

Chapter 13

DISPOSITION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY AND EFFECTS PROGRAM

Section 13A—Disposition of Personal Property and Effects Program Overview.

13.1. Program Objective. The Department of the Air Force collects, safeguards and promptly processes property and effects belonging to deceased military personnel and other eligible individuals, which is located at a place under DAF jurisdiction, or when there is no legal representative or surviving spouse present to act on behalf of the member.

13.1.1. Personal Effects Defined. Any personal item, organizational clothing, or equipment physically located on or with the remains. PE shipped with the remains or directly to the PERE are not to be treated in the same manner as personal property. Examples of PE include, but are not limited to, eyeglasses, jewelry, wallets, insignia, and clothing. Organizational clothing and equipment will be returned through unit supply channels. The MO is responsible to collect, inventory, safeguard and process PE. **(T-1)**.

13.1.2. Personal Property Defined. Personal property is all of the other personal possessions of the decedent found at a place under jurisdiction of the Air Force. These include items such as household goods, mail and personal papers, privately owned vehicle(s) and movable property used or owned by the person. A SCO inventories, ships, and processes personal property. **(T-0)**. Personal property shipment usually occurs at a later date than PE shipment. The term does not include interests in real property. Personal property found in off-base housing may only be shipped by a SCO upon receipt of a Power of Attorney by the PERE. **(T-1)**.

13.2. Entitled Air Force Personnel and Other Individuals. Personnel entitled to personal property and effects protection and disposition under this instruction include:

13.2.1. Deceased Regular Air Force and Space Force personnel.

13.2.2. A member of a reserve component of an armed force who dies while:

13.2.2.1. On active-duty status.

13.2.2.2. Performing inactive-duty training.

13.2.2.3. Performing authorized travel directly to or from active-duty or inactive-duty training.

13.2.2.4. Remaining overnight immediately before the commencement of inactive-duty training, or remaining overnight, between successive periods of inactive-duty training, at or near the site of the inactive-duty training.

13.2.2.5. Hospitalized or undergoing treatment for an injury, illness, or disease incurred or aggravated while on active-duty or performing inactive-duty training.

13.2.2.6. Serving on funeral honors duty under Title 10, USC § 12503, *Ready Reserve Funeral Honors Duty* or Title 32, USC § 115, *Funeral Honors Duty Performed as a Federal Function*.

13.2.2.7. Traveling directly to or from the place at which the member is to serve.

13.2.2.8. Remaining overnight at or in the vicinity of that place before so serving, if the place is outside reasonable commuting distance from the member's residence.

13.2.3. Retired or Retained Personnel eligible for mortuary entitlements who die at a place or command under the jurisdiction of the Air Force and there is no legal representative or surviving spouse present.

13.2.4. Deceased Department of Air Force civilian employees and persons serving with or accompanying an armed force, in the field, in a time of declared war or a contingency operation. The Air Force will provide support to other Federal Agency Employees in accordance with DoDI 1300.18, Enclosure 6, *Civilian Casualty Reporting, Recording, Notification, and Assistance by DoD Components*. (T-0).

13.2.5. Residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Homes who die in an Air Force Hospital when sent for treatment.

13.2.6. Other individuals entitled to personal property and effects protection and disposition, but NOT entitled to an appointed SCO include: missing, captured or detained, personnel on active-duty status; personnel on active-duty status and designated DUSTWUN; personnel on active-duty status who are medically evacuated, hospitalized, or psychologically disabled; contract personnel; foreign national military members and civilians; and indigent persons who die on Air Force or Space Force installations.

13.3. Authorized Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE). A prioritized list of persons authorized to accept personal property and effects from Air Force officials is provided below. **NOTE:** If a dispute arises over a determination of the authorized recipient, request legal help from the SJA and place property and effects in temporary storage pending resolution. When the PERE is not listed as the Executor of the estate in the Will, the SCO will not take any actions regarding the disposal of personal property without guidance from the installation Staff Judge Advocate. (T-1).

13.3.1. Surviving spouse or Legal Representative. (T-0).

13.3.2. Children in order of age. If the recipient is a minor, forward the property as instructed by the minor's surviving parent, guardian, or adoptive parent. (T-0).

13.3.3. Parents in order of age. (T-0). If the parents are divorced or legally separated and the divorce or legal separation occurred while the deceased was a minor, then the recipient is the custodial parent. (T-0). If the parents are divorced and the divorce occurred when the decedent was an adult, precedence will go back to the parents in order of age. (T-0). **NOTE:** In a shared custody arrangement, the custodial parent is the one who had physical custody at the time the deceased reached the age of majority or entered the military.

13.3.4. Siblings in order of age. (T-0).

13.3.5. The next-of-kin of the deceased. Where there are several persons equal in relationship to the deceased, the oldest is the recipient. (T-0).

13.3.6. A beneficiary named in the will of the deceased will take precedence over persons outlined in [paragraphs 13.3.1](#) through [paragraph 13.3.5](#). (T-0). Where there are several primary beneficiaries, the oldest is the recipient. (T-0). **NOTE:** When the PERE is not listed as the Executor of the estate in the Will, the SCO will not take any actions regarding the disposal of personal property without guidance from the installation Staff Judge Advocate.

13.4. Disposition of Personal Property Roles and Responsibilities.

13.4.1. Director, Air Force Services (AF/AIS) establishes policy for the disposition of personal property and effects.

13.4.2. AFMAO:

13.4.2.1. Develops and implements procedures, based on policy, for the disposition of personal property and effects.

13.4.2.2. Provides guidance in resolving unusual property and/or effects matters.

13.4.2.3. Obtains disposition instructions for PE and property from the PERE or authorized recipient located in CONUS for members who die OCONUS.

13.4.2.4. May grant additional 90-day extensions to the SCO for personal property actions which remain unresolved after the maximum 60-day extension granted by the installation commander.

13.4.3. Installation commander or Special Court Martial Convening Authority (Joint Base):

13.4.3.1. Appoints a commissioned officer on orders (special Orders Series-A), as the "Summary Court Officer," usually referred to as a SCO.

13.4.3.1.1. Should not appoint a person who is in a deployment or Permanent Change of Station status, or who serves in an assignment which would interfere with Summary Court duties.

13.4.3.1.2. Appoints a Chaplain as the SCO when a Chaplain dies to safeguard professional, religious and confidential materials.

13.4.3.1.3. Appoint a Judge Advocate as the SCO when an attorney dies to safeguard Attorney-Client privileged material.

13.4.3.1.4. Appoints a Medical officer (medical, mental health, dental, etc.) as the SCO when a Medical officer dies to safeguard client Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) material.

13.4.3.2. Is responsible for ensuring personal property and effects located on or near the installation for any person covered by this instruction are collected, safeguarded, inventoried, and stored or forwarded.

13.4.3.2.1. Grants an extension up to 60 days (total) beyond the initial 120 days given to the SCO for completing property actions.

13.4.3.2.2. Reviews and signs off on closing the completed Summary Court file.

13.4.3.2.3. Appoints a uniformed member to safeguard, inventory and return the property for Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown and medically evacuated, hospitalized or mentally incompetent personnel (reference [paragraph 13.25](#) and [paragraph 13.26](#)) to the person who would have been the PERE had the member been declared dead. The appointed uniformed member shall meet the qualifications of a SCO (Administrative appointment, not on Series A-Orders).

13.4.4. Installation MO:

13.4.4.1. Determines entitlements for each reported death.

- 13.4.4.2. Advises the installation commander of an entitled deceased member.
 - 13.4.4.3. Completes the PE Checklist.
 - 13.4.4.4. Collects, inventories, safeguards and processes PE.
 - 13.4.4.5. Helps the installation commander collect and safeguard the personal property pending SCO appointment.
 - 13.4.4.6. Identifies the PERE for the deceased member's property and effects.
 - 13.4.4.7. Obtains PE and personal property disposition instructions from the PERE, if a local death. Carries out PE instructions and gives property instructions to the SCO.
 - 13.4.4.8. Briefs the SCO on duties and provides the SCO a copy of this chapter.
 - 13.4.4.9. Monitors SCO actions from start to finish.
 - 13.4.4.10. Develops a comprehensive checklist for the SCO. An example can be found on the AFMAO SharePoint.
 - 13.4.4.11. Responds to inquiries or complaints from the PERE.
 - 13.4.4.12. Ensures the SCO advises the FAR of the SCO's actions.
 - 13.4.4.13. Reviews the SCO file with the SCO and coordinates with the SJA before submitting to the installation commander for signature.
 - 13.4.4.14. Attaches the finalized SCO file to the left side of the mortuary case file, or forwards the file to the MO handling the remains. Scans and uploads the finalized Summary Court file to the file attachments section of the associated case in the DCIPS.
 - 13.4.4.15. Ensures budget procedures are in place to work mortuary-related funding issues (e.g., fees for shipping documents and PE, travel in performance of SCO duties).
 - 13.4.4.16. Assists Air Reserve Component full-time MT or MO in their Area of Responsibility with dispositions of personal property and effects. **NOTE:** Many MO responsibilities can be delegated to the MT.
- 13.4.5. Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Special Actions, (DFAS-IN/FJSCA). Settles deceased members' pay accounts in accordance with DoD 7000.14-R, Vol. 7A, DoD Financial Management Regulation, *Military Pay Policy – Active-Duty and Reserve Pay*.
- 13.4.6. Traffic Management Office. Provides applicable weight limits and arranges for packing, storing and shipping personal property.
- 13.4.7. SJA. Reviews the SCO file for legal sufficiency before closing a case and provides guidance for legal questions concerning the PERE' disposition of property and effects.
- 13.4.8. CAR. Provides copies of the DD Form 1300 as needed.

13.5. SCO Requirements. A Special Court Martial Convening Authority must appoint a SCO when a decedent meets the criteria outlined in [paragraph 13.2.1](#) to [paragraph 13.2.5](#). (T-0).

13.6. SCO Actions. When a military member dies in an entitlement eligible duty status, the SCO will dispose of personal property within 120 days. (T-3). **NOTE:** If a dispute arises over an Air Force or Space Force determination on the PERE, disposition may take longer.

13.6.1. All claims for damages to real property resulting from the death of an eligible member, see **Section 2A**, occurring off-base, are a civil matter. There is no provision for the Department of the Air Force to cover these costs. **NOTE:** Neither the USAF nor USSF has fiscal authority to pay claims made by a landlord against a deceased Airman or Guardian for damage to an off-base residence, not in the course of their official duties, over and above the amount secured by their security deposit.

13.6.1.1. Due to various causes and manners of death, the SCO may be questioned as to how the location of death is to be cleaned. When death occurs in an area where the Air Force is directly responsible for maintenance and cleaning (dormitories, offices, hangers), the facility manager will use installation Operation and Maintenance funds to clean the place of death. Cleaning of personal property (privatized base housing or dormitories, privately owned or rented residence, automobile, clothing) is the responsibility of the PERE or manager of the property, not the Department of the Air Force. No funds are available beyond what is described in the following:

13.6.1.1.1. If the death took place in a residence, refer the lien holder or leaser to the insurance company which insures the deceased member's residence or property. Another source of funds may be a security deposit which might settle costs associated with the clean-up.

13.6.1.1.2. For deaths occurring in an automobile, the company insuring the vehicle should be consulted as a possible source to cover associated clean-up or repair cost. If the lien holder or leaser persists, request their contact information and advise them that the MO will ensure the legal next-of-kin is provided with their information.

13.6.1.1.3. Consult with the MO and the installation Staff Judge Advocate as appropriate for guidance. This is the extent the SCO and MO is able to assist these parties.

13.6.2. Operations and Maintenance funds can be used to clean personal clothing items that the member may have been wearing at the time of death or other laundry in the residence belonging to the deceased that will be forwarded to PERE.

Section 13B—Handling and Processing of PE of Deceased Personnel

13.7. Procedures. PE are broadly defined as any personal item, organizational clothing or equipment physically located on the remains. PE shipped with the remains or directly to the authorized recipient are not to be treated in the same manner as personal property. **NOTE:** For off-base PE, recommend the SCO procure a Special Power of Attorney from the PERE to inspect, assemble and arrange for property to be packed and shipped by TMO for return to the PERE. Concurrence by the PERE allows the SCO to perform actions as necessary to avoid causing undue additional grief to the family. See the installation Staff Judge Advocate for assistance and further guidance.

13.8. Inventorying PE. The MO will:

- 13.8.1. Inventory PE using the DD Form 1076. **(T-1)**.
- 13.8.2. List every item with a full description. Annotate "LAST ITEM" below last item and draw a line through the rest of the form. **(T-1)**. Sign and date the form. Attach additional sheets as necessary. **(T-1)**.
- 13.8.3. Thoroughly inspect remains to ensure all PE are found, check all pockets of any clothing. **(T-1)**.
- 13.8.4. Take digital photos of the PE and include as documentation in the case file. **(T-1)**.
- 13.8.5. The inventory sheet(s) must accompany the PE at all times. Keep a copy for the case file. **(T-1)**.
- 13.8.6. For deaths under investigation or circumstances which do not permit an immediate, hands-on inventory of PE, perform a visual inventory and annotate the inventory sheet. **(T-1)**. Conduct a complete inventory as soon as possible, and make every attempt to ensure PE will be returned when available. **(T-1)**.

13.9. PE Containing Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment. The SCO will:

- 13.9.1. Collect all organizational clothing and individual equipment (e.g., parkas, cold weather footwear) when such items are no longer required for investigation, and inventories on the DD Form 1076. **(T-1)**.
- 13.9.2. Contact the deceased member's unit commander to arrange the return of all issued organizational equipment and clothing to the squadron. **(T-3)**.
- 13.9.3. Contact the PERE to determine if they desire any of the remaining issued organizational clothing. **(T-3)**. **NOTE:** Do not offer dangerous articles and organizational weapons to the PERE.
- 13.9.4. Make a separate DD Form 1076 for the organizational clothing and equipment to be turned in to supply.
- 13.9.5. Ensure the Logistics Readiness Squadron representative signs the DD Form 1076 accepting the items. **(T-3)**.

13.10. Securing PE. The MO completes the inventory, cleans the PE, and locks them in a secure area such as a cabinet, safe, or room. Establishes and maintains a log for deposit and withdrawal of PE from the secured storage area. **(T-3)**.**13.11. Disposition of PE.**

- 13.11.1. Once the MO has ensured the PERE has been officially notified of the death, the MO requests the PERE provide instructions for disposition of the PE. Options include using the military escort, mail or in the casket. Ensure the escort and receiving funeral director are notified if PE are shipped with the remains. **(T-1)**. Ensure the PERE is advised of the nature of the PE on-hand before shipping. **(T-1)**.

13.11.2. Via Military Escort. The military escort can hand deliver the PE to the receiving funeral home or to the PERE. Military escorts will check the inventory sheet(s), inventory, and accept responsibility for the PE by signing the inventory sheet. **(T-1)**. Two copies of the DD Form 1076 inventory should accompany the PE. Escorts will annotate the inventory sheet with the name of the person who accepted responsibility for final disposition of the effects and will have that person (funeral director or PERE) sign the inventory sheet. **(T-1)**. Instruct the escort to request the funeral director to check the inventory sheet(s) and accept responsibility for the PE by signing block 13 (front and back) as Receiving Official and, upon transfer, have the PERE sign block 14. **(T-1)**. If the escort turns over directly to the PERE, have them complete the DD Form 1076 by signing block 14. **(T-1)**. Instruct the escort or funeral director to return one copy to the MO at the shipping installation. **(T-1)**. Maintain the signed DD Form 1076 in the Summary Courts file. **(T-1)**.

13.11.2.1. Via U.S. Mail or Delivery Service. Mail PE expeditiously to the PERE, base mortuary office, or funeral director. **(T-1)**. Use a mail or delivery service which has tracking capability and require a signature at the receiving destination. **(T-1)**. Include the inventory sheet and an addressed, stamped envelope with the PE and request the receiving party sign, date, and return the completed DD Form 1076 by signing block 14 and return using the pre-addressed and stamped envelope. **(T-1)**. Call the recipient prior to sending to advise what items are being sent and when they will arrive to ensure receipt and reduce any emotional trauma to the family. **(T-1)**. 13.11.2.2. Delivered in Casket or On Remains. Ensure only the items the PERE requested be shipped with the remains are on the remains or in the casket and are visible if the casket is opened. **(T-1)**. The shipping MO will instruct the receiving funeral director to document receipt and transfer to the PERE. **(T-1)**. Instruct the funeral director to check the inventory sheet(s), inventory, and accept responsibility for the PE by signing block 13 (front and back) as Receiving Official and, upon transfer, have the PERE sign block 14. **(T-1)**. Two copies of the DD Form 1076 inventory should accompany the PE so the PERE has a copy and the other copy will be returned to the MO who shipped the remains.

13.11.3. PE Property Retained as Evidence. PE property may be retained as evidence by civil or military law enforcement or investigative authorities until no longer needed. **NOTE:** Items may be held by law enforcement agencies for an indefinite period of time. When that is the case, the SCO may close the case file with a memo for record documenting the communication to the PERE, identifying the items withheld and the agency holding them. When those items are released, they may be turned over to the SCO if one is still active on the case or request assignment of a SCO who will take custody of the items, ship them and document the return to the PERE.

13.11.3.1. Civil Agencies. Civil law enforcement and investigative agencies have their own policies and procedures for disposing of evidence, including PE property. The SCO will advise the PERE that queries concerning PE property held by non-military agencies should be sent to each applicable agency. **(T-1)**. The SCO will provide the PERE with the agency's physical evidence custodian's name, mailing address, and telephone number. **(T-1)**.

13.11.3.2. Military Agencies. The SCO will contact the physical evidence custodian of the military law enforcement or investigative agency and advise the custodian when PE property is released as evidence, the PE property is turned over to the SCO for disposition. **(T-1)**.

13.11.3.3. Air Force OSI, or Security Forces Investigations should return PE property withdrawn for investigation purposes directly to the SCO for further authorized distribution.

13.12. Destroying PE.

13.12.1. Mortuary personnel have no authority to arbitrarily destroy PE. If the remains are being shipped to a mortuary, all PE should be shipped with the remains and the port mortuary personnel should contact AFMAO to obtain instructions from the PERE. **(T-1)**.

13.12.2. If the PERE agrees that mortuary personnel should destroy some items, record the PERE's instructions in the case file and annotate the items to be destroyed on the DD Form 1076.

13.12.3. On all items to be destroyed, the MO should wait for written authorization by the PERE before destroying items. Ensure items are destroyed beyond recognition.

13.12.4. After destruction, annotate the destroyed items on the DD Form 1076. **(T-1)**. Place the documentation in the case file. **(T-1)**.

13.12.5. For additional information regarding destruction of property, see [paragraph 13.15.6](#).

13.13. Record Final Disposition of PE. Ensure the signed and dated DD Form 1076 is included in the case file. If a funeral director or base mortuary personnel accept the items, verify they will deliver the PE to the PERE and note this on the DD Form 1076. **(T-1)**.

Section 13C—Disposing Of Property and Settling Accounts for Members Who Die in an Eligible Status.

13.14. Personal Property Disposition Instructions. The SCO:

13.14.1. Obtains property disposition instructions and the name and address of the PERE from the MO, reviews the Training Video, "You Are a Summary Court Officer - What Now?", and establishes a log of events.

13.14.2. When the SCO and the PERE are in CONUS, the SCO telephones or video conferences with the PERE and explains their function. **(T-1)**.

13.14.2.1. The MO will determine the PERE and obtain disposition instructions for the property. **(T-1)**. These instructions are provided in a Personal Property Message via email to the SCO by the MO. **(T-1)**.

13.14.2.2. When the death occurs overseas and the PERE is in CONUS, the MO will be the point of contact between the PERE and the SCO. **(T-1)**.

13.14.2.3. In either case, the SCO sends a formal letter of introduction to the PERE within 3 duty days after appointment to the position to advise them of Summary Court actions. **(T-1)**. The SCO will also explain the need for any additional information necessary to help with disposition, e.g., Power of Attorney, if needed for TMO actions or other use.

13.14.2.4. When speaking to the family, all references to the deceased should be stated in a personal nature such as “Capt Jones’ wristwatch” and not as “the deceased member’s wristwatch.” The SCO should coordinate all outgoing correspondence with the MO.

13.14.3. Advises the PERE at least once a week regarding progress in resolving property matters. Annotates all correspondence in the log of events. **(T-1)**.

13.14.4. Informs the MO and Technician of all correspondence with the PERE, other agencies, and interested parties. **(T-1)**.

13.14.5. Alerts organizations on the installation to make a claim for any unpaid debts, such as a base Club. **(T-3)**. Review the deceased member’s correspondence to identify potential creditors with a claim for or against the estate and inform the PERE of the debts owed. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** An alternate base-wide notification may be made via email. Coordinate with the installation Public Affairs office for message release. **(T-3)**.

13.14.6. Provide the completed DD Form 139, *Pay Adjustment Authorization*, with bills for the deceased member’s debts within 2 weeks of the date of death to the local Financial Services Office. Include information in the Case Management System for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to compute final pay.

13.14.7. Completes and signs a DD Form 1351-2, *Travel Voucher or Subvoucher*, if the deceased member was on temporary duty or en route to a permanent change of station, and submits the voucher with the member’s orders. **(T-3)**.

13.15. Inventorying Property. The SCO:

13.15.1. Inventories all property on the DD Form 1076.

13.15.2. Promptly gathers the uniform and clothes needed for burial and gives them to the MO or Technician when requested by the PADD. **(T-3)**. Consideration should be given to providing a new uniform to allow the Airman or Guardian’s uniform to be retained by the family for sentimental purposes if requested.

13.15.3. Collects organizational clothing and equipment. Turns in organizational clothing and equipment to the responsible supply officer (see [paragraph 13.9](#) for organizational clothing that may be offered to the authorized recipient). **(T-3)**.

13.15.4. Removes any questionable items and determines the disposition of this property based on the following criteria:

13.15.4.1. Categories of Questionable Property. Questionable property falls into one of three categories:

13.15.4.1.1. Category 1 - Property with no intrinsic or sentimental value which includes, but is not limited to: items which have no resale value (for example, used toothpaste, soap, deodorant, lotions, shampoo, tobacco, candy, opened food items) or items which are not allowed to be shipped in accordance with Joint Personal Property Shipping Office requirements, such as liquids, corrosives, flammables, or oils.

13.15.4.1.2. Category 2 - Property that is unfit to forward to the PERE. This includes, but is not limited to: mutilated items, items damaged beyond repair, burned, soiled with blood or bodily fluid, or are unsanitary. ,.

- 13.15.4.1.3. Category 3 - Inflammatory property which includes, but is not limited to: items which could cause further grief to the PERE such as compromising pictures, magazines, paraphernalia or videos sexual in nature, personal letters, etc. SCOs may contact AFMAO for consult regarding items of this nature.
- 13.15.4.2. Criteria for Disposition of Questionable Property in Categories 1 and 2. The SCO has no authority to destroy personal property in these two categories without authorization from the PERE.
- 13.15.4.2.1. When possible, make soiled, bloodstained, or torn clothing presentable by the SCO or MO using FSS Operation and Maintenance Funds to cover cleaning expenses through commercial vendors. However, the PERE should be asked if they would like to have the items, and if so, state the condition of the items and inform them they will be cleaned before being returned.
- 13.15.4.2.2. Opened mail, papers, photographs, videotapes, books, magazines, and other such items will be screened for suitability. Questions on suitability will be directed to the MO and SJA. The SCO should pay close attention to cell phones, iPads, digital cameras, and computers to ensure these and like devices do not contain unfit items. If they do, the SCO should hold device until receiving instructions from the installation Staff Judge Advocate or OSI (if investigation is pending) regarding destruction.
- 13.15.4.2.3. Personal cell phones, iPads, digital cameras, and computers may be locked and unable to be opened. In these instances, document the attempt to open them with a memorandum for record and then turn the device over to the PERE. **(T-1)**. If unlocked, digital contents should be reviewed as outlined in [paragraph 13.15.4.2.2](#).
- 13.15.4.2.4. Exposed but unprocessed film will be processed using FSS Operation and Maintenance funds and screened for suitability. **(T-1)**. The MO will ensure FSS funds are available to the SCO to cover these expenses. **(T-1)**.
- 13.15.4.2.5. The SCO has no obligation or authority to review the decedent's social media accounts for questionable posts or images.
- 13.15.4.3. Criteria for Disposition of Questionable Property - Category 3. The possession of and decision to destroy inflammatory items will not directly involve the PERE. Annotate these items on a separate DD Form 1076 and turn the items over to the MO, who will consult with the FAR about the state of mind of the PERE to determine if turning over the items would likely cause them unnecessary grief and distress. The items will be reviewed immediately upon discovery for any information that would be useful to family members (e.g., a suicide note that contains disposition of remains instructions) or may provide solace to family members (e.g., a homicide confession that expresses remorse over the grief that the decedent's actions have cause the family).
- 13.15.4.3.1. The MO in consultation with the installation Staff Judge Advocate will determine if the items should be turned over immediately or if they should be retained awaiting approval of destruction by the officer who appointed the SCO. **(T-1)**. If a decision is made to release Category 3 items, the MO will draft a release letter for the PERE to sign stating they have been notified the items being turned over may cause additional distress or grief. **(T-1)**.

- 13.15.4.3.2. If a decision is made to withhold items for destruction, the MO will retain the questionable property for a minimum of 45 days following receipt of all other property by the PERE, in the event the PERE requests information pertaining to these items. **(T-1)**.
- 13.15.4.3.3. Once 45 days have passed without any inquiry regarding the questionable property, the MO should request the installation Staff Judge Advocate review the items identified for destruction and make a written recommendation for their final disposition. **(T-1)**. If the installation Staff Judge Advocate recommends destruction, obtain approval from the SCO Appointing Authority. **(T-1)**.
- 13.15.4.4. Items prohibited for shipment will be disposed except for firearms and ammunition. **(T-0)**. Privately owned firearms and ammunition may be shipped to the PERE through an individual or company with a Federal Firearms License and in accordance with Traffic Management Office policies and Customs entry requirements. If the PERE is a minor, the shipment will be required to go through their guardian who is at least 18 years of age for long guns, or 21 years of age for handguns. Ammunition may be shipped as arranged by the PERE or disposed of using local procedures.
- 13.15.5. The SCO will provide a list of all items withdrawn and disposed of to the MO for inclusion in the official SCO File. **(T-1)**.
- 13.15.6. Methods of destruction. The SCO, in coordination with the MO, may destroy and dispose of items by incineration, shredding, or mangling. Destruction must be absolute, obliterating all evidence of the prior owner's and other related person's identities, and rendering the item useless and without any value. **(T-0)**.

13.16. Disposing of Identification (ID) and Military Documents. Military ID cards (also known as Common Access Cards), Military Driver's Licenses, and other documents the deceased member may have carried are extremely powerful mementos for surviving family members and every attempt should be made to return these items to the family. SCOs may work with the Military Personnel Flight (MPF), Logistics Readiness Squadron, and other offices to clear these accounts and then return the cards to family members.

- 13.16.1. The SCO gives ID tags to the MO to place with the remains or send with PE. **Exception:** If the remains have already been shipped and the PERE did not request to be sent with PE, send the ID tags, as part of personal property shipment, to the PERE.
- 13.16.2. The SCO gives the Optional Form 346, *US Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card*, to the PERE after clearing with the Logistics Readiness Squadron.
- 13.16.3. The SCO clears the Service member's identification card with the MPF personnel records custodian and then provides it to the PERE. In accordance with DAFI 36-3026, **Table 12.2**, Item 4, all identification cards provided to the PERE, or next-of-kin, must be terminated, have the certificates revoked and have a hole punched through the integrate circuit chip prior to its release. **(T-0)**.
- 13.16.4. The SCO safeguards military documents and submits any classified documents to the proper authorities for disposition. **(T-1)**.

13.17. Disposing of Mail and Personal Papers. The SCO:

13.17.1. For members who were not residing with a spouse, collect all mail received for the member after death, inventory on the DD Form 1076 and send to the PERE. **(T-1)**. Place a forwarding notice with the Post Office to close the Post Office box or stop mail from being delivered to the residence.

13.17.2. Forwards all personal papers promptly by registered mail to the PERE and keeps a record of the forwarded items. **(T-1)**.

13.18. Disposing of Funds and Negotiable Instruments. The SCO may:

13.18.1. If requested by the PERE, notify financial institutions of the death and arrange to have the accounts closed and the funds forwarded to the payable-on-death designee or, if no such designation was made by the decedent, to the PERE. The SCO should not, if at all possible, personally handle such funds. **NOTE:** A death certificate may be required for this action.

13.18.2. To pay off a deceased member's local or government debts, provide a completed DD Form 139, with bills for the member's debts within 2 weeks of the date of death to the local Financial Services Office. Include information in the Case Management System for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to compute final pay.

13.18.3. Give unused cash to the PERE if that person lives in the local area. If the PERE lives outside of the local area and the money must be mailed, take it to the local Comptroller Squadron (CPTS) for conversion into a U.S. Treasury check payable to the PERE. (reference DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 5, DoD Financial Management Regulation, *Disbursing Policy*).

13.18.4. Give foreign currency to the local CPTS for conversion into a U.S. Treasury Check. **NOTE:** If the currency exceeds the amount authorized in DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 5, give an application to the installation commander to certify that Air Force personnel acquired the currency properly. **NOTE:** Include souvenir currency with the deceased member's personal property.

13.19. Shipping Items. The SCO coordinates with the Traffic Management Office to arrange shipment of household goods. **(T-3)**. Permanent Change of Station funds are used to move personal property of deceased personnel. Permanent Change of Station funding classifications for officers and enlisted members are annotated on the DD Form 1300.

13.19.1. The SCO.

13.19.1.1. May ship one vehicle owned by the member or member's legal dependent. **NOTE:** Vehicles shipped from a foreign country must meet U.S. safety and pollution requirements. The SCO must receive written authorization from the lien holder to ship vehicles encumbered by a lien. **(T-0)**.

13.19.1.2. May be able to ship a boat as a household good. Contact the Traffic Management Office for guidance.

13.19.1.3. May not ship pets at the government's expense (refer to 37 USC (§) 401 and DoD 4515.13). **(T-0)**.

13.19.1.4. Immediate care may be needed for a pet(s) owned by a single member or member without family in the immediate area. Work with the member's unit if at all possible to provide temporary pet care until the PERE can assume those responsibilities either by way of professional pet care services, pet transport or some other method to ensure the health and safety of the pet(s). Ultimately, the PERE is responsible for the care and transportation costs of the pet(s). The PERE may also decide to surrender the pet(s) to a local animal shelter or rescue facilities.

13.19.1.5. Ships property owned by the member to no more than two locations designated by the PERE. If shipment is to a storage unit or location, the PERE will be responsible for any cost associated with removal of any items stored.

13.20. Packing and Storage Services. The SCO:

13.20.1. Contacts the Traffic Management Office for packing and storage services and for items which cannot be shipped at government expense. **(T-3)**. Advises the PERE of their right to personally arrange for disposition or give the SCO a Power of Attorney to sell the items.

13.20.2. Marks or tags all packages and items with the names and addresses of the sender and the PERE. **(T-3)**.

13.20.3. Stores the property in CONUS until the PERE provides disposition instructions. **(T-1)**.

13.20.4. Stores property from outside CONUS by shipping it to a CONUS port of entry for non-temporary storage pending disposition instructions. **(T-1)**.

13.21. Disposing of Property in Transit or in Non-temporary Storage. The SCO:

13.21.1. Obtains the location, weight, and cube of the deceased member's property from the Traffic Management Office.

13.21.2. Diverts the property, if it is in transit, or moves the property not in storage to the location specified by the PERE. **NOTE:** Do not inventory this property.

13.21.3. Advises the PERE of the property shipping date, mode, and anticipated date of delivery.

13.21.4. Distributes copies of the DD Form 1076.

13.22. Disposing of Property Without a Recipient. The SCO will:

13.22.1. Ask the MO for help if a PERE is not found. **(T-1)**.

13.22.2. Collect from local debtors and pay local creditors. **(T-1)**.

13.22.3. Inventory property on the DD Form 1076, as needed. **(T-1)**.

13.22.3.1. The Traffic Management Office will hold property for at least 30 days following the death.

13.22.3.2. If no PERE comes forward within 30 days:

13.22.3.2.1. Sell the property and use the funds collected from the sale to pay any remaining local debts. Record all cash transactions on the DD Form 1076.

- 13.22.3.2.2. Do not sell articles of keepsake value, such as medals or insignia (refer to Title 10, USC §9712[e], *Disposition of effects of deceased persons by summary court-martial*) or stocks, bonds, evidence of bank accounts, or any other forms of purely commercial paper.
- 13.22.3.3. Give all unused cash and checks, with the DD Form 1076, to the local Comptroller Squadron for deposit (reference DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 5).
- 13.22.4. Make sure the Comptroller shows receipt of the funds by signing and returning the DD Form 1076.
- 13.22.5. Place the original signed DD Form 1076 in the Summary Court file.

13.23. Closing the Summary Court File. The SCO:

- 13.23.1. Closes property actions within 120 days of appointment as the SCO. **(T-1)**. However, the installation commander may grant an extension up to 60 additional days. The AFMAO Commander may grant extensions beyond the 60 days granted by the installation commander.
- 13.23.2. Places the signed DD Form(s) 1076 in the file. **(T-1)**. Documents unsuccessful efforts made to get the forms signed. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** If after several attempts have been made and the PERE has not returned the DD Form 1076(s), document dates and times of request in a Memorandum for Record to be placed to the DD Form 1076(s) in the case file and submit the case file to the MO to close the case.
- 13.23.3. Once the work is completed, the SCO telephones or video conferences with the PERE, following up with a letter providing contact numbers or addresses in the event they have questions in the future. **(T-1)**.
- 13.23.4. Places a chronological account of all Summary Court transactions with supporting documents in the file. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** Include all email correspondence with the PERE.
- 13.23.5. Prepares an electronic staff summary sheet, closure letter and case file to be coordinated through the MO and SJA for final signature by the installation commander. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** Closure of the SCO case file is accomplished through a letter signed by the installation commander, stating they have reviewed the file and declaring all property actions have been completed by the SCO.
- 13.23.6. The MO forwards the SCO file and closure letter through the SJA to the installation commander or other officer who appointed the SCO, for review, approval and signature on the letter, closing the case. **(T-1)**. The SCO File is the only portion of a Mortuary Case File which is forwarded to the installation commander or other officer who appointed the SCO, to be signed and closed. **(T-1)**.

Section 13D—Disposing of Property and Settling Accounts for Other Individuals.

13.24. Missing, Detained and Captured Persons (Military Personnel).

- 13.24.1. Once a member is declared missing, if the PERE is not in local area, the MO secures and holds the property for at least 30 days or until the member's status is changed from missing to detained, captured or the member returns. **(T-0)**. If the missing member returns, the property is released back to the member.

13.24.2. If, after 30 days, the member's missing status does not change or when the member's status is changed to detained or captured, and the PERE is not in the local area, the installation commander appoints a uniformed member meeting the qualifications of a SCO. **(T-0)**.

13.24.3. The appointed uniformed member secures the property from the MO, inventories, and gives or ships the property to the person who would have been the PERE had the member been declared dead. **(T-0)**.

13.25. Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN). The MO secures and holds property for up to 10 days pending the return of the person to military control or a change in status to deceased, missing, detained, or captured. **(T-1)**.

13.26. Medically Evacuated, Hospitalized, or Mentally Incompetent Personnel.

13.26.1. After the permanent disposition of an evacuated or hospitalized member has determined that the member will not return to the member's current installation:

13.26.1.1. The PERE, if present, arranges with the Traffic Management Office to ship the property of disabled personnel.

13.26.1.2. When the PERE is not present, the installation commander appoints, in writing, a military member, meeting the same requirements of a SCO, to make shipping arrangements. **(T-1)**.

13.26.2. The appointed military member gets disposition instructions, when possible, from the disabled person, and secures, inventories, and ships the property as instructed. Exception: If the disabled person is not of sound mind, the appointed military member will receive instructions from the PERE.

13.27. DoD Civilians. (Includes APF, NAF, and Air Reserve Component technicians). The installation commander asks the Chief of Civilian Personnel or NAF Human Resources Officer to appoint an APF or NAF employee, in writing, to assist the PERE. **(T-1)**. If there is not an APF or NAF employee available, the MO will appoint a military member.

13.27.1. For civilians in CONUS (including temporary duty) and U.S. possessions, decedent's personal property will be provided to the person appointed by Civilian Personnel, who will provide it to the PERE, if present. **(T-1)**. If the PERE is not present and the property cannot be shipped or claimed within 45 days, the person appointed by Civilian Personnel will deliver it with all available information to a recipient designated by The Judge Advocate General (TJAG) or by the local civil government with jurisdiction over estates of deceased persons. **(T-1)**.

13.27.2. For civilians OCONUS (including Alaska and Hawaii).

13.27.2.1. If the PERE cannot be present, the MO or decedent's commander secures the property. The appointed person will inventory all property and ship in accordance with instructions received from the AFMAO OL. The appointed person works with the Traffic Management Office to ship property.

13.27.2.2. If the PERE lives in CONUS, the AFMAO operating location obtains disposition instructions and provides the information by message to the MO at the installation involved, who, in turn, will provide it to the appointed assistant. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** In some geographic locations, the appointed assistant may need help from the American Embassy or other Foreign Service post in getting property from the civil domain. When no Air Force representative or PERE is present where the death occurred, the American Consulate officer should be asked to secure and hold the property pending receipt of disposition instructions from AFMAO.

13.27.3. After 45 days, unclaimed or unshipped property will be delivered by the MO, or the appointed assistant, to the person designated by the judicial officer or the local civil government with jurisdiction over the estates of deceased persons. **(T-1)**.

13.27.4. The appointed assistant gives a completed travel voucher and orders for individuals who die while on temporary duty or Permanent Change of Station en route to the local Travel Pay Office, who will process and submit unpaid travel claims to the local Defense Finance and Accounting Service office.

13.28. Contract Personnel Whose Property is in Possession of the Air Force.

13.28.1. For an employee who resides and dies while living in CONUS, the contractor appoints a representative.

13.28.2. For contract personnel who reside and die OCONUS, the contractor-appointed representative or an American Consulate officer:

13.28.2.1. Secures and inventories the property.

13.28.2.2. Delivers the property to the PERE upon receiving proof of entitlement.

13.28.2.3. Arranges for the contractor to pay to move property for contract personnel.

13.29. Foreign National Military Members Who Die While on Training in the US.

13.29.1. The MO will coordinate with Air Force Security Assistance Training Squadron assistance to:

13.29.1.1. Secure the property.

13.29.1.2. Inventory the property on the DD Form 1076.

13.29.1.3. Forward it to the appropriate Air Attaché at the parent country's embassy in the Office of Defense Cooperation.

13.29.2. The Air Attaché:

13.29.2.1. Turns the property over to the Service of the deceased member's country.

13.29.2.2. Forwards any DD Form 1173, *Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card* found to the issuing agency shown on the card.

13.29.3. The Service of the deceased member's country advises the Air Attaché what to do with items which cannot be shipped.

13.29.4. The foreign government pays to move property for entitled foreign nationals.

13.30. Foreign National Civilian Employees. The MO:

13.30.1. Forwards DoD Identification Cards found on a foreign national civilian employee to the agency shown on the card. **(T-1)**.

13.30.2. Delivers personal property to the PERE. **(T-1)**.

13.30.3. Contacts the foreign embassy for assistance if the deceased person owned property in CONUS.

13.30.4. Delivers property which cannot be delivered or is not claimed within 45 days to the judicial officer of the local civil government that has jurisdiction over the deceased person's estate. **(T-1)**.

13.30.5. The foreign government pays to move property for entitled foreign nationals.

13.31. Pensioners, Indigent Patients and Persons Who Die on Air Force or Space Force Installations.

13.31.1. If no PERE comes forward, the installation commander ensures the property is secured and notifies the state official responsible for people who die without a known PERE or a legal representative. **(T-1)**.

13.31.2. Use Operation and Maintenance Funds to pay for moving the property of indigents to the place directed by the state official. **(T-1)**.

13.32. Traditional ANG or Dual Status Technician Members Who Die While Not in a Duty Status.

13.32.1. Traditional Air National Guard members or Dual Status Technician members who die while not in a status as outlined in [paragraph 2.1](#), are not eligible for a SCO. However, the MO is responsible for ensuring personal property and effects located on the Air National Guard installation for any Traditional Air National Guard member or Technician member are collected, safeguarded, inventoried and stored.

13.32.2. The MO also identifies the authorized recipient for the deceased member's property and effects.

Section 13E—Wartime PE and Property Procedures.**13.33. PE and Property.**

13.33.1. PE. Ship any personal items, organizational clothing or equipment located on the remains with the remains.

13.33.2. Personal Property. Any property not on the remains will be shipped as personal property. **(T-0)**. The MO or decedent's commander will secure property while the installation commander appoints a SCO. **(T-0)**. The appointed SCO will inventory and account for property and ship to the Theater PE Depot, if established, or coordinate with the MO to ship to the JPED. **(T-0)**.

13.33.3. Theater PE Depot (TPED). The TPED is responsible for the receipt, safeguard, inventory (when required), storage, palletizing, and evacuation of personal property to the JPED. When the TPED is located in the operational area, the depot may process the personal property of deceased U.S. military personnel, U.S. civilians and others, multinational partner, local national, and adversary personnel who come into custody of the U.S. military. In the case of multinational partner, third country, local national, and adversary personal property, the TPED will work to return those effects back to the originating country representative as promptly as possible. If a TPED is not established, ship personal property to the JPED. **(T-1)**. **NOTE:** PE must stay with the remains to be processed at the mortuary.

13.34. In Forward Areas.

13.34.1. Unit commanders must recover and secure personal property of military and civilian members who are reported dead, missing, detained, or captured and forward the property to the nearest MO for disposition. **(T-0)**. **NOTE:** PE found on or with the remains must stay with the remains. **(T-0)**.

13.34.2. When wartime conditions do not allow removal of remains and collection of PE, theater commanders will authorize the burial of remains without removing or inventorying PE.

13.34.3. When remains are moved to a collection point or cemetery, all personnel involved are responsible for safeguarding PE, which will remain on the deceased.

13.35. In Rear Areas.

13.35.1. Commanders must recover and safeguard personal property of members who are reported dead, missing, detained, or captured and turn the personal property over to the appropriate MO. **(T-0)**.

13.35.2. The installation commander appoints a SCO.

13.35.3. The MO assists the installation commander in appointing a SCO, briefs the SCO on responsibilities and coordinates personal property shipment to the TPED or the JPED, as appropriate. **(T-0)**.

13.35.4. The SCO will collect, safeguard, and inventory the decedent's personal property. Property may be located in various locations, to include living and working quarters, laundry, a Medical Treatment Facility, etc. Coordinate with the MO to ship the decedent's property to the TPED or the JPED, as appropriate. **(T-0)**.

13.35.5. If the member dies in a medical treatment facility, medical personnel will release the remains and PE through the evacuation process. **(T-0)**.

13.36. Disposing of the Property and Funds of Deceased Persons.

13.36.1. The MO inventories and sorts the property into the following groups prior to disposition:

13.36.1.1. Items of sentimental or intrinsic value.

13.36.1.2. Items of no intrinsic or sentimental value.

13.36.1.3. Explosives and highly combustible items are withdrawn and disposed of by appropriate means.

13.36.2. Forward all items to the TPED or the JPED, as appropriate. When the MO disposes of property, prepare three copies of the DD Form 1076. Place the original in the personal property container, keep a copy for the originating unit, and forward one copy directly to the TPED or the JPED, as appropriate. Do not send a copy to the next-of-kin.

13.36.3. Take cash and other financial instruments to the local Finance Office. **(T-0)**. The Finance Officer will issue a receipt for record and will forward financial instruments to their servicing Defense Finance and Accounting Service office for disposition in accordance with the DoD Financial Management Regulation, Volume 5, Chapter 8. Refer to [paragraph 13.18.3](#) and [paragraph 13.18.4](#). **(T-0)**.

13.36.4. Place mutilated currency refused by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in an envelope and send it with the personal property. **(T-1)**. Record the disposition action on the DD Form 1076, and forward the form with the currency. **(T-1)**.

13.37. Effects Disposition for Allied Dead.

13.37.1. Commanders secure and handle personal property and effects of allied deceased members the same way they would for U.S. military deceased. **(T-0)**. Exception: Do not pay for or collect debts.

13.37.2. Include any money with the other personal property and forward with one copy of each DD Form 1076, clearly marked "ALLIED DEAD." **(T-0)**.

13.37.3. Send personal property to the TPED, which will work to return those effects back to the originating country representative as promptly as possible. **(T-0)**. If no TPED is established, coordinate with the Theater Mortuary Affairs Office for disposition or the command headquarters responsible for arranging disposition with the country concerned. **(T-0)**.

13.37.4. The command headquarters forwards the property and effects inventories to the liaison officer.

13.37.5. Keeps a receipt, which becomes a permanent part of the records of the unit responsible for the burial.

13.37.6. Lists the personal property and effects on a memorandum advising the graves registration officer and higher headquarters of the burial when delivering the remains to a civilian cemetery.

13.38. Missing, Detained or Captured Personnel. If military or civilian personnel are determined to be missing, detained or captured, the installation commander will assign a person to secure, inventory and ship property to the TPED or the JPED, as appropriate.

13.39. Return of a Missing Person. When a missing person returns, that person must submit a written request to the TPED or the JPED, depending on the location of personal property, for the return of funds and property.

13.40. Disposition of Classified Matter. Dispose of organizational property, log books, and records containing classified information as directed by higher authority and applicable security directives. **(T-0)**.