclaimed sale proceeds are reportable as unclaimed property.



<http://dor.wa.gov>

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