



## 273235 - What Should Repair Shops Do with Appliances Whose Owners Abandon Them?

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### the question

There is something that is worrying me, and I do not know the ruling on it. I am a young man and I have a shop for repairing household appliances, mostly fridges, washing machines and air conditioning units. The place where I work is not big, and often I end up with a lot of fridges and washing machines whose owners don't come to collect them, and don't want them to be fixed. I wait, sometimes for a year, sometimes for two years, and they do not come, then because the place is full and there is no room to receive the appliances whose owners want them to be fixed, I have no choice but to dismantle them and throw them away. Sometimes I leave them outside the shop for a month or more, and they do not come to collect them, so I throw them away. Sometimes I take parts from them, if they are good enough to use. After more than a year or two, some of them come to ask about their appliances, and I tell them that were it not that I was forced to throw them away because the place is too small, I would not have thrown them away. Some of them accept the situation, and some of them say to me: I will not forgive that; I want my appliance. Sometimes, when I know where the owner of the broken appliance lives, who did not ask about it for a year, I even rent a truck at my own expense to deliver it to their houses for them. But sometimes, I do not know who the owner is, because they leave the appliances outside the shop and I find them, and keep them for more than six months, then if the owner does not show up, I throw them away. I want to know the Islamic ruling on my situation. Are the appliances that I throw away regarded as a trust that has been left with me, and is it not permissible to dispose of them? If the answer is yes, then is there a particular length of time for which I should keep them? If it is not permissible, then please tell me and advise me, because I am confused, and I do not want to incur the wrath of Allah, may He be exalted, or be one of those who consume people's wealth unlawfully.



## **Summary of answer**

The appliances that the owners bring to you to fix are regarded as a trust that is left with you, and you must keep them and look after them until their owners come to collect them. However, if the owner of the appliance is later than usual in coming to collect his appliance after you have fixed it, and you have lost hope that he will return, or his leaving the appliance is detrimental to your business because you do not have much room, or because it is difficult to keep them and alike, in this case you have the right to sell these appliances at the market price, and take from that your fee as agreed upon with the customer, and set the rest of that money aside. Then if the owner comes along some day, you can give the remaining money back to him.

## **Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

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However, if the owner of the appliance is later than usual in coming to collect his appliance after you have fixed it, and you have lost hope that he will return, or his leaving the appliance is detrimental to your business because you do not have much room, or because it is difficult to keep them and alike, in this case you have the right, on the grounds of warding off harm from yourself, to sell these appliances at the market price, and take from that your fee as agreed upon with the customer, and set the rest of that money aside. Then if the owner comes along some day, you can give the remaining money back to him.

The Fatwa committee of the Al-Fiqh Al-Islami (Islamic jurisprudence) website said: He must wait for the length of time after which he thinks it most likely that the owner will never come back to collect it, then he may dispose of it and take in full his fee, and the rent for the place according to custom or agreement, then if anything is left it belongs to the owner. if the owner shows up he should give it back to him, and if he does not show up, it is permissible for him to make use of it,



but he remains liable for replacing it, and if he keeps it [without making use of it] to be on the safe side, that is better.

This is what he must do on the basis of the general Islamic principle that harm must be removed. It is well known that keeping these items in the shop and not receiving any fee for his work causes great harm to the owner of the workshop or laundry service, especially if he needs parts and the like, and he also needs to pay his workers' wages and rent for the shop, and he may be forced to turn away other work because he does not have space to store the items.

The matter is exacerbated if this happens repeatedly with more than one customer. All of that causes serious harm to the owner of the shop, and it justifies his disposing of these items by selling them.

Our advice to you is that you should put a clause in the contract, or write it on a piece of paper that you post in a prominent place in your shop, so that the customers can see it, stating that appliances will be disposed of after a certain period that you think is appropriate to both parties, if the owners do not come to collect them.

After the end of that period, you are not obliged to keep them, and it is permissible for you to dispose of them by selling them, then taking your fee and giving the rest of the money in charity, or by giving them in charity as is, or getting rid of them if they are not fit to give in charity or sell.

Nonetheless, it would be better to write down the phone number, contact details or email of the owner of each appliance, and the date you received the appliance, then before the end of that period, you can contact him to warn him that you are not responsible for his appliance if he does not come and collect it. If he does come and collect it, all well and good, otherwise you may dispose of it as explained above.

For more details, please see the following answers: [141623](#) , [150529](#) , [95887](#) , and [34597](#)

And Allah knows best.