

RCW 46.55.100 Impound notice—Abandoned vehicle report—Owner information, liability—Disposition report. (1) At the time of impoundment the registered tow truck operator providing the towing service shall give immediate notification, by telephone or radio, to a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction who shall maintain a log of such reports. A law enforcement agency, or a private communication center acting on behalf of a law enforcement agency, shall within six to twelve hours of the impoundment, provide to a requesting operator the name and address of the legal and registered owners of the vehicle, and the registered owner of any personal property registered or titled with the department that is attached to or contained in or on the impounded vehicle, the vehicle identification number, and any other necessary, pertinent information. The initial notice of impoundment shall be followed by a written or electronic facsimile notice within twenty-four hours. In the case of a vehicle from another state, time requirements of this subsection do not apply until the requesting law enforcement agency in this state receives the information.

(2) The operator shall immediately send an abandoned vehicle report to the department for any vehicle, and for any items of personal property registered or titled with the department, that are in the operator's possession after the one hundred twenty hour abandonment period. Such report need not be sent when the impoundment is pursuant to a writ, court order, or police hold that is not a suspended license impound. The owner notification and abandonment process shall be initiated by the registered tow truck operator immediately following notification by a court or law enforcement officer that the writ, court order, or police hold that is not a suspended license impound is no longer in effect.

(3) Following the submittal of an abandoned vehicle report, the department shall provide the registered tow truck operator with owner information within seventy-two hours.

(4) Within fourteen days of the sale of an abandoned vehicle at public auction, the towing operator shall send a copy of the abandoned vehicle report showing the disposition of the abandoned vehicle and any other items of personal property registered or titled with the department to the department. The vehicle buyer information sent to the department on the abandoned vehicle report relieves the previous owner of the vehicle from any civil or criminal liability for the operation of the vehicle from the date of sale thereafter and transfers full liability for the vehicle to the buyer. By January 1, 2003, the department shall create a system enabling tow truck operators the option of sending the portion of the abandoned vehicle report that contains the vehicle's buyer information to the department electronically.

(5) If the operator sends an abandoned vehicle report to the department and the department finds no owner information, an operator may proceed with an inspection of the vehicle and any other items of personal property registered or titled with the department to determine whether owner identification is within the vehicle.

(6) If the operator finds no owner identification, the operator shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency, which shall search the vehicle and any other items of personal property registered or titled with the department for the vehicle identification number or other appropriate identification numbers and check the necessary records to determine the vehicle's or other

property's owners. [2002 c 279 s 9; 1999 c 398 s 5; 1998 c 203 s 9; 1995 c 360 s 5; 1991 c 20 s 1; 1989 c 111 s 9; 1987 c 311 s 8; 1985 c 377 s 10.]

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