

## Updates to the Unclaimed/Abandoned Law

Legislative Act 2015-470 amends the unclaimed/abandoned motor vehicle law. Effective July 1, 2016, a person or entity, including towing companies, in possession of an “unclaimed” or “abandoned” motor vehicle must report the following information to the Department of Revenue (DOR) before a motor vehicle can be sold as an “abandoned” motor vehicle. The DOR will provide an Unclaimed/Abandoned motor vehicle portal for this purpose. A link to the portal will be available on the Motor Vehicle Division webpage on July 1, 2016.

- Within five (5) calendar days from the date the vehicle was first considered “unclaimed” by the person or entity in possession of a motor vehicle, the vehicle must be reported as “unclaimed” to the DOR. A forty-five (45) day hold will be placed on the vehicle title record. Unclaimed motor vehicles include the following
  - A motor vehicle left unattended on a public road or highway for more than 48 hours.
  - A motor vehicle, not left on private property for repairs that has remained on private or other public property for a period of more than 48 hours without the consent of the owner or lessee of the property.
  - A motor vehicle, left on private property for repairs, that has not been reclaimed within 48 hours from the latter of either the date the repairs were completed or the agreed upon redemption date.

**NOTE: Storage fees may not be assessed unless the unclaimed vehicle is reported to the DOR within five (5) calendar days of the date the vehicle becomes unclaimed.**

- Within five (5) calendar days from the date the motor vehicle was reported as “unclaimed” to the DOR, the person or entity in possession of the motor vehicle shall use the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) to determine the state in which the vehicle is titled and/or registered. A list of NMVTIS service providers may be found on the following web site:  
[http://www.vehiclehistory.gov/nmvtis\\_vehiclehistory.html](http://www.vehiclehistory.gov/nmvtis_vehiclehistory.html)
- Within five (5) calendar days of receiving the NMVTIS record, the person or entity in possession of the motor vehicle must send a Notice of Possession to the owner and lienholder or record. This notice must be sent via certified mail.
- Thirty (30) days after the Notice of Possession is sent to the owner and lienholder of record, the motor vehicle will be considered “abandoned” and may be sold at a public auction.
- Thirty-five (35) calendar days before the vehicle may be sold, a Notice of Public Auction must be sent to the owner and lienholder of record. If the auction is to be held in the county in which the vehicle is registered, the auction must be publicized once a week for two consecutive weeks in a local publication.
- Within five (5) calendar days of the receipt of public auction, the DOR shall send a Notice of Termination to the current owner and lienholder of record.
- A list of all unclaimed/abandoned motor vehicles will be available to the public on the DOR website.
- After thirty-five (35) calendar days from the Notice of Public Auction, the vehicle may be sold. The abandoned vehicle bill of sale will be generated from the Unclaimed/Abandoned portal and will be used to apply for the Alabama certificate of title.

**NOTE: ACT 2015-470 only applies to the sale of an abandoned vehicle for which notice is published on or after July 1, 2016. If the notice of the sale was posted prior to July 1, 2016, the vehicle may be sold under the current abandoned motor vehicle law. In this situation, the vehicle must be titled prior to the end of the calendar year 2016, or the purchaser would be required to post a title surety bond in order to title the vehicle.**

For more information regarding the unclaimed/abandoned vehicle requirements, please contact the Alabama Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division at: (334) 242-9007, or [titles@revenue.alabama.gov](mailto:titles@revenue.alabama.gov)