

Article 25.

Small Estates.

§ 28A-25-1. Collection of property by affidavit when decedent dies intestate.

(a) When a decedent dies intestate leaving personal property, less liens and encumbrances thereon, not exceeding twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in value, at any time after 30 days from the date of death, any person indebted to the decedent or having possession of tangible personal property or an instrument evidencing a debt, obligation, stock or chose in action belonging to the decedent shall make payment of the indebtedness or deliver the tangible personal property or an instrument evidencing a debt, obligation, stock or chose in action to a person claiming to be the public administrator appointed pursuant to G.S. 28A-12-1, or an heir or creditor of the decedent, not disqualified under G.S. 28A-4-2, upon being presented a certified copy of an affidavit filed in accordance with subsection (b) and made by or on behalf of the heir or creditor or the public administrator stating:

- (1) The name and address of the affiant and the fact that the affiant is the public administrator or an heir or creditor of the decedent;
- (2) The name of the decedent and the decedent's residence at time of death;
- (3) The date and place of death of the decedent;
- (4) That 30 days have elapsed since the death of the decedent;
- (5) That the value of all the personal property owned by the estate of the decedent, less liens and encumbrances thereon, does not exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000);
- (6) That no application or petition for appointment of a personal representative is pending or has been granted in any jurisdiction;
- (7) The names and addresses of those persons who are entitled, under the provisions of the Intestate Succession Act, to the personal property of the decedent and their relationship, if any, to the decedent; and
- (8) A description sufficient to identify each tract of real property owned by the decedent at the time of the decedent's death.

In those cases in which the affiant is the surviving spouse and sole heir of the decedent, not disqualified under G.S. 28A-4-2, the property described in this subsection that may be collected pursuant to this section may exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in value but shall not exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) in value, after reduction for any spousal allowance paid to the surviving spouse pursuant to G.S. 30-15. In such cases, the affidavit shall state: (i) the name and address of the affiant and the fact that the affiant is the surviving spouse and is entitled, under the provisions of the Intestate Succession Act, to all of the property of the decedent; (ii) that the value of all of the personal property owned by the estate of the decedent, less liens and encumbrances thereon, does not exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000); and (iii) the information required under subdivisions (2), (3), (4), (6), and (8) of this subsection.

(b) Prior to the recovery of any assets of the decedent, a copy of the affidavit described in subsection (a) shall be filed in the office of the clerk of superior court of the county where the decedent was domiciled at the time of death. The affidavit shall be filed by the clerk upon payment of the fee provided in G.S. 7A-307, shall be indexed in the index to estates, and a copy thereof shall be mailed by the clerk to the persons shown in the affidavit as entitled to the personal property.

(c) The presentation of an affidavit as provided in subsection (a) shall be sufficient to require the transfer to the affiant or the affiant's designee of the title and license to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the decedent owner; the ownership rights of a savings account or checking account in a bank in the name of the decedent owner; the ownership rights of a savings account or share certificate in a credit union, building and loan association, or savings and loan

association in the name of the decedent owner; the ownership rights in any stock or security registered on the books of a corporation in the name of a decedent owner; or any other property or contract right owned by decedent at the time of the decedent's death.

(d) The public administrator or an heir that has presented an affidavit as provided in subsection (a) of this section shall be entitled to remove or otherwise dispose of the decedent's personal property located in the demised premises. (1973, c. 1329, s. 3; 1975, c. 300, s. 9; 1983, c. 65, s. 1; c. 713, s. 21; 1985, c. 651, s. 1; 1989, c. 407, s. 1; 1995, c. 262, s. 1; 2009-175, s. 1; 2011-344, s. 4; 2021-71, s. 2.3.)