

§ 72.47

between rival claimants, or judgment rendered, the consular officer should notify all parties concerned and sell the entire personal estate at auction in the manner prescribed by § 72.37, with the exception of jewelry, heirlooms, and articles which may have sentimental value to relatives, regardless of intrinsic value. Should any of the personal property not have been taken into physical possession previously (see § 72.29), the consular officer should take possession of such property and, after preparing a supplementary inventory in the manner prescribed in §§ 72.35 and 72.36, include this portion of the estate with that already in his possession. The proceeds of the sale should be converted into United States dollars and after payment of local debts (§ 72.39) and collection of the fee prescribed by § 72.52, should be transmitted, with any unsold portion of the estate in the consular officer's possession, to the Department of State for forwarding to the General Accounting Office for safekeeping and lawful disposition as conservator of the estate (22 U.S.C. 1175).

§ 72.47 Consular action on unproved claim to estate.

If the evidence of a claimant's right to receive the estate is not considered sufficient to relieve the consular officer of his responsibility as provisional conservator, he may elect a period of time, not less than one year from the date of the decedent's death, within which settlement must be effected, in order to obviate interminable delay in disposing of the estate. In the consular officer's discretion, he may before releasing the estate, require the claimant to give bond in an amount fixed by the officer himself to run for such period of time as he may designate, in order to protect himself against other possible claims against the estate. If claim to the estate is still unproved at the expiration of the period set, or the claimant refuses to meet the conditions of any bond which the consular officer may require, the consular officer should dispose of the entire personal estate in the manner prescribed by § 72.46.

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§ 72.48 Consular action on unclaimed estates.

If, after the expiration of one year from the date of the decedent's death, a legal representative has not appeared to claim the estate, the consular officer should dispose of the entire personal estate in the manner prescribed by § 72.46.

§ 72.49 Disposition of estate upon departure of responsible officer.

(a) *Responsibility vested in officer, not post.* For the purpose of the regulations in this part, the consular officer who actually takes possession and disposes of the personal estate of the deceased, i.e., the officer whose signature appears on the inventory of effects, is considered to be the responsible officer. Consequently, upon his departure from the post, either on transfer or extended leave, provision should be made for the disposition of any estate remaining unsettled at the time of his departure.

(b) *Procedure when estate held for less than one year.* When the personal estate is held less than one year, the personal effects in the departing officer's possession should be turned over to another officer at the post against a receipt therefor, in triplicate, identifying the property and cash on hand by reference to the inventory (§§ 72.35 and 72.36) and the trust fund records of the post.

(c) *Procedure when estate held for more than one year.* When the estate has been held for more than one year, the personal effects in the departing officer's possession should be forwarded to the Department for transmission to the General Accounting Office in the manner prescribed by § 72.46 and accounted for in accordance with § 72.50 unless circumstances as described in §§ 72.46 and 72.47 warrant continuing efforts to effect agreement between rival claimants, or to establish an unproved claim. If the estate is not forwarded to the Department, it should be turned over to another officer at the post in the same manner authorized by paragraph (b) of this section.

§ 72.50 Final statement of account.

The consular officer must account directly to the parties in interest and to the courts of law in estate matters. Consequently, he must keep an account