

AN ACT

To amend section 169.03 of the Revised Code to generally require that notice of unclaimed funds be mailed to owners by holders of the funds either by regular or certified mail depending upon the value of the funds and to authorize charges for certain mailings of notices.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That section 169.03 of the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 169.03. (A)(1) Every holder of unclaimed funds and, when requested, every person ~~which~~ that could be the holder of unclaimed funds, under this chapter shall report to the director of commerce with respect to the unclaimed funds as provided in this section. The report shall be verified.

(2) With respect to items of unclaimed funds each having a value of fifty dollars or more, the report required under division (A)(1) of this section shall include the following:

(a) The full name, if known, and last known address, if any, of each person appearing from the records of the holder to be the owner of unclaimed funds under this chapter;

(b) In the case of unclaimed funds reported by holders providing life insurance coverage, the full name of the insured or annuitant and beneficiary, if any, and their last known addresses according to ~~such~~ the holder's records;

(c) The nature and identifying number, if any, or description of the funds and the amount appearing from the records to be due;

(d) The date when the funds became payable, demandable, or returnable and the date of the last transaction with the owner with respect to the funds;

(e) Subject to division (I) of this section, the social security number of the owner of the unclaimed funds, if it is available;

(f) If the item of unclaimed funds has a value of one thousand dollars or more and the holder has verified that the last known address as shown by the records of the holder is not accurate as provided in division (D) of this section, a statement that efforts were undertaken by the holder to verify that

the address is not accurate. Any verifying documentation shall be maintained by the holder for five years from the date of the report and shall be available upon request to the director or the director's designee.

(g) Other information ~~which~~ that the director prescribes as necessary for the administration of this chapter.

(3) With respect to items of unclaimed funds each having a value of less than fifty dollars, the report required under division (A)(1) of this section shall include the following:

(a) Each category of items of unclaimed funds as described in section 169.02 of the Revised Code;

(b) The number of items of unclaimed funds within each category;

(c) The aggregated value of the items of unclaimed funds within each category.

(B) If the holder of unclaimed funds is a successor to other organizations that previously held the funds for the owner, or if the holder has changed its name while holding the funds, it shall file with the report all prior known names and addresses and date and state of incorporation or formation of each holder of the funds.

(C) The report shall be filed before the first day of November of each year as of the preceding thirtieth day of June, but the report of holders providing life insurance coverage shall be filed before the first day of May of each year as of the preceding thirty-first day of December. The director may postpone, for good cause shown, the reporting date upon written request by any holder required to file a report.

(D) The holder of unclaimed funds under this chapter shall send notice to each owner of each item of unclaimed funds having a value of fifty dollars or more at the last known address of the owner as shown by the records of the holder before filing the annual report. In case of holders providing life insurance coverage, ~~such~~ this notice shall also be mailed to each beneficiary at the last known address of ~~such~~ the beneficiary as shown by the records of ~~such~~ the holder, except that ~~such~~ the notice to beneficiaries shall not be mailed if ~~such~~ that address is the same as that of the insured and the surname of the beneficiary is the same as that of the insured. The holder shall not report an item of unclaimed funds earlier than the thirtieth day after the mailing of notice required by this division.

~~Such~~ The notice required by this division shall set forth the nature and identifying number, if any, or description of the funds and the amount appearing on the records of the holder to be due the owner or beneficiary, and shall inform the owner or beneficiary that the funds will, thirty days after the mailing of ~~such~~ the notice, be reported as unclaimed funds under

this chapter. A self-addressed, stamped envelope shall be included with the notice, with instructions that the owner or beneficiary may use ~~such~~ the envelope to inform the holder of the owner's or beneficiary's continued interest in the funds, and, if so informed before the date for making the report to the director, the holder shall not report ~~said~~ the funds to the director. The notice shall be mailed by first class mail if the item of unclaimed funds has a value of fifty dollars or more but less than one thousand dollars and by certified mail, return receipt requested, if the item of unclaimed funds has a value of one thousand dollars or more, unless the holder has verified that the last known address of the owner or beneficiary as shown by the records of the holder is not accurate. For purposes of this section, a holder has verified that the last known address of the owner or beneficiary is not accurate by documenting at least two of the following:

(1) The owner or beneficiary failed to respond to a first class mail notice sent to the last known address of the owner or beneficiary.

(2) A first class mail notice sent by the holder to the last known address of the owner or beneficiary was returned as undeliverable.

(3) An electronic or manual search of available public records failed to confirm that the last known address of the owner or beneficiary is accurate. The holder shall maintain documentation of its search efforts. If a search of public records or databases identifies a more recent address for the owner or beneficiary than the address in the holder's records, the holder shall send notice to the owner or beneficiary at that more recent address in accordance with this section. If

A holder that sends a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, may charge the item of unclaimed funds up to twenty dollars for providing that notice.

If there is no address of record for the owner or ~~other person entitled to the unclaimed funds~~ beneficiary, the holder is relieved of any responsibility of sending notice, attempting to notify, or notifying the owner or beneficiary. The mailing of notice pursuant to this section shall discharge the holder from any further responsibility to give notice.

(E) Verification of the report and of the mailing of notice, where required, shall be executed by an officer of the reporting holder.

(F)(1) The director may, at reasonable times and upon reasonable notice, examine or cause to be examined, by auditors of supervisory departments or divisions of the state, the records of any holder to determine compliance with this chapter.

(2) Holders shall retain records, designated by the director as applicable to unclaimed funds, for five years beyond the relevant time period provided

in section 169.02 of the Revised Code, or until completion of an audit conducted pursuant to division (F) of this section, whichever occurs first. An audit conducted pursuant to division (F) of this section shall not require a holder to make records available for a period of time exceeding the records retention period set forth in division (F) of this section, except for records pertaining to instruments evidencing ownership, or rights to them or funds paid toward the purchase of them, or any dividend, capital credit, profit, distribution, interest, or payment on principal or other sum, held or owed by a holder, including funds deposited with a fiscal agent or fiduciary for payment of them, or pertaining to debt of a publicly traded corporation. Any holder that is audited pursuant to division (F) of this section shall only be required to make available those records that are relevant to an unclaimed funds audit of that holder as prescribed by the director.

(3) The director may enter into contracts, pursuant to procedures prescribed by the director, with persons for the sole purpose of examining the records of holders, determining compliance with this chapter, and collecting, taking possession of, and remitting to the department's division of unclaimed funds, in a timely manner, the amounts found and defined as unclaimed. The director shall not enter into such a contract with a person unless the person does all of the following:

(a) Agrees to maintain the confidentiality of the records examined, as required under division (F)(4) of this section;

(b) Agrees to conduct the audit in accordance with rules adopted under section 169.09 of the Revised Code;

(c) Obtains a corporate surety bond issued by a bonding company or insurance company authorized to do business in this state. The bond shall be in favor of the director and in the penal sum determined by the director. The bond shall be for the benefit of any holder of unclaimed funds that is audited by the principal and is injured by the principal's failure to comply with division (F)(3)(a) or (b) of this section.

(4) Records audited pursuant to division (F) of this section are confidential, and shall not be disclosed except as required by section 169.06 of the Revised Code or as the director considers necessary in the proper administration of this chapter.

(5) If a person with whom the director has entered into a contract pursuant to division (F)(3) of this section intends to conduct, in conjunction with an unclaimed funds audit under this section, an unclaimed funds audit for the purpose of administering another state's unclaimed or abandoned property laws, the person, prior to commencing the audit, shall provide written notice to the director of the person's intent to conduct such an audit,

along with documentation evidencing the person's express authorization from the other state to conduct the audit on behalf of that state.

(6) Prior to the commencement of an audit conducted pursuant to division (F) of this section, the director shall notify the holder of unclaimed funds of the director's intent to audit the holder's records. If the audit will be conducted in conjunction with an audit for one or more other states, the director shall provide the holder with the name or names of those states.

(7) Any holder of unclaimed funds may appeal the findings of an audit conducted pursuant to division (F) of this section to the director. Pursuant to the authority granted by section 169.09 of the Revised Code, the director shall adopt rules establishing procedures for considering such an appeal.

(G) All holders shall make sufficient investigation of their records to ensure that the funds reported to the director are unclaimed as set forth in division (B) of section 169.01 and section 169.02 of the Revised Code.

(H) The expiration of any period of limitations on or after March 1, 1968, within which a person entitled to any moneys, rights to moneys, or intangible property could have commenced an action or proceeding to obtain ~~the same~~ these items shall not prevent ~~such~~ these items from becoming unclaimed funds or relieve the holder ~~thereof~~ of them of any duty to report and give notice as provided in this section and deliver ~~the same~~ them in the manner provided in section 169.05 of the Revised Code, provided that the holder may comply with ~~the provisions of~~ this section and section 169.05 of the Revised Code with respect to any moneys, rights to moneys, or intangible property as to which the applicable statute of limitations has run prior to March 1, 1968, and in ~~such~~ that event the holder shall be entitled to the protective provisions of section 169.07 of the Revised Code.

(I) No social security number contained in a report made pursuant to this section shall be used by the department of commerce for any purpose other than to enable the division of unclaimed funds to carry out the purposes of this chapter and for child support purposes in response to a request made by the office of child support in the department of job and family services made pursuant to section 3123.88 of the Revised Code.

SECTION 2. That existing section 169.03 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

Sub. H. B. No. 108

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The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ___ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____