

RCW 46.55.230 Junk vehicles—Removal, disposal, sale—Penalties—Cleanup restitution payment.

(1) (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any law enforcement officer having jurisdiction, or any employee or officer of a jurisdictional health department acting pursuant to RCW 70A.205.195, or any person authorized by the director shall inspect and may authorize the disposal of an abandoned junk vehicle. The person making the inspection shall record the make and vehicle identification number or license number of the vehicle if available, and shall also verify that the approximate value of the junk vehicle is equivalent only to the approximate value of the parts.

(b) A tow truck operator may authorize the disposal of an abandoned junk vehicle if the vehicle has been abandoned two or more times, the registered ownership information has not changed since the first abandonment, and the registered owner is also the legal owner.

(2) The law enforcement officer or department representative shall provide information on the vehicle's registered and legal owner to the landowner.

(3) Upon receiving information on the vehicle's registered and legal owner, the landowner shall mail a notice to the registered and legal owners shown on the records of the department. The notification shall describe the redemption procedure and the right to arrange for the removal of the vehicle.

(4) If the vehicle remains unclaimed more than fifteen days after the landowner has mailed notification to the registered and legal owner, the landowner may dispose of the vehicle or sign an affidavit of sale to be used as a title document.

(5) If no information on the vehicle's registered and legal owner is found in the records of the department, the landowner may immediately dispose of the vehicle or sign an affidavit of sale to be used as a title document.

(6) It is a gross misdemeanor for a person to abandon a junk vehicle on property. If a junk vehicle is abandoned, the vehicle's registered owner shall also pay a cleanup restitution payment equal to twice the costs incurred in the removal of the junk vehicle. The court shall distribute one-half of the restitution payment to the landowner of the property upon which the junk vehicle is located, and one-half of the restitution payment to the law enforcement agency or jurisdictional health department investigating the incident.

(7) For the purposes of this section, the term "landowner" includes a legal owner of private property, a person with possession or control of private property, or a public official having jurisdiction over public property.

(8) A person complying in good faith with the requirements of this section is immune from any liability arising out of an action taken or omission made in the compliance. [2021 c 65 § 52; 2002 c 279 § 13; 2001 c 139 § 3; 2000 c 154 § 4; 1991 c 292 § 2; 1987 c 311 § 19; 1985 c 377 § 23.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.

Severability—2000 c 154: See note following RCW 70A.200.030.