

IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 452 of 2004

***** 445.79b.added THIS ADDED SECTION IS EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2011 *****

445.79b.added Seizure without process of property not exceeding \$50,000.00; procedure; powers of seizing agency; title; examination of seized money; return of money; burden of proof.

Sec. 19b. (1) If property is seized pursuant to section 19a, forfeiture proceedings shall be instituted promptly. If the property is seized without process as provided under section 19a and the total value of the property seized does not exceed \$50,000.00, the following procedure shall be used:

(a) The local unit of government that seized the property or, if the property was seized by the state, the state shall notify the owner of the property that the property has been seized and that the local unit of government or, if applicable, the state intends to forfeit and dispose of the property by delivering a written notice to the owner of the property or by sending the notice to the owner by certified mail. If the name and address of the owner are not reasonably ascertainable or delivery of the notice cannot be reasonably accomplished, the notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the property was seized, for 10 successive publishing days.

(b) Unless all criminal proceedings involving or relating to the property have been completed, the seizing agency shall immediately notify the prosecuting attorney for the county in which the property was seized or, if the attorney general is actively handling a case involving or relating to the property, the attorney general of the seizure of the property and the intention to forfeit and dispose of the property.

(c) Any person claiming an interest in property that is the subject of a notice under subdivision (a) may, within 20 days after receipt of the notice or of the date of the first publication of the notice, file a written claim signed by the claimant with the local unit of government or the state expressing his or her interest in the property. The person filing the claim shall give a bond to the local unit of government or the state in the amount of 10% of the value of the claimed property, but not less than \$250.00 or greater than \$5,000.00, with sureties approved by the local unit of government or the state containing the condition that if the property is ordered forfeited by the court the obligor shall pay all costs and expenses of the forfeiture proceedings. The local unit of government or, if applicable, the state shall transmit the claim and bond with a list and description of the property seized to the attorney general, the prosecuting attorney for the county, or the city or township attorney for the local unit of government in which the seizure was made. The attorney general, the prosecuting attorney, or the city or township attorney shall promptly institute forfeiture proceedings after the expiration of the 20-day period. However, unless all criminal proceedings involving or relating to the property have been completed, a city or township attorney shall not institute forfeiture proceedings without the consent of the prosecuting attorney or, if the attorney general is actively handling a case involving or relating to the property, the attorney general.

(d) If no claim is filed or bond given within the 20-day period as described in subdivision (c), the local unit of government or the state shall declare the property forfeited and shall dispose of the property as provided under section 19c. However, unless all criminal proceedings involving or relating to the property have been completed, the local unit of government or the state shall not dispose of the property under this subdivision without the written consent of the prosecuting attorney or, if the attorney general is actively handling a case involving or relating to the property, the attorney general.

(2) Property taken or detained under this act is not subject to an action to recover personal property, but is considered to be in the custody of the seizing agency subject only to this section or an order and judgment of the court having jurisdiction over the forfeiture proceedings. When property is seized under this act, the seizing agency may do any of the following:

(a) Place the property under seal.

(b) Remove the property to a place designated by the court.

(c) Take custody of the property and remove it to an appropriate location for disposition in accordance with law.

(d) Deposit money seized under this act into an interest-bearing account in a financial institution. As used in this subdivision, "financial institution" means a state or nationally chartered bank or a state or federally chartered savings and loan association, savings bank, or credit union whose deposits are insured by an agency of the United States government and that maintains a principal office or branch office located in this state under the laws of this state or the United States.

(3) Title to real property forfeited under this act shall be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction. A forfeiture of real property encumbered by a bona fide security interest is subject to the interest of the secured

party who neither had knowledge of nor consented to the act or omission.

(4) An attorney for a person who is charged with a crime involving or related to the money seized under this act has 60 days within which to examine that money. This 60-day period begins to run after notice is given under subsection (1)(a) but before the money is deposited into a financial institution under subsection (2)(d). If the attorney general, prosecuting attorney, or city or township attorney fails to sustain his or her burden of proof in forfeiture proceedings under this act, the court shall order the return of the money, including any interest earned on money deposited into a financial institution under subsection (2)(d).

History: Add. 2010, Act 314, Eff. Apr. 1, 2011.