



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Carri Grube Lybarker, Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Juliana Harris, (803) 734-4296

Legislative Update: Pawnbrokers Act Amendments

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is announcing changes made during the 2018 legislative session to state pawnbroker laws.

Senate Bill 810 amends the South Carolina Pawnbrokers Act to provide further protections for consumers within South Carolina. These changes include additional recordkeeping requirements for the state’s approximate 200 pawnbrokers, revised procedures for law enforcement, and increased penalties for certain acts by pawnbrokers. The new law becomes **effective August 15, 2018**, and makes the following changes:

- **Requires Digital Images of Pawned Items.** Pawnbrokers are to keep a record of each loan or purchase made, which must include a digital photograph of the item being pawned, pledged, or purchased.
- **Requires Database for Electronic Reporting.** Pawnbrokers must electronically transfer records of all pledged items to an SCDCA approved database that will be accessible by law enforcement.
- **Revises Procedures for Hold Orders.** Law enforcement may take possession of a pawned item believed to be stolen until the completion of a criminal investigation. Law enforcement must hold the item for 10 days before releasing the item to the true owner. If no true owner is identified, the item will be returned to the pawnbroker.
- **Provides Penalties for Intentional Violations.** Pawnbrokers who willfully fail to keep their records open to court officials, law enforcement, or SCDCA will be guilty of a misdemeanor and may be subject to a \$500 fine, imprisoned for 30 days or less, or both.

The Department is currently reviewing database options and soliciting recommendations and feedback from law enforcement and pawnbrokers. A database determination will be made no later than early next month to provide pawnbrokers with the opportunity to make appropriate arrangements to meet the August 15th reporting requirement deadline.

About SCDCA

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.

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