

Abandoned Vehicles

Vehicles may not be parked or left standing upon the right-of way of a public highway for a period longer than 48 hours or upon a city street or state, county or city property for a period longer than five (5) days (MCA 61-8-356). The abandonment of a motor vehicle on a public highway, a city street, public property or private property creates a **prima facie presumption** which means that the last registered owner of the motor vehicle is responsible for the abandonment and is liable for the costs incurred in removing, storing and disposing of the abandoned vehicle.

Any person or persons violating the provisions of MCA 61-8-356 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$25 or more than \$300 or by imprisonment in the county jail for not less than 5 days or more than 90 days or by both fine and imprisonment.

To reclaim the vehicle, the person entitled to possession must show satisfactory proof of right of possession to the sheriff or civil clerk and pay for all costs incurred in the removal and up to a maximum of ninety (90) days storage (MCA 61-12-403).

If the vehicle is not claimed by the current owner or lien holder within thirty (30) days of notification of certified mail or prescribed publication by the Park County Sheriff's Office, the vehicle will either be sold at public auction or classified as a "junk vehicle". After any vehicle is sold or junked the former owner or person entitled to possession has no further right, title, claim or interest in or to the vehicle.

For additional information regarding abandoned vehicles please contact Park County Sheriff's Office at 406-222-4172 or check the website Montana Code Annotated (MCA), Title 61.

