

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No. 22-166
For business meeting on September 20, 2022

Title

Rules and Forms: Small Estate Disposition

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

Revise forms DE-305 and DE-310

Recommended by

Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee Hon. Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, Chair Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

January 1, 2023

Date of Report

September 2, 2022

Contact

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Executive Summary

The Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee recommends revising two forms used in proceedings for the summary disposition of property in estates of small value. Effective April 1, 2022, and without circulation for comment, the Judicial Council adopted one form and revised three forms, including the two in this report, to comply with a statutory mandate to adjust dollar amounts related to small estate disposition and to publish the adjusted amounts. Having circulated the forms for comment, the committee now recommends these revisions.

Recommendation

The Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective January 1, 2023:

- 1. Revise *Affidavit re: Real Property of Small Value* (form DE-305) to clarify that the declarant must attach form DE-300 to the affidavit if the decedent died on or after April 1, 2022; and
- 2. Revise *Petition to Determine Succession to Real Property* (form DE-310) to clarify that the declarant must attach form DE-300 to the petition if the decedent died on or after April 1, 2022, and to make technical changes to improve usability.

The proposed revised forms are attached at pages 5–8.

Relevant Previous Council Action

Effective April 1, 2022, the Judicial Council adopted form DE-300 and revised forms DE-305, DE-310, and DE-315 to implement a mandate in Probate Code section 890 to determine and publish adjusted amounts for use in determining the eligibility of property and decedents' estates for summary disposition procedures. The recommendation was adopted without circulation for comment because the time between the publication of the December 2021 Consumer Price Index data, which were needed to calculate the adjustments, and the effective date of the required adjustment based on that data was too short to allow for circulation.

Analysis/Rationale

The Judicial Council adopted form DE-300 for mandatory use and revised forms DE-305, DE-310, and DE-315 to fulfill the mandate in Probate Code section 890.² That statute requires the Judicial Council, on April 1, 2022, and at each three-year interval thereafter, to adjust the dollar amounts specified in chapter 6 (commencing with section 6600) of part 3 of division 6 and in division 8 (commencing with section 13000) of the Probate Code in effect immediately before that date. These amounts set upper limits on the property values that determine eligibility for disposition of small estates without full probate administration.

The statute requires the council to determine the amount of each required adjustment based on the change in the United States city average of the "Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers" from the December "40 months prior to the adjustment" (this year, December 2018) to "the December immediately preceding the adjustment" (this year, December 2021) and to round each adjusted amount to the nearest \$25.³ The council must also, as of April 1 of each year in which an adjustment is required, publish a list of the adjusted values and the date of the next scheduled adjustment.⁴ Form DE-300, adopted by the Judicial Council effective April 1, 2022, fulfills the publication mandate by listing each code section that specifies a maximum value, briefly describing the property to which that section applies, listing the adjusted value for that section, and giving the date of the next scheduled adjustment.

Sections 13101, 13152, 13200, and 13601, which specify procedures for disposition of specific types of property in small estates without full probate administration, also require an affiant, declarant, or petitioner who seeks to use the procedure authorized by any of those sections to

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Rules and Forms: Small Estate Disposition* (Feb. 23. 2022), https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10564750&GUID=F84A8EC1-DC5B-4B42-B226-8003E3C7703D.

² Prob. Code, § 890 (added by Assem. Bill 473; Stats. 2019, ch. 122, § 1). All further statutory references are to the Probate Code unless otherwise specified.

³ *Id.*, § 890(b).

⁴ *Id.*, § 890(c).

attach the published list to the affidavit or petition.⁵ For this reason, the council adopted form DE-300 for mandatory use.

Policy implications

The committee's recommended revisions are intended to improve the quality of justice and service to the public by clarifying the requirements for completing and filing forms DE-305 and DE-310. No policy implications contributed to controversy or intense debate in the committee.

Comments

The proposal was circulated for public comment in the spring 2022 invitation-to-comment period. Two commenters, the Orange County Bar Association and the Superior Court of San Diego County, responded. Both commenters agreed with the proposal and suggested modifications. Based on these suggestions, the committee recommends revising item 4 on form DE-305 and item 8 on form DE-310 to distinguish more clearly the alternative dollar amounts and, as suggested by the Superior Court of San Diego County, to indicate that form DE-300 must be attached to form DE-305 or DE-310 if the decedent died on or after April 1, 2022. These revisions will give declarants and petitioners better notice of the requirement to attach form DE-300 in appropriate cases.

The San Diego court also noted a lack of clarity regarding how to enforce the requirement to attach form DE-300 to an affidavit or declaration under section 13101 (to collect money, tangible personal property, or evidence of intangible personal property) or section 13601 (to collect compensation owed to a decedent). Such an affidavit requires submission to the holder of the property to which the affiant is claiming succession or the decedent's employer, respectively, but does not require filing with the court or any court supervision or other involvement. Under the statutory scheme at issue, succession to personal property or collection of compensation owed to an estate is a private transaction. The enforcement of the attachment requirement is left to the property holder or the employer. The Judicial Council's purview extends only to rules and forms for *judicial* administration, practice, and procedure.

The Orange County Bar Association suggested that forms DE-305, DE-310, and DE-315 be revised to include a reference to the date of the next required scheduled adjustment to the values specified in those forms. The committee declined to make these suggested changes because, as required by Probate Code section 890(c), form DE-300, which must be attached to forms DE-305 and DE-310, already includes the date of the next scheduled adjustment.

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⁵ *Id.*, §§ 13101(f) (affidavit to collect or transfer personal property), 13152(e) (petition to determine succession to real property), 13200(f) (affidavit to collect real property of limited value), and 13601(e)(2) (affidavit to collect compensation owed to deceased spouse).

⁶ Section 13200(f) requires the list of adjusted dollar amounts, that is, form DE-300, to be attached to an affidavit or declaration claiming succession of a decedent who died on or after April 1, 2022, to a particular item of real property. The council adopted form DE-305 to serve as that affidavit or declaration. Section 13152(f)(2) imposes an analogous requirement on a petition for a judicial determination that the petitioner has succeeded to a particular item of real property. The council has adopted form DE-310 to serve as that petition.

A chart of comments is attached at pages 9–12.

Alternatives considered

The committee considered not revising the forms to avoid costs to courts and litigants, but determined that the two revisions recommended would not impose significant costs on courts and would likely reduce delays by leading more litigants to attach form DE-300 to their initial filings.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Courts will need to replace paper copies of existing forms DE-305 and DE-310. The revisions should save costs and time for litigants by reducing the number of forms filed without the required attachment.

Attachments and Links

- 1. Forms DE-305 and DE-310, at pages 5–8
- 2. Chart of comments, at pages 9–12
- 3. Link A: Assem. Bill 473 (Stats. 2019, ch. 122) (showing amendments), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB473& showamends=true

Aft	TORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY STATE BAR NO.: er recording, return to:			
	ME:			
	RM NAME: REET ADDRESS:			
	TY, STATE, ZIP CODE:		DRAFT	
	LEPHONE NO.: FAX NO.:	N/	ot approved by	
E١	MAIL ADDRESS:		• •	
АТ	TORNEY FOR (name):	tne	Judicial Council	
Sι	PERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF	=		
s	TREET ADDRESS:			
М	AILING ADDRESS:			
CI.	TY AND ZIP CODE:			
	BRANCH NAME:	FC	DR RECORDER'S USE ONLY	
E	STATE OF (name):		CASE NUMBER:	
		DECEDENT		
		DECEDENT	FOR COURT USE ONLY	
	AFFIDAVIT RE REAL PROPERTY OF SMA	ALL VALUE	POR COURT USE ONE!	
1.	The decedent (name):			
	died on (date):			
	at (city, state):			
2.	At least six months have passed since the decedent's dear copy of the decedent's death certificate.)	th. (Attach a certified		
3.	a The decedent was domiciled in this county at the			
	b. The decedent was not domiciled in California at the the decedent died owning real property in this cou	•		
4.	4. The gross value , on the date of the decedent's death, of all real property in the decedent's estate located in California, as shown by the attached inventory and appraisal—excluding the real property described in Probate Code section 13050—did not exceed (check one):			
	a. \$55,425 (decedent died before April 1, 2022). b. \$61,500 (decedent died on or after April 1, 2022, a	and form DE-300 is attached	d as required by law).	
5.	 a. The legal description and the Assessor's Parcel Numb declarant(s) are provided on an attached page titled Atta deed or other legal instrument.) b. The decedent's interest in this real property is (specify): 	achment 5a, "Legal Descript		
6.	Name and address of each guardian or conservator of the o	decedent's estate at time of	death: none are as follows:* Address	
	Additional guardians or conservators are identified in a (* You must deliver a copy of this affidavit and all attachmen guardian or conservator named above. You may use Judicipersonal delivery, or form POS-050 for proof of electronic delivery.	nts in <mark>any</mark> manner provided l ial Council form POS-030 fol		
7.	7. An inventory and appraisal of all of the decedent's real property in California is attached. The appraisal was made by a probate referee appointed by the State Controller for the county in which the property is located. (You must prepare the inventory on Judic Council forms DE-160 and DE-161. You may select any probate referee appointed for the county to perform the appraisal. A list of all probate referees, shown by county, is available at www.sco.ca.gov/eo_probate_contact.html . Each court also has a list of referees appointed for its county. Check with the probate referee or consult an attorney if you need help preparing the inventory.)			
8.	 a. No proceeding for administration of decedent's estate is now being or has been conducted in California. b. The decedent's personal representative has consented in writing to the use of the procedure provided by Probate Code section 13200 et seq. (Attach a copy of the consent and a copy of the personal representative's letters of administration. 			

Form Adopted for Mandatory Use Judicial Council of California DE-305 [Rev. January 1, 2023] Page 1 of 2

ESTATE OF (name):			CASE NUMBER:			
		DECEDENT				
. Funeral expenses, expenses of last illness, and all known unsecured debts of the decedent have been paid. (NOTE: You may be personally liable for decedent's unsecured debts up to the fair market value of the real property and any income you receive from						
successor of the decedent (as de and no other person or entity has a. (if decedent left a will, will. (Attach a copy of the	efined in Probate Code section 1: s a superior right to the decedent) the sole beneficiary or all the beneficiary or all the beneficiary or all the beneficiary or all the will.)	3006) to the deceden 's interest in that propension	or all declarants together constitute, the t's interest in the property described in item 5, perty, because the declarant(s) is or are: eeded to the property under the decedent's ceeded to the property under Probate Code			
I declare under penalty of perjury un	der the laws of the State of Califo	ornia that the foregoin	ng is true and correct.			
Date:						
		•				
(TYPE OR PRII	NT NAME)*		(SIGNATURE OF DECLARANT)			
Date:						
		_				
(TYPE OR PRII	NT NAME)*	SIGNATURES OF	(SIGNATURE OF DECLARANT) F ADDITIONAL DECLARANTS ATTACHED			
* A declarant claiming on behalf of a to will and declarant's capacity to sign or			ity that is a beneficiary under the decedent's .).			
	CERTIFICATE OF AC	KNOWLEDGMEN	 T			
(NOTE: Do not use a small strip of p additional certificates of acknowledg			nent to this page. If you need one or more sized 8-1/2 by 11-inch page.)			
A notary public or other officer co			of the individual who signed the document f the document.			
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY						
	, before me <i>(name and title):</i>					
	tisfactory evidence to be the pers xecuted the instrument in their a	uthorized capacity(ies) is/are subscribed to the within instrument s), and that by their signature(s) on the the instrument.			
I certify under PENALTY OF PERJU of California that the foregoing parag		(NOTARY SEAL)				
WITNESS my hand and official seal.						
(SIGNATURE OF NO	TARY PUBLIC)					
(SEAL)			TICATE			
		CLERK'S CERTIF	TICATE			
	attached legal description of th correct copy of the original affic	e property (but excludation and the property (but excluded a property (but excluded a property) and the property (but excluded a property).	ertificates of acknowledgment and any ding other attachments), is a true and ce. (Certified copies of this affidavit do not dory and appraisal. See Probate Code			
	attached legal description of th correct copy of the original affici include the (1) death certificate	e property (but excludation and the property (but excluded a property (but excluded a property) and the property (but excluded a property).	ding other attachments), is a true and ce. (Certified copies of this affidavit do not			

DE-305 [Rev. January 1, 2023]

ДΤ	TORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY	STATE BAR NO.:			
	ME:			FOR COURT USE ONLY	
	ME. RM NAME:				
	REET ADDRESS:				
CIT		STATE:	ZIP CODE:		
	LEPHONE NO.:	FAX NO.:	2.1 0002.		
	IAIL ADDRESS:	TAKNO		DRAFT	
	TORNEY FOR (name):			Not approved by	
				the Judicial Counci	il
	JPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUN	ITY OF			· -
	TREET ADDRESS:				
	AILING ADDRESS:				
CII	'Y AND ZIP CODE: BRANCH NAME:				
_					
ES	STATE OF (name):			CASE NUMBER:	
			DECEDENT		
	DETITION TO DETERMINE O	UCCECCION TO I		HEARING DATE AND TIME:	DEPT.:
	PETITION TO DETERMINE S		REAL PROPERTY		
	and i	Personal Property			
1.	Petitioner (name of each person claim	ning an interest):			
	,				
	requests a determination that the reapetitioner.	I property a	nd personal property d	escribed in item 11 is property passii	ng to
2	Decedent (name):				
۷.	a. Date of death:				
	b. Place of death (city and state or, it	f outside the United S	States, city and country):		
3.	At least 40 days have passed si				
1	-				
4.	a. Decedent was a resident ofb. Decedent was not a resident			d owning property in this county.	
_					F 10-
5.		,		of the will is attached as Attachment	
6.			~	or has been conducted in California by Probate Code section 13150 et se	
7.	Proceedings for the administration of	decedent's estate in	another jurisdiction		
	a. have not been commenced.				
	b. have been commenced	and completed.	(Specify state, county, coun	rt, and case number):	
8	The gross value , at the time of deced	dent's death of dece	dent's interest in real and pe	rsonal property in California—exclud	ling the
	property described in Probate Code s				
	a. \$166,250 (decedent died be	fore April 1, 2022).			
	b. \$184,500 (decedent died on				
	(Prepare and attach as Attachment 8				
	DE-160 and DE-161.) A probate refer			appraise all real property and all pers	onal
	property other than cash or its equival	ent. See Probate Co	de, §§ 8901, 8902.)		
9.	a. Decedent is survived by (check ite	ems (1) or (2), and (3)	or (4), and (5) or (6), and (7) or (8)):	
	(1) spouse				
	(2) no spouse, as follows:	(a) divorce	d or never married (b)	spouse deceased	
	(3) registered domestic par	tner			
		partner (See Family	Code, § 297.5(c); Probate C	code, §§ 37(b), 6401(c), and 6402.)	
	(5) child, as follows: (a)	natural or add	opted (b) natural a	dopted by a third party	
	(6) no child				
	(7) issue of a predeceased	child			
	(8) no issue of a predeceas	sed child			
	b. Decedent is is is r	not survived by	a stepchild or foster child or	children who would have been adop	ted by
	decedent if a legal barrier had not	prevented adoption	(See Probate Code & 6454	1	

Page 1 of 2

ESTATE OF (name):	CASE NUMBER:
	DECEDENT
10. Decedent is survived by (complete if decedent is survived by Probate Code, § 37, but no issue (only a or b apply); or (2) no Code, § 37, and no issue. Check only the first box that applie a. a parent or parents who are listed in item 14. b. a sibling, or issue of a deceased sibling, all of whom are listed. other persons who might be entitled to inherit property if d. no known next of kin.	o spouse or registered domestic partner described in Probate es.)
 Attachment 11 contains (1) the legal description of decedent's Ca and a description of the personal property in California passin (3) if a petitioner's claim to the property is based on succession uncharacter of the property as community, separate, or quasi-community. 	ng to each petitioner; (2) decedent's interest in the property; and der Probate Code sections 6401 and 6402, facts that show the
 12. Each petitioner is a successor of the decedent (as defined in Proba in one or more of the pieces of real property and personal a. (will) a beneficiary who succeeded to the property under a 5 or 12a. b. (no will) a person who succeeded to the property under F 	I property described in item 11 because each petitioner is decedent's will, and a copy of the will is attached as Attachment
13. The interest claimed by each petitioner in each specific piece of real is stated in Attachment 13 is as follows (specify):	
14. The names, relationships to decedent, ages, and residence or mailipetitioner, of (1) all persons named or checked in items 1, 9, and 10 property in the absence of a will; and (3) all persons designated in the contraction.	O; (2) all other persons who may be entitled to inherit decedent's
15. The names and addresses of all executors named in decedent's will	Il are listed below listed in Attachment 15.
No executor is named. There is no will.	
	Il to receive property. The names and addresses of all persons sts under Probate Code section 15804(a)(1), (2), or (3), are listed
17. Decedent's estate was under a guardianship addresses of all persons serving as guardian or conservator	conservatorship at decedent's death. The names and are listed below are listed in Attachment 17.
18. Number of pages attached:	
Date:	•
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF ATTORNEY)	(SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY)*
I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Californ	nia that the foregoing is true and correct.
Date:	•
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF PETITIONER)	(SIGNATURE OF PETITIONER)*
	•
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME OF PETITIONER)	(SIGNATURE OF PETITIONER)* SIGNATURE(S) OF ADDITIONAL PETITIONERS ATTACHED

* Each petitioner (i.e., each person named in item 1) must sign this form. (Prob. Code, § 1020.) If more than 2 petitioners, check the box above and use an attachment.

SPR22-16
Rules and Forms: Small Estate Disposition (adopt form DE-300; revise forms DE-305, DE-310, DE-315)
All comments are verbatim unless indicated by an asterisk (*).

	Commenter	Position	Comment	Committee Response
1.	Orange County Bar Association by Daniel S. Robinson, President Newport Beach	AM	The OCBA agrees that this proposal appropriately addresses the stated purpose if it is modified as follows:	
			(1) Attachment "A" should be attached and referenced as part of the Form DE-300 "Maximum Values" chart; it is a useful explanation for determination of values.	The committee does not recommend the suggested change. Attachment to form DE-300 could mislead some form users to think that they were required or authorized to perform a calculation. They are not. The Judicial Council is required by statute to perform those calculations. Form DE-300 shows the results. Attachment A, which explains the basis of the council's calculation, is attached to the report adopted by the council at its March 11, 2022, meeting. The report is available on the California Courts website as item 22-079 on the public agenda for that meeting.
			(2) On Form DE-305 "Affidavit re Real Property of Small Estate" a reference should be made at paragraph 4 that the amount of \$61,500 is to be adjusted in Probate Code §890 in the same manner as referenced on Form DE-300.	The committee does not recommend the suggested change. Probate Code section 890(c) requires that the list of the adjusted amounts include the date of the next scheduled adjustment. The Judicial Council has adopted form DE-300 as the list of the adjusted amounts. That form, which must be attached to form DE-305 when the latter is filed, gives April 1, 2025, as the date of the next scheduled adjustment. No additional reference on form DE-305 to the next adjustment is necessary or appropriate.
			(3) On Form DE-305 add at paragraph 10 after the words - "(Attach a copy of the will)" in parentheses the phrase - "if you claim under the will and no estate proceeding is pending or has been conducted in California)."	The committee does not recommend the suggested change. Item 8 provides the information necessary to comply with the requirement in Probate Code section 13200(a)(7) that the affidavit or declaration state either that "[n]o proceeding for

Positions: A = Agree; AM = Agree if modified; N = Do not agree; NI = Not indicated

SPR22-16
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	Commenter	Position	Comment	Committee Response
				administration of decedent's estate is now being or has been conducted in California" or that "[t]he decedent's personal representative has consented in writing to the use of the procedure provided by Probate Code section 13200 et seq."
			(4) On Form DE-310 "Petition to Determine Succession" a reference to the Probate Code §890 adjustment to the value at paragraph 8.	The committee does not recommend the suggested change. Probate Code section 890(c) requires that the list of the adjusted amounts include the date of the next scheduled adjustment. The Judicial Council has adopted form DE-300 as the list of the adjusted amounts. That form, which must be attached to form DE-310 when the latter is filed, gives April 1, 2025, as the date of the next scheduled adjustment. No additional reference on form DE-310 to the next adjustment is necessary or appropriate.
			(5) On Form DE-315 "Order Determining Succession to Real Property" a reference to the Probate Code §890 adjustment to the value at paragraph 6.	The committee does not recommend the suggested change. Probate Code section 890(c) requires that the list of the adjusted amounts include the date of the next scheduled adjustment. The Judicial Council has adopted form DE-300 as the list of the adjusted amounts. That form gives April 1, 2025, as the date of the next scheduled adjustment. No additional reference on form DE-315 to the next adjustment is necessary or appropriate.
2.	Superior Court of San Diego County by Mike Roddy, Executive Officer	AM	Does the proposal appropriately address the stated purpose? Yes Would the proposal provide cost savings? If so,	The committee appreciates these comments. No further response is required.
			please quantify. No	No further response is required.

Positions: A = Agree; AM = Agree if modified; N = Do not agree; NI = Not indicated

SPR22-16
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Commenter	Position	Comment	Committee Response
		What would the implementation requirements be for courts—for example, training staff (please identify position and expected hours of training), revising processes and procedures (please describe), changing docket codes in case management systems, or modifying case management systems? Minimal staff training. Clerical, Examiners, and Judges to be informed of new dollar amounts and be made aware of the new and revised forms.	No further response is required.
		Q: How well would this proposal work in courts of different sizes? It appears this proposal would work similarly among courts of all sizes.	No further response is required.
		Other Comments: It is not entirely clear that the new form, DE-300, must be attached to certain affidavits/petitions unless specifically looking at DE-300. It would be helpful to either add this form as a Page-3 to DE-305 and DE-310 or add a checkbox or bullet point that prompts the filer to include the new attachment. See suggestions below.	The committee agrees with this suggestion and has added the following language to item 4b on form DE-305 and item 8b on form DE-310: "(decedent died on or after April 1, 2022, and form DE-300 is attached as required by law)."
		DE-305 – Affidavit RE: Real Property of Small Value 4. b. [] The decedent died on or after April 1, 2022. Judicial Council form, DE-300, Maximum Values for Small Estates Set-Aside& Disposition of Estate Without Administration is attached.	

Positions: A = Agree; AM = Agree if modified; N = Do not agree; NI = Not indicated

SPR22-16
Rules and Forms: Small Estate Disposition (adopt form DE-300; revise forms DE-305, DE-310, DE-315)
All comments are verbatim unless indicated by an asterisk (*).

Commenter	Position	Comment	Committee Response
		DE-310 – Petition to Determine Succession to Real Property	
		8. b. [] The decedent died on or after April 1, 2022. Judicial Council form, DE-300, Maximum Values for Small Estates Set-Aside& Disposition of Estate Without Administration is attached.	
		It is also unclear how this requirement would be enforced on non-court supervised proceedings, such as an affidavit under probate code section 13100 or 13601.	The committee acknowledges that the statutory scheme leaves a putative successor's compliance with the attachment requirement in a collection or transfer under section 13101 or 13601 to the vigilance of the holder of the property claimed or the employer. In this respect, enforcement of that requirement is no different from enforcement of any of the other content requirements in those sections. Because the statutes do not call on the court to enforce these requirements, developing forms for that purpose is beyond the scope of the Judicial Council's purview.