

**Cherokee Nation Code Annotated**

**Title 21: Crimes and Punishments**

**Part IV. Crimes Against Public Decency and Morality**

**Chapter 39: Cherokee Nation Obscenity and Child Pornography Act**

**§ 1040.54. Seizure and forfeiture of equipment used in certain offenses relating to obscene material or child pornography**

Cite as: 21 CNCA § 1040.54

A. Any peace officer of Cherokee Nation is authorized to seize any equipment which is used, or intended for use in the preparing, photographing, printing, selling, exhibiting, publishing, distributing, displaying, advertising, filming, copying, recording, or mailing of obscene material, as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(B)(1) or child pornography, as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(A). Said equipment may be held as evidence until a forfeiture has been declared or a release ordered. Forfeiture actions under this section may be brought by the Attorney General as petitioner; provided, in the event the Attorney General elects not to file such an action, or fails to file such action within ninety (90) days of the date of the seizure of such equipment, a forfeiture action may be brought by the entity seizing such equipment as petitioner.

B. Notice of seizure and intended forfeiture proceeding shall be given all owners and parties in interest by the party seeking forfeiture as follows:

1. Upon each owner or party in interest whose name and address is known, by mailing a copy of the notice by registered mail to the last-known address; and

2. Upon all other owners or parties in interest, whose addresses are unknown, by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the seizure was made.

C. Within sixty (60) days after the mailing or publication of the notice, the owner of the equipment and any other party in interest may file a verified answer and claim to the equipment described in the notice of seizure and of the intended forfeiture proceeding.

D. If at the end of sixty (60) days after the notice has been mailed or published there is no verified answer on file, the Court shall hear evidence upon the fact of the unlawful use and may order the equipment forfeited to the Nation, if such fact is proven.

E. If a verified answer is filed, the forfeiture proceeding shall be set for hearing.

F. At the hearing the party seeking the forfeiture shall prove by clear and convincing evidence that the equipment was used in the preparing, photographing, printing, selling, exhibiting, publishing, distributing, displaying, advertising, filming, copying, recording, or

mailing of obscene material, as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(B)(1) or child pornography, as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(A), with knowledge by the owner of the equipment.

G. The owner or party in interest may prove that the right or interest in the equipment was created without any knowledge or reason to believe that the equipment was being, or was to be, used for the purpose charged.

H. In the event of such proof, the court may order the equipment released to the bona fide or innocent owner or party in interest if the amount due the person is equal to, or in excess of, the value of the equipment as of the date of the seizure.

I. If the amount due to such person is less than the value of the equipment, or if no bona fide claim is established, the equipment shall be forfeited to Cherokee Nation and shall be sold pursuant to the judgment of the Court.

J. Equipment taken or detained pursuant to this section shall not be replevable, but shall be deemed to be in the custody of the office of the Attorney General or in the custody of the party seeking the forfeiture. The Attorney General or the party seeking the equipment may release said equipment to the owner of the equipment if it is determined that the owner had no knowledge of the illegal use of the equipment or if there is insufficient evidence to sustain the burden of showing illegal use of the equipment. Equipment which has not been released by the Attorney General or the party seizing the equipment shall be subject to the orders and decrees of the District Court or the official having jurisdiction thereof.

K. The Attorney General or the party seizing such equipment shall not be held civilly liable for having custody of the seized equipment or proceeding with a forfeiture action as provided for in this section.

L. The proceeds of the sale of any equipment not taken or detained by the Cherokee Nation Marshal Service or the Office of the Attorney General shall be distributed as follows, in the order indicated:

1. To the bona fide or innocent purchaser or conditional sales vendor of the equipment, if any, up to the amount of the person's interest in the equipment, when the Court declaring the forfeiture orders a distribution to such person;
2. To the payment of the actual expenses of preserving the equipment; and
3. The balance to the Marshal Service. Monies from said fund may be used to pay costs for the storage of such equipment if such equipment is ordered released to a bona fide or innocent owner, purchaser, or conditional sales vendor and if such monies are available in said fund.

M. When any equipment is forfeited pursuant to this section, the District Court may order that the equipment seized may be retained by the Marshal Service for its official use.

N. If the Court finds the equipment was not used in the preparing, photographing, printing, selling, exhibiting, publishing, distributing, displaying, advertising, filming, copying, recording, or mailing of obscene material, as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(B)(1) or child pornography as defined in 21 CNCA § 1024.1(A), the Court shall order the equipment released to the owner.

O. No equipment shall be forfeited pursuant to the provisions of this section by reason of any act or omission established by the owner thereof to have been committed or omitted without the knowledge or consent of such owner, or by any person other than such owner while such equipment was unlawfully in the possession of a person other than the owner in violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state.

#### Historical Data

LA 20–08, eff. January 12, 2009. Amended LA 09–12, eff. May 23, 2012.