

Sixty-fifth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1352

Introduced by

Representatives M. Johnson, Rick C. Becker, Dockter, Kading, B. Koppelman, Lefor, Owens,  
Steiner

Senators Campbell, Casper, Clemens

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 24-03-23, 39-26-02, 39-26-04, 39-26-06,  
2 39-26-07, 39-26-08, and 47-30.1-23 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to custody and  
3 disposition of abandoned motor vehicles and deposit of funds; to provide for a continuing  
4 appropriation; and to declare an emergency.

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

6 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 24-03-23 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8 **24-03-23. Encroachments on state highways.**

9 No part of the right of way for state highways may be encroached upon by erection thereon  
10 of ~~any~~a structure, or placing thereon any personal property, other than a temporary parking of a  
11 motor vehicle, without a written permit from the director. ~~Any~~An encroachment may be caused  
12 to be removed, obliterated, or corrected by order of the director and the total cost thereof must  
13 be paid by the person responsible for the encroachment. Property other than motor vehicles left  
14 upon highway right of way for a period exceeding seventy-two hours, the ownership of which  
15 cannot be determined after reasonable effort has been made to do so, must be deemed  
16 abandoned and may be removed from the right of way and stored at the nearest site available  
17 for thirty days and if it is not claimed by the owner during such period, and the cost of removal  
18 and storage paid, it may be disposed of in the manner prescribed by the director. Abandoned  
19 motor vehicles are subject to the provisions of sections 39-26-01 through 39-26-11. If such  
20 property is disposed of it must, except as otherwise provided by this section, be sold or  
21 disposed of in the manner provided in sections 39-26-05 through 39-26-09. The receipts  
22 therefrom must be deposited in the state treasury as provided in section 1 of article IX of the

1 Constitution of North Dakota and credited to the permanent school fund unless a commercial  
2 towing service lawfully disposes of the abandoned motor vehicle.

3 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-26-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
4 amended and reenacted as follows:

5 **39-26-02. Definitions.**

6 As used in this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

- 7 1. "Abandoned motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle, as defined in section 39-01-01,  
8 that has remained for a period of more than forty-eight hours on public property  
9 illegally or lacking vital component parts, or ~~has remained for a period of more than~~  
10 ~~forty-eight hours~~ is located on private property without consent of the person in control  
11 of such property or in an inoperable condition such that it has no substantial potential  
12 further use consistent with its usual functions unless it is kept in an enclosed garage or  
13 storage building. It also means a motor vehicle voluntarily surrendered by its owner to  
14 a person duly licensed under section 39-26-10. An antique automobile, as defined in  
15 section 39-04-10.4, and other motor vehicles to include parts car and special interest  
16 vehicles, may not be considered an abandoned motor vehicle within the meaning of  
17 this chapter.
- 18 2. "Collector" means the owner of one or more special interest vehicles who collects,  
19 purchases, acquires, trades, or disposes of special interest vehicles or parts thereof  
20 for the person's own use in order to restore, preserve, and maintain a special interest  
21 vehicle or antique vehicle.
- 22 3. "Commercial towing service" means a registered business in North Dakota that tows  
23 motor vehicles.
- 24 4. "Department" means the state department of health.
- 25 ~~4.5.~~ "Parts car" means a motor vehicle generally in nonoperable condition which is owned  
26 by the collector to furnish parts to restore, preserve, and maintain a special interest  
27 vehicle or antique vehicle.
- 28 ~~5.6.~~ "Special interest vehicle" means a motor vehicle which is at least twenty years old and  
29 which has not been altered or modified from original manufacturer's specifications  
30 and, because of its historic interest, is being preserved by hobbyists.

1     ~~6-7.~~ "Unit of government" includes a state department or agency, a county, city, township,  
2             or other political subdivision.

3     ~~7-8.~~ "Vital component parts" means those parts of a motor vehicle that are essential to the  
4             mechanical functioning of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, the motor, drive  
5             train, and wheels.

6             **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-26-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8             **39-26-04. Custody of abandoned vehicle.**

9             Units of government may take into custody and impound ~~any~~ abandoned motor vehicle. If  
10 requested by an owner, lessee, tenant, or occupant of private property, a commercial towing  
11 service may remove and take into custody an abandoned motor vehicle located on the private  
12 property.

13            **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-26-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
14 amended and reenacted as follows:

15            **39-26-06. Notice to owner of abandoned vehicle.**

16            1. When an abandoned motor vehicle does not fall within the provisions of section  
17            39-26-05, the unit of government or commercial towing service taking it into custody  
18            shall give notice of the taking within ten days. The notice must set forth the date and  
19            place of the taking, the year, make, model, and serial number of the abandoned motor  
20            vehicle and the place where the vehicle is being held, must inform the owner and any  
21            lienholders or secured parties of their right to reclaim the vehicle under section  
22            39-26-07, and must state that failure of the owner or lienholders or secured parties to  
23            exercise their right to reclaim the vehicle is deemed a waiver by them of all right, title,  
24            and interest in the vehicle and a consent to the sale~~disposal~~ of the vehicle ~~at a public~~  
25            ~~auction~~ pursuant to section 39-26-08.

26            2. The notice must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the registered  
27            owner, if any, of the abandoned motor vehicle and to all readily identifiable lienholders  
28            or secured parties of record. If it is impossible to determine with reasonable certainty  
29            the identity and address of the registered owner and all lienholders, the notice must be  
30            published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the motor

1 vehicle was abandoned. Published notices may be grouped together for convenience  
2 and economy.

3 **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-26-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
4 amended and reenacted as follows:

5 **39-26-07. Right of owner to reclaim abandoned vehicle.**

6 1. The owner, secured parties, or ~~any~~ lienholder of an abandoned motor vehicle has a  
7 right to reclaim such vehicle from the unit of government taking ~~the motor vehicle~~ into  
8 custody upon payment of all towing and storage charges resulting from taking the  
9 vehicle into custody within ~~fifteen~~ thirty days after the date of the notice required by  
10 section 39-26-06.

11 2. The owner, secured parties, or a lienholder of an abandoned motor vehicle has a right  
12 to reclaim such vehicle from a commercial towing service taking the motor vehicle into  
13 custody upon payment of all towing and storage charges resulting from taking the  
14 vehicle into custody within thirty days after receipt of the notice required by section  
15 39-26-06.

16 2.3. Storage charges under subsection 2 may not exceed fifty dollars per day for an  
17 abandoned passenger vehicle, pickup, van, or truck that does not exceed twenty  
18 thousand registered gross weight pounds [9071.85 kilograms].

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

24 **SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 39-26-08 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
25 amended and reenacted as follows:

26 **39-26-08. ~~Public sale~~Disposal of vehicle - Disposition of proceeds.**

27 1. An abandoned motor vehicle not more than seven model years of age taken into  
28 custody by a unit of government and not reclaimed under section 39-26-07 must be  
29 sold to the highest bidder at public auction or sale, following reasonable published  
30 notice thereof. The purchaser must be given a receipt in a form prescribed by the  
31 department which shall be sufficient title to dispose of the vehicle. The receipt also

1 entitles the purchaser to register the vehicle and receive a certificate of title, free and  
2 clear of all liens and claims of ownership. The license plates displayed on an  
3 abandoned vehicle must be removed and destroyed prior to the purchaser taking  
4 possession of the vehicle.

5 2. From the proceeds of the sale of an abandoned motor vehicle, the unit of government  
6 shall reimburse itself for the cost of towing, preserving, and storing the vehicle, and all  
7 notice and publication costs incurred pursuant to this chapter. Any remainder from the  
8 proceeds of a sale must be held for the owner of the vehicle or entitled lienholder or  
9 secured parties for ninety days and then must be deposited in the state treasury as  
10 provided in section 1 of article IX of the Constitution of North Dakota and credited to  
11 the ~~permanent school~~common schools trust fund.

12 3. If a commercial towing service takes custody of an abandoned motor vehicle and the  
13 vehicle is not reclaimed under section 39-26-07, the commercial towing service may  
14 obtain a release from the department of transportation which is sufficient title to  
15 dispose of the vehicle. The release entitles the commercial towing service to register  
16 the vehicle and receive a certificate of title, free and clear of all liens and claims of  
17 ownership. The license plates displayed on the abandoned vehicle must be removed  
18 and destroyed upon receipt of the new title.

19 4. From the proceeds of the sale of an abandoned motor vehicle, the commercial towing  
20 service may reimburse itself for the cost of towing, preserving, and storing the vehicle,  
21 and for all notice and publication costs incurred under this chapter. Any remainder  
22 from the proceeds of a sale must be held for the owner of the vehicle or entitled  
23 lienholder or secured parties for ninety days and then must be delivered to the  
24 administrator of the state abandoned property office in accordance with chapter  
25 47-30.1.

26 **SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Section 47-30.1-23 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
27 amended and reenacted as follows:

28 **47-30.1-23. Deposit of funds - Continuing appropriation.**

29 1. Except as otherwise provided by this section, the administrator shall promptly deposit  
30 in the state treasury to the credit of the common schools trust fund all funds received

1 under this chapter, including the proceeds from the sale of abandoned property under  
2 section 47-30.1-22.

3 2. The administrator promptly shall deposit in the state treasury to the credit of the  
4 common schools trust fund all funds received from the sale of abandoned property  
5 under section 47-30.1-22 which were delivered to the administrator in accordance with  
6 section 39-26-08.

7 3. There is appropriated annually the amounts necessary to pay all expense deductions  
8 under this section, including:

- 9 a. Any costs in connection with the sale of abandoned property;  
10 b. Costs of mailing, publication, and outreach efforts in connection with any  
11 abandoned property;  
12 c. Reasonable service charges;  
13 d. Costs incurred in examining records of holders of property and in collecting the  
14 property from those holders;  
15 e. Funds for the payment of claims; and  
16 f. Funds for the payment of holder refunds.

17 **SECTION 8. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.