Organization for your Tax Deed Surplus Records
Welcome to SurplusDatabase.com

This manual covers the functional aspects of the Surplus Database ("How do I...", “Where can I find...”, etc.). If you need technical assistance or wish to request customization to your database, please log in to the website and submit a Ticket on our help Desk.

We designed this database to assist active Asset Recovery Specialists. If you are just starting your new business in Asset Recovery, please be sure to read all guides and watch our videos so you can fully understand our database and the surplus recovery process.

Every County in the U.S. that holds Tax Deed Auctions has their own set of laws and processes. **We do not teach those processes.** However, we are partnered with Tax Auction Surplus ([https://www.TaxAuctionSurplus.com](https://www.TaxAuctionSurplus.com)) and Florida Overbids ([https://www.FloridaOverbids.com](https://www.FloridaOverbids.com)). Tax Auction Surplus provides surplus records for the counties in Florida and Florida Overbids provides training, videos, forms and material for Surplus Recovery business in Florida Counties.

No matter which Membership Level you choose (aside from the Demo), you will have a steady stream of new Florida Surplus Lists to import into your database. You also receive a wealth of benefits to assist you with Florida Surplus Recovery.

If you have a service that provides you with surplus records from other states, we have an Excel Import Template you can use to bring those records into your Surplus Database.

We look forward to helping you succeed with Asset Recovery.
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ENTER THE DATABASE
Log in to your website and choose Surplus Database from the WordPress Admin Dashboard

Asset Recovery Website
We Specialize in Unclaimed Money Held by Counties (Not States)

About Us  Did We Contact You?  Contact Us  Login

Username or Email Address

Password

Remember Me

Log In

Lost your password?
← Back to Asset Recovery Website
Choose Surplus Database from the Menu Bar on the left

**IMPORTANT!** “Surplus Database” may optionally say “Participants Database”

Like this:
The menu will expand to show you all options
SEARCH MENU

Searching for Records: On the “List Records” page, use the drop-down to choose the field you wish to search and type in your search term.

![List Records page with search options and filters](image)
SD Record ID vs ID

When the records we give you are first brought in to the database by import, there is a field named SD Record ID. This matches the Record ID we have in our own Master Database so that if you ever have a question about a particular record, you can give us that SD Record ID# and we can quickly locate it in our own records.

Once you import the records into YOUR Database, a unique ID is created for that record in your database only (we do not see or use that number). It is a unique number to identify that record within your own records, so possibly you would use the Record ID as your “Client Account Number” or “Property ID”. Therefore, when you choose “Search by ID”, you are searching the field of ID’s and NOT the “SD Record ID’s”

Special Search Notes

Search By Tax Deed

Each auctioned property is given a Tax Deed Number by the County. Each county may call this number something different (e.g. Case Number, Clerk Number, File Number, etc.). It is a unique number the county uses to identify that property being auctioned.

When searching by Tax Deed, please note that the format given for this number varies between counties and therefore if, for example, you are looking to find abcd-123 but you enter abcd123 into the search field, it will not be found because you omitted the hyphen.

Search By Parcel

All properties have a Parcel Number. This is basically a social security number for the property. ALL properties in the U.S. have a Parcel #. In our Resources Section online, we have a link to every county’s Property Appraiser website where you can search by Parcel Numbers.

When searching by Parcel, please note that the format given for this number varies between counties and therefore if, for example, you are looking to find 45-7121-339-12 but you enter 45712133912 into the search field, it will not be found because you omitted the hyphens.
VIEW LIST OF RECORDS
Click “List Records” and you are presented with a List of all your records. Each record on the list is linked so you can open that record fully.

Choose which columns you see on the List
You can choose which columns are most important for you to see on the list.

STEP 1: Choose “Manage List Columns”

Step 2: In the “ADMIN LIST COLUMN SETUP”, for the fields you want visible in List View, Click and drag down from “Available Fields” to “List Columns”
Please Note, there is also a section for “Public List Column Setup”. This is what will be shown on the front end of your website when you choose to “View Records by Status”
ADD NEW RECORD
Although you will have a steady stream of surplus records to import by bulk into your database, there may come a time when you want to add one single record manually.

STEP 1: Choose Add Record from the menu
STEP 2: Go through each tab on the Add New Record Screen and fill out the info you want.
MANAGE DATABASE FIELDS
First and foremost, very important! NEVER DELETE any field that is already in your database which was added by us. If you do, the daily surplus records will not import correctly into your database.

You can ADD as many fields as you want and delete those

Add a New Field

For this example, we will say that you want to add a field for a fax number of the property owner.

STEP 1: Choose Manage Database Fields
STEP 2: Decide on the Tab where this new field should be. In this case, the Tab would be “Owner Details” – Then Click ADD FIELD

STEP 3: Type in the Field Title and Choose the type of field from the drop down. In the case of a Fax Number, you may think you should choose numeric however, there may be a point when you type in parentheses around the area code and there are dashes in the phone number, so you would choose Text Line. This will accept numbers, letters and special characters.

See FIELD TYPE DESCRIPTIONS AT THE END OF THIS SECTION
Step 4: Click Add Field button.

Add Field

New Field Title
Fax Number
New Field Form Element
Text-line

Add Field

STEP 5: (Optional) If you want to be able to sort the Record List by this field and/or make sure this field is exported when/if you export your surplus lists, click on arrow to expand/open the new field and check the boxes for CSV and Sortable

Step 6: Click the Update Fields button or your field will not be saved.
Field Type Descriptions

- **Text-line** – simple text field, limited to 255 characters.
- **Text-area** – a simple text box with a character limit of 65,000.
- **Rich Text** – this presents a text editor box like the one used to edit content in WordPress pages and posts. The rich text editor will only be shown on the frontend if allowed in the settings. If the “Use WP auto format” setting is set, the content of this field will be passed through the “the_content” filter, meaning things like shortcodes will be processed.
- **Checkbox** – a single checkbox that may have one or two values, the second value represents the “unchecked” value for the field.
- **Radio Buttons** – for showing several choices, only one of which may be selected. This is better than a dropdown for a small number of choices.
- **Dropdown List** – the is the familiar dropdown control, allowing only one item to be selected at a time. This is better for long lists of options.
- **Date Field** – this is a field specifically for date values. Dates entered as text will be converted to a UNIX timestamp for storage. You must use this field type if you want date searches and sorts to work correctly.
- **Numeric** – good for storing numbers, integers only.
- **Decimal** – allows for numbers with decimals, defaults to 10 places on the left of the point, and 4 to the right. Also uses the configuration values as in the numeric field.
- **Currency** – allows for numbers with two decimal places, like most currency values. Currency symbols are not allowed, it’s just the number part. Uses the configuration values as in the numeric field.
- **Dropdown/Other** – this is a special type of dropdown that presents a text field when “other” is selected, allowing for a write-in choice.
- **Multiselect Checkbox** – this presents a multiple-choice series of checkboxes, any number of which may be selected.
- **Radio Buttons/Other** – like the Dropdown/Other, only better suited to a few choices because all the options are visible.
- **Multiselect/Other** – like the Multiselect Checkbox, several choices can be made, plus a write-in choice. Not good for large numbers of choices.
- **Link Field** – this is a special field for defining a link, it allows the link text to be defined along with the URL. If only the URL is provided, the link text will be the URL.
- **Image Upload Field** – this provides an upload field for an image file. The allowed types and maximum file size are determined in the plugin settings.
- **File Upload Field** – this provides a general file upload control. Any file type appearing in the “allowed file types” setting will be accepted as long as it is under the maximum file size. The accepted file types may also be defined on a per-field basis by putting a comma-separated list of allowed file extensions in the “values.”
- **Hidden Field** – this is generally used to store system information not requiring user input, such as an IP number or user name. It can also be used as a way to add a fixed
value to a record, or as a convenient way to allow client-side java script to add a value to the submission. The values stored in hidden fields can be shown only as “read only” values on the frontend.

- Password Field – this is a special-use field for developers so that a hashed password can be stored with the record. The plugin does not make use of passwords unless custom code has been created to use them.
- CAPTCHA – this provides a simple way to include a human test for your form submissions. There is only one type of CAPTCHA provided with the plugin: one that asks the user to solve a simple randomly generated arithmetic problem. This is adequate spam control for most installations. Stronger spam controls will probably be needed for more popular sites and can be easily implemented by a developer using the API.
VIEW RECORDS BY STATUS
Choose Admin Dashboard – Records By Status on your menu. **ALL records are set to New when they are first imported.** Records will only appear in the other Status sections after **YOU** change the status of that record.

Change the Status of a Record
You should change the status of a record depending on where in the process you are currently.

**Claim Status and Notes**

*Current Status*

Save the Record

Submit: save record and return to
Apply: save record and continue
Next: save record and move to the

**Record Status and Their Purposes**

Each section shows you the records where YOU set the Status matching that Status Name. They are all in the order of how you should proceed with records from importing to the database all the way through closing the file.

When you first import records, the status is set to “NEW” by default. This allows you to easily see which records you have not worked on yet because you have not changed the status. Below is a chart showing you each Status, in order that you should be ‘working the records’. It follows a logical, organized path:

**RECORD STATUS / REPORTS AND THEIR PURPOSES**

**New Records - No Status**

These records have not been worked on (or you forgot to choose a different status when you opened it in Record Details view).
You need to open these one by one and determine the first status (Either Research Record or Ignore Record)

### Research Records

When you set a status to “Research Records”, this is meant for you to research the actual record itself (not the property owner, that comes later). You first want to determine if this a state where the lienholders can make a claim against the surplus (such as Florida). If Yes, then you need to locate a means to find out if there are liens and if yes, how much.

**With the records from TaxAuctionSurplus.com, you also have the benefit of access to all the Property Information reports for records with over $5k in surplus. There is an online repository where you log in and pull up any Property report. There are also example Property Reports for each county, showing you where to look for the mention of documents that may or may not be liens.**

*If there are documents mentioned, you then need to open the Official Records website for that county and search that document number. Then you can see if it is a lien and how much.*

*Be sure to read our Lien Research Guide!*

For other states, we cannot vouch for how you locate the information. This is up to you to contact the County and ask. The questions you ask:

1. Do liens have a right to the surplus from the tax deed auctions... and if yes,
2. How do I find out if there are liens on this record?

After research on the record, if you decide it is not a good record to continue, set the status to “Ignore Record”.

If you decide it IS good, set Status to “Locate Claimant” because that is your next step.

### Locate Claimant

These records are ready to be ‘Skip Traced’. You may have your own system for doing so. However, in case you do not nor do you have the means to open an account with professional location service (such as Accurint, TLOxp, or hiring a PI), we have a guide “Skip Trace with Public Records” filled with resources for you to use and tips on searching.

In the database, there are 3 fields on the skip trace screen meant for you to enter good, confirmed information (Address, Phone and Email).

Once you have good contact information, set the status to “Contact Claimant”

### Contact Claimant
# RECORD STATUS / REPORTS AND THEIR PURPOSES

These are the records where the claimant is ready to be contacted. Here is where you will utilize the Database Fields named “Follow Ups”. Keep track of who, when and notes about claimants when they are contacted.

If, during your contact with them, they give a reason that they will not be meeting with you (they already claimed the surplus, etc.), you can set that record to “File Closed”.

If during your contact, they are ready for the next step, you can use the “Contact Attempts and Follow Up” table to set the appointment details.

After you have the necessary documents signed, set the status of that record to “Documents Signed”.

## Documents are Signed
These records are ready to have the surplus claim filed with the county. Once you file, set status to “Claim Filed”

## Claim Filed with County
These are the records where you have a claim in with the county. You can use this report to track the status with the county. Once the county pays the claim, set the status to “Claim Paid”

## Claim Paid
These claims are paid but possibly you have not settled with your client yet. Once you are finished with your client, set the status to “File Closed”

## File Closed
All of your closed files (Successful or not, as long as you performed some work on them)

## Ignored Records
All of your ignored records. There may be a point when you want to view these again.
IMPORTING RECORDS

Import Records From SurplusDatabase.com

After you obtain each new surplus list from your account on SurplusDatabase.com, you need to import it into your database online. Your list will be in a CSV Format. If you open the list to look at it before importing, it’s very important that you DO NOT edit the Title/Headers, or your list will not import into the database.

Import your Spreadsheet
Follow these steps to bring those records into your database.

STEP 1: Make sure the Surplus File that you downloaded from us is closed.

STEP 2: Click Import CSV File
STEP 3: Make sure all these settings are in place:

The “Duplicate Record” settings are important. This will stop you from accidentally importing the same set of records twice. If you try to do so, the database will recognize that the “SD Record ID’s” on the sheet you are importing are duplicates of records that are already in the database and it will not import them again.

STEP 4: Click the Browse Button and locate the Surplus File on your computer, select it and click Open
STEP 5: You can see it has the correct file and then you click the “Upload File” button

It does not take very long and you will then see at the top that it was added

IMPORT SUCCESSFUL!
Now if you click back to “List Records” and choose “Show Only records with “Current Status” “New”, you can see the new records you imported.

Please note, if you have other records in your database that you have not yet worked on or changed the status, then those will still appear here as well.
Import Records From Other Sources

STEP 1: Prepare your Spreadsheet
When you need to import new records, the first thing you need to do is prepare your Import Spreadsheet.

A. If you have not already done so, download the Import Template from our website
B. Fill in the cells with your data
C. Click Save
D. Choose Name and save it as a CSV (NOT an XLSX)
E. Close file or it will not import

**DO NOT EDIT THE COLUMN HEADINGS. If you edit these titles, your spreadsheet will not import into the database. You will get an error that your re-named fields do not exist in the database.**

- **Leave the id column blank.** This number is generated by your database when you import the records
- **Leave the private_id column blank.** This is reserved for records coming from SurplusDatabase.com

![Import Spreadsheet](image)

Step 2: Follow the same instructions as above, importing records from SurplusDatabase.com
EXPORTING RECORDS
You can Export all records to a CSV File.

**STEP 1:** Click “List Records” on the menu

**STEP 2:** Type in a File Name, Check Box to Include Field Titles (if desired) and click “Download CSV for this list”. Save on your computer.
Export only Particular Records

If you want to export only certain records, perform a Filter first. For example, if you want to export only Bay County...

**Surplus Database**

**List Records**

Show only records with:

- **County** ▼ that contains ▼ Bay

- **Surplus** that is greater than ▼ $150,000

Filter Clear Number of filters to use: 2

Advanced Filter: For example, if you want to export only Bay County AND the surplus is over $150,000 (Do not use commas or symbols)

**Surplus Database**

**List Records**

Show only records with:

- **County** ▼ that contains ▼ Bay

- **Surplus** that is greater than ▼ $150,000

Filter Clear Number of filters to use: 2

Sort by:
- Date Updated

1 record found, sorted by: Date Updated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Tax Deed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8619</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>172,713.15</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Bay County</td>
<td>2019-50201D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKING WITH A RECORD

For any record on which you want to work, click the Edit Icon next to that record.

Record Groups

You are presented with tabbed pages, one for each “Group”. A Group is a set of fields we put together because they are related.
The Groups are:
Record Info, Auction Details, Figures, Property Details, Owner Details, Record Research,
Claim Status and Notes, Follow Ups, Public Information, Attachments

Fields within the Groups

The highlighted fields are already populated when you import the records from SurplusDatabase.com

- Record Info (These fields are generated by actions performed)
  - ID
  - SD Record ID
  - Date Recorded
  - Date Updated
  - Last Accessed

- Auction Details
  - State
  - County
  - Auction Date
  - Week Number
  - Auction Notes

- Figures
  - Starting Bid
  - Assessed Value
  - Ending Bid
  - Overbid** (why is there an overbid AND surplus field?)
  - Surplus**
  - Notes About Figures

- Property Details
  - Tax Deed
  - Parcel Number
  - Physical Address 1
  - Physical Address 2
  - Physical City
  - Physical State
  - Physical Zip
  - Homestead
  - Property Notes

- Owner Details
• Owner Name
• Owner Address 1
• Owner Address 2
• Owner City
• Owner State
• Owner Zip
• Owner Research and Notes
• Owner Verified Phone
• Owner Verified Email
• Owner Verified Address

• Record Research (**Available only with the Pro Subscription**)
  • There ARE Liens on this record (True or False)
  • Lien Claim Deadline (Set at 210 days after the date of the auction. Why 210 Days? ***)
  • Has Governmental Liens (True or False)
  • Governmental Liens (Lists Book/Page #’s and Amount of Lien)
  • Has Mortgage(s) (True or False)
  • Mortgage Documents (Lists Book/Page #’s, Original Amount, Mortgage Date and Lender)
  • Has Judgments (True or False)
  • Judgments (Lists Book/Page #’s, Date, Amount and Lien Holder – Could be obtained as client)
  • Has HOA or COA Liens (True or False)
  • HOA Liens (Lists Book/Page #’s, Amount of Lien)
  • Has Other or Unknown Liens (True or False)
  • Other Liens (Lists any info we can find)
  • Notes About Research (We may or may not have notes on each record)
  • Has Federal Lien (True or False)
  • Federal Liens (Lists Book/Page #’s, Amount of Lien – Federal Liens never expire)

• Claim Status and Notes
  • Claim Status and Notes (Text Area for you to type in your notes)
  • Current Status (Drop Down Box for you to change the status on records –
  the default status upon import is “New”)

• Follow Ups (Five Date and Description fields for you to track your tasks)
  • Follow Up Date 1
  • Follow Up Description 1
  • Follow Up Date 2
  • Follow Up Description 2
  • Follow Up Date 3
  • Follow Up Description 3
  • Follow Up Date 4
  • Follow Up Description 4
  • Follow Up Date 5
Follow Up Description 5

Public Information Field

IF, later on, you decide you want to show partial information on your website to your visitors, this is the information that would show. We create this field when we set up the records to be imported into your database. You can edit the information right in this box. By default, only their name and Surplus amount will show in this field. Also by default, no surplus record information is shown to the public on your website.

Attachments

You can attach your documents directly to the record. Although we DO provide the Property Information Reports for your imported records, we do not attach them to the individual records for you.

- Property Information Report
- Assignment of Interest
- Contingency Agreement
- Power of Attorney
- Surplus Claim Form
- Other File
DELETE RECORDS UNDER CERTAIN $ AMOUNT

We realize you may not want to work with surplus records under a certain amount, ever.
You can quickly clean out records under the amount you choose.
**You are deleting records from your database and you cannot get them back.**
We produce surplus records where the surplus is $1,000 and above. If, for example, you
positively know you will never work with anything under $7,000, here is what to do:

**STEP 1: Filter your List of Records so only those less than $7,000 show**

Look at your Filtered List and be sure those are the records you want to get rid of:

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**Surplus Database**

Show only records with:

- Surplus ▼ that ▼ is less than ▼ 7000

Filter  Clear  Number of filters to use: 1

---

1 record found, sorted by: Date Updated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Tax Deed</th>
<th>Parcel Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8620</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>3,048.69</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Charlotte County</td>
<td>19-0654</td>
<td>402204305001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Look at your Filtered List and be sure those are the records you want to get rid of:
Step 2: Check the box at the top left of the list. This will check ALL of the records on the Filtered List. Choose “Delete” on the drop down and then Click “Apply”. You will be asked if you are sure, Choose Yes.

1 record found, sorted by: Date Updated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8620</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>5,048.66</td>
<td>FL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OTHER ITEMS
The Surplus Database was created, based on a WordPress Plugin called ‘Participants Database’. There are a few more items on your menu. We highly recommend you do not change anything here unless you really know what you are doing.

PROTECTING YOUR DATABASE AND WEBSITE FILES

We set up a system to create a backup of your Surplus Database and Records every morning at 1:00 a.m. EST. At any point, if for any reason your database gets messed up, you can request that we restore the most recent backup.

Please Note, the backups do not cover your website pages and images. If you accidentally delete pages or images, we will need to manually re-create them. You have to submit a Help Desk Ticket and there is a fee involved. We recommend instead of deleting pages you do not want, you “unpublish” them instead. That way, they are still there but not viewable by your website visitors.

In edit mode of the page, choose Edit, next to “Published”. In the drop-down, choose “Draft” and “OK”. Then be sure to click “Update” to save the page. To restore this page, simply do the reverse: Change it to “Published”.
GETTING HELP

All Assistance is provided through the Help Desk Ticketing System on our website. https://www.SurplusDatabase.com

Please be sure to select the appropriate topic for all Tickets you submit.

Aside from your initial free one-hour phone consultation, we do accept call requests at a rate of $20 for the first 15 minutes and $1 per minute thereafter.

The Online Help Desk is always free.
Why is there an overbid AND surplus field?

This is Florida-Specific. When determining the opening bid, a county takes into account if the property is homestead. If it IS, then 1/2 of the Assessed value of the property is added to the Opening Bid. That shows BIDDERS what they need to start the bidding. However, for the purposes of collecting surplus after the auction, that ‘1/2 of the assessed value’ also goes to the previous owner/lienholders/mortgage company (whoever is claiming the surplus).

Therefore, on our records for Florida Counties, if you see that the Overbid amount and the Surplus Amount are different, then that property had the Homestead Exemption when the auction happened. It’s not necessary you understand all of that. You only need to know that for the purposes of Surplus Recovery, the Surplus amount we show is the correct figure you are dealing with.

If interested, you can read the full explanation here: https://www.taxauctionsurplus.com/faq/

Scroll down to the heading “Homestead Status matters when it comes to Florida Tax Deed Surplus”

Why is the deadline set at 210 days?

First of all, this deadline applies to LIEN HOLDERS only. The previous property owner is NOT under a deadline to claim.

As the Florida Statute is written, lien holders have “120 days from the date the county mails the surplus notice” to file a claim or they are forever barred. Also, “Within 90 days after the claim period expires, the clerk may either file an interpleader or pay the claim” – Therefore, we set the deadline in our records to encompass both the 120 day and the 90 days to be absolutely sure the deadline is reached.