

Enrolled
House Bill 3474

Sponsored by Representative STIEGLER; Representatives BARKER, CLEM, ESQUIVEL, GARRETT, HUFFMAN, HUNT, KOTEK, NOLAN, G SMITH, J SMITH, VANORMAN, WHISNANT

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to garnishments; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 18.736 and 18.838.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 18.736 is amended to read:

18.736. (1) If a garnishee that employs a debtor is required to make any payment under a writ of garnishment by reason of wages payable to the debtor, the garnishee may collect a [~~\$1~~] **\$2** processing fee for each week of wages, or fraction of a week of wages, for which a payment is made under the provisions of ORS 18.735. The processing fee must be collected after the last payment is made under the writ. The fee shall be withheld from the wages of the debtor, and is in addition to the amounts withheld for payment to the garnishor under the writ or under any other writ delivered to the garnishee.

(2) The fee provided for in this section may not be collected if withholding of the fee would reduce the debtor's net disposable income below the minimum amounts prescribed by ORS 18.385.

SECTION 2. ORS 18.838 is amended to read:

18.838. Instructions to garnishees must be in substantially the following form:

INSTRUCTIONS TO GARNISHEE

Except as specifically provided in these instructions, you must complete and deliver the Garnishee Response within seven calendar days after you receive the writ of garnishment. If the writ does not comply with Oregon law, the writ is not effective to garnish any property of the Debtor, but you still must complete and deliver the Garnishee Response. You must complete and deliver the response even though you cannot determine from the writ whether you hold any property or owe any debt to the Debtor. If the seventh calendar day is a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, you must deliver your response on or before the next following day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

The writ is not effective, and you need not make a Garnishee Response, if:

- You do not receive the writ within 60 days after the date of issuance shown on the face of the writ.

- You do not receive an original writ of garnishment or a copy of the writ.

Statutes that may affect your rights and duties under the writ can be found in ORS 18.600 to 18.850.

NOTE: The Garnishor may be the Creditor, the attorney for the Creditor or some other person who is authorized by law to issue the writ of garnishment. See the writ to determine who the Garnishor is.

STEP 1. FILL OUT THE GARNISHEE RESPONSE.

All garnishees who are required to deliver a garnishee response must fill in Part I of the Garnishee Response. Garnishees who employ the Debtor must also fill in Part II of the response. You should keep a copy of the response for your records.

Completing Part I of the Garnishee Response. If you discover before you deliver your response that a bankruptcy petition has been filed by or on behalf of the Debtor, and the bankruptcy petition was filed after a judgment was entered against the Debtor or after the debt otherwise became subject to garnishment (see the date specified in the writ), you must put a check by the appropriate statement in Part I. If a bankruptcy petition has been filed, you should not make any payments to the Garnishor unless the court orders otherwise. You need not complete any other part of the response, but you still must sign the response and deliver it in the manner described in Step 2 of these instructions.

In all other cases you must list in Part I all money and personal property of the Debtor that is in your possession, control or custody at the time of delivery of the writ. You must also list all debts that you owe to the Debtor, whether or not those debts are currently due (e.g., money loaned to you by the Debtor that is to be repaid at a later time).

If you are the employer of the Debtor at the time the writ is delivered to you, you must put a check by the appropriate statement in Part I. In addition, you must complete Part II of the response.

If you believe that you may hold property of the Debtor or that you owe a debt to the Debtor, but you are not sure, you must put a check by the appropriate statement and provide an explanation. When you find out what property you hold that belongs to the Debtor, or you find out whether you owe money to the Debtor and how much, you must prepare and deliver an amended response. You must do this even if you find out that you have no property of the Debtor or that you do not owe anything to the Debtor.

If you determine that the writ, on its face, does not comply with Oregon laws governing writs of garnishment, or if you are unable to determine the identity of the Debtor from the information in the writ, then the writ is not effective to garnish any property of the Debtor. You must put a check by the appropriate statement in Part I and provide an explanation. You still must complete the response and deliver the response in the manner described in Step 2 of these instructions.

If you have received an order to withhold income that applies to the income of the Debtor and that order has priority over the garnishment, and if compliance with the order will reduce or eliminate the money or property that you would otherwise deliver under the garnishment, you must put a check by the appropriate statement in Part I. You still must fill out the remainder of the response and deliver the response in the manner described in Step 2 of these instructions. If you employ the Debtor, you still must complete Part II of the response.

If you receive notice of a challenge to the garnishment before you send your response, you must complete and deliver your response as otherwise required by these instructions. However, see Step 3 of these instructions regarding payment of money or delivery of property after receipt of notice of a challenge to the garnishment.

If you owe a debt to the Debtor and the Debtor owes a debt to the holder of an underlying lien on your property, you may be able to offset the amount payable to the underlying lienholder. See ORS 18.620. You must note that you have made the offset in Part I of the response (under "Other") and specify the amount that was offset.

Completing Part II of the Garnishee Response (employers only). You must fill in Part II of the response if you employ the Debtor on the date the writ of garnishment is delivered to you, or if you previously employed the Debtor and still owe wages to the Debtor on the date the writ is delivered to you.

Wages affected. Except as provided below, the writ garnishes all wages that you owe to the Debtor for work performed before the date you received the writ, even though the wages will not be paid until a later date. The writ also garnishes all wages that are attributable to services performed during the 90-day period following the date you received the writ, even though you would not pay the Debtor for all or part of those services until after the end of the 90-day period. Wages subject to garnishment under the writ include all amounts paid by you as an employer, whether on an hourly, weekly or monthly basis, and include commission payments and bonuses.

Example 1: Debtor A is employed by you and is paid a monthly salary on the first day of each month. You receive a writ of garnishment on July 17. The writ garnishes all wages that you owe to Debtor A for work performed on or before July 17. If Debtor A was paid on July 1 for services performed in the month of June, the writ garnishes Debtor A's salary for the period beginning July 1 and ending October 15 (90 days after receipt of the writ).

The writ does not garnish any wages you owe to a Debtor for a specific pay period if:

(a) The writ is delivered to you within two business days before the Debtor's normal payday for the pay period;

(b) When the writ is delivered to you, the Debtor's wages are paid by direct deposit to a financial institution, or you use an independent contractor as payroll administrator for your payroll; and

(c) Before the writ was delivered to you, you issued instructions to the financial institution or the payroll administrator to pay the Debtor for the pay period.

If any wages are not garnishable by reason of the issuance of instructions to a financial institution or a payroll administrator as described above, you must so note in the Garnishee Response. Thereafter, you must pay to the Garnishor all wages that are subject to garnishment that are attributable to services performed by the Debtor during the 90-day period following the date you received the writ.

Calculation of wages subject to garnishment. A Wage Exemption Calculation form is attached to the writ of garnishment. You must use this form to calculate the amount of the Debtor's wages that is subject to garnishment. You should read the instructions printed on the Wage Exemption Calculation form to determine the normal wage exemption and the minimum wage exemption for each payment you make under the writ.

A Wage Exemption Calculation form must be sent with the first payment you make under the writ. For the 90-day period during which the writ is effective, you must also fill out and return a Wage Exemption Calculation form with a subsequent payment any time the initial calculation changes. Finally, you must fill out and return a Wage Exemption Calculation form with the final payment that you make under the writ.

Payment of amount subject to garnishment. Payments under the writ must be made at the following times, unless the amount owing on the judgment or other debt is fully paid before the final payment is made or the writ is released:

(a) You must make a payment to the Garnishor of all wages subject to garnishment at the time you next pay wages to the Debtor. Complete the wage exemption computation, using the Wage Exemption Calculation form, to determine the portion of the Debtor's wages that is subject to garnishment. Be sure to adjust the minimum exemption amount for any payment that covers less than a full pay period. You must include a copy of the Wage Exemption Calculation form with this first payment.

Example 2: Using the facts given in Example 1, when you next make any payment of wages to Debtor A after you receive the writ on July 17, you must complete the Wage Exemption Calculation form and send the form to the Garnishor along with all amounts determined to be subject to garnishment that are attributable to the period covered by the payment. If you pay Debtor A on August 1, the payment will be for all wages attributable to the period beginning July 1 and ending July 31.

(b) Unless the writ of garnishment is satisfied or released, during the 90-day period following the date you received the writ, you must pay to the Garnishor all wages that are determined to be subject to garnishment whenever you issue a paycheck to the Debtor. If the Debtor is paid on a weekly basis, you must make payment under the writ on a weekly basis. If the Debtor is paid on a monthly basis, you must make payment under the writ on a monthly basis. If the amount paid to the Debtor varies from paycheck to paycheck, or changes at any time from the amount being paid at the time the writ was delivered to you, you must perform a new wage exemption computation to determine the amount of wages subject to garnishment under the writ. You must send a copy of the new Wage Exemption Calculation form with your payment to the Garnishor.

Example 3: Using the facts given above, as you make each subsequent payment of wages to Debtor A you must make a payment of that portion of the Debtor's wages that are subject to garnishment. If you continue to pay Debtor A on the first of each month, payments must be made on September 1 and October 1.

(c) Upon the expiration of the 90-day period, you must make a final payment to the Garnishor for all wages that were owing to the Debtor for the work performed by the Debtor through the 90th day following your receipt of the writ. This payment may be made at the time of the Debtor's next paycheck. You will need to complete another Wage Exemption Calculation form to determine the amount of the wages subject to garnishment.

Example 4: Using the facts given above, you must make a final payment for the wages owing to Debtor A for the period beginning October 1 and ending October 15. You may make this payment at the time you issue Debtor A's paycheck on November 1, but you must make the payment at any time you issue a paycheck to Debtor A after October 15. Be sure that in completing the wage exemption computation for the final payment you adjust the minimum exemption amount to take into account the fact that the period covered is only 15 days of the full month (see instructions on Wage Exemption Calculation form).

Processing fee. You may collect a [~~\$1~~] **\$2** processing fee for each week of wages, or fraction of a week of wages, for which a payment is made under the writ. The fee must be collected after you make the last payment under the writ. The fee must be withheld from the wages of the debtor, and is in addition to the amounts withheld for payment to the garnishor under the writ or under any other writ you have received.

If you receive more than one writ of garnishment. If you receive a second writ of garnishment for the same Debtor from another Garnishor, the first writ will have priority for wages. The priority of the first writ lasts for the 90-day period following delivery of that writ to you, or until the first writ is paid in full, whichever comes first. In your response to the second writ, you must put a check by the appropriate statement in Part II and indicate the date on which the first writ will expire (90 days after the date you received the writ). You should make no payments under the second writ until expiration of the first writ. The expiration date of the second writ is 90 days after the date you received the second writ; the expiration date is not affected by any delay in payment attributable to the priority of the first writ.

STEP 2. DELIVER THE GARNISHEE RESPONSE.

You must deliver your Garnishee Response and copies of the response in the manner provided in this step. The response and copies may be mailed or delivered personally.

You must complete and deliver the Garnishee Response within seven calendar days after you receive the writ of garnishment. If the seventh calendar day is a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, you must deliver your response on or before the next following day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

If you are required to hold any property under the writ or make any payment under the writ, either at the time of making your response or later, you must:

(a) Send the original of your Garnishee Response to the Garnishor at the address indicated on the writ under Important Addresses.

(b) Send a copy of your Garnishee Response to the court administrator at the address indicated on the writ under Important Addresses.

(c) Send a copy of your Garnishee Response to the Debtor if an address is indicated on the writ under Important Addresses.

If you are not required to hold any property under the writ or make any payment under the writ, either at the time of making your response or later, you must:

(a) Send the original of your Garnishee Response to the Garnishor at the address indicated on the writ under Important Addresses.

(b) Send a copy of your Garnishee Response to the Debtor if an address is indicated on the writ under Important Addresses.

STEP 3. DELIVER THE FUNDS OR OTHER PROPERTY.

As long as the writ is in effect, you may be liable to the Creditor if you pay any debt or turn over any property to the Debtor except as specifically allowed by law. If you have any money or property of the Debtor in your possession, control or custody at the time of delivery of the writ, or owe any debt to the Debtor, you must pay the money or hold the property as required by this step. Exceptions to this requirement are listed below.

IF YOU ARE HOLDING MONEY FOR THE DEBTOR OR OWE A DEBT THAT IS CURRENTLY DUE, you must pay the money to the Garnishor with your response. You must send your payment to the Garnishor at the address indicated on the writ under Important Addresses. Make your check payable to the Garnishor.

IF YOU OWE A DEBT TO THE DEBTOR THAT WILL BECOME DUE WITHIN 45 DAYS AFTER THE DATE YOU RECEIVED THE WRIT, you must send your payment directly to the Garnishor at the address provided in the writ when the debt becomes due. Make your check payable to the Garnishor.

IF YOU ARE HOLDING PROPERTY THAT BELONGS TO THE DEBTOR, OR OWE A DEBT TO THE DEBTOR THAT WILL NOT BECOME DUE WITHIN 45 DAYS AFTER THE DATE YOU RECEIVED THE WRIT, you must keep the property or debt in your possession, control or custody until you receive written notice from the Sheriff. The Sheriff's notice will tell you what to do with the property or debt. If you have followed all of the instructions in the writ and you receive no notice from the Sheriff within 30 days after the date on which you delivered your Garnishee Response, you may treat the writ as being of no further force or effect.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Challenge to garnishment or specific directions from court. If you are making any payments under the garnishment and before making a payment you receive notice of a challenge to the garnishment from the court, or receive a specific direction from the court to make payments to the court, you must send or deliver the payment directly to the court administrator. If the money is currently due when you receive the notice, send the payment promptly to the court. If the payment is for a debt that is payable within 45 days after you receive the writ, make the payment to the court promptly when it becomes due. If you make payment by check, make the check payable to the State of Oregon. Because you may be liable for any payment that does not reach the court, it is better not to send cash by mail.

A challenge to the garnishment does not affect your duty to follow the instructions you receive from the Sheriff for property that belongs to the Debtor and debts that you owe to the Debtor that do not become due within 45 days.

2. Previous writ of garnishment. If you receive a second writ of garnishment for the same Debtor from another Garnishor, the first writ will have priority and you need not make payments or deliver property under the second writ to the extent that compliance with the first writ will reduce or eliminate the payment of money or delivery of property that you would otherwise make under the garnishment. You must still deliver a Garnishee Response to the second writ, and must commence payment under the second writ as soon as the first writ is satisfied or expires.

3. Offset for payment of underlying lien. If you owe a debt to the Debtor and the Debtor owes a debt to the holder of an underlying lien on your property, you may be able to offset the amount payable to the underlying lienholder. See ORS 18.620.

4. Subsequent events:

(a) Bankruptcy. If you make your response and then discover that a voluntary or involuntary bankruptcy petition has been filed by or on behalf of the Debtor after the judgment was entered against the Debtor or after the debt otherwise became subject to garnishment (see date in writ), you may not make any further payments or delivery of property under the writ unless the court orders otherwise. If you have not delivered all property that is subject to garnishment under this writ when you discover that a bankruptcy petition has been filed, you must mail the following notice to the Garnishor and to the Debtor.

(b) Order to withhold income. If you make your response and then receive an order to withhold income that has priority over the writ, you may make payments or deliver property under the writ only after payment of the amounts required under the order to withhold income. If you have not delivered all property that is subject to garnishment under this writ when you receive an order to withhold income that has priority, you must mail the following notice to the Garnishor and to the Debtor.

SUPPLEMENTAL GARNISHEE
RESPONSE

TO: The Garnishor and the Debtor

RE: Writ of garnishment received _____, 2__ (date), in the case of _____ (Plaintiff)
vs. _____ (Defendant), Circuit Court of _____ County, Oregon, Case No. _____.

The undersigned Garnishee furnished a Garnishee Response to this writ of garnishment on _____, 2__ (date). Since that time (check appropriate statement):

— I have discovered that a voluntary or involuntary bankruptcy petition has been filed by or on behalf of the Debtor after the judgment was entered against the Debtor or after the debt otherwise became subject to garnishment.

— I have received an order to withhold income of the Debtor by reason of a support obligation. Under ORS 25.375, the order to withhold income has priority over any other legal process under Oregon law against the same income. The withholding of income pursuant to the order to withhold income might reduce or eliminate subsequent payments under the garnishment. (Provide details, including the name of the agency serving the order to withhold, the date the order was served on you and the amounts to be withheld.)

Dated _____, 2__

Name of Garnishee

Signature

Address

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR BANKS
AND OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

If the Garnishor fails to pay the search fee required by ORS 18.790 and you do not employ the Debtor, you are not required to deliver a Garnishee Response and you may deal with any property of the Debtor as though the garnishment had not been issued.

If the Debtor owes a debt to you that was due at the time you received the writ of garnishment, you may be able to offset the amount of that debt. See ORS 18.795. You must note that you have made the offset in Part I of the Garnishee Response (under "Other") and specify the amount that was offset.

Before making a payment under the writ, you may first deduct any processing fee that you are allowed under ORS 18.790.

You need not deliver any property contained in a safe deposit box unless the Garnishor pays you in advance for the costs that will be incurred in gaining entry to the box. See ORS 18.792.

SECTION 3. The amendments to ORS 18.736 and 18.838 by sections 1 and 2 of this 2009 Act apply only to writs of garnishment issued on or after the effective date of this 2009 Act.

Passed by House April 29, 2009

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Chief Clerk of House

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Speaker of House

Passed by Senate May 29, 2009

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President of Senate

Received by Governor:

.....M,....., 2009

Approved:

.....M,....., 2009

.....
Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M,....., 2009

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Secretary of State