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November 2015

## Advance America vs. Safety

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**State of Tennessee**  
**Department of State**  
Administrative Procedures Division  
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1102  
Phone: (615) 741-7008/Fax: (615) 741-4472

November 16, 2015

Commissioner Bill Gibbons  
Tennessee Department of Safety  
23<sup>rd</sup> Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower  
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1102

Patrick L. Rice, Esq.  
Staff Attorney III  
Tennessee Department of Safety &  
Homeland Security  
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Knoxville, TN 37914-7002

Advance America  
ATTN: Legal Advisor  
4206-B North Broadway  
Knoxville, TN 37917

RE: In the Matter of: Advance America (Q3442)

Docket No. 19.05-134007J

Enclosed is an Initial Order rendered in connection with the above-styled case.

Administrative Procedures Division  
Tennessee Department of State

/aem  
Enclosure

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER OF THE TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**ADVANCE AMERICA**

**DOCKET NO. 19.05-134007J**

**NOTICE**

ATTACHED IS AN INITIAL ORDER RENDERED BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION.

THE INITIAL ORDER IS NOT A FINAL ORDER BUT SHALL BECOME A FINAL ORDER UNLESS:

1. THE ENROLLEE FILES A WRITTEN APPEAL, OR EITHER PARTY FILES A PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION NO LATER THAN **December 1, 2015**.

YOU MUST FILE THE APPEAL, PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION. THE ADDRESS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION IS:

SECRETARY OF STATE  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION  
WILLIAM R. SNODGRASS TOWER  
312 ROSA PARKS AVENUE, 8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-1102

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION, **615/741-7008 OR 741-5042, FAX 615/741-4472**. PLEASE CONSULT APPENDIX A AFFIXED TO THE INITIAL ORDER FOR NOTICE OF APPEAL PROCEDURES.

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER OF THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT  
OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security,**

**v.**

**One 1997 Ford Explorer  
VIN: 1FMDU34E8VZC37704  
Seized From: Gary D. Hill  
Date of Seizure: September 23, 2014  
Claimant: Advance America  
Lien Holder: Advance America**

**DOCKET NO: 19.05-134007J  
D.O.S. Case No. Q3442**

**INITIAL ORDER AND NOTICE OF DEFAULT**

This matter came for hearing in Knoxville, Tennessee on October 13, 2015, before Steve R. Darnell, Administrative Law Judge, assigned by the Secretary of State, and sitting for the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety. Attorney Patrick Rice represented the Department. No one appeared on behalf of Advance America (Lienholder).

This was a “show cause” hearing to determine why the subject vehicle should not be forfeited to the seizing agency because Lienholder failed to take possession of the vehicle. The Department moved for an initial order holding Lienholder in default and further requested that Lienholder’s claim be stricken from the record and its interested forfeited to the seizing agency. The motion was granted based upon the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. This vehicle was seized pursuant to the law, resulting in the issuance of a property forfeiture warrant. Lienholder filed the proper paperwork to protect its lien and secure a claim to the vehicle.

2. A previous order forfeited the interest of other owners/claimants in this vehicle to the seizing agency subject to Lienholder's interest. This order provided, "if lienholder fails to take custody of the captioned vehicle on or before thirty (30) days from the date of this order, this matter shall be brought up on motion by the seizing agency for the lienholder to show cause why their interest should not be forfeited."
3. This show-cause hearing was set for Lienholder to appear and demonstrate why the forfeiture provision of the previous order should not be put into effect.
4. Lienholder was provided notice of this hearing via mail sent to Lienholder's address of record. No one appeared at the hearing on Lienholder's behalf.
5. The Department moved for an order holding Lienholder in default and that the forfeiture provisions of the previous order be enforced.

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ANALYSIS**

1. Department of Safety Rule 1340-2-2-.11 provides as follows:
  - (1) At a reasonable time prior to a hearing, a "Notice of Hearing" shall be filed by the Legal Division and served on all parties, per Rule 1340-2-2-.03(4).
  - (2) In serving a "Notice of Hearing," the Legal Division shall rely upon the addresses of record as given by a claimant or by claimant's counsel. Proof of service per Rule 1340-2-2-.03(4) to the addresses of record shall establish a rebuttable presumption that claimant or claimant's counsel received notice of the hearing date.
  - (3) Notice of hearing for a second or subsequent setting of the hearing will be by certified mail, return receipt requested. The return receipt card may be filed with the Legal Division and serve as a record of notification.
- (4) All claims filed against a specific seized property shall be consolidated for a single hearing.
2. Department of Safety Rule 1340-2-2-.17(1) provides, in relevant part:
  - (d) No default shall be entered against a claimant for failure to attend except upon proof, by the filing of the return receipt card, that the Legal Division has given notice of hearing.

(e) Upon default by a party, an administrative judge may enter either an initial default order or an order for an uncontested proceeding.

3. Department of Safety Rule 1340-2-2-.17(2) states, in relevant part:

Upon a default by a claimant, a claimant's claim shall be stricken by initial default order.

4. The Commissioner's ruling regarding the proper procedure for default proceedings, as set forth in the forfeiture case *In re: Taliaferro*, Docket No. 19.05-049400J (April 12, 2004) is that the Claimant's claim be stricken.

5. The claim being stricken, it is as if no claim had ever been filed, which constructively evokes T.C.A. §40-33-206(c). That section states: "If a claim . . . is not filed with the applicable agency within the time specified . . . the seized property shall be forfeited and disposed of as provided by law."

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT** the Department's motion for default is granted, Lienholder's claim is stricken, and the above described vehicle is **FORFEITED** to the seizing agency.

This Initial Order entered and effective this 16<sup>th</sup> day of NOV. 2015.



Steve R. Darnell  
Administrative Law Judge

Filed in the Administrative Procedures Division, Office of the Secretary of State, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of NOVEMBER 2015.



J. Richard Collier, Director  
Administrative Procedures Division

**APPENDIX A TO INITIAL ORDER**  
**NOTICE OF APPEAL PROCEDURES**

**Review of Initial Order**

This Initial Order shall become a Final Order (reviewable as set forth below) fifteen (15) days after the entry date of this Initial Order, unless either or both of the following actions are taken:

(1) A party files a petition for appeal to the agency, stating the basis of the appeal, or the agency on its own motion gives written notice of its intention to review the Initial Order, within fifteen (15) days after the entry date of the Initial Order. If either of these actions occurs, there is no Final Order until review by the agency and entry of a new Final Order or adoption and entry of the Initial Order, in whole or in part, as the Final Order. A petition for appeal to the agency must be filed within the proper time period with the Administrative Procedures Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, William R. Snodgrass Tower, 312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243. (Telephone No. (615) 741-7008). See Tennessee Code Annotated, Section (T.C.A. §) 4-5-315, on review of initial orders by the agency.

(2) A party files a petition for reconsideration of this Initial Order, stating the specific reasons why the Initial Order was in error within fifteen (15) days after the entry date of the Initial Order. This petition must be filed with the Administrative Procedures Division at the above address. A petition for reconsideration is deemed denied if no action is taken within twenty (20) days of filing. A new fifteen (15) day period for the filing of an appeal to the agency (as set forth in paragraph (1) above) starts to run from the entry date of an order disposing of a petition for reconsideration, or from the twentieth day after filing of the petition, if no order is issued. See T.C.A. §4-5-317 on petitions for reconsideration.

A party may petition the agency for a stay of the Initial Order within seven (7) days after the entry date of the order. See T.C.A. §4-5-316.

**Review of Final Order**

Within fifteen (15) days after the Initial Order becomes a Final Order, a party may file a petition for reconsideration of the Final Order, in which petitioner shall state the specific reasons why the Initial Order was in error. If no action is taken within twenty (20) days of filing of the petition, it is deemed denied. See T.C.A. §4-5-317 on petitions for reconsideration.

A party may petition the agency for a stay of the Final Order within seven (7) days after the entry date of the order. See T.C.A. §4-5-316.

**YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE FURTHER NOTICE OF THE INITIAL ORDER BECOMING A FINAL ORDER**

A person who is aggrieved by a final decision in a contested case may seek judicial review of the Final Order by filing a petition for review in a Chancery Court having jurisdiction (generally, Davidson County Chancery Court) within sixty (60) days after the entry date of a Final Order or, if a petition for reconsideration is granted, within sixty (60) days of the entry date of the Final Order disposing of the petition. (However, the filing of a petition for reconsideration does not itself act to extend the sixty day period, if the petition is not granted.) A reviewing court also may order a stay of the Final Order upon appropriate terms. See T.C.A. §4-5-322 and §4-5-317.