

CHAPTER 42  
[Engrossed House Bill No. 769]  
STOLEN AND ABANDONED VEHICLES

AN ACT Relating to stolen and abandoned vehicles on the highways in the state of Washington, requiring notification to the department of motor vehicles by the transferor, giving the director of the department of motor vehicles responsibility for the ultimate disposition of abandoned vehicles and automobile hulks, making the last registered owner liable for costs of removing and disposing of the vehicle or hulk; authorizing a local abatement procedure for disposition of hulks that constitute a public nuisance; amending section 7, chapter 140, Laws of 1967 and RCW 46.12.101; amending section 46.52.110, chapter 12, Laws of 1961, as last amended by section 61, chapter 32, Laws of 1967, and RCW 46.52.110; adding new sections to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW, repealing sections 1, 2, and 3, chapter 155, Laws of 1967, and RCW 60.62.010 through 60.62.030; and prescribing penalties.

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

Section 1. Section 7, chapter 140, Laws of 1967 and 46.12.101 RCW are each amended to read as follows:

A transfer of ownership in a motor vehicle is perfected by compliance with the requirements of this section.

(1) If an owner transfers his interest in a vehicle, other than by the creation of a security interest, he shall, at the time of the delivery of the vehicle, execute an assignment to the transferee in the space provided therefor on the certificate or as the department prescribes, and cause the certificate and assignment to be transmitted to the transferee or to the department.

(2) The transferor shall, unless he is a motor vehicle dealer, within five days after transfer, transmit to the department of motor vehicles, on a form prescribed by the director of motor vehicles, notice that he has transferred his interest in the vehicle, the name of the transferee, and the date on which the transaction was made. Compliance with this requirement shall preclude any liability on the

part of the transferor under chapter 46.52 RCW.

~~((42))~~ (3) Except as provided in RCW 46.12.120 the transferee shall within fifteen days after delivery to him of the vehicle, execute the application for a new certificate of ownership in the same space provided therefor on the certificate or as the department prescribes, and cause the certificates and application to be transmitted to the department.

~~((43))~~ (4) Upon request of the owner or transferee, a secured party in possession of the certificate of ownership shall, unless the transfer was a breach of its security agreement, either deliver the certificate to the transferee for transmission to the department or, when the secured party receives the owner's assignment from the transferee, it shall transmit the transferee's application for a new certificate, the existing certificate, and the required fee to the department. Compliance with this section does not affect the rights of the secured party under his security agreement.

~~((44))~~ (5) If a security interest is reserved or created at the time of the transfer, the certificate of ownership shall be retained by or delivered to the person who becomes the secured party, and the parties shall comply with the provisions of RCW 46.12.170.

~~((45))~~ (6) If the purchaser or transferee fails or neglects to transfer such certificate of ownership and license registration within fifteen days after date of delivery of the vehicle to him, he shall on making application for transfer be assessed a five-dollar penalty on the sixteenth day and one dollar additional for each day thereafter, but not to exceed fifteen dollars: PROVIDED, That such failure or neglect to transfer within forty-five days after date of delivery of said vehicle shall be a misdemeanor.

~~((46))~~ (7) Upon receipt of an application for the reissue of a certificate of ownership and transfer of license registration, accompanied by the endorsed certificate of ownership and such other documentary evidence as is deemed necessary, the department shall, if the application is in order and if all provisions relating to the

certificates of ownership and license registration have been complied with, issue new certificates of title and license registration as in the case of an original issue and shall transmit the fees together with an itemized detailed report to the state treasurer, to be deposited in the motor vehicle fund.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

Responsibility for the ultimate disposition of abandoned vehicles and abandoned automobile hulks is hereby vested in the department of motor vehicles. The director of the department of motor vehicles, in cooperation with the chief of the Washington state patrol and other law enforcement agencies throughout this state, after appropriate notice and hearing, shall establish from time to time rules and regulations for the disposition of abandoned vehicles and abandoned automobile hulks not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

An "abandoned vehicle" for the purposes of this chapter shall mean any vehicle left within the limits of any highway or upon the property of another without the consent of the owner of such property for a period of twenty-four hours, or longer except that a vehicle shall not be considered abandoned if its owner or operator is unable to remove it from the place where it is located and so notifies law enforcement officials and requests assistance. An "abandoned automobile hulk" for the purposes of this chapter shall mean the abandoned remnant or remains of a motor vehicle which is inoperative and cannot be made mechanically operative without the addition of vital parts or mechanisms and the application of a substantial amount of labor to effect repairs.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

The abandonment of any vehicle or automobile hulk shall constitute

a prima facie presumption that the last owner of record is responsible for such abandonment and thus liable for any costs incurred in removing, storing and disposing of such motor vehicle or automobile hulk. A registered owner who has complied with the requirements of section 1 of this 1969 amendatory act in the transfer of ownership of the vehicle or hulk shall be relieved of liability under this section.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

The director of the department of motor vehicles may appoint any tow truck operator engaged in removing and storing of abandoned motor vehicles as his agent for the purpose of disposing of certain abandoned vehicles and automobile hulks. Each such appointment shall be contingent upon the submission of an application to the director and the making of subsequent reports in such form and frequency as may be required by rule and regulation and upon the posting of a surety bond in the amount of three thousand dollars to ensure compliance with section 6 of this 1969 amendatory act and to compensate the owner of any vehicle that has been unlawfully sold as a result of any negligence or misconduct of the tow truck operator.

Any appointment may be canceled by the director upon evidence that the appointed tow truck operator is not complying with all laws, rules and regulations relative to the handling and disposition of abandoned motor vehicles.

Any tow truck operator under contract to a city or county for the impounding of vehicles shall comply with such administrative regulations relative to the handling and disposing of vehicles as may be promulgated by such city or county and as hereinafter set forth.

Sec. 6. Section 46.52.110, chapter 12, Laws of 1961, as last amended by section 61, chapter 32, Laws of 1967, and RCW 46.52.110 are each amended to read as follows:

It shall be the duty of the sheriff of every county, the chief of police or chief police officer of every incorporated city and town of this state, constables and members of the Washington state patrol to report

immediately to the chief of the Washington state patrol all motor vehicles reported to them as stolen or recovered, upon forms to be provided by the chief of the Washington state patrol.

In the event that any motor vehicle reported as stolen has been recovered, the person so reporting the same as stolen shall be guilty of a misdemeanor unless he shall report the recovery thereof to the sheriff, chief of police, or other chief police officer to whom such motor vehicle was reported as stolen.

Upon receipt of such information the chief of the Washington state patrol shall file the same in a "stolen vehicle index." He shall also file any reports of vehicles stolen in other states and reported to him as such. It shall be the duty of the chief of the Washington state patrol to keep a file record of all vehicles reported to him as recovered.

The chief of the Washington state patrol shall publish at least once a month a list of all vehicles reported as stolen and not reported as having been recovered and all abandoned vehicles and forward a copy of such list to every sheriff in this state, the chief of police or chief police officer of every incorporated city and town with a population in excess of three thousand inhabitants, each member of the Washington state patrol and the cognizant state officer of each state in the United States.

Such information shall be provided by the chief of the Washington state patrol for the use of the director of motor vehicles as will permit the director to check the motor or serial number set forth in any application for certificate of ownership or certificate of license registration against such "stolen vehicle index" and no such certificates shall be issued upon any vehicle recorded as stolen and the director shall immediately inform the chief of the Washington state patrol of any application upon any such vehicle.

It shall be the duty of the sheriff of every county, the chief of police or chief police officer of each incorporated city and town, members of the Washington state patrol and constables to

report to the chief of the Washington state patrol all vehicles or automobile hulks found abandoned on a public highway or at any other place and the same shall ~~((be taken into the custody of the sheriff of the county wherein found abandoned and stored and the same shall, for the purposes of listing the same, be considered as a recovered vehicle,--Personal notice that such vehicle has been found abandoned shall be forwarded to the registered and legal owners of such vehicle if any record of registered or legal owner thereof exists in this state,--In the event there appears to be a registered or legal ownership thereof in another state the sheriff shall send notice thereof to the official having cognizance of issuing legal or registered ownerships in such other state,--If, at the expiration of twenty days from the date of mailing such notices by registered or certified mail with return receipt requested, the vehicle remains unclaimed and has not been reported as a stolen vehicle, then the same may be sold at public auction either at the site of the vehicle or at such place on county property as the board of county commissioners may direct upon notice published in one issue of a paper of general circulation in the county in which such vehicle has been found abandoned, such publication to describe the vehicle and set forth the place, date and time at which such vehicle shall be put up for public auction, which date shall be not sooner than three days following the date of such publication,--Any surplus accruing at said sale after deducting the cost of placing the vehicle in custody, advertising and selling the same, shall be held for the owner a period of ten days and if not claimed by the expiration thereof shall be certified one-half to the county treasurer of such county to be placed in the county current expense fund and one-half to the state treasurer to be credited to the highway safety fund,~~

~~If no bids are received at said sale the sheriff shall deliver the vehicle to the garage operators who may be entitled to reimbursement for towing and storing the vehicle,--In this event such garage operators may dispose of all or any part of the vehicle as they may~~

determine.

~~Any vehicle left in a garage for storage more than fifteen days where the same has not been left by the registered owner under a contract of storage and has not during such period been removed by the person leaving the same shall be an abandoned vehicle and shall be delivered to the sheriff of the county with notice of such fact. Any garage keeper failing to report such fact to the sheriff and tender delivery to him of such vehicle at the end of fifteen days shall thereby forfeit any claims for the storage of such vehicle. All such vehicles considered abandoned by being left in a garage shall be disposed of in accordance with the procedure prescribed above for abandoned vehicles.~~

~~Except for the forfeiture of claim for storage as set forth herein for failure to report vehicle left in excess of fifteen days, nothing in this section shall be construed to impair any lien for storage accruing to a garage keeper under other law of this state)) thereafter, at the direction of such law enforcement officer, be placed in the custody of a tow truck operator.~~

NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

Such tow truck operator shall take custody of such abandoned vehicle or automobile hulk, remove the same to the established place of business of the tow truck operator where the same shall be stored, and such tow truck operator shall have a lien upon such vehicle or hulk for services provided in the towing and storage of the same, and shall also have a claim against the last registered owner of such vehicle or hulk for services provided in the towing and storage of the same, not to exceed the sum of one hundred dollars. A registered owner who has complied with section 1 of this 1969 amendatory act in the transfer of ownership of the vehicle or hulk shall be relieved of liability under this section.

Within five days after receiving custody of such abandoned vehicle or automobile hulk, the tow truck operator shall give notice of

his custody to the department of motor vehicles and the chief of the Washington state patrol and within five days after having received the name and address of the owner, he shall notify the registered and legal owner of the same with copies of such notice being sent to the chief of the Washington state patrol and to the department of motor vehicles. The notice to the registered and legal owner shall be sent by the tow truck operator to the last known address of said owner appearing on the records of the department of motor vehicles, and such notice shall be sent to the registered and legal owner by first class mail with return receipt requested. Such notice shall contain a description of the vehicle or hulk including its license number and/or motor number if obtainable, and shall state the amount due the tow truck operator for services in the towing and storage of the same and the time and place of public sale if the amount remains unpaid.

The department of motor vehicles shall supply the last known names and addresses of registered and legal owners of abandoned vehicles or automobile hulks appearing on the records of the department to tow truck operators on request without charge.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

If, after the expiration of fifteen days from the date of mailing of notice to the registered and legal owner, the vehicle or automobile hulk remains unclaimed and has not been listed as a stolen or recovered vehicle, then the tow truck operator having custody of such vehicle or hulk shall conduct a sale of the same at public auction after having first published a notice of the date, place and time of such auction in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the vehicle is located not less than three days before the date of such auction.

Such abandoned vehicle or automobile hulk shall be sold at such auction to the highest bidder. The proceeds of such sale, after deducting the towing and storage charges due the tow truck operator,



including the cost of sale, which shall be computed as in a public auction sale of personal property by the sheriff, shall be certified one-half to the county treasurer of the county in which the vehicle is located to be credited to the county current expense fund, and one-half to the state treasurer to be credited to the highway safety fund. If the amount bid at the auction is insufficient to compensate the tow truck operator for his towing and storage charges and the cost of sale, such tow truck operator shall be entitled to assert a claim for any deficiency, not to exceed one hundred dollars less the amount bid at the auction, against the last registered owner of such vehicle or automobile hulk. A registered owner who has complied with section 1 of this 1969 amendatory act in the transfer of ownership of the vehicle or hulk shall be relieved of liability under this section.

After the public auction and sale of any abandoned vehicle or automobile hulk as in this section provided, and after an application for certificate of title accompanied by applicable fees and taxes and supported by an appropriate affidavit reciting compliance with the procedures of this chapter has been submitted, the director of the department of motor vehicles shall issue a certificate of title showing ownership of the vehicle or automobile hulk in the name of the successful bidder at such auction. The issuance of such certificate of title by the director of the department of motor vehicles shall terminate any and all rights or claims of prior lien-holders and all rights of former owners in and to such vehicle or automobile hulk.

The director of the department of motor vehicles shall establish such additional administrative rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter, as may be necessary to facilitate the disposition of abandoned vehicles and automobile hulks in those instances where the ownership of such a vehicle or hulk is not known.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 9. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of

1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

Any vehicle left in a garage for storage more than five days where the same has not been left by the registered owner under a contract of storage and has not during such period been removed by a person leaving the same shall be an abandoned vehicle and notice shall be given to the registered and legal owner and to the chief of the Washington state patrol and to the department of motor vehicles of the existence of such abandoned vehicle. Any garage keeper failing to report such fact to the chief of the Washington state patrol and the department of motor vehicles within ten days after the commencement of such storage shall forfeit any claim for the storage of such vehicle. All such vehicles considered abandoned by being left in a garage shall be disposed of by the garage keeper in accordance with the procedure prescribed in sections 7 and 8 of this 1969 amendatory act.

Except for the forfeiture of claim for storage as set forth herein for failure to report vehicles left in excess of five days, nothing in this section shall be construed to impair any lien for storage accruing to a garage keeper under other law of this state.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 10. A tow truck operator bonded in accordance with section 5 of this 1969 amendatory act who shall tow, transport or store any vehicle whether by contract or at the direction of any public officer, shall have a lien upon such vehicle so long as the same remains in his possession, for the charges for such towing, transportation or storage. If such a vehicle remains unclaimed for five days, it may be deemed abandoned and subject to the provisions of sections 7 and 8 of this 1969 amendatory act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 11. A city or county may adopt an ordinance or resolution establishing procedures for the disposition of abandoned vehicles. Any vehicle impounded pursuant to an ordinance or resolution of any city or county and left unclaimed for a period of fifteen days shall be deemed to be an abandoned vehicle, and at the expiration of such period said vehicle shall be deemed to be in

the custody of the sheriff of the county where said vehicle is located and the sheriff of the county shall deliver the vehicle to a tow truck operator who shall dispose of such vehicle in the manner provided in sections 7 and 8 of this 1969 amendatory act: PROVIDED, That if the vehicle is of a model year ten or more years prior to the calendar year in which such vehicle is stored, the sheriff may be authorized to declare that such vehicle is a public nuisance, and may dispose of such vehicle without notice of sale, and in such case, the director of motor vehicles shall issue an appropriate bill of sale to the tow truck operator to dispose of the vehicle as he may determine.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 12. There is added to chapter 12, Laws of 1961 and to chapter 46.52 RCW a new section to read as follows:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a city, town, or county may adopt an ordinance establishing procedures for the abatement and removal as public nuisances of abandoned, wrecked, dismantled, or inoperative vehicles or automobile hulks or parts thereof from private property not including highways. Costs of removal may be assessed against the last registered owner of the vehicle or automobile hulk if the identity of such owner can be determined, unless such owner in the transfer of ownership of such vehicle or automobile hulk has complied with section 1 of this 1969 amendatory act, or the costs may be assessed against the owner of the property on which the vehicle is stored.

Such ordinance shall contain:

(1) A provision requiring notice to the last registered owner of record and the property owner of record that a public hearing may be requested before the governing body of the city, town or county as designated by the governing body, and that if no hearing is requested, the vehicle or automobile hulk will be removed.

(2) A provision requiring that if a request for a hearing is received, a notice giving the time, location and date of such hearing on the question of abatement and removal of the vehicle or part thereof as a public nuisance shall be mailed, by certified or re-

gistered mail, with a five-day return requested, to the owner of the land as shown on the last equalized assessment roll and to the last registered and legal owner of record unless the vehicle is in such condition that identification numbers are not available to determine ownership.

(3) A provision that the ordinance shall not apply to (a) a vehicle or part thereof which is completely enclosed within a building in a lawful manner where it is not visible from the street or other public or private property or (b) a vehicle or part thereof which is stored or parked in a lawful manner on private property in connection with the business of a licensed dismantler, licensed vehicle dealer, fenced according to the provisions of RCW 46.80.130.

(4) A provision that the owner of the land on which the vehicle is located may appear in person at the hearing or present a written statement in time for consideration at the hearing, and deny responsibility for the presence of the vehicle on the land, with his reasons for such denial. If it is determined at the hearing that the vehicle was placed on the land without the consent of the landowner and that he has not subsequently acquiesced in its presence, then the local agency shall not assess costs of administration or removal of the vehicle against the property upon which the vehicle is located or otherwise attempt to collect such cost from the owner.

(5) A provision that after notice has been given of the intent of the city, town or county to dispose of the vehicle and after a hearing, if requested, has been held, the vehicle or part thereof, shall be removed, at the request of a law enforcement officer, and disposed of to a licensed auto wrecker with notice to the Washington state patrol and the department of motor vehicles that the vehicle has been wrecked. The city, town or county may operate such a disposal site when its governing body determines that commercial channels of disposition are not available or are inadequate, and it may make final disposition of such vehicles or parts, or may transfer such vehicle or parts to another governmental body provided such disposal

shall be only as scrap.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 13. Sections 1 through 3, chapter 155, Laws of 1967, and RCW 60.62.010 through 60.62.030 are each repealed.

Passed the House March 18, 1969  
Passed the Senate March 28, 1969  
Approved by the Governor April 4, 1969  
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CHAPTER 43  
[Senate Bill No. 273]  
COUNTY PRINTING

AN ACT Relating to county printing; and amending section 36.72.050, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.72.050; and declaring an emergency.

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

Section 1. Section 36.72.050, chapter 4, Laws of 1963 and RCW 36.72.050 are each amended to read as follows:

The county auditor, at least five weeks, but not more than eight weeks, before the meeting of the board of county commissioners in April of each year, shall advertise for proposals for the public printing, for the term of one year, beginning on the first day of July following, which advertisement shall be inserted for four consecutive weeks in the official newspaper of the county, or if there is no official newspaper, then in some other newspaper published in the county, or in a county adjacent to such county, and having a general circulation therein.

The board of county commissioners shall not be compelled in any event to accept any bid for a greater price than (~~two-dollars and-forty~~) three dollars and twenty cents per folio of one hundred words for the first insertion, and (~~one-dollar-and-eighty~~) two dollars and forty cents per folio of one hundred words for each subsequent insertion, or its equivalent in number of words.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall