

Sixty-sixth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE BILL NO. 1263

Introduced by

Representatives Dockter, Grueneich, D. Ruby

Senator Rust

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 23.1-15-01, 23.1-15-03, 23.1-15-05,
2 23.1-15-06, and 23.1-15-07 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to custody and
3 disposition of abandoned motor vehicles; to provide a penalty; and to declare an emergency.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 23.1-15-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **23.1-15-01. Definitions. (Contingent effective date - [See note](#))**

8 For purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 9 1. "Abandoned motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle, as defined in section 39-01-01,
10 that has remained for a period of more than forty-eight hours on public property
11 illegally or lacking vital component parts, or ~~has remained for a period of more than~~
12 ~~forty-eight hours~~ is located on private property without consent of the person in control
13 of the property or in an inoperable condition such that it has no substantial potential
14 further use consistent with its usual functions, unless it is kept in an enclosed garage
15 or storage building. It also means a motor vehicle voluntarily surrendered by its owner
16 to a person duly licensed under section 23.1-15-09. An antique automobile, as defined
17 in section 39-04-10.4, and other motor vehicles to include parts car and special
18 interest vehicles, may not be considered an abandoned motor vehicle within the
19 meaning of this chapter.
- 20 2. "Collector" means the owner of one or more special interest vehicles that collects,
21 purchases, acquires, trades, or disposes of special interest vehicles or parts of special
22 interest vehicles for the person's own use in order to restore, preserve, and maintain a
23 special interest vehicle or antique vehicle.

1 3. "Commercial towing service" means a registered business in North Dakota that tows
2 motor vehicles.

3 4. "Department" means the department of environmental quality.

4 4.5. "Parts car" means a motor vehicle generally in nonoperable condition which is owned
5 by the collector to furnish parts to restore, preserve, and maintain a special interest
6 vehicle or antique vehicle.

7 5.6. "Special interest vehicle" means a motor vehicle that is at least twenty years old and
8 has not been altered or modified from original manufacturer's specifications and,
9 because of its historic interest, is being preserved by hobbyists.

10 6.7. "Unit of government" includes a state department or agency, a county, city, township,
11 or other political subdivision.

12 7.8. "Vital component parts" means those parts of a motor vehicle that are essential to the
13 mechanical functioning of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, the motor, drive
14 train, and wheels.

15 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 23.1-15-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is
16 amended and reenacted as follows:

17 **23.1-15-03. Custody of abandoned vehicle. (Contingent effective date - [See note](#))**

18 Units of government may take into custody and impound an abandoned motor vehicle. If
19 requested by an owner, lessee, tenant, or occupant of private property, a commercial towing
20 service may remove and take into custody an abandoned motor vehicle located on the private
21 property.

22 **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 23.1-15-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is
23 amended and reenacted as follows:

24 **23.1-15-05. Notice to owner and law enforcement of abandoned vehicle. (Contingent**
25 **effective date - [See note](#))**

26 1. When an abandoned motor vehicle does not fall within the provisions of section
27 23.1-15-04, the unit of government or commercial towing service taking it into custody
28 shall give notice of the taking within ten days. The notice must set forth the date and
29 place of the taking, the year, make, model, and serial number of the abandoned motor
30 vehicle, and the place where the vehicle is being held, must inform the owner and any
31 lienholders or secured parties of their right to reclaim the vehicle under section

23.1-15-06, and must state that failure of the owner or lienholders or secured parties to exercise their right to reclaim the vehicle is deemed a waiver by them of all right, title, and interest in the vehicle and a consent to the ~~sale~~disposal of the vehicle at a ~~public auction~~ pursuant to section 23.1-15-07.

2. The notice must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the registered owner, if any, of the abandoned motor vehicle and to all readily identifiable lienholders or secured parties of record. If it is impossible to determine with reasonable certainty the identity and address of the registered owner and all lienholders, the notice must be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the motor vehicle was abandoned. Published notices may be grouped together for convenience and economy.

3. Subject to section 23.1-15-04, a commercial towing service that takes an abandoned motor vehicle into custody shall provide notice to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the location from which the motor vehicle was towed within twelve hours after completing the tow.

a. The notice must include:

(1) The license plate number and state of registration;

(2) The location from which the motor vehicle was towed;

(3) The location to which the motor vehicle was towed;

(4) The name, address, and telephone number of the commercial towing service that towed and is storing the motor vehicle; and

(5) A description of the motor vehicle, including make, model, year, and color.

b. A commercial towing service that violates this subsection must be assessed a fee of five hundred dollars and shall return the motor vehicle to the registered owner at no cost to the owner.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT. Section 23.1-15-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

23.1-15-06. Right of owner to reclaim abandoned vehicle. (Contingent effective date - [See note](#))

1. The owner, secured parties, or ~~any~~a lienholder of an abandoned motor vehicle has a right to reclaim such vehicle from the unit of government taking ~~it~~the motor vehicle into

1 custody upon payment of all towing and storage charges resulting from taking the
2 vehicle into custody within ~~fifteen~~thirty days after the date of the notice required by
3 section 23.1-15-05.

4 2. The owner, secured parties, or a lienholder of an abandoned motor vehicle, within
5 thirty days after receipt of the notice required by section 23.1-15-05, has a right to
6 reclaim the vehicle from a commercial towing service taking the motor vehicle into
7 custody upon payment of all towing and storage charges resulting from taking the
8 vehicle into custody.

9 3. Storage charges under subsection 2 may not exceed fifty dollars per day for an
10 abandoned passenger vehicle, pickup, van, or truck that does not exceed twenty
11 thousand registered gross weight pounds [9071.85 kilograms].

12 4. Nothing in this chapter may be construed to impair any lien of a garagekeeper under
13 the laws of this state or the right of a lienholder or secured parties to foreclose. For the
14 purposes of this section, "garagekeeper" is an operator of a parking place or
15 establishment, an operator of a motor vehicle storage facility, or an operator of an
16 establishment for the servicing, repair, or maintenance of motor vehicles.

17 **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 23.1-15-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is
18 amended and reenacted as follows:

19 **23.1-15-07. ~~Public sale~~Disposal of vehicle - Disposition of proceeds. (Contingent**
20 **effective date - [See note](#))**

21 1. An abandoned motor vehicle not more than seven model years of age taken into
22 custody by a unit of government and not reclaimed under section 23.1-15-06 must be
23 sold to the highest bidder at public auction or sale, following reasonable published
24 notice. The purchaser must be given a receipt in a form prescribed by the department
25 which is sufficient title to dispose of the vehicle. The receipt also entitles the purchaser
26 to register the vehicle and receive a certificate of title, free and clear of all liens and
27 claims of ownership. The license plates displayed on an abandoned vehicle must be
28 removed and destroyed prior to the purchaser taking possession of the vehicle.

29 2. ~~From the proceeds of the sale of an abandoned motor vehicle, the unit of government~~
30 ~~shall reimburse itself for the cost of towing, preserving, and storing the vehicle, and all~~
31 ~~notice and publication costs incurred pursuant to this chapter. Any remainder from the~~

proceeds of a sale must be held for the owner of the vehicle or entitled lienholder or secured parties for ninety days and then must be deposited in the state treasury as provided in section 1 of article IX of the Constitution of North Dakota and credited to the permanent school fund. If a commercial towing service takes custody of an abandoned motor vehicle and the vehicle is not reclaimed under section 23.1-15-06, the commercial towing service may obtain a release from the department of transportation which is sufficient title to dispose of the vehicle. The release entitles the commercial towing service to register the vehicle and receive a certificate of title, free and clear of all liens and claims of ownership. The license plates displayed on the abandoned vehicle must be removed and destroyed upon receipt of the new title.

3. From the proceeds of the sale of an abandoned motor vehicle, the unit of government or the commercial towing service may reimburse itself for the cost of towing, preserving, and storing the vehicle, and for all notice and publication costs incurred under this chapter. Any remainder from the proceeds of a sale must be held for the owner of the vehicle or entitled lienholder or secured parties for ninety days and then must be delivered to the administrator of the state abandoned property office in accordance with chapter 47-30.1.

SECTION 6. EMERGENCY. This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.