

# State of California Unclaimed Property Investigator Handbook



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California State Controller's Office**

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## Unclaimed Property Program

This handbook has been prepared to assist Investigators in locating and reuniting owners or their heirs with unclaimed property. The Unclaimed Property Program started in 1959 as part of a nationwide system to provide customer protection. The program exists to relieve businesses and financial institutions (holders) of the burden and liability of maintaining the property. In California, the State Controller's Office (SCO) manages this program. The program includes two types of property, abandoned property and county probated estates of deceased persons.

### Abandoned Property

Abandoned property is generally defined as any financial asset that has been left inactive by the owner for a period of time specified in the law, generally three (3) years. Holders of abandoned property are required to review their records on an annual basis and report such property to the SCO. Common types of abandoned property include bank accounts, stocks, bonds, uncashed checks, insurance benefits, wages, and safe deposit box contents.

The property is held in perpetuity by the SCO, and there is no deadline for the rightful owner to file a claim. Exceptions to this include property received from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and property received from the Conservation Liquidation Office as a result of dissolution of an insurer or other person brought under Division 1 of the Insurance Code (an insurance company) is immediately transferred to the Department of Insurance upon receipt. The statutes and regulations governing the administration of the Unclaimed Property Law (UPL) related to abandoned property are provided in the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP), sections 1500-1582, and in the California Code of Regulations, Administrative Code, Title 2, Division 2, Chapter 2, Subchapter 8, Articles 1-5.

### County Probated Estates of Deceased Persons

County probated estates of deceased persons are probated estates with balances due a named heir or no named heir. County treasurers' offices are required to report this property to the SCO.

Estates of deceased persons are remitted to the SCO under provisions of the Probate Code and CCP section 1300 et seq. Unlike abandoned property which is held in perpetuity, estates of deceased persons permanently escheat and are no longer available to claim after set periods of time by operation of law.

#### **Judicial Escheat – Estates with Named Heirs**

Estates in the amount of \$1,000 or more with named heirs are subject to judicial escheat.

After the SCO has held estates of deceased persons' properties for a period of five years, it forwards a list of the estates to the Office of the Attorney General. The Attorney General publishes the decedents' names and the decedents' named heirs in a newspaper of general circulation in the counties where the estates were probated. After publication of the names, the Attorney General consults with the SCO to identify any estates where a valid claim has been established against the estate. If no claim activity has been made on an estate, the Attorney General obtains a permanent escheat court order. Five years from the date of the court order, the estate is permanently escheated by operation of law and all future claims are barred. Estate properties in the amount of

\$1,000 or more with named heirs are subject to claim for a period of 10 years after the estate is remitted to the SCO.

### **Administrative Escheat – Estates with Named Heirs**

Estates less than \$1,000 with named heirs are subject to administrative escheat.

After the SCO has held estates of deceased persons' properties for a period of five years, it publishes a legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento. Additionally, a list of estates, including named heirs that are subject to permanent escheat, is on display in the offices of the State Controller in Sacramento and Los Angeles, and in the California State Library-Sutro in San Francisco. Five years from the newspaper publication date, these estates are permanently escheated by operation of law and all future claims are barred. Estate properties less than \$1,000 with named heirs are subject to claim for a period of 10 years after the estate is remitted to the SCO.

### **Estates with No Named Heirs**

Estates with no named heirs permanently escheat five years from the estate's probate date, regardless of when the SCO receives the estate. Permanent escheat occurs by operation of law. Estate properties with no named heirs are subject to claim for a period of five years from the date on which the estate is probated.

### **Exception to Judicial and Administrative Escheat**

Infants and persons of unsound mind may present a claim for property that has permanently escheated provided as follows:

- Infants must have been born prior to the end of the permanent escheat period and must be 19 years of age or younger when the claim is presented for payment.
- Persons of unsound mind must file their claims within one year after their disability ceases.

## Investigator Registration

Although the SCO does not require licensing, registering as an Investigator is strongly encouraged. To register, the following documentation is requested by the SCO before the Investigator enters into contracts with potential owners:

- A list of employees authorized to represent your business in contacting our office or the public through written correspondence (mail, email) or by telephone. The list should include the physical address for the business, mailing address for the business, and email addresses of the employees.
- Copies of photo identification for all employees (i.e., driver's license, passport, or other photo identification (ID) card). We strongly advise you to not redact identifiable information on your photo identification card.
- A copy of a document showing the Social Security Number (SSN) or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) to be used for claim payment.
- A list of all emails, telephone, cellular, and facsimile numbers used by your business.
- A copy of your Private Investigator's License, if applicable; however this is not a requirement.

Email or mail the completed information to:

State Controller's Office  
Unclaimed Property Division  
Attn: Investigator Unit  
PO Box 942850  
Sacramento, CA 94250-5873  
[updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov](mailto:updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov)

You will be notified of your registration through email correspondence from the SCO, Unclaimed Property Division (UPD). We do not provide a registration number. Once registered, your information will be kept indefinitely, unless otherwise requested. If you need to update your records, please contact us at the aforementioned email address with the new information.

## Investigator Guidelines

### Pre-escheat Period

An Investigator may NOT:

- Enter into contract with potential owners of abandoned property until the property is transferred to the SCO.
- Enter into a contract to retrieve property based on the Unclaimed Property notification
  - This is a pre-escheat letter sent to owners advising them of a pending transfer of their property to the State Controller's Office by the business.

### Investigator Fees

The fees Investigators may charge to cover the costs of their efforts to reunite owners with abandoned property are set forth in CCP section 1582, which states:

“(a) (1) An agreement to locate, deliver, recover, or assist in the recovery of property reported under Section 1530 is invalid if either of the following apply:  
 (A) The agreement is entered into between the date a report is filed under subdivision (d) of Section 1530 and the date the property is paid or delivered under Section 1532.  
 (B) The agreement requires the owner to pay a fee or compensation prior to approval of the claim and payment of the recovered property to the owner by the Controller.  
 (2) An agreement to locate, deliver, recover, or assist in the recovery of property reported under Section 1530 made after payment or delivery under Section 1532 is valid if it meets all of the following requirements:  
 (A) The agreement is in writing and includes a disclosure of the nature and value of the property, that the Controller is in possession of the property, and the address where the owner can directly claim the property from the Controller.  
 (B) The agreement is signed by the owner after receipt of the disclosure described in subparagraph (A).  
 (C) The fee or compensation agreed upon is not in excess of 10 percent of the recovered property.  
 (3) This subdivision shall not be construed to prevent an owner from asserting, at any time, that an agreement to locate property is based upon an excessive or unjust consideration.  
 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, records of the Controller's office pertaining to unclaimed property are not available for public inspection or copying until after publication of notice of the property or, if publication of notice of the property is not required, until one year after delivery of the property to the Controller..”

An agreement is invalid if it requires the owner to pay a fee or compensation prior to approval of the claim and payment of the recovered property to the owner by the Controller.

The fees Investigators may charge to cover the costs of their efforts to reunite county probated estate property with heirs has no restriction.

### Agreement Provisions

All Investigator agreements submitted must be in compliance with CCP section 1582. The SCO must review all Investigator agreements to ensure compliance with the statute. To facilitate claim processing, the SCO recommends the use of the Standard Investigator Agreement. This agreement can be found at [https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form\\_investigator\\_agreement.pdf](https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form_investigator_agreement.pdf). An original agreement created by an Investigator and/or an attorney must contain all of the essential elements of the Standard Investigator Agreement. It is advisable to have a new Investigator agreement reviewed by the SCO before submitting it with a claim package.

Per CCP section 1582, an investigator is required to provide full disclosure of the unclaimed property in the contract information. Full disclosure includes:

- 1) Owner name as reported by the holder;
- 2) Owner address as reported by the holder;
- 3) Reported amount of the property;
- 4) Property type;
- 5) Name and address of the holder; and
- 6) Name and address of the SCO, UPD.

When one claim package includes claims for multiple properties, full disclosure is required for each property. The Standard Investigator Agreement – Contract Attachment provides for the reporting of the disclosure information. This attachment can be found on page 2 of the Standard Investigator Agreement file at [https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form\\_investigator\\_agreement.pdf](https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form_investigator_agreement.pdf).

## Investigator Representation

Please be advised that Investigators may not represent themselves as employees or representatives of the SCO. Investigator contracts are business transactions that exist solely between the Investigator and their client(s). Please refer to the Business and Professions Code section 17533.6 (a), which states:

(a) It is unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, or association that is a nongovernmental entity to solicit information, or to solicit the purchase of or payment for a product or service, or to solicit the contribution of funds or membership fees, by means of a mailing, electronic message, or Internet Web site that contains a seal, insignia, trade or brand name, or any other term or symbol that reasonably could be interpreted or construed as implying any state or local government connection, approval, or endorsement, unless the requirements of paragraph (1) or (2) have been met, as follows:

(1) The nongovernmental entity has an expressed connection with, or the approval or endorsement of, a state or local government entity, if permitted by other provisions of law.

(2) The solicitation meets both of the following requirements:

(A) The solicitation bears on its face, in conspicuous and legible type in contrast by typography, layout, or color with other type on its face, the following notice:

"THIS PRODUCT OR SERVICE HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED OR ENDORSED BY ANY GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY, AND THIS OFFER IS NOT BEING MADE BY AN AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT."

(B) In the case of a mailed solicitation, the envelope or outside cover or wrapper in which the matter is mailed bears on its face in capital letters and in conspicuous and legible type, the following notice: "THIS IS NOT A GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT."

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (c), any business that solicits the purchase of, or payment for, a service by means of an unsolicited mailing that offers to assist the recipient in dealing with a state or local governmental agency shall do both of the following:

(1) State on the envelope and in the mailing that the business is not a governmental agency and is not associated with the governmental agency referenced.

(2) Include in the mailing the contact information for the governmental agency referenced.

(c) Subdivision (b) shall not apply if either of the following requirements has been met:

(1) The business has an expressed connection with, or the approval or endorsement of, a state or local governmental entity, if permitted by other provisions of law.

(2) The business has an "established business relationship," as defined in Section 1798.83 of the Civil Code, with the recipient.

## Searching for Unclaimed Property

There are multiple ways you can search for abandoned property. Investigators can search for free using the SCO's Online Unclaimed Property Search or Unclaimed Property Download. Estates of deceased persons' records are available via a free, downloadable Microsoft Excel worksheet.

### Abandoned Property Records

#### SCO Online Unclaimed Property Search

The most current information for abandoned property records can be accessed via the SCO's public website at <https://ucpi.sco.ca.gov/en/Property/SearchIndex>. The SCO's public website is updated weekly to remove properties that have been claimed and to add new properties remitted to the SCO.

#### SCO Unclaimed Property Download

Unclaimed Property records in the Controller's public database can also be downloaded in .CSV format via the main Unclaimed Property landing page at [https://sco.ca.gov/upd\\_download\\_property\\_records.html](https://sco.ca.gov/upd_download_property_records.html) by selecting the link labeled Download Unclaimed Property Records. The records can be sorted as permitted by the database program being utilized (Excel, Google, etc.). Some of the files are very large and a broadband connection is highly recommended. The files will be updated on a weekly basis. The Controller's team does not provide technical support.

### Estate of Deceased Persons' Property Records

Estates of Deceased Persons' records are updated twice a year. Information for estates of deceased persons' records is only available via a downloadable Microsoft Excel Worksheet posted on the SCO's public website at [https://sco.ca.gov/upd\\_estates\\_investigator.html](https://sco.ca.gov/upd_estates_investigator.html).

#### Information Available on SCO's Public Website

The SCO receives estate accounts semi-annually from the various counties in California. The Estates of Deceased Persons' file contains estates of deceased persons remitted to the State of California pursuant to Probate Code and CCP section 1300 et seq. The Estates of Deceased Persons' file displays properties indexed by the following four categories:

- State of California's Property ID Number
- Decedent's name
- Reported heir(s)
- Property's available balance

The Estates of Deceased Persons' file lists all estate properties in the system, including ones previously paid and/or escheated. Note: The status of these properties once published is subject to change at any time, without further notice. *Please contact the SCO to verify availability of Estate funds prior to any client activity.*

#### Accessing the Estates File

Microsoft Excel 2007 or newer is needed to open and navigate the ".xlsx" file found on the SCO's public website. If you do not have access to a valid copy of Excel 2007, you

may download a free viewer application directly from Microsoft's website. All technical questions pertaining to the operation of this application should be directed to Microsoft; SCO's personnel will not be able to troubleshoot issues with this application.

## Estates File

The Estates File contains four tabs:

**Estates File Tab** - contains all relevant property information in an easy to view format; it is shown in ascending order of when the property was received [newer properties at the bottom] This tab **SHOULD NOT BE SORTED**; doing so will break the relationship between the property and any additional decedent aliases, heirs and/or escheat comments. "Search" these records using the Find option (Ctrl + F).

**Price Index Tab**- convenient way to view the county, property balance, and Property ID Number.

**Heir Index Tab** - can be used to search information related to any known heirs: name and/or entitled amount (current property balance is also shown).

**Decedent Index Tab** - can be used to sort by any of the criteria attached to the property that is associated with the decedent, such as name, received date, probate date (if present), probate number (where available), probate amount, current balance, and county.

Note: If sorting an index, care should be taken to sort all fields (columns) together, so as not to disconnect relevant records (rows).

## Estates File Fields

The following describes the information provided in the Electronic Estates File:

- Property ID Number – Property ID number assigned by the State of California's Unclaimed Property System. (Also shows the legacy 'E' number [applicable to old accounts only])
- Decedent's Name – Name as reported from the County of where the probate process was initiated.
- Received Date – Date the property was received by the SCO.
- Probate Date – Date probate was closed. (This date is established on the Final Decree of Distribution which is signed by a judge.)
- Probate Number – Number assigned by the county reporting the estate.
- Probate Amount – Amount reported.
- County Name – Name of the county where the probate process was initiated.
- Heirs / Other Beneficiaries – Names of heirs, if they have been specified in the county records at the time of escheatment.

- Entitled Amount – Amount specified for each heir in the Final Decree of Distribution.
- Escheat Comments\* – Comment(s) associated with the transaction that permanently escheats funds to the State. (Appears under Decedent's Name.)
- Escheat Date\* – Date the permanent escheat transaction was recorded.

\*These two fields will only be present where an escheatment has taken place; properties without these fields should either have a balance to be claimed, or were previously claimed and therefore never escheated.

### **Records Contained in Estates File**

The SCO has converted the records contained in the file from older legacy systems that are, or have been, phased out from mainline use. While it is the intent of the SCO to provide to the public the most useful information possible, some records in this Estates File contain material that may not be completely clear.

## Assembling a Claim Package for Abandoned Property

A claim package is a group of documents submitted to the SCO to validate a request for payment of unclaimed property. Every claim package needs to have the following information.

### Claim Package

- 1) **Investigator Agreement** – A properly executed Investigator Agreement that is signed and dated by the Investigator and each claimant.

Notarization of this agreement is not required.

All Investigator agreements submitted must be in compliance with CCP section 1582, which limits the fee an Investigator may charge to no more than 10% of the recovered amount.

When one claim package includes claims for multiple properties, full disclosure is required for each property. The Standard Investigator Agreement – Contract Attachment provides for the reporting of the disclosure information. This form can be located at [https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form\\_investigator\\_agreement.pdf](https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form_investigator_agreement.pdf).

- 2) **Abandoned Property Claim Form** – A completed Claim for Abandoned Property form for each claimant.

This form can be located at [https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form\\_investigator\\_ce1.pdf](https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form_investigator_ce1.pdf). The form should be submitted to our office on yellow paper to ensure that Investigator claims can be easily identified by the SCO upon receipt. Use of the provided forms helps expedite the claim process.

The claimant must sign (wet signature) and date the claim form and the claimant's signature must be notarized if the total value of the cash properties is \$1,000 or greater. All claims for securities and safe-deposit box properties must be notarized.

- 3) **Reported Address and/or Association to the Reporting Agency** – A document to verify that the claimant received mail at the reported address.

If there is no reported address, the claimant needs to provide proof that the property belongs to them.

- 4) **Current Address** – A document to verify the claimant's current address.

- 5) **Proof of SSN** – A document that shows proof of the claimant's SSN/Tax Identification number.

Non-residents of the United States of America may submit a Temporary SSN, an IRS Form W-8 BEN, or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of SSN/Tax Identification Number.

- 6) **Proof of ID** – Proof of photo identification.

Documentation substantiating complex claims should be organized, referenced, and indexed to facilitate the evaluation of the claim package. We strongly encourage listing multiple properties in numerical order to expedite the claim process.

## Filing Instructions

Review the filing instructions before submitting a claim. The documentation needed will vary based on the type of property being claimed and the relationship of the claimant to the reported owner of the property. Once a claim package is received, the property is removed from the SCO public website while the claim is being processed.

Select from one of the following links below to view and print the filing instructions and documentation needed to substantiate your claim.

- [Filing Instructions For A Property Owner](#)  
Select the link above if the claimant is the reported owner listed in our records.
- [Filing Instructions For Heir Filing A Deceased Owner Claim](#)  
Select the link above if the claimant is an heir, trustee, or personal representative/administrator of the deceased owner of the property listed in our records.
- [Filing Instructions For A Business](#)  
Select the link above if the claimant is an officer of the business with signature authority or an employee who has been granted signature authority by an officer to claim property on behalf of the business listed in our records.
- [Filing Instructions For A Government Agency](#)  
Select the link above if the claimant is an officer with authority to claim property on behalf of the Government Agency listed in our records.

## Agreement Required for Each Claimant

It is not unusual for one or more heirs to claim property belonging to the same deceased owner. A fully executed agreement and claim form must exist for each owner/heir claiming the property. The Standard Investigator Agreement allows up to two claimant signatures on a single agreement. More than two claimants will necessitate an additional agreement(s).

## Non-English Documents

If the document submitted to substantiate the claim is not in English, then the entire document must be translated to English, and the translated document must be submitted along with the non-English document.

The translation must be authenticated. If the document is translated at an embassy, the seal of the embassy must be affixed to the translation as authentication. If the document is translated at a college or university where the language is taught, the translation must be written or printed on the letterhead of the institution and must be signed by the instructor who translated it.

## Power of Attorney

Powers of Attorney (POA) may not be accepted in lieu of a claimant's signature on the claim form or investigator agreement. The claim must be verified by the claimant per CCP section 1540(a). Exceptions may be considered in cases where a POA is necessitated by a medical condition that prevents the claimant from signing the claim form. In such a case, the claim is referred to the SCO Legal Office for determination. Claim packages signed by a POA that do not contain medical verification signed by a licensed physician may be denied.

## Property Types that will Require Additional Documentation

### Escrow Accounts

If the unclaimed property account shows both buyer and seller, the claimant must establish their legal entitlement to the escrow deposit and disputed escrow funds. To prove entitlement, the claimant must submit documentation from the escrow or title company that specifies the distribution of the escrow funds or court documentation indicating rightful ownership to the funds.

### Insurance Claim Checks

When a property is reported with two owners and one is a lienholder, the claimant must provide proof the lien was satisfied.

### Negotiable Instruments, Certified Checks, Money Orders, or Travelers Checks

Additional documentation is needed to verify claims for negotiable instruments. Generally, the original instrument must be submitted. If the original instrument is not available, the evaluator may reach out to the claimant directly for additional information.

### Safe Deposit Box Contents

An account statement may be required. If the statement is not available, proof of residence or occupancy at the address shown on the property account is required. If proof of residence is not available or if the reporting agency did not report an account owner's last known address, evidence must be submitted proving an association with the reporting agency.

If lien amounts are owed to the bank at the time of escheatment, that information is reported to the SCO. Liens are paid to the bank: 1) when cash is found in the box, 2) with proceeds from the sale of safe-deposit box contents, or 3) by the claimant when ownership has been verified.

## Assembling a Claim Package for Estates of Deceased Persons

A claim package is a group of documents submitted to the SCO to validate a request for payment of unclaimed property. Every claim package needs to have the information described below.

### Estates of Deceased Persons with Named Heirs

The named heirs of an estate may claim the estate regardless of the value of that estate without court action per CCP section 1352.

Heirs of the named heir of an estate may also claim estates valued at less than \$60,000 without a court action. However, when the estate is valued at \$60,000 or more, the heirs of the named heirs must file a petition under CCP section 1355.

### Estates of Deceased Persons without Named Heirs

For claims of \$59,999 or less for estates with no named heirs, the claimant does not need to provide a court order. The property may be paid to any blood relative of the decedent.

For claims of \$60,000 or more for estates with no named heirs, the claimant must file a petition in the superior court of any city or county in which the Attorney General has an office (San Diego, Sacramento, San Francisco, or Los Angeles).

At least 20 days before the hearing of the petition, the claimant must send a copy of the petition and notice of hearing to the SCO. Please include a claim package with the petition and notice of hearing. (Please refer to CCP section 1355 for documentation required.)

### Claim Package

- 1) **Investigator Agreement** – A properly executed Investigator Agreement that is signed and dated by the Investigator and each claimant.

Notarization of this agreement is not required.

All Investigator agreements submitted must be in compliance with CCP section 1582.

When one claim package includes claims for multiple properties, full disclosure is required for each property. The Standard Investigator Agreement for Estates can be located at [https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form\\_investigator\\_agreement\\_estates.pdf](https://sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/form_investigator_agreement_estates.pdf).

- 2) **Estates of Deceased Person Claim Form** – A completed Claim for Estates of Deceased Persons form for each claimant.

The SCO recommends that you contact our office before submitting the claim package so the SCO can advise you of the documentation required, based on the particulars of the estate. We will send you the claim form on blue paper so that upon its return, it is directed to the appropriate staff for processing. In section A, we will mark an “X” indicating the documentation that we will require.

The claimant must sign and date the claim form and the claimant's signature must be notarized if the total value of the cash properties is \$1,000 or more. All claims for securities and safe-deposit box properties must be notarized.

**3) Proof of Relationship to Decedent** – If the claimant is not a named heir of the estate, a birth, death, or marriage certificate of the decedent, named heir, or both that proves that claimant is the heir to the decedent's estate must be provided.

**4) Proof of SSN** – A document that shows proof of the claimant's SSN/Tax Identification number.

Non-residents of the United States of America may submit a Temporary SSN, an IRS Form W-8 BEN, or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of SSN/Tax Identification Number.

**5) Proof of ID** – Proof of photo identification.

**6) Final Decree of Distribution** – This document is required for the decedent's estate if the SCO does not already have it.

Additional documents may be required if the documentation provided does not prove the blood relation of the claimant to the estate's decedent. Additional documents that may be required include: a Table of Heirship; a Declaration under Probate Code section 13101; other birth, marriage, or death certificates of blood relatives; census reports; genealogy charts; and/or an Application for Social Security Account Number (SS-5).

## Submitting a Claim Package

All claim packages are processed on a first-in, first-out basis, as received by the SCO. A claim package may be submitted to the SCO by any of the following methods:

***U.S. Mail* – Sent to the following address:**

State Controller's Office  
Unclaimed Property Division  
P. O. Box 942850  
Sacramento, CA 94250-5873

***Expedite/Overnight Delivery* – Delivered to the street address given below.**

***Delivery in Person* – Delivered to the following address:**

State Controller's Office  
Unclaimed Property Division  
10600 White Rock Road, Suite 141  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Note: New claim packages cannot be emailed or faxed to our office. If a claim package has already been mailed and there is additional documentation to add, please email the documentation to [updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov](mailto:updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov).

## Competing Claims

When more than one Investigator service submits a claim for the same property, or an individual submits a claim and an Investigator, acting on behalf of that individual, also submits a claim, the SCO will process the claim that was received first and contracted first. In all other instances, we will notify all parties in writing of the competing claims. The claimant is then required to choose which claim to process and communicate that decision to the SCO via a Competing Claim Designation Letter provided by the SCO. Once this decision is received by our office, the elected claim will be processed if all of the information provided is sufficient to prove ownership.

## Checking the Claim Status

Check the status of a claim online by entering the Claim Identification Number (CID) at <https://ucpi.sco.ca.gov/en/Claim/ClaimStatus?source=ClaimStatus>. The CID number is located at the top right hand corner of the Claim for Abandoned Property Form for a claim that was initiated on our website. If you did not initiate the claim from our website, you can email [updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov](mailto:updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov) with a property identification number (PID) to request the CID number.

The SCO shall consider a claim package within 180 days of receipt of all documentation that substantiates the claim. The claim package documents are reviewed for compliance with the UPL, and the documentation provided must substantiate the claim in order to be paid. The following statuses are assigned to each claim package during the claim process:

**Received** – The claim package has been received.

**Pended** – The claim package is incomplete; we will notify the Investigator if there is insufficient documentation.

**Approved** – The claim package has been approved and is pending payment.

**Paid** – The claim has been paid.

**Denied** – The SCO notifies the Investigator in writing if the documentation submitted indicates that:

- The person claiming the property is not the correct owner/heir of the property.
- The documents submitted are not sufficient to determine if the person claiming is the rightful owner.
- A claim against this property is already in process. This may be a duplicate claim by the claimant or one filed by another individual.
- The property was previously paid.

If a claim is denied and your client wishes to pursue further they can file an informal appeal to the SCO Legal Office within 30 days of the date of the UPD denial letter. Upon receipt of the informal appeal letter, the SCO Legal Office will review the file and may request additional evidence or schedule a hearing. The SCO Legal Office will provide a

written response to the claimant of their decision to uphold the denial or approve the claim. The claimant also has the option to bring an action to establish a claim in the superior court of any city or county in which the Attorney General has an office. This action must be filed within 90 days of the date of the UPD denial letter, not the SCO Legal Office's appeal decision letter.

## Payment of Cash Claims

Investigator claims are paid according to the procedures below.

- One warrant, made payable to the claimant, will be mailed directly to the claimant for their agreed-upon percentage; a second warrant, made payable to the Investigator, will be mailed directly to the Investigator for their agreed-upon percentage.
- If the claim contains both cash and stock properties, two checks will be mailed for the cash portion. Stock will be handled as indicated below.
- The payments are recorded against the claimant's SSN or FEIN and the Investigator's SSN or FEIN.
- The contents of a safe deposit box will be mailed directly to the claimant. Only one claimant may be designated to receive the contents of the box.
- Payments can be sent to a foreign country; additional documentation may be required.

## Payment of Stock Claims

The UPL (CCP section 1563), requires the SCO to sell securities no sooner than 18 months, but no later than 20 months, after the final date for filing the report required by CCP section 1530. If a claimant's securities have been sold, the law no longer provides for interest to be paid.

*Note: The SCO is not authorized to buy back the claimant's shares, nor make up the difference in sale proceeds in the event that the market value of the stock increased between the date it was sold and the date of the claim.*

Claim payments for unsold securities split between Investigator and claimant will be transferred in whole share increments only. If the split of the shares results in a fraction, the owner's shares will be rounded up. If the Investigator is entitled to an additional fraction of a share under their contract, it will be the Investigator's responsibility to collect this amount directly from the owner.

*Note: If the SCO receives a stock certificate property that is not registered in the name of the SCO, the certificate can only be released to one individual and cannot be split. If there is more than one entitled claimant, all claimants and the Investigator need to complete a Property Release Form and agree to release the stock certificate to one claimant.*

For inquiries on claims containing securities, please allow up to one year from the approved date shown online as staff must research and apply any corporate actions, such as dividends or mergers, initiated by the company, which affect the value of the securities. In most cases, this process can be completed within 120 days. If the securities have not been sold, they will be sent

in the form of shares and information will be mailed to the claimant and investigator regarding how the securities will be transferred into the claimant's name. To check the status of a stock claim call (916) 464-4441 or email [UPDSCI@sco.ca.gov](mailto:UPDSCI@sco.ca.gov) with the approved property identification number(s). To check the status of a share(s) transfer that has an approved status on our website, contact [UPDSTS@sco.ca.gov](mailto:UPDSTS@sco.ca.gov) with the approved property identification number(s).

## Interagency Intercept Program

Effective September 2, 2009, all cash claims and claims paid by proceeds of liquidated stock may be subject to offset by the Franchise Tax Board's (FTB) Interagency Offset Program. Therefore, if a claimant owes a debt to a California State Agency, city, county, courts, and special districts, the payment will be intercepted and reduced by the amount of the debt. Any remaining balance will be sent to the claimant. If the claim is offset, the FTB will send a notification letter to the claimant; the Investigator will not be notified. This process will not affect the Investigator's payment, provided the Investigator agreement specifically assigned the Investigator a percentage of the payment.

Note to Investigators: Advise your client to contact the agency listed on their letter if they have any questions. The SCO only has general information regarding the offset and is not made aware of the offset until it occurs.

## Contact Information

Visit our Website	<a href="https://sco.ca.gov/index.html">https://sco.ca.gov/index.html</a>	
Mailing Address	California State Controller's Office Malia Cohen, California State Controller Unclaimed Property Division P.O. Box 942850 Sacramento, CA 94250-5873	
Physical Address For Courier Delivery Services	California State Controller's Office Malia Cohen, California State Controller Unclaimed Property Division 10600 White Rock Road, Suite 141 Rancho Cordova, CA 95670	
SCO Hours of Operation	Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST	
Contacts for Investigators		
Investigator Unit	<a href="mailto:updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov">updinvestigators@sco.ca.gov</a>	
Securities Inquiries	<a href="mailto:UPDSCI@sco.ca.gov">UPDSCI@sco.ca.gov</a>	
Share Transfer Inquiries	<a href="mailto:UPDSTS@sco.ca.gov">UPDSTS@sco.ca.gov</a>	
General Information	<a href="http://www.claimit.ca.gov">www.claimit.ca.gov</a>	Nationwide (800) 992-4647  Outside of U.S. (916) 323-2837

## Investigator Resources

### Useful Links

[Notice to Investigators](#)

[Investigator Handbook and Forms](#)

[Estates of Deceased Persons File](#)

[Investigator Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[For Consumers about Investigators](#)

[Laws, Regulations, and Guidelines](#)

[National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators \(NAUPA\)](#)

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