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Ohio Revised Code

Section 313.14 Notice to relatives - disposition of property.

Effective: August 31, 2016
Legislation: House Bill 240 - 131st General Assembly

(A) The coroner shall notify any known relatives of a deceased person who meets death in the manner described by section 313.12 of the Revised Code by letter or otherwise. The next of kin, other relatives, or friends of the deceased person, in the order named, shall have prior right as to disposition of the body of such deceased person. If relatives of the deceased are unknown, the coroner shall make a diligent effort to ascertain the next of kin, other relatives, or friends of the deceased person. The coroner shall take charge and possession of all moneys, clothing, and other valuable personal effects of such deceased person, found in connection with or pertaining to such body, and shall store such possessions in the county coroner's office or such other suitable place as is provided for such storage by the board of county commissioners. If the coroner considers it advisable, the coroner may, after taking adequate precautions for the security of such possessions, store the possessions where the coroner finds them until other storage space becomes available.

(B) In cases in which the cost of the burial is paid by the county, after using such of the clothing as is necessary in the burial of the body, the coroner shall sell at public auction the valuable personal effects of such deceased persons, found in connection with or pertaining to the unclaimed dead body, except firearms, which shall be disposed of as provided in division (C) of this section. The coroner shall make a verified inventory of such effects and they shall be sold within eighteen months after burial, or after delivery of such body in accordance with section 1713.34 of the Revised Code. All moneys derived from such sale shall be deposited in the county treasury. A notice of such sale shall be given in one newspaper of general circulation in the county, for five days in succession, and the sale shall be held immediately thereafter. The cost of such advertisement and notices shall be paid by the board upon the submission of a verified statement therefor, certified to the coroner.

(C) If a firearm is included in the personal effects of a deceased person who meets death in the manner described by section 313.12 of the Revised Code, the coroner shall deliver the firearm to the chief of police of the municipal corporation within which the body is found, or to the sheriff of the county if the body is not found within a municipal corporation. Upon delivery of the firearm to the chief of police or the sheriff, the chief of police or sheriff shall give the coroner a receipt for the firearm that states the date of delivery and an accurate description of the firearm. The firearm shall be used for evidentiary purposes only.

The deceased person's next of kin or other relative may request that the firearm be given to the next of kin or other relative once the firearm is no longer needed for evidentiary purposes. The chief of police or the sheriff shall give the firearm to the next of kin or other relative who requested the firearm only if the next of kin or other relative may lawfully possess the firearm under applicable law of this state or the United States. The chief of police or the sheriff shall keep a record identifying the next of kin or other relative to whom the firearm is given, the date the firearm was given to the next of kin or other relative, and an accurate description of the firearm.

If a next of kin or other relative does not request the firearm or is not entitled to possess the firearm, the firearm shall be used at the discretion of the chief of police or the sheriff.

(D) This section does not invalidate section 1713.34 of the Revised Code.