

# SENATE BILL 577

R5

6lr3137

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By: **Senator James**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Vehicle Laws – Towing of Vehicles from Parking Lots – Civil Action for**  
3 **Nonpayment**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing a person in possession of a towed vehicle to require the  
5 owner of the vehicle to present a valid government–issued photo identification card  
6 before retaking possession of the vehicle without payment; authorizing a tower to  
7 bring a civil action against a vehicle owner who withholds payment for retaking the  
8 vehicle; and generally relating to towing.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
10 Article – Transportation  
11 Section 21–10A–01  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
15 Article – Transportation  
16 Section 21–10A–05  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Transportation**

22 21–10A–01.

23 (a) In this subtitle, “parking lot” means a privately owned facility consisting of 3  
24 or more spaces for motor vehicle parking that is:

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(1) Accessible to the general public; and

(2) Intended by the owner of the facility to be used primarily by the owner's customers, clientele, residents, lessees, or guests.

(b) (1) This subtitle applies only to the towing or removal of vehicles from parking lots.

(2) Nothing in this subtitle prevents a local authority from exercising any power to adopt local laws or regulations relating to the registration or licensing of persons engaged in, or otherwise regulating in a more stringent manner, the parking, towing or removal, or impounding of vehicles.

21-10A-05.

(a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, if a vehicle is towed or otherwise removed from a parking lot, the person in possession of the vehicle:

(1) Shall immediately deliver the vehicle directly to the storage facility stated on the signs posted in accordance with § 21-10A-02 of this subtitle;

(2) May not move the towed vehicle from that storage facility to another storage facility for at least 72 hours; [and]

(3) Shall provide the owner of the vehicle or the owner's agent immediate and continuous opportunity, at a minimum from 6 a.m. to midnight, 7 days per week, from the time the vehicle was received at the storage facility, to retake possession of the vehicle;

AND

**(4) MAY REQUIRE THE OWNER OF THE VEHICLE TO PRESENT A VALID GOVERNMENT-ISSUED PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD BEFORE RETAKING POSSESSION OF THE VEHICLE WITHOUT PAYMENT.**

(b) Before a vehicle is removed from a parking lot, a tower who possesses the vehicle shall release the vehicle to the owner or an agent of the owner:

(1) If the owner or agent requests that the tower release the vehicle;

(2) If the vehicle can be driven under its own power;

(3) Whether or not the vehicle has been lifted off the ground; and

(4) If the owner or agent pays a drop fee to the tower in an amount not exceeding 50% of the cost of a full tow.

(c) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, a storage facility that is in possession of a towed vehicle shall:

(i) Accept payment for outstanding towing, recovery, or storage charges by cash or at least two major, nationally recognized credit cards; and

(ii) If the storage facility accepts only cash, have an operable automatic teller machine available on the premises.

(2) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, if a storage facility is unable to process a credit card payment and does not have an operable automatic teller machine on the premises, the storage facility shall accept a personal check as payment for outstanding towing, recovery, and storage charges.

(ii) A storage facility may refuse to accept a personal check as payment if it is unable to process a credit card for the payment because use of the credit card has been declined by the credit card company.

(3) A storage facility that is in possession of a towed vehicle shall make the vehicle available to the owner, the owner's agent, the insurer of record, or a secured party, under the supervision of the storage facility, for:

(i) Inspection; or

(ii) Retrieval from the vehicle of personal property that is not attached to the vehicle.

**(D) (1) A STORAGE FACILITY MAY BRING A CIVIL ACTION TO RECOVER PAYMENT AGAINST A VEHICLE OWNER WHO RETAKES POSSESSION OF A VEHICLE:**

**(I) WITHOUT PAYMENT; OR**

**(II) WITH PAYMENT BY USE OF A CREDIT CARD, BUT SUBSEQUENTLY WITHHOLDS THE PAYMENT.**

**(2) A CIVIL ACTION BROUGHT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE FILED PRIOR TO 10 DAYS AFTER THE RELEASE OF A VEHICLE.**

**(3) IF THE COURT IN AN ACTION FILED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION DETERMINES THAT THE VEHICLE WAS VALIDLY TOWED, THE COURT SHALL AWARD THE TOWER:**

**(I) THE AMOUNT VALIDLY CHARGED FOR TOWING THE VEHICLE;**

1                   **(II) LIQUIDATED DAMAGES OF TWO TIMES THE AMOUNT**  
2 **VALIDLY CHARGED FOR TOWING THE VEHICLE, BUT NOT MORE THAN \$1,000;**

3                   **(III) COURT COSTS; AND**

4                   **(IV) REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES.**

5           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
6   October 1, 2026.