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## Citifinancial vs. Safety

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

**Citifinancial (N6863)  
1995 Ford Mustang  
V.I.N. 1FALP42T1SF109872  
Seized from: David A. Christie  
Date of Seizure: April 9, 2013  
Claimant: CitiFinancial**

**DOCKET NO: 19.03-123487J**

**INITIAL DEFAULT ORDER**

This matter was set to be heard on October 15, 2013, before Joyce Carter-Ball, Administrative Law Judge, assigned by the Secretary of State, and sitting for the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Safety. Karen Litwin, Staff Attorney for the Department of Safety, represented the Seizing Agency. No one was present on behalf of the Claimant, CitiFinancial.

This is a show cause hearing for the lien holder to show why it has failed to take possession of the above referenced vehicle.

Claimant (lien holder) did not appear at the hearing. The State therefore moved for an initial **default** and **dismissal** of lien holder's claim. The motion was **granted** based upon the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The vehicle was seized pursuant to law, resulting in the issuance of a Property Forfeiture Warrant. The lien holder filed a claim to the vehicle.
2. By previous order, the vehicle was forfeited to the Seizing Agency, subject to the lien holder's interest. Lien holder was notified of this action, but did not take possession of the

vehicle or take other steps to protect its interest. On July 10, 2013, lien holder was sent notice by the Department advising it that a hearing was scheduled for lien holder to “show cause” why its interest should not also be forfeited to the Seizing Agency.

3. A show-cause hearing was scheduled on October 15, 2013. The lien holder was notified of the hearing time and location by certified mail. A copy of the postal green card shows that it was signed at Claimant’s address.

4. The lien holder did not appear at the show-cause hearing, and was not otherwise represented. Based on the lien holder’s failure to appear, the State made an oral motion for the entry of an Order of Default and Dismissal of lien holder’s claim.

5. The State had its witnesses available and was ready to go forward to prove its case.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. 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.
  
2. 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.
  
3. Department of Safety Rule 1340-2-2-.11(2) provides, in relevant part:

The Department of Safety is entitled to rely upon the address of record in providing notice to a claimant.

4. The State's motion for default being granted, it is therefore **ordered** that the lien holder's **claim be stricken**. 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."

5. Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED** that the lien holder's claim be stricken from the record and dismissed. The subject property is **ORDERED forfeited to the Seizing Agency**.

This Initial Order entered and effective this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2013.

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Joyce Carter-Ball  
Administrative Law Judge

Filed in the Administrative Procedures Division, Office of the Secretary of State,  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2013.



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J. Richard Collier, Director  
Administrative Procedures Division