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CIVIL CODE - CIV

DIVISION 3. OBLIGATIONS [1427 - 3273.69] (*Heading of Division 3 amended by Stats. 1988, Ch. 160, Sec. 14.)*

PART 4. OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM PARTICULAR TRANSACTIONS [1738 - 3273.69] (*Part 4 enacted 1872.)*

TITLE 5. HIRING [1925 - 1997.270] (*Title 5 enacted 1872.)*

CHAPTER 5. Disposition of Personal Property Remaining on Premises at Termination of Tenancy [1980 - 1991] (*Chapter 5 added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 331.)*

1980. As used in this chapter:

- (a) "Landlord" means any operator, keeper, lessor, or sublessor of any furnished or unfurnished premises for hire, or his or her agent or successor in interest.
- (b) "Owner" means any person other than the landlord who has any right, title, or interest in personal property.
- (c) "Premises" includes any common areas associated therewith.
- (d) "Reasonable belief" means the actual knowledge or belief a prudent person would have without making an investigation (including any investigation of public records) except that, where the landlord has specific information indicating that such an investigation would more probably than not reveal pertinent information and the cost of such an investigation would be reasonable in relation to the probable value of the personal property involved, "reasonable belief" includes the actual knowledge or belief a prudent person would have if such an investigation were made.
- (e) "Records" means any material, regardless of the physical form, on which information is recorded or preserved by any means, including in written or spoken words, graphically depicted, printed, or electromagnetically transmitted. "Records" does not include publicly available directories containing information an individual has voluntarily consented to have publicly disseminated or listed, such as name, address, or telephone number.
- (f) "Tenant" includes any paying guest, lessee, or sublessee of any premises for hire.

(Amended by Stats. 2009, Ch. 134, Sec. 4. (AB 1094) Effective January 1, 2010.)

1980.5. (a) Except as provided in Section 1993.01, the provisions of this chapter shall not apply to commercial real property, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 1954.26. For purposes of this section, commercial real property shall not include self-storage units.

(b) This chapter shall apply to self-storage units only to the extent that it does not conflict with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 21700) of Division 8 of the Business and Professions Code.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 91, Sec. 7. (AB 1916) Effective January 1, 2025.)

1981. (a) This chapter provides an optional procedure for the disposition of personal property that remains on the premises after a tenancy has terminated and the premises have been vacated by the tenant.

(b) This chapter does not apply whenever Section 1862.5, 2080.8, 2080.9, or 2081 to 2081.6, inclusive, applies. This chapter does not apply to property that exists for the purpose of providing utility services and is owned by a public utility, whether or not that property is actually in operation to provide those utility services.

(c) This chapter does not apply to any manufactured home as defined in Section 18007 of the Health and Safety Code, any mobilehome as defined in Section 18008 of the Health and Safety Code, or to any commercial coach as defined in Section 18001.8 of the Health and Safety Code, including attachments thereto or contents thereof, whether or not the manufactured home, mobilehome, or commercial coach is subject to registration under the Health and Safety Code.

(d) This chapter does not apply to the disposition of an animal to which subdivision (d) of Section 1815 or Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 17001) of Part 1 of Division 9 of the Food and Agricultural Code applies, and those animals shall be disposed of in accordance with those provisions.

(e) If the requirements of this chapter are not satisfied, nothing in this chapter affects the rights and liabilities of the landlord, former tenant, or any other person.

(Amended by Stats. 2008, Ch. 265, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 2009.)

1982. (a) Personal property which the landlord reasonably believes to have been lost shall be disposed of pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 2080) of Chapter 4 of Title 6. The landlord is not liable to the owner of the property if he complies with this subdivision.

(b) If the appropriate police or sheriff's department refuses to accept property pursuant to subdivision (a), the landlord may dispose of the property pursuant to this chapter.

(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 331.)

1983. (a) Where personal property remains on the premises after a tenancy has terminated and the premises have been vacated by the tenant, the landlord shall give written notice to the tenant and to any other person the landlord reasonably believes to be the owner of the property. If the property consists of records, the tenant shall be presumed to be the owner of the records for the purposes of this chapter.

(b) The notice shall describe the property in a manner reasonably adequate to permit the owner of the property to identify it. The notice may describe all or a portion of the property, but the limitation of liability provided by Section 1989 does not protect the landlord from any liability arising from the disposition of property not described in the notice except that a trunk, valise, box, or other container which is locked, fastened, or tied in a manner which deters immediate access to its contents may be described as such without describing its contents. The notice shall advise the person to be notified that reasonable costs of storage may be charged before the property is returned, where the property may be claimed, and the date before which the claim must be made. The date specified in the notice shall be a date not less than 15 days after the notice is personally delivered or, if mailed, not less than 18 days after the notice is deposited in the mail.

(c) The notice shall be personally delivered to the person to be notified or sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the person to be notified at his or her last known address and, if there is reason to believe that the notice sent to that address will not be received by that person, also to any other address known to the landlord where the person may reasonably be expected to receive the notice. If the notice is sent by mail to the former tenant, one copy shall be sent to the premises vacated by the tenant. If the former tenant provided the landlord with the tenant's email address, the landlord may also send the notice by email.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 4. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1984. (a) A notice given to the former tenant which is in substantially the following form satisfies the requirements of Section 1983:

Notice of Right to Reclaim Abandoned Property
To: _____ (Name of former tenant) _____ _____ (Address of former tenant) _____
When you vacated the premises at _____ (Address of premises, including room or apartment number, if any) _____, the following personal property remained: _____ (Insert description of the personal property) _____ You may claim this property at _____ (Address where property may be claimed) _____ . If you claim this property by _____ (insert date not less than 2 days after the former tenant vacated the premises), you may minimize the costs of storage. If you fail to claim this property by _____ (insert date not less than 2 days after the former tenant vacated the premises), unless you pay the landlord's reasonable cost of storage for all the above-described property, and take possession of the property which you claim, not later than _____ (insert date not less than 15 days after notice is personally delivered or, if mailed, not less than 18 days after notice is deposited in the mail) this property may be disposed of pursuant to Civil Code Section 1988. (Insert here the statement required by subdivision (b) of this section)

Dated: _____	(Signature of landlord) _____
	(Type or print name of landlord) _____
	(Telephone number) _____
	(Address) _____

(b) The notice set forth in subdivision (a) shall also contain one of the following statements:

(1) "If you fail to reclaim the property, it will be sold at a public sale after notice of the sale has been given by publication. You have the right to bid on the property at this sale. After the property is sold and the cost of storage, advertising, and sale is deducted, the remaining money will be paid over to the county. You may claim the remaining money at any time within one year after the county receives the money."

(2) "Because this property is believed to be worth less than \$700, it may be kept, sold, or destroyed without further notice if you fail to reclaim it within the time indicated above."

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 5. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1985. A notice which is in substantially the following form given to a person (other than the former tenant) the landlord reasonably believes to be the owner of personal property satisfies the requirements of Section 1983:

Notice of Right to Reclaim Abandoned Property	
To: _____ (Name) _____ _____ (Address) _____	
When (name of former tenant) vacated the premises at _____ (address of premises, including room or apartment number, if any) _____ ,	
the following personal property remained: _____ (insert description of the personal property) _____	
If you own any of this property, you may claim it at (address where property may be claimed).	
If you claim this property by _____ (insert date not less than 2 days after the former tenant vacated the premises), you may minimize the costs of storage.	
If you fail to claim this property by _____ (insert date not less than 2 days after the former tenant vacated the premises), unless you pay the landlord's reasonable cost of storage and take possession of the property to which you are entitled not later than _____ (insert date not less than 15 days after notice is personally delivered or, if mailed, not less than 18 days after notice is deposited in the mail) this property may be disposed of pursuant to Civil Code Section 1988.	
Dated: _____	_____ (Signature of landlord) _____ _____ (Type or print name of landlord) _____ _____ (Telephone number) _____ _____ (Address) _____

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 6. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1986. The personal property described in the notice shall either be left on the vacated premises or be stored by the landlord in a place of safekeeping until the landlord either releases the property pursuant to Section 1987 or disposes of the property pursuant to Section 1988. The landlord shall exercise reasonable care in storing the property, but he is not liable to the tenant or any other owner for any loss not caused by his deliberate or negligent act.

(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 331.)

1987. (a) The personal property described in the notice shall be released by the landlord to the former tenant or, at the landlord's option, to any person reasonably believed by the landlord to be its owner if that tenant or other person pays the reasonable cost of storage and takes possession of the property not later than the date specified in the notice for taking possession.

(b) Where personal property is not released pursuant to subdivision (a) and the notice stated that the personal property would be sold at a public sale, the landlord shall release the personal property to the former tenant if he or she claims it prior to the time it is sold and pays the reasonable cost of storage, advertising, and sale incurred prior to the time the property is withdrawn from sale.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the landlord shall release the personal property described in the notice to the former tenant and shall not require the former tenant to pay the cost of storage if the property remained in the dwelling and the former tenant or other person reasonably believed by the landlord to be its owner reclaims the property within two days of vacating the dwelling.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 7. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1988. (a) If the personal property described in the notice is not released pursuant to Section 1987, it shall be sold at public sale by competitive bidding. However, if the landlord reasonably believes that the total resale value of the property not released is less than seven hundred dollars (\$700), the landlord may retain the property for his or her own use or dispose of it in any manner. Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the landlord or tenant from bidding on the property at the public sale.

(b) Notice of the time and place of the public sale shall be given by publication pursuant to Section 6066 of the Government Code in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county where the sale is to be held. The last publication shall be not less than five days before the sale is to be held. The notice of the sale shall not be published before the last of the dates specified for taking possession of the property in any notice given pursuant to Section 1983. The notice of the sale shall describe the property to be sold in a manner reasonably adequate to permit the owner of the property to identify it. The notice may describe all or a portion of the property, but the limitation of liability provided by Section 1989 does not protect the landlord from any liability arising from the disposition of property not described in the notice, except that a trunk, valise, box, or other container which is locked, fastened, or tied in a manner which deters immediate access to its contents may be described as such without describing its contents.

(c) After deduction of the costs of storage, advertising, and sale, any balance of the proceeds of the sale which is not claimed by the former tenant or an owner other than such tenant shall be paid into the treasury of the county in which the sale took place not later than 30 days after the date of sale. The former tenant or other owner may claim the balance within one year from the date of payment to the county by making application to the county treasurer or other official designated by the county. If the county pays the balance or any part thereof to a claimant, neither the county nor any officer or employee thereof is liable to any other claimant as to the amount paid.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 8. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1989. (a) Notwithstanding subdivision (c) of Section 1981, where the landlord releases to the former tenant property which remains on the premises after a tenancy is terminated, the landlord is not liable with respect to that property to any person.

(b) Where the landlord releases property pursuant to Section 1987 to a person (other than the former tenant) reasonably believed by the landlord to be the owner of the property, the landlord is not liable with respect to that property to:

(1) Any person to whom notice was given pursuant to Section 1983; or

(2) Any person to whom notice was not given pursuant to Section 1983 unless such person proves that, prior to releasing the property, the landlord believed or reasonably should have believed that such person had an interest in the property and also that the landlord knew or should have known upon reasonable investigation the address of such person.

(c) Where property is disposed of pursuant to Section 1988, the landlord is not liable with respect to that property to:

(1) Any person to whom notice was given pursuant to Section 1983; or

(2) Any person to whom notice was not given pursuant to Section 1983 unless such person proves that, prior to disposing of the property pursuant to Section 1988, the landlord believed or reasonably should have believed that such person had an interest in the property and also that the landlord knew or should have known upon reasonable investigation the address of such person.

(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 331.)

1990. (a) Costs of storage which may be required to be paid under this chapter shall be assessed in the following manner:

(1) Where a former tenant claims property pursuant to Section 1987, he or she may be required to pay the reasonable costs of storage for all the personal property remaining on the premises at the termination of the tenancy which are unpaid at the time the claim is made.

(2) Where an owner other than the former tenant claims property pursuant to Section 1987, he or she may be required to pay the reasonable costs of storage for only the property in which he or she claims an interest.

(b) In determining the costs to be assessed under subdivision (a), the landlord shall not charge more than one person for the same costs.

(c) If the landlord stores the personal property on the premises, the cost of storage shall be the fair rental value of the space reasonably required for that storage for the term of the storage. Costs shall not be assessed if the former tenant reclaims property stored on the premises within two days of having vacated the premises.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 560, Sec. 9. (AB 2521) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1991. Where a notice of belief of abandonment is given to a lessee pursuant to Section 1951.3, the notice to the former tenant given pursuant to Section 1983 may, but need not, be given at the same time as the notice of belief of abandonment even though the tenancy is not terminated until the end of the period specified in the notice of belief of abandonment. If the notices are so given, the notices may, but need not, be combined in one notice that contains all the information required by the sections under which the notices are given.

(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 331.)