

8-1103. Towed motor vehicles, lien thereon; procedure; personal property; providing notice of fee; city ordinance or county resolution. (a) Whenever any person providing wrecker or towing service, as defined by law, while lawfully in possession of a vehicle, at the direction of a law enforcement officer or the owner or as provided by a city ordinance or county resolution, renders any service to the owner thereof by the recovery, transportation, protection, storage or safekeeping thereof, a first and prior lien on the vehicle is hereby created in favor of such person rendering such service and the lien shall amount to the full amount and value of the service rendered. The lien may be foreclosed in the manner provided in this act. If the name of the owner of the vehicle is known to the person in possession of such vehicle, then within 15 days, notice shall be given to the owner that the vehicle is being held subject to satisfaction of the lien. Any vehicle remaining in the possession of a person providing wrecker or towing service for a period of 30 days after such wrecker or towing service was provided may be sold to pay the reasonable or agreed charges for such recovery, transportation, protection, storage or safekeeping of such vehicle and personal property therein, the costs of such sale, the costs of notice to the owner of the vehicle and publication after giving the notices required by this act, unless a court order has been issued to hold such vehicle for the purpose of a criminal investigation or for use as evidence at a trial. If a court orders any vehicle to be held for the purpose of a criminal investigation or for use as evidence at a trial, then such order shall be in writing, and the court shall assess as costs the reasonable or agreed charges for the protection, storage or safekeeping accrued while the vehicle was held pursuant to such written order. Any personal property within the vehicle need not be released to the owner thereof until the reasonable or agreed charges for such recovery, transportation or safekeeping have been paid, or satisfactory arrangements for payment have been made, except as provided under subsection (c) or for personal medical supplies which shall be released to the owner thereof upon request. The person in possession of such vehicle and personal property shall be responsible only for the reasonable care of such property. Any personal property within the vehicle not returned to the owner shall be sold at the auction authorized by this act.

(b) At the time of providing wrecker or towing service, any person providing such wrecker or towing service shall give written notice to the driver, if available, of the vehicle being towed that a fee will be charged for storage of such vehicle. Failure to give such written notice shall invalidate any lien established for such storage fee.

(c) A city ordinance or county resolution authorizing the towing of vehicles from private property shall specify in such ordinance or resolution: (1) The maximum rate such wrecker or towing service may charge for such wrecker or towing service and storage fees; (2) that an owner of a vehicle towed shall have access to personal property in such vehicle for 48 hours after such vehicle has been towed and such personal property shall be released to the owner; and (3) that the wrecker or towing service shall report the location of such vehicle to local law enforcement within two hours of such tow.

History: L. 1987, ch. 209, § 1; L. 1991, ch. 40, § 1; L. 2000, ch. 179, § 12; L. 2004, ch. 37, § 2; L. 2009, ch. 119, § 9; L. 2016, ch. 81, § 3; July 1.