



## JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

www.courts.ca.gov

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# CIRCULATING ORDER MEMORANDUM TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Circulating Order Number: CO-16-05

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**Title**

Civil Practice and Procedure: Adjustments to Dollar Amounts of Exemptions from Enforcement of Judgments

**Action Requested**

VOTING MEMBERS ONLY: Vote and return by fax. Additionally, return original signature page.

**Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected**

Approve form EJ-156

**Please Respond By**

March 29, 2016

**Recommended by**

Judicial Council Rules and Projects Committee

Hon. Harry E. Hull, Jr., Chair

Martin Hoshino

Administrative Director

**Date of Report**

March 16, 2016

**Contact**

Anne M. Ronan, 415-865-8933

anne.ronan@jud.ca.gov

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### Executive Summary

Statute mandates that the Judicial Council, on April 1 of every third year beginning in 2004, make and publish adjustments to the dollar amounts of certain statutory exemptions from judgments to reflect changes in the consumer price index over the prior three-year period. These exemption amounts are listed in the *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions From Enforcement of Judgments* (form EJ-156). The council is also required, at the same time, to submit to the Legislature a report on potential adjustments to the dollar amounts of homestead exemptions, calculated in the same way. The Judicial Council Rules and Projects Committee and the Administrative Director recommend that approval of the form revision and report to the Legislature be made by circulating order rather than at the council's next business meeting to ensure that the form is revised and the report submitted in compliance with statute.

## Recommendation

1. The Judicial Council's Rules and Projects Committee recommends that the Judicial Council approve, effective April 1, 2016, revised *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions From Enforcement of Judgments* (form EJ-156).
2. The Administrative Director recommends that the Judicial Council take the following actions:
  - a. Approve, effective March 30, 2016, the report to the Legislature on potential adjustments to the dollar amounts of homestead exemptions from enforcement of civil judgments, in conformance with Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c); and
  - b. Direct the Administrative Director to submit the report to the Legislature.

The recommended form is attached at pages 5–6. The recommended report and report summary are attached at pages 7–11.

## Previous Council Action

In 2004, the Judicial Council authorized staff<sup>1</sup> to prepare a list of the amounts of certain exemptions from enforcement of judgments and to periodically update the list as required by Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(d)–(e).<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to this authorization, a list entitled *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions From Enforcement of Judgments* was prepared and posted on the California Courts website in April 2004. The list contained the dollar amounts of exemptions effective as of April 1, 2004, and indicated that further adjustments would be made every three years. As statutorily mandated, the exemption amounts on the list were adjusted in 2007, 2010, and 2013. The council, rather than the Administrative Director, began approving the revisions to the form in 2013.

The requirement that the council report on potential adjustments to the homestead exemption (see section 703.150(c)) is a more recent addition to the statute. This is the second report to the Legislature prepared under that provision.

## Rationale for Recommendation

Section 703.150(e) requires the Judicial Council, beginning April 1, 2004, to publish a list of the current dollar amounts of exemptions from the enforcement of judgment provided in sections 703.140(b)—for cases under Title 11 of the United States Code—and 704.010 et seq. (for other cases) together with the next scheduled date of adjustment. The council is required to adjust the figures every three years based on changes to the consumer price index. (See § 703.150(a)–(b).)

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<sup>1</sup> See Judicial Council of Cal., Report from Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee, *Exemptions From the Enforcement of Judgments* (Apr. 12, 2004) and minutes of the Apr. 23, 2004, Judicial Council meeting, item 1.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all statutory references hereafter are to the Code of Civil Procedure.

The list of the dollar amounts of exemptions needs to be adjusted again at this time.

The dollar amounts of the exemptions must be adjusted based on the change in the California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the most recent three-year period ending on December 31. (§ 703.150(d).) Based on the formula attached to this report, staff has calculated the adjusted dollar amounts of the exemptions that will be effective on April 1, 2016. *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions From Enforcement of Judgments* (as form EJ-156) has been revised to show the adjusted amounts.

In 2010, the Legislature amended the provisions on exemptions to address potential adjustments to the dollar amount of homestead exemptions provided in section 704.730(a). (See § 703.150(c).) The council is not to make those adjustments, but only to calculate what they would be under the same formula used for adjusting the other exemptions (i.e., based on the change in the consumer price index over the past three years) and to provide that information to the Legislature, beginning on April 1, 2013, and at three-year intervals thereafter. (*Ibid.*) The recommended report to the Legislature provides this information, along with a copy of the formula used to generate it.

### **Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications**

This proposal was not circulated for comment because the changes to the forms are technical. No alternatives were considered in light of the statutory mandate to adjust the figures and to provide a report to the Legislature.

### **Implementation Requirements, Costs, and Operational Impacts**

The resource implications for this proposal for the trial courts should be minimal. The form is informational only and is not filed with or completed by the courts. No costs or operational impacts are associated with the approval of the report to the Legislature.

### **Attachments**

1. Formula for adjusting exemption amounts, at page 4
2. Form EJ-156, at pages 5–6
3. *Report on Potential Adjustments of Dollar Amounts of Homestead Exemptions* and report summary, at pages 7–11
4. Voting instructions, at page 12
5. Vote and signature pages, at pages 13–14

**Calculation of Dollar Amounts of Exemptions  
Under Code of Civil Procedure Sections 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq.  
(Adjusted April 1, 2016)**

The adjustments to the current dollar amounts of the exemptions provided in Code of Civil Procedure sections 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq., in the *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions From Enforcement of Judgments*, are calculated as follows:

**1. Formula**

Under Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(a), (b), and (d) the adjustments to the dollar amount of the exemptions in sections 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq., are computed as follows:

$$\text{Adjusted dollar amount} = \left[ \frac{\text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2015)} - \text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2012)}}{\text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2012)}} + 1 \right] \times \text{Previous dollar amount}$$

This is similar to the method of calculation employed by the Judicial Conference of the United States in calculating adjustments to the federal bankruptcy exemptions, but it uses the California Consumer Price Index instead of the federal equivalent.

**2. Definition**

“CCPI” stands for the California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, published by the Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Statistics.

**3. Current Calculation (as of April 1, 2016)**

The calculation for the adjusted dollar amounts of the exemptions in section 703.140(b) and 704.010 et. seq. is based on the following formula:

$$\text{Adjusted dollar amount} = \left[ \frac{249.666 - 238.155}{238.155} + 1 \right] \times \text{Previous dollar amount} = 1.0483 \times \text{Previous dollar amount}$$

The calculation of the dollar amounts of each of the individual exemptions is calculated by multiplying the amounts of the individual exemptions by 1.0483 with each adjusted amount rounded to the nearest \$25. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 703.150(d).)

**CURRENT DOLLAR AMOUNTS OF EXEMPTIONS FROM ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENTS**  
**Code of Civil Procedure sections 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq.**

**EXEMPTIONS UNDER SECTION 703.140(b)**

The following lists the current dollar amounts of exemptions from enforcement of judgment under Code of Civil Procedure section 703.140(b).

These amounts are effective April 1, 2016. Unless otherwise provided by statute after that date, they will be adjusted at each three-year interval, ending on March 31. The amount of the adjustment to the prior amounts is based on the change in the annual California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the most recent three-year period ending on the preceding December 31, with each adjusted amount rounded to the nearest \$25. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 703.150(d).)

<u>Code Civ. Proc., § 703.140(b)</u>	<u>Type of Property</u>	<u>Amount of Exemption</u>
(1)	The debtor's aggregate interest in real property or personal property that the debtor or a dependent of the debtor uses as a residence, or in a cooperative that owns property that the debtor or a dependent of the debtor uses as a residence,	\$ 26,800
(2)	The debtor's interest in one or more motor vehicles	\$ 5,350
(3)	The debtor's interest in household furnishings, household goods, wearing apparel, appliances, books, animals, crops, or musical instruments, that are held primarily for the personal, family, or household use of the debtor or a dependent of the debtor (value is of any particular item)	\$ 675
(4)	The debtor's aggregate interest in jewelry held primarily for the personal, family, or household use of the debtor or a dependent of the debtor	\$ 1,600
(5)	The debtor's aggregate interest, plus any unused amount of the exemption provided under paragraph (1), in any property	\$ 1,425
(6)	The debtor's aggregate interest in any implements, professional books, or tools of the trade of the debtor or the trade of a dependent of the debtor	\$ 8,000
(8)	The debtor's aggregate interest in any accrued dividend or interest under, or loan value of, any unexpired life insurance contract owned by the debtor under which the insured is the debtor or an individual of whom the debtor is a dependent	\$ 14,325
(11)(D)	The debtor's right to receive, or property traceable to, a payment on account of personal bodily injury of the debtor or an individual of whom the debtor is a dependent	\$ 26,800

**CURRENT DOLLAR AMOUNTS OF EXEMPTIONS FROM ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENTS**  
**Code of Civil Procedure sections 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq.**

**EXEMPTIONS UNDER SECTION 704.010 et seq.**

The following lists the current dollar amounts of exemptions from enforcement of judgment under title 9, division 2, chapter 4, article 3 (commencing with section 704.010) of the Code of Civil Procedure.

These amounts are effective April 1, 2016. Unless otherwise provided by statute after that date, they will be adjusted at each three-year interval, ending on March 31. The amount of the adjustment to the prior amounts is based on the change in the annual California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the most recent three-year period ending on the preceding December 31, with each adjusted amount rounded to the nearest \$25. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 703.150(d).)

<u>Code Civ. Proc. Section</u>	<u>Type of Property</u>	<u>Amount of Exemption</u>
704.010	Motor vehicle (any combination of aggregate equity, proceeds of execution sale, and proceeds of insurance or other indemnification for loss, damage, or destruction)	\$ 3,050
704.030	Material to be applied to repair or maintenance of residence	\$ 3,200
704.040	Jewelry, heirlooms, art	\$ 8,000
704.060	Personal property used in debtor's or debtor's spouse's trade, business, or profession (amount of exemption for commercial motor vehicle not to exceed \$4,850)	\$ 8,000
704.060	Personal property used in debtor's and spouse's common trade, business, or profession (amount of exemption for commercial motor vehicle not to exceed \$9,700)	\$ 15,975
704.080	Deposit account with direct payment of social security or public benefits (exemption without claim, section 704.080(b)) <sup>1</sup>	
	• Public benefits, one depositor is designated payee	\$ 1,600
	• Social security benefits, one depositor is designated payee	\$ 3,200
	• Public benefits, two or more depositors are designated payees <sup>2</sup>	\$ 2,375
	• Social security benefits, two or more depositors are designated payees <sup>2</sup>	\$ 4,800
704.090	Inmate trust account	\$ 1,600
	Inmate trust account (restitution fine or order)	\$ 300 <sup>3</sup>
704.100	Aggregate loan value of unexpired life insurance policies	\$ 12,800

<sup>1</sup> The amount of a deposit account that exceeds exemption amounts is also exempt to the extent it consists of payments of public benefits or social security benefits. (Code Civ. Proc., § 704.080(c).)

<sup>2</sup> If only one joint payee is a beneficiary of the payment, the exemption is in the amount available to a single designated payee. (Code Civ. Proc., § 704.080(b)(3) and (4).)

<sup>3</sup> This amount is not subject to adjustments under Code Civ. Proc., § 703.150.





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San Francisco, CA 94102-3688  
Tel 415-865-4200  
TDD 415-865-4272  
Fax 415-865-4205  
www.courts.ca.gov

HON. TANI G. CANTIL-SAKAUYE  
*Chief Justice of California  
Chair of the Judicial Council*

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*Chair, Executive and Planning Committee*

HON. DAVID M. RUBIN  
*Chair, Litigation Management Committee*

HON. KENNETH K. SO  
*Chair, Policy Coordination and  
Liaison Committee*

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*Chair, Rules and Projects Committee*

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MR. MARTIN HOSHINO  
*Administrative Director,  
Judicial Council*

March 30, 2016

Ms. Diane F. Boyer-Vine  
Legislative Counsel  
State Capitol, Room 3021  
Sacramento, California 95814

Mr. Daniel Alvarez  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol, Room 400  
Sacramento, California 95814

Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3196  
Sacramento, California 95814

*Re: Report on Potential Adjustments of Dollar Amounts of Homestead  
Exemptions, as required under Code of Civil Procedure section  
703.150(c)*

Dear Ms. Boyer-Vine, Mr. Alvarez, and Mr. Wilson:

The Judicial Council respectfully submits this report on potential adjustments to the dollar amounts of certain exemptions from enforcement of judgments, as required by Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c). That statute provides that at three-year intervals beginning on April 1, 2013, the Judicial Council shall submit to the Legislature the amount by which the dollar amounts of the homestead exemptions in effect immediately before that date as provided in Code of Civil Procedure section 704.730(a) may be increased under the formula set forth in section 703.150(d), should the Legislature approve such an adjustment.

Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(d) provides that the Judicial Council is to determine the amount of the potential adjustment based on

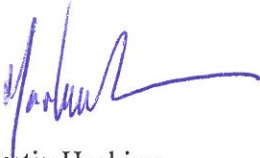
Ms. Diane F. Boyer-Vine  
Mr. Daniel Alvarez  
Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
March 30, 2016  
Page 2

the change in the annual California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, published by the Department of Industrial Relations, for the most recent three-year period ending on December 31 preceding the adjustment date, with each adjusted amount rounded to the nearest twenty-five dollars (\$25). The council has calculated that the adjusted amounts based on the formula attached to this report would be as follows:

- The exemption amount in section 704.730(a)(1) (currently \$75,000) would be increased to \$78,625.
- The exemption amount in section 704.730(a)(2) (currently \$100,000) would be increased to \$104,825.
- The exemption amount in section 704.730(a)(3) (currently \$175,000) would be increased to \$183,450.

If you have any questions related to this report, please contact Deborah Brown, Chief Counsel at [deborah.brown@jud.ca.gov](mailto:deborah.brown@jud.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Martin Hoshino  
Administrative Director  
Judicial Council

MH/AMR  
Attachment

cc: Shaun Naidu, Principal Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León  
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Alf Brandt, Senior Counsel, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Anita Lee, Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Tina McGee, Executive Secretary, Legislative Analyst's Office  
Mike Petersen, Consultant, Senate Republican Policy Office  
Alison Merrilees, Chief Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee



Ms. Diane F. Boyer-Vine  
Mr. Daniel Alvarez  
Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
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Page 3

Paul Dress, Consultant, Assembly Republican Office of Policy & Budget  
Cory T. Jasperson, Director, Governmental Affairs, Judicial Council  
Deborah Brown, Chief Counsel, Legal Services, Judicial Council  
Laura Speed, Principal Manager, Governmental Affairs, Judicial Council  
Peter Allen, Public Affairs Officer, Public Affairs, Judicial Council  
Yvette Casillas-Sarcos, Administrative Coordinator, Governmental Affairs, Judicial  
Council

## Calculation of Dollar Amounts of Exemptions

### Under Code of Civil Procedure Sections 704.730(a) (April 1, 2016)

The possible adjustments to the current dollar amounts of the exemptions provided in Code of Civil Procedure section 704.730(a) are calculated as follows:

#### 1. Formula

Under Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c)–(d) the adjustments to the dollar amount of the exemptions in sections 704.730(a) would be computed as follows:

$$\text{Adjusted dollar amount} = \left[ \frac{\text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2015)} - \text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2012)}}{\text{annual CCPI (Dec. 2012)}} + 1 \right] \times \text{Previous dollar amount}$$

#### 2. Definition

“CCPI” stands for the California Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, published by the Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Statistics.

#### 3. Current Calculation (as of April 1, 2016)

The calculation for the adjusted dollar amounts of the exemptions in section 703.140(b) and 704.010 et seq. is based on the following formula:

$$\text{Adjusted dollar amount} = \left[ \frac{249.666 - 238.155}{238.155} + 1 \right] \times \text{Previous dollar amount} = 1.0483 \times \text{Previous dollar amount}$$

The calculation of the dollar amounts of each of the individual exemptions is calculated by multiplying the amounts of the individual exemptions by 1.0483 with each adjusted amount rounded to the nearest \$25. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 703.150(d).)



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Hon. Charles D. Wachob

MR. MARTIN HOSHINO  
Administrative Director,  
Judicial Council

## Report Summary

Report title: *Report on Potential Adjustments of Dollar Amounts of Homestead Exemptions*

Code section: Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c)

Date of report: March 30, 2016

The Judicial Council has submitted a report to the Legislature in accordance with Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c).

The following summary of the report is provided under the requirements of Government Code section 9795.

The report describes potential adjustments to the dollar amounts of homestead exemptions in Code of Civil Procedure section 704.730(a).

The full report can be accessed here: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/7466.htm>.

A printed copy of the report may be obtained by calling 415-865-7446.

## Instructions for Review and Action by Circulating Order

### Voting members

- Please indicate your **vote, sign, and return by 5pm, Tuesday, March 25, 2016**, if possible by one of these methods:
  1. Fax the signature pages to the attention of Judicial Council Support, Leadership Services Division at 415-865-4391
  2. Reply to the e-mail message with “I approve,” “I disapprove,” or “I abstain.”
- If you are unable to reply by March 25, 2016 please do so as soon as possible thereafter.
- Additionally, **return the original** signature page to the Judicial Council Support, Judicial Council of California, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California, 94102-3688. **Please keep a copy for your records.**

### Advisory members

The circulating order is being faxed to you for your information only. There is no need to sign or return any documents.

**CIRCULATING ORDER**  
**Judicial Council of California**  
**Voting and Signature Pages**

The Judicial Council:

1. Approves, effective April 1, 2016, revised *Current Dollar Amounts of Exemptions from Enforcement of Judgments* (form EJ-156), as recommended by the Rules and Projects Committee; and
2. Approves, effective March 30, 2016, the report to the Legislature on potential adjustments to the dollar amounts of homestead exemptions from enforcement of civil judgements, in conformance with Code of Civil Procedure section 703.150(c); and directs the Administrative Director to submit the report to the Legislature.

My vote is as follows:

Approve       Disapprove       Abstain

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Marla O. Anderson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian John Back

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Bloom

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Mark G. Bonino

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Daniel J. Buckley

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Ming W. Chin

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Samuel K. Feng

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
Harry E. Hull, Jr.

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
James M. Humes

My vote is as follows:

Approve

Disapprove

Abstain

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Hannah-Beth Jackson

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Patrick M. Kelly

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Donna D'Angelo Melby

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Douglas P. Miller

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Gary Nadler

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Debra Elaine Pole

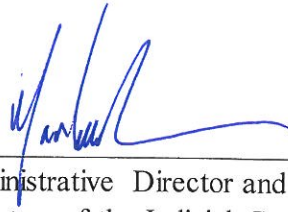
\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
David M. Rubin

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Dean T. Stout



Date: March 29, 2016

Attest:



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Administrative Director and  
Secretary of the Judicial Council