

WWGofGA-Tool Sale and Estate Disposition Process

When woodworkers retire from woodworking or seek to declutter and downsize their shop or when family members need help to dispose of woodworking equipment from a woodworker's estate, difficult choices lay ahead. In most cases there is a sincere desire to pass along these tools to the next generation of woodworkers.

Woodworking shops typically contain power tools, hand tools, lumber, and various other items unfamiliar to non-woodworkers. Determining the value and demand for a shop's contents can be a challenging task. You typically have four options:

- 1) try to sell these items yourself
- 2) hire a professional for-profit estate seller
- 3) find a knowledgeable charitable organization to assist you in selling the tools
- 4) make a donation and receive a tax benefit.

The Woodworkers Guild of Georgia (WWGofGA) can assist you in making the right choice that works best for you.

Overview

This section outlines what WWGofGA can do to assist you. Woodshop contents can be complicated. It is challenging to understand the functions and values of specialized tools, various accessories, antique tools, exotic woods, and other items.

We have an experienced team of woodworkers who help those in need address these concerns. If the tool owner's shop is in the Atlanta metro area a Guild representative can visit the shop, conduct a brief survey of the contents, advise you as to the estimated value and demand for the equipment, tools and materials and explain how the Guild may be able to assist you.

WWGofGA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and, if the contents are suitable, the Guild can accept donations. For additional information please contact the Guild's Tool Sales Coordinator at toolsalescoordinator@wwgofga.com.

1. Donations to the Guild of woodworking tools in working condition can be accepted if the tool owner's shop is in metro Atlanta. WWGofGA will remove all the donated items from the shop and leave it in clean, orderly condition. We will not be able to assist with disposition of items unrelated to woodworking. Donated tools may be used to support the development of our Education Center or sold to WWGofGA members as appropriate.

2. If you prefer to sell the contents of the shop, and the contents are suitable for WWGofGA to sell on your behalf, we will prepare the shop for a sale in place, schedule and advertise the sale with your approval, conduct the sale, collect and account for payments received and clean up afterwards. Disposal of unsold items not donated to the Guild will be the responsibility of the estate.

Compensation

We typically collect a modest fee for assistance with a tool sale. For most services, we charge 15% of the proceeds from a sale for Guild members, and 20% for non-members.

If you desire to work with the WWGofGA to conduct and tool sale, you will be asked to sign a brief Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating the rights and responsibilities of each party.

Tool Sale Process

Guild representatives will:

1. Consult with the tool owner or estate representative to understand the shop space, equipment, and materials to be sold.
2. Develop a schedule agreeable to both parties for sale preparation and execution.
3. Begin the tool sale process by making an inventory of the contents of the shop and organizing items into categories; for instance, large power tools standing on the floor, bench mounted and portable power tools, hand tools, fasteners and finishing supplies, clamps, fixtures, accessories, and jigs.
4. Arrange items of similar nature together, with small items on tables for display and large items placed for easy inspection. If available, place instruction manuals with all power tools.
5. Price all items in advance and label with secure price tags. Tool prices are set by the Guild based on experience, the available local market, and past sales.
6. Discard clutter. It is best for someone not emotionally attached to the material to get rid of unsaleable items such as scraps of wood, loose fasteners, partial cans of finishing materials and damaged tools.
7. Evaluate lumber which falls into one of several categories:
 - a. **Furniture grade** – hardwood lumber (e.g., maple, oak, walnut, cherry, mahogany), veneer plywood and larger pieces of furniture grade hardwood are usually saleable.
 - b. **Construction grade** – decking material, plywood, MDF, molding, 2x4s, 2x6s, and other soft wood material may be saleable, but is not preferred by most woodworkers
 - c. **Shorts & Cut-Offs** – Hardwood pieces less than 3 feet long. Small hardwood pieces are usable by wood turners for pens and other small items. Woodworkers can make use of shorter boards for building small projects such as boxes.

- d. **Milled hardwoods** – ¼” to 1” thick, widths from 3” to 12”, and lengths from 2’ to 8’ are of value to woodworkers if it is free of bug damage, nails, and deep cracks. Small pieces of exotic species and figured hardwood are desirable for wood turners. Wood veneers are desirable if in good condition and stored properly.
 - e. **Blocks of wood for turning and carving** – may be green or dry, large blocks, half or full logs, burls, squares, rounds, etc. It should be sealed with wax on the end grain and free of deep cracks.
 - f. **Spalted wood** – (caused by fungus) is valued if the wood is not too soft.
8. Advertise the sale on Craigslist and via Guild social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram, with a brief description of each item for sale (model numbers are helpful), starting and closing times, location and a clearly defined cash and carry policy. High value tools can be advertised on eBay. Place posters announcing the sale in your neighborhood a few days before the sale. If paid advertising is desired, it can be done at the expense of the tool owner.
 9. Work with you in advance to decide what the policy for bargaining will be and who will represent the Guild in these discussions.
 10. If possible, setup the location so that physical access is limited to a single entrance.
 11. Do not permit entry before the starting time. If possible, keep the door closed until starting time.
 12. Set up a table in a secure spot for checking out purchases and taking payments.
 13. Have a supply of small bills for making change.
 14. Make it clear that buyers are responsible for removing purchases at the time of sale except by special arrangement with the seller.
 15. Move as many non-sale items as possible from the sale area and clearly identify remaining items in the sale area that are not included in the sale.
 16. Post-sale finances are tabulated, and proceeds distributed.

Advice for our Members

We will all eventually reach a point when we are no longer able to do woodworking. If you are not present to direct the disposition of your tools and supplies, your family may be left to complete this task at a stressful time.

You can make things far easier for your family by providing some guidance now. Any advice you give them in advance about your preferences for the disposition of the contents of your shop, an accurate inventory of the contents and estimates of the value of your tools will be helpful. This listing can also assist with insurance issues while you are still using your tools. The inventory should be done in writing and include pictures or videos. A simple Excel spreadsheet that you can customize to meet your needs is [downloadable](#) as a starting point for your inventory. Maintaining receipts and any appraisals for special items you may have can also be very useful.

You might also consider including directions about the disposition of your shop in your will. Directions could designate specific items to be given to special individuals or specify organizations to receive a donation. Of course, you should consult an attorney to be sure your instructions meet the legal requirements for a will. As an option, WWGofGA members may name our Guild to receive a bequest of their shop's contents. WWGofGA would be grateful for such bequests in the future.

Additional resources that you may find helpful on this topic from the internet are shown below.

- <https://www.finewoodworking.com/forum/where-do-your-tools-go-when-you-die>
- <https://www.nixonpeabody.com/en/ideas/blog/trusts-and-estates/2018/07/17/how-to-handle-your-woodworkers-tools-and-equipment-after-death>