STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

SENATE BILL 2098 By: Barrington

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to towing of vehicles; amending 47 O.S. 2011, Section 955, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 222, O.S.L. 2013 (47 O.S. Supp. 2013, Section 955), which relates to towing of vehicles and grounds and licensed wrecker liability; exempting certain persons from liability; clarifying what may be released after-hours; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 47 O.S. 2011, Section 955, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 222, O.S.L. 2013 (47 O.S. Supp. 2013, Section 955), is amended to read as follows:

Section 955. A. Any officer of the Department of Public Safety or any other political subdivision of this state is hereby authorized to cause to be towed any vehicle found upon public roads, highways, streets, turnpikes, private parking lots accessible to the public, other public places or upon any private road, street, alley or lane which provides access to one or more single-family or multifamily dwellings when:

1. Report has been made that the vehicle has been stolen or taken without the consent of its owner;

2. The officer has reason to believe the vehicle has been abandoned as defined in Sections 901 and 902 of this title;

3. The person driving or in control of the vehicle is arrested for an alleged offense for which the officer is required by law to take the person arrested or summoned before a proper magistrate without unnecessary delay;

4. At the scene of an accident, if the owner or driver is not in a position to take charge of the vehicle and direct or request its proper removal;

5. The officer has probable cause that the person operating the vehicle has not been granted driving privileges or that the driving privileges of the person are currently suspended, revoked, canceled, denied, or disqualified;

6. The officer has probable cause that the vehicle has been used in the commission of a felony offense and the officer has obtained a search warrant authorizing the search and seizure of the vehicle;

7. The officer has probable cause that the vehicle is not insured as required by the Compulsory Insurance Law of this state; or

8. The vehicle is involved in a fatal motor vehicle collision and is needed for evidentiary purposes.

No vehicle shall be released after impoundment unless the owner provides to the storing facility proof of valid insurance or an affidavit of nonuse on the roadway, or in the event of a release request from an insurer or the representative of the insurer who has accepted liability for the vehicle, no such proof of insurance or affidavit of nonuse on the roadway shall be required.

B. A licensed wrecker operator is not liable for damage to a vehicle, vessel, or cargo that obstructs the normal movement of traffic or creates a hazard to traffic and is removed in compliance with the request of a law enforcement officer, unless there is failure to exercise reasonable care in the performance of the act or for conduct that is willful or malicious.

C. Each officer of the Department shall use the services of the licensed wrecker operator whose location is nearest to the vehicle to be towed in all instances in subsection A of this section. The requests for services may be alternated or rotated among all licensed wrecker operators who are located within a reasonable radius of each other. In like manner, the officer shall advise any person requesting information as to the availability of a wrecker or towing service, the name of the nearest licensed wrecker operator, giving equal consideration to all licensed wrecker operators located within a reasonable radius of each other. In cities of less than fifty thousand (50,000) population, all licensed wrecker operators located near or in the city limits of such cities shall be

considered as being equal distance and shall be called on an equal basis as nearly as possible. In counties bordering other states, if the officer deems safety and time considerations warrant, the officer may call a wrecker or towing service that is not on the rotation log.

D. Any officer of the Department who has been requested by a person in need of wrecker or towing service to call a specific wrecker or towing service for such person, and who calls a different wrecker or towing service other than the one requested, without the consent of the person, except where hazardous conditions exist, shall be suspended from the Department, without compensation, for a period of thirty (30) days, except in instances where a vehicle is removed from the roadway under the authority of paragraphs 3, 4 and 6 of subsection A of this section.

E. Operators conducting a tow under this section shall release all personal property within the vehicle ~~to an insurer or representative of the insurer who has accepted liability for the vehicle, or~~ to any person upon proof of ownership <u>of the vehicle</u> and an Oklahoma driver license or other state or federally issued photo identification. Personal property shall include everything in a vehicle except the vehicle, the attached or installed equipment, and the spare tire and tools to change the tire. <u>Interlock devices may be removed pursuant to Section 11-902a of this title.</u> If release of personal property occurs during normal business hours as prescribed

by the Corporation Commission, it shall be at no cost to the registered owner or the owner prior to the repossession. After-hour fees may be assessed as prescribed by this Chapter or by the Corporation Commission, when the release of property is made after the prescribed normal business hours.

F. The operator of a wrecker or towing service may request a person offering proof of ownership of personal property and any interlock device to execute a form provided by the operator exempting the operator from liability for such release.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2014.

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