



"The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom" Proverbs 9:10

## Impound and Signage Laws

### **RCW 46.55.070**

Posting requirements - Exceptions

(1) No person may impound, tow, or otherwise disturb any unauthorized vehicle standing on nonresidential private property or in a public parking facility for less than twenty-four hours unless a sign is posted near each entrance and on the property in a clearly conspicuous and visible location to all who park on such property that clearly indicates:

(a) The times a vehicle may be impounded as an unauthorized vehicle; and

(b) The name, telephone number, and address of the towing firm where the vehicle may be redeemed.

(2) The requirements of subsection (1) of this section do not apply to residential property. Any person having charge of such property may have an unauthorized vehicle impounded immediately upon giving written authorization.

(3) The department shall adopt rules relating to the size of the sign required by subsection (1) of this section, its lettering, placement, and the number required.

(4) This section applies to all new signs erected after July 1, 1986. All other signs must meet these requirements by July 1, 1989.

### **RCW 46.55.037**

Compensation for private impounds.

A registered tow truck operator may receive compensation from a private property owner or agent for a private impound of an unauthorized vehicle that has an approximate fair market value equal only to the approximate value of the scrap in it. The private property owner or an agent must authorize the impound under RCW 46.55.080. The registered tow truck operator shall process the vehicle in accordance with this chapter and shall deduct any compensation received from the private property owner or agent from the amount of the lien on the vehicle in accordance with this chapter.

### **RCW 46.55.080**

Law enforcement impound, private impound — Master log — Certain associations restricted.

(1) If a vehicle is in violation of the time restrictions of \*RCW 46.55.010(13), it may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator at the direction of a law enforcement officer or other public official with jurisdiction if the vehicle is on public property, or at the direction of the property owner or an agent if it is on private property. A law enforcement officer may also direct the impoundment of a vehicle pursuant to a writ or court order.

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**RCW 46.55.080 (cont.)**

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

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

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

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

**WAC 308-61-145**

Specifications and posting of signs.

How is the posting of signs on private and public property handled?

(1) Signs must measure at least 15" by 24" and the lettering thereon must be clearly visible to all who park.

(2) Signs for publicly owned or controlled parking facilities need to disclose that unauthorized vehicles will be impounded and must also disclose a phone number for redeeming a vehicle. If a registered tow truck operator is used, the signs must meet the same requirements as in the posting of private nonresidential property.