

Avoid Loss of Household Goods

The Navy Wire Service recently reported that, under certain circumstances, a company storing your household goods (HHG) has a right to charge you for storage services and may even have the right to sell your personal property.

You can avoid these problems by working with your Personal Property Shipping Office (PPSO). Always keep them informed of any changes to your orders, your address, or other information affecting your entitlement to ship or store HHG.

Above all, contact your PPSO ahead of time if you are unable to take delivery of your HHG as originally planned. The PPSO will provide guidance and assistance in making other arrangements for continued storage of your HHG.

You may also seek guidance from the HHG Helpline at (800) 444-7789 or learn more about your entitlements by visiting the NAVSUP home page at <http://207.132.136.34/navsuphhg/>

FFSC Yokosuka Relocation asked the PPSO Manager at FISC Yokosuka to comment on the above news report. Here is an excerpt of his reply:

A Sailor was assigned to Yokosuka with orders to a ship. The Sailor put HHG into storage, and the PRD shown on the orders was three years later. In other words, the Sailor's basic entitlement for HHG storage would be good for the next three years.

Three years later the Sailor received another set of orders to a ship home ported here but did not do anything to extend the storage entitlement. The storage expired; letters were sent to the previous command, but they were returned to the office controlling the storage contractor. The HHG were handled out (reprocessed) at member's expense but the storage contractor was not able to contact the member.

Depending on state law, all the contractor may have to do in such a case is run a notice of unclaimed property in a newspaper for a period of required time, normally 30 days. If no response is received the contractor can then sell the property to recover the storage cost due. If the storage company recovers more than the cost due, the balance may go to the member if the case comes up within another (unspecified) period of time. On the other hand, the member may also be liable for storage cost if, by selling the goods, the company did not recover the storage cost that was due.

In our example, the member lost the property and has no recourse, even though there may have been an entitlement for storage of HHG. By doing nothing, the property was lost.

This happened to a member [at a duty station in Yokosuka] who did not keep HHG storage authorization updated, and the HHG were subsequently sold at auction.

MORAL OF THE STORY: Keep the Personal Property Office informed of any changes in your duty status! AND ... Keep a detailed inventory of your personal property.