

Chapter 10.20

VEHICLE ABANDONMENT AND IMPOUNDMENT

Sections:

- 10.20.005 Definitions.
- 10.20.010 Abandonment prohibited--impoundment authorized.
- 10.20.020 Persons authorized to impound vehicles.
- 10.20.030 Impoundment and storage charges.
- 10.20.035 Disposition of abandoned vehicles.

10.20.005 Definitions.

- A. "Department" means the county highway department.
- B. "Officer in charge" means the department head, officer or designee vested with the management or supervision of the various county properties.
- C. "Vehicle" means any motor vehicle, trailer, semi-trailer or home. (Ord. 144-24, Sec. 27, 2000; Ord. 81-82/274 Sec.1(part), 1982).

10.20.010 Abandonment prohibited--Impoundment authorized.

A. No person shall leave unattended any vehicle on any public highway in the county, or on county property, for such time and under such circumstances as to cause the vehicle to reasonably appear to have been abandoned. Except as otherwise provided in this section, whenever any vehicles has been left unattended without permission of the property owner or officer in charge for more than 48 hours, the vehicle is deemed abandoned and constitutes a public nuisance. A vehicle shall not be considered abandoned when it is out of ordinary public view, or when designated as not abandoned by the sheriff or the officer in charge in accord with this chapter.

1. The sheriff, sheriff's deputy or the officer in charge who discovers any vehicle which has been abandoned shall cause it to be removed to the county vehicle pound as provided in A.2. The officer shall notify the sheriff of the abandonment and location of the impounded vehicle.

2. The sheriff or the officer in charge of the property upon which it stands shall, prior to towing and impoundment under this section, attempt to notify the owner of proposed towing and impoundment. If attempted notification fails, the vehicle may be impounded.

B. If a vehicle is left unattended on county property without the permission of the officer in charge and it jeopardizes public safety by creating an unsafe condition, significantly hindering the efficient movement of traffic or interfering with parking of vehicles in county lots, the officer in charge of the property on which it stands or the sheriff may authorize the immediate removal, towing and impoundment of the vehicle at the vehicle pound.

C. The officer in charge or the sheriff may order the immediate towing and impoundment of any unattended vehicle having caused damage to county property until such time as restitution for damages is made to the county, a release therefor is executed, and all charges under 10.20.030 are paid.

D. Any vehicle in violation of this section shall be impounded until lawfully claimed or disposed of under 10.20.030 or 10.20.035, except that if the officer in charge deems that the cost of towing and storage charges for impoundment would exceed the value of the vehicle, it may be junked or sold in accord with 10.20.035 prior to the expiration of the impoundment period upon determination by the sheriff that the vehicle is not stolen or otherwise wanted for evidence or other reason. (Ord. 165-15, Sec. 2, 2021; Ord. 147-88, 2004; Ord.144-24, Sec. 28, 2000; Ord.126-47 Secs.1, 2, 1982; Ord.81-82/274 Sec.1(part), 1982).

(Ord. 165-15, Sec. 3, 2021; Ord.126-47 Sec.3, 1982)

10.20.020 Persons authorized to impound vehicles. The department shall accept vehicles and watercraft for impoundment upon request of the following:

A. The officer in charge of county property upon which the vehicle was abandoned or where it caused property damage;

B. A law enforcement officer as defined in 9.46.005 B. engaged in official duties;

C. The district attorney or designee;

D. Upon order of the circuit court. (Ord.126-47 Secs.4, 5, 1982; Ord 81-82/274 Sec.1(part), 1982).

10.20.030 Impoundment and storage charges.

A. The owner of any abandoned or impounded vehicle is responsible for all costs of impoundment or disposition of the vehicle. The corporation counsel is authorized to recover by civil action all costs not recovered by the assessment of charges or disposition of the vehicle.

B. The owner or lienholder of record of any vehicle impounded or stored at the vehicle pound pursuant to this chapter shall be assessed \$30.00 for each day the vehicle remains in storage, plus towing costs in addition to any civil forfeiture.

C. The department shall calculate all charges and restitution due and owing on all impounded vehicles and may release an impounded vehicle upon receipt of the following:

1. A duly executed release from the impounding officer or court;

2. A release from the sheriff stating that the vehicle is not stolen or otherwise wanted for evidence or other reason;

3. A released of satisfaction from the impounding officer for restitution for damages under 10.20.010 C.

4. Payment to the county treasurer for all charges assessed by the department pursuant to this section. (Ord. 151-32, Sec. 18, 2007; Ord. 148-102 Sec. 13, 2004; Ord. 146-47, 2002; Ord. 81-82/274 Sec.1(part), 1982).