

RCW 46.55.110 Notice to legal and registered owners. (1) (a)

When an unauthorized vehicle is impounded, the impounding towing operator shall notify the legal and registered owners of the impoundment of the unauthorized vehicle and the owners of any other items of personal property registered or titled with the department. The notification shall be sent by first-class mail within twenty-four hours after the impoundment to the last known registered and legal owners of the vehicle, and the owners of any other items of personal property registered or titled with the department, as provided by the law enforcement agency, and shall inform the owners of the identity of the person or agency authorizing the impound.

(b) The notification shall include the name of the impounding tow firm, its address, and telephone number. The notice shall also include the location, time of the impound, and by whose authority the vehicle was impounded. The notice shall also include the written notice of the right of redemption and opportunity for a hearing to contest the validity of the impoundment pursuant to RCW 46.55.120.

(c) The notification must include a notice that the registered tow truck operator will store personal belongings found in the vehicle at no cost if the vehicle's owner or agent is present to retrieve the personal belongings from the vehicle and sign a personal belongings storage request form before the date of auction. If the vehicle's owner calls a registered tow truck operator to inquire about the impounded vehicle, the registered tow truck operator shall inform the owner of the owner's ability to retrieve any personal belongings from the vehicle and to request the registered tow truck operator to store the personal belongings by signing a personal belongings storage request form before the date of auction. Registered tow truck operators shall store personal belongings at no cost for thirty days from the date the personal belongings are removed from the vehicle by the owner and the vehicle's owner or agent has signed a personal belongings storage request form. Registered tow truck operators shall maintain a record of any signed personal belongings storage request form.

(2) In addition, if a suspended license impound has been ordered, the notice must state the length of the impound, the requirement of the posting of a security deposit to ensure payment of the costs of removal, towing, and storage, notification that if the security deposit is not posted the vehicle will immediately be processed and sold at auction as an abandoned vehicle, and the requirements set out in RCW 46.55.120(1)(c) regarding the payment of the costs of removal, towing, and storage as well as providing proof of satisfaction of any penalties, fines, or forfeitures before redemption. The notice must also state that the registered owner is ineligible to purchase the vehicle at the abandoned vehicle auction, if held.

(3) In the case of an abandoned vehicle, or other item of personal property registered or titled with the department, within twenty-four hours after receiving information on the legal and registered owners from the department through the abandoned vehicle report, the tow truck operator shall send by first-class mail a notice of custody and sale to the legal and registered owners and of the penalties for the traffic infraction littering—abandoned vehicle. The notice must include a notice that the registered tow truck operator will store personal belongings found in the vehicle at no cost if the vehicle's owner or agent is present to retrieve the personal belongings from the vehicle and sign a personal belongings storage

request form before the date of auction. The tow truck operator shall obtain a certificate of mailing from the United States postal service when notice is mailed.

(4) If the date on which a notice required by subsection (3) of this section is to be mailed falls upon a Saturday, Sunday, or a postal holiday, the notice may be mailed on the next day that is neither a Saturday, Sunday, nor a postal holiday.

(5) No notices need be sent to the legal or registered owners of an impounded vehicle or other item of personal property registered or titled with the department, if the vehicle or personal property has been redeemed. [2019 c 401 s 2; 2017 c 43 s 1; 2002 c 279 s 11; 1999 c 398 s 6; 1998 c 203 s 3; 1995 c 360 s 6; 1989 c 111 s 10; 1987 c 311 s 9; 1985 c 377 s 11.]

Finding—1998 c 203: See note following RCW 46.55.105.