



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4513.61 Storing vehicles in possession of law enforcement officers or left on public property.

Effective: April 7, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 507

(A) The sheriff of a county or chief of a law enforcement agency of a municipal corporation, township, port authority, conservancy district, or township or joint police district, within the sheriff's or chief's respective territorial jurisdiction, or a state highway patrol trooper, upon notification to the sheriff or chief of such action and of the location of the place of storage, may order into storage any motor vehicle, including an abandoned junk motor vehicle as defined in section 4513.63 of the Revised Code, that:

(1) Has come into the possession of the sheriff, chief, or state highway patrol trooper as a result of the performance of the sheriff's, chief's, or trooper's duties; or

(2) Has been left on a public street or other property open to the public for purposes of vehicular travel, or upon or within the right-of-way of any road or highway, for forty-eight hours or longer without notification to the sheriff or chief of the reasons for leaving the motor vehicle in such place. However, when such a motor vehicle constitutes an obstruction to traffic it may be ordered into storage immediately unless either of the following applies:

(a) The vehicle was involved in an accident and is subject to section 4513.66 of the Revised Code;

(b) The vehicle is a commercial motor vehicle. If the vehicle is a commercial motor vehicle, the sheriff, chief, or state highway patrol trooper shall allow the owner or operator of the vehicle the opportunity to arrange for the removal of the motor vehicle within a period of time specified by the sheriff, chief, or state highway patrol trooper. If the sheriff, chief, or state highway patrol trooper determines that the vehicle cannot be removed within the specified period of time, the sheriff, chief, or state highway patrol trooper shall order the removal of the vehicle.

Subject to division (C) of this section, the sheriff or chief shall designate the place of storage of any motor vehicle so ordered removed.



(B) If the sheriff, chief, or a state highway patrol trooper issues an order under division (A) of this section and arranges for the removal of a motor vehicle by a towing service, the towing service shall deliver the motor vehicle to the location designated by the sheriff or chief not more than two hours after the time it is removed.

(C)(1) The sheriff or chief shall cause a search to be made of the records of an applicable entity listed in division (F)(1) of section 4513.601 of the Revised Code to ascertain the identity of the owner and any lienholder of a motor vehicle ordered into storage by the sheriff or chief, or by a state highway patrol trooper within five business days of the removal of the vehicle. Upon obtaining such identity, the sheriff or chief shall send or cause to be sent to the owner or lienholder at the owner's or lienholder's last known address by certified or express mail with return receipt requested, by certified mail with electronic tracking, or by a commercial carrier service utilizing any form of delivery requiring a signed receipt. The notice shall inform the owner or lienholder that the motor vehicle will be declared a nuisance and disposed of if not claimed within ten days of the date of the sending of the notice.

(2) The owner or lienholder of the motor vehicle may reclaim the motor vehicle upon payment of any expenses or charges incurred in its removal and storage, and presentation of proof of ownership, which may be evidenced by a certificate of title or memorandum certificate of title to the motor vehicle, a certificate of registration for the motor vehicle, or a lease agreement. Upon presentation of proof of ownership evidenced as provided above, the owner of the motor vehicle also may retrieve any personal items from the vehicle without retrieving the vehicle and without paying any fee. However, a towing service or storage facility may charge an after-hours retrieval fee established by the public utilities commission in rules adopted under section 4921.25 of the Revised Code if the owner retrieves the personal items after hours, unless the towing service or storage facility fails to provide the notice required under division (B)(3) of section 4513.69 of the Revised Code, if applicable. However, the owner shall not do either of the following:

(a) Retrieve any personal item that has been determined by the sheriff, chief, or a state highway patrol trooper, as applicable, to be necessary to a criminal investigation;

(b) Retrieve any personal item from a vehicle if it would endanger the safety of the owner, unless the



owner agrees to sign a waiver of liability.

For purposes of division (C)(2) of this section, "personal items" do not include any items that are attached to the vehicle.

(3) If the owner or lienholder of the motor vehicle reclaims it after a search of the applicable records has been conducted and after notice has been sent to the owner or lienholder as described in this section, and the search was conducted by the place of storage, and the notice was sent to the motor vehicle owner by the place of storage, the owner or lienholder shall pay to the place of storage a processing fee of twenty-five dollars, in addition to any expenses or charges incurred in the removal and storage of the vehicle.

(D) If the owner or lienholder makes no claim to the motor vehicle within ten days of the date of sending the notice, and if the vehicle is to be disposed of at public auction as provided in section 4513.62 of the Revised Code, the sheriff or chief, without charge to any party, shall file with the clerk of courts of the county in which the place of storage is located an affidavit showing compliance with the requirements of this section. Upon presentation of the affidavit, the clerk, without charge, shall issue a salvage certificate of title, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, to the sheriff or chief. If the vehicle is to be disposed of to a motor vehicle salvage dealer or other facility as provided in section 4513.62 of the Revised Code, the sheriff or chief shall execute in triplicate an affidavit, as prescribed by the registrar of motor vehicles, describing the motor vehicle and the manner in which it was disposed of, and that all requirements of this section have been complied with. The sheriff or chief shall retain the original of the affidavit for the sheriff's or chief's records, and shall furnish two copies to the motor vehicle salvage dealer or other facility. Upon presentation of a copy of the affidavit by the motor vehicle salvage dealer, the clerk of courts, within thirty days of the presentation, shall issue a salvage certificate of title, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances.

(E) Whenever a motor vehicle salvage dealer or other facility receives an affidavit for the disposal of a motor vehicle as provided in this section, the dealer or facility shall not be required to obtain an Ohio certificate of title to the motor vehicle in the dealer's or facility's own name if the vehicle is dismantled or destroyed and both copies of the affidavit are delivered to the clerk of courts.

(F) No towing service or storage facility shall fail to comply with this section.