
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5317

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senate Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, J. Wilson, Frame, Lias, Lovick, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Wellman, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to the removal of vehicles by a regional transit
2 authority when obstructing the operation of high capacity
3 transportation vehicles or jeopardizing public safety; amending RCW
4 46.55.010; and reenacting RCW 46.55.080.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.55.010 and 2022 c 186 s 708 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 The definitions set forth in this section apply throughout this
9 chapter:

10 (1) "Abandoned vehicle" means a vehicle that a registered tow
11 truck operator has impounded and held in the operator's possession
12 for 120 consecutive hours.

13 (2) "Immobilize" means the use of a locking wheel boot that, when
14 attached to the wheel of a vehicle, prevents the vehicle from moving
15 without damage to the tire to which the locking wheel boot is
16 attached.

17 (3) "Abandoned vehicle report" means the document prescribed by
18 the state that the towing operator forwards to the department after a
19 vehicle has become abandoned.

20 (4) "Impound" means to take and hold a vehicle in legal custody.
21 There are two types of impounds—public and private.

1 (a) "Public impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded at
2 the direction of a law enforcement officer or by a public official
3 having jurisdiction over the public property upon which the vehicle
4 was located.

5 (b) "Private impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded
6 at the direction of a person having control or possession of the
7 private property upon which the vehicle was located.

8 (5) "Junk vehicle" means a vehicle certified under RCW 46.55.230
9 as meeting at least three of the following requirements:

10 (a) Is three years old or older;

11 (b) Is extensively damaged, such damage including but not limited
12 to any of the following: A broken window or windshield, or missing
13 wheels, tires, motor, or transmission;

14 (c) Is apparently inoperable;

15 (d) Has an approximate fair market value equal only to the
16 approximate value of the scrap in it.

17 (6) "Master log" means the document or an electronic facsimile
18 prescribed by the department and the Washington state patrol in which
19 an operator records transactions involving impounded vehicles.

20 (7) "Registered tow truck operator" or "operator" means any
21 person who engages in the impounding, transporting, or storage of
22 unauthorized vehicles or the disposal of abandoned vehicles.

23 (8) "Residential property" means property that has no more than
24 four living units located on it.

25 (9) "Suspended license impound" means an impound ordered under
26 RCW 46.55.113 because the operator was arrested for a violation of
27 RCW 46.20.342 or 46.20.345.

28 (10) "Tow truck" means a motor vehicle that is equipped for and
29 used in the business of towing vehicles with equipment as approved by
30 the state patrol.

31 (11) "Tow truck number" means the number issued by the department
32 to tow trucks used by a registered tow truck operator in the state of
33 Washington.

34 (12) "Tow truck permit" means the permit issued annually by the
35 department that has the classification of service the tow truck may
36 provide stamped upon it.

37 (13) "Tow truck service" means the transporting upon the public
38 streets and highways of this state of vehicles, together with
39 personal effects and cargo, by a tow truck of a registered operator.

1 (14) "Unauthorized vehicle" means a vehicle that is subject to
2 impoundment after being left unattended in one of the following
3 public or private locations for the indicated period of time:

4 Subject to removal after:

- 5 (a) Public locations:
 - 6 (i) Constituting an accident or a traffic hazard as
7 defined in RCW 46.55.113 Immediately
 - 8 (ii) On a highway and tagged as described in RCW
9 46.55.085 24 hours
 - 10 (iii) In a publicly owned or controlled parking
11 facility, properly posted under RCW
12 46.55.070 Immediately
 - 13 (iv) (~~During the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, within~~
14 ~~the~~) On or within 10 feet on either side of a
15 right-of-way used by a regional transit authority
16 for high capacity transportation where the vehicle
17 constitutes an obstruction to the operation of high
18 capacity transportation vehicles or
19 jeopardizes public safety. Immediately
- 20 (b) Private locations:
 - 21 (i) On residential property Immediately
 - 22 (ii) On private, nonresidential property,
23 properly posted under RCW
24 46.55.070 Immediately
 - 25 (iii) On private, nonresidential property,
26 not posted 24 hours

27 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.55.080 and 2022 c 186 s 709 are each reenacted to
28 read as follows:

29 (1) If a vehicle is in violation of the time restrictions of RCW
30 46.55.010(14), it may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator
31 at the direction of a law enforcement officer, authorized regional
32 transit authority representative under the conditions described in
33 RCW 46.55.010(14)(a)(iv), or other public official with jurisdiction
34 if the vehicle is on public property, or at the direction of the
35 property owner or an agent if it is on private property. A law
36 enforcement officer may also direct the impoundment of a vehicle
37 pursuant to a writ or court order.

1 (2) The person requesting a private impound or a law enforcement
2 officer, authorized regional transit authority representative, or
3 public official requesting a public impound shall provide a signed
4 authorization for the impound at the time and place of the impound to
5 the registered tow truck operator before the operator may proceed
6 with the impound. A registered tow truck operator, employee, or his
7 or her agent may not serve as an agent of a property owner for the
8 purposes of signing an impound authorization or, independent of the
9 property owner, identify a vehicle for impound.

10 (3) In the case of a private impound, the impound authorization
11 shall include the following statement: "A person authorizing this
12 impound, if the impound is found in violation of chapter 46.55 RCW,
13 may be held liable for the costs incurred by the vehicle owner."

14 (4) A registered tow truck operator shall record and keep in the
15 operator's files the date and time that a vehicle is put in the
16 operator's custody and released. The operator shall make an entry
17 into a master log regarding transactions relating to impounded
18 vehicles. The operator shall make this master log available, upon
19 request, to representatives of the department or the state patrol.

20 (5) A person who engages in or offers to engage in the activities
21 of a registered tow truck operator may not be associated in any way
22 with a person or business whose main activity is authorizing the
23 impounding of vehicles.

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