

§960. Criminal forfeiture

1. A person convicted of a violation of this chapter forfeits to the State all rights, privileges, interests and claims to property that is subject to forfeiture pursuant to section 959. All rights, privileges, interest and title in property subject to forfeiture under this section vest in the State upon the commission of the act giving rise to forfeiture pursuant to section 959.

[PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]

2. Property subject to forfeiture that is not yet the subject of a final order pursuant to section 959 may be proceeded against by indictment or superseding indictment of a grand jury in any related criminal proceeding in which one or more persons with an interest in the property have been simultaneously indicted for one or more violations of this chapter. At any time prior to trial, the State, with the consent of the court and any defendant with an interest in the property, may file an ancillary charging instrument or information alleging that that property is subject to criminal forfeiture. Upon commencement of a criminal forfeiture by indictment or information of any property that may be the subject of any pending civil action commenced pursuant to section 959, the civil action must be immediately stayed and subrogated to the criminal forfeiture action. Discovery in the criminal action must be as provided by the Maine Rules of Unified Criminal Procedure.

[PL 2015, c. 431, §36 (AMD).]

3. Property subject to forfeiture that has not already been seized but has been indicted by a grand jury pursuant to this section may also be ordered seized based upon the grand jury's finding of probable cause pursuant to section 959.

[PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]

4. Trial against property charged by indictment or information may be by jury and must be held in a single proceeding together with the trial of the related criminal violation. Forfeiture of the property must be proved by the State by a preponderance of the evidence. The court, in its discretion, may allow any defendant with an interest in property indicted pursuant to this section to waive the right to trial by jury as against the property while preserving the right to trial by jury of any crime alleged. At trial by jury, the court, upon motion of a defendant or the State, may separate the trial of the matter against the defendant from the trial of the matter against the property subject to criminal forfeiture. If the court bifurcates the jury trial, the court shall first instruct and submit to the jury the issue of the guilt or innocence of defendants to be determined by proof beyond a reasonable doubt and shall restrict argument of counsel to those issues. After a verdict upon the guilt or innocence of all defendants, the court shall instruct and submit to the jury the issue of the forfeiture of the property to be determined by proof by a preponderance of the evidence and the court shall restrict argument to those issues. A special verdict must be returned as to the extent of the interest in property subject to forfeiture, if any.

[PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]

5. A person not charged in an indictment under this section may not intervene in the criminal action. Following the entry of a verdict of forfeiture of property pursuant to this section or the entry of a guilty plea in open court on the record, the State shall provide written notice of its intent to dispose of the property to any person known to have alleged an interest in the property. The notice may be by certified, return receipt mail or as otherwise ordered by the court. Receipt by a person then licensed to operate a motor vehicle in the State is presumed when notice is mailed to the last known address of that person on file with the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles. A person other than the defendant asserting a legal interest in the property within 30 days of the date of receipt of the notice may petition the court for a hearing to adjudicate the validity of any alleged interest in the property. The hearing must be held before the court without jury. The request for the hearing must be signed by the petitioner under penalty of perjury and must state the nature and extent of the petitioner's right, title or interest in the property, the time and circumstances of the petitioner's acquisition of the right, title or interest in the property, any additional facts supporting the petitioner's claim and the relief

sought. The court shall issue or amend a final order of forfeiture in accordance with its determination if, after the hearing, the court determines that the petitioner has established by a preponderance of the evidence that:

A. The petitioner has a legal right, title or interest in the property and the right, title or interest renders the order of forfeiture invalid in whole or in part because the right, title or interest was vested in the petitioner rather than any defendant or was superior to any right, title or interest to the exclusion of any defendant at the time of the commission of the acts that gave rise to the forfeiture of the property under this section; and [PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]

B. The petitioner is a bona fide purchaser for value of the right, title or interest in the property and was at the time of purchase reasonably without cause to believe that the property was subject to forfeiture under this section. [PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]
[PL 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §21 (AMD).]

6. Following the entry of a verdict of forfeiture of property pursuant to this section or the entry of a guilty plea in open court on the record, the State has clear title to property that is the subject of the indictment or information and order of forfeiture and may order all or a portion of the property forfeited to the State to be disposed of pursuant to section 959.
[PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2001, c. 461, §2 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §21 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 431, §36 (AMD).

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