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**HOUSE BILL 2495**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Thomas, Reed, Scott, Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Parshley, Macri, Street, Pollet, and Obras

Read first time 01/15/26. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to the removal of vehicles by certain cities when  
2 obstructing the operation of streetcar vehicles or jeopardizing  
3 public safety; amending RCW 46.55.080; reenacting and amending RCW  
4 46.55.010; and declaring an emergency.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.55.010 and 2023 c 326 s 1 are each reenacted and  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 The definitions set forth in this section apply throughout this  
9 chapter:

10 (1) "Abandoned vehicle" means a vehicle that a registered tow  
11 truck operator has impounded and held in the operator's possession  
12 for 120 consecutive hours.

13 (2) "Abandoned vehicle report" means the document prescribed by  
14 the state that the towing operator forwards to the department after a  
15 vehicle has become abandoned.

16 (3) "Immobilize" means the use of a locking wheel boot that, when  
17 attached to the wheel of a vehicle, prevents the vehicle from moving  
18 without damage to the tire to which the locking wheel boot is  
19 attached.

20 (4) "Impound" means to take and hold a vehicle in legal custody.  
21 There are two types of impounds—public and private.

1 (a) "Public impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded at  
2 the direction of a law enforcement officer or by a public official  
3 having jurisdiction over the public property upon which the vehicle  
4 was located.

5 (b) "Private impound" means that the vehicle has been impounded  
6 at the direction of a person having control or possession of the  
7 private property upon which the vehicle was located.

8 (5) "Junk vehicle" means a vehicle certified under RCW 46.55.230  
9 as meeting at least three of the following requirements:

10 (a) Is three years old or older;

11 (b) Is extensively damaged, such damage including but not limited  
12 to any of the following: A broken window or windshield, or missing  
13 wheels, tires, motor, or transmission;

14 (c) Is apparently inoperable;

15 (d) Has an approximate fair market value equal only to the  
16 approximate value of the scrap in it.

17 (6) "Master log" means the document or an electronic facsimile  
18 prescribed by the department and the Washington state patrol in which  
19 an operator records transactions involving impounded vehicles.

20 (7) "Registered tow truck operator" or "operator" means any  
21 person who engages in the impounding, transporting, or storage of  
22 unauthorized vehicles or the disposal of abandoned vehicles.

23 (8) "Residential property" means property that has no more than  
24 four living units located on it.

25 (9) "Suspended license impound" means an impound ordered under  
26 RCW 46.55.113 because the operator was arrested for a violation of  
27 RCW 46.20.342 or 46.20.345.

28 (10) "Tow truck" means a motor vehicle that is equipped for and  
29 used in the business of towing vehicles with equipment as approved by  
30 the state patrol.

31 (11) "Tow truck number" means the number issued by the department  
32 to tow trucks used by a registered tow truck operator in the state of  
33 Washington.

34 (12) "Tow truck permit" means the permit issued annually by the  
35 department that has the classification of service the tow truck may  
36 provide stamped upon it.

37 (13) "Tow truck service" means the transporting upon the public  
38 streets and highways of this state of vehicles, together with  
39 personal effects and cargo, by a tow truck of a registered operator.

1 (14) "Unauthorized vehicle" means a vehicle that is subject to  
2 impoundment after being left unattended in one of the following  
3 public or private locations for the indicated period of time:

4 Subject to removal after:

- 5 (a) Public locations:
  - 6 (i) Constituting an accident or a traffic hazard as  
7 defined in RCW 46.55.113 . . . . . Immediately
  - 8 (ii) On a highway and tagged as described in RCW  
9 46.55.085 . . . . . 24 hours
  - 10 (iii) In a publicly owned or controlled parking  
11 facility, properly posted under RCW  
12 46.55.070 . . . . . Immediately
  - 13 (iv) Within the right-of-way used by a regional transit  
14 authority for high capacity transportation where  
15 the vehicle constitutes an obstruction to the  
16 operation of high capacity transportation vehicles  
17 or  
18 jeopardizes public safety. . . . . Immediately
  - 19 (v) Within the right-of-way used by a city with a  
20 population greater than 700,000 for streetcar  
21 operations where the vehicle constitutes an  
22 obstruction to the operation of streetcar vehicles  
23 or jeopardizes public safety . . . . . Immediately
- 24 (b) Private locations:
  - 25 (i) On residential property . . . . . Immediately
  - 26 (ii) On private, nonresidential property,  
27 properly posted under RCW  
28 46.55.070 . . . . . Immediately
  - 29 (iii) On private, nonresidential property,  
30 not posted . . . . . 24 hours

31 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.55.080 and 2023 c 326 s 2 are each amended to  
32 read as follows:

33 (1) If a vehicle is in violation of the time restrictions of RCW  
34 46.55.010(14), it may be impounded by a registered tow truck operator  
35 at the direction of a law enforcement officer, authorized regional  
36 transit authority representative under the conditions described in  
37 RCW 46.55.010(14) (a) (iv), authorized city representative under the

1 conditions described in RCW 46.55.010(14)(a)(v), or other public  
2 official with jurisdiction if the vehicle is on public property, or  
3 at the direction of the property owner or an agent if it is on  
4 private property. A law enforcement officer may also direct the  
5 impoundment of a vehicle pursuant to a writ or court order.

6 (2) The person requesting a private impound or a law enforcement  
7 officer, authorized regional transit authority representative,  
8 authorized city representative, or public official requesting a  
9 public impound shall provide a signed authorization for the impound  
10 at the time and place of the impound to the registered tow truck  
11 operator before the operator may proceed with the impound. A  
12 registered tow truck operator, employee, or his or her agent may not  
13 serve as an agent of a property owner for the purposes of signing an  
14 impound authorization or, independent of the property owner, identify  
15 a vehicle for impound.

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

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

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

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
32 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
33 effect immediately.

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