



**Sonoma County Sheriff's Office**  
**Sheriff-Coroner Steve Freitas**

**Private Property Parking**

**California Vehicle Code Section 22658 provides the citing and removal of vehicles illegally parked on private property.**

**22658. (a)** The owner or person in lawful possession of private property, including an association of a common interest development as defined in Section 1351 of the Civil Code, may cause the removal of a vehicle parked on the property to a storage facility that meets the requirements of subdivision (n) under any of the following circumstances:

- (1) There is displayed, in plain view at all entrances to the property, a sign not less than 17 inches by 22 inches in size, with lettering not less than one inch in height, prohibiting public parking and indicating that vehicles will be removed at the owner's expense, and containing the telephone number of the local traffic law enforcement agency and the name and telephone number of each towing company that is a party to a written general towing authorization agreement with the owner or person in lawful possession of the property. The sign may also indicate that a citation may also be issued for the violation.
- (2) The vehicle has been issued a notice of parking violation, and 96 hours have elapsed since the issuance of that notice.
- (3) The vehicle is on private property and lacks an engine, transmission, wheels, tires, doors, windshield, or any other major part or equipment necessary to operate safely on the highways, the owner or person in lawful possession of the private property has notified the local traffic law enforcement agency, and 24 hours have elapsed since that notification.
- (4) The lot or parcel upon which the vehicle is parked is improved with a single-family dwelling.

**Example of a NO PARKING sign:**

Displayed at all entrances to property

Sign size is no less than 17" X 22"

Lettering no less than 1" in height

Prohibiting public parking



Indicating the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense

Name and number for local traffic law enforcement agency

Name and number of tow company with authorization to tow from property



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**Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program**

The Abandoned Vehicle Abatement program (AVA) was originally implemented by legislation and adopted by the state in 1990. The California Department of Motor Vehicles collects one dollar from each passenger vehicle registered in Sonoma County and three dollars for larger commercial vehicles to fund the program.

The AVA program is run by Sheriff's Office Volunteers in Policing (VIPs). They typically work one day a week, usually on Tuesdays. Vehicles, boats and trailers are reported as abandoned through the AVA hotline at 565-7395. The reporting party is asked to leave a message with as much detailed information as possible. The make, model, color, approximate year, license plate and location of the vehicle.

The volunteers must obtain authorization from the property owner before towing any vehicle on private property. The property must also be in the unincorporated area of the county. The vehicles are run through the DMV system to attain ownership information. The volunteers then send out a 10 day Notice of Intent to Abate to the registered/legal owner by certified mail. If no hearing is requested after 10 days and the vehicle is still there, the vehicle is towed using a contracted tow company.

California Vehicle Code section 22669 and the Sonoma County Municipal Code Chapter 18 Article IV provides that the authorized personnel who has reasonable grounds to believe that the vehicle has been abandoned may remove the vehicle.

**V C Section 22669 Removal of Abandoned Vehicles**

**22669. (a)** Any peace officer, as that term is defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, or any other employee of the state, county, or city designated by an agency or department of the state or the board of supervisors or city council to perform this function, in the territorial limits in which the officer or employee is authorized to act, who has reasonable grounds to believe that the vehicle has been abandoned, as determined pursuant to Section 22523, may remove the vehicle from a highway or from public or private property.

The Sheriff's Office tows approximately 100-150 abandoned vehicles every year. This program is highly beneficial by removing junk and abandoned vehicles from private property and public areas. Without this program the impact of all these cars would be astronomical.

**To report an abandoned vehicle please call:**  
**565-7395**