

CALVIN BALL  
*County Executive*



GREGORY J. DER  
*Chief of Police*

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

3410 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Dear Applicant:

Enclosed is the application for authority to dispose of an abandoned motor vehicle which you requested. Specific attention should be given to the vehicle description which **MUST** include the serial number (VIN) or a reason why it has not been included (i.e. removed, destroyed, etc.). Please be specific as to the location of the vehicle on your property and include a daytime telephone number on the application. This application must be completed as accurately as possible and emailed or mailed to the below information.

[abandonedvehicles@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:abandonedvehicles@howardcountymd.gov)

Special Operations Command  
Howard County Police Department  
Attn: Abandoned Vehicles 11226  
Scaggsville Road  
Laurel, MD 20723

Once the completed application has been returned to this Department, a police officer/cadet or auxiliary officer will respond to your property to confirm the vehicle identification number. A computer inquiry will then be made to identify the last registered owner and any lien holders. The last registered owner and any lien holders will then be sent a letter notifying them of your intent to dispose of the abandoned vehicle. The vehicle will also be advertised at the Circuit Courthouse in Ellicott City.

By authority of the Transportation Article of the State of Maryland, the owner or lien holder must reclaim the vehicle within twenty-one (21) days after receipt of the letter. If the vehicle is unclaimed during this period, you will be issued authority to dispose of the vehicle. It will be your responsibility to contact a towing company or dismantler to revoke the vehicle once you have received the Certificate of Authority.

As you can see, the entire process is regulated by state law and is designed to protect both the property and vehicle owners. The processing of an application should be completed within 30 to 60 days but with certain circumstances could take longer. Please advise this Department if the vehicle is removed from your property during the interim period.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact [abandonedvehicles@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:abandonedvehicles@howardcountymd.gov) or call 410-313-3700 and ask for the Abandoned Vehicle Coordinator.

Sincerely,

Major Cory Zirk  
Deputy Chief, Special Operations Command

CZ/ML

TELEPHONE: 410-313-3700  
WWW.HOWARDCOUNTYMD.GOV  
ABANDONEDVEHICLES@HOWARDCOUNTYMD.GOV

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**APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO DISPOSE  
OF AN ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLE IN  
HOWARD COUNTY  
(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)**



I, hereby make application for authority to dispose of the vehicle described below, which was abandoned on my property, the location of which is herein stated, for a period of more than forty-eight (48) hours.

(1) NAME OF APPLICANT	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	LAST NAME	PHONE #
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(2) ADDRESS OF APPLICANT	STREET ADDRESS OR RFD & BOX NO.			
	CITY OR TOWN	STATE	ZIP CODE	

(3) VEHICLE DESCRIPTION	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	BODY STYLE	COLOR (S)	CURRENT MILEAGE
	SERIAL NUMBER (VIN)		REGISTRATION-TAG #	STATE	YEAR EXP	TITLE NO.

(4) LOCATION VEHICLE WAS TOWED FROM	STREET ADDRESS			
	CITY OR TOWN	COUNTY	STATE	ZIP CODE

(5) CURRENT LOCATION OF VEHICLE	STREET ADDRESS			
	CITY OR TOWN	COUNTY	STATE	ZIP CODE

(6) STATE FACTS SURROUNDING ABANDONMENT	<b>Facts:</b>
	<b>Date of Tow:</b>

(7) COUNTY POLICE TOW? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	IF YES, IR # _____
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I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the information set forth herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

(8) _____ <b>DATE OF APPLICATION</b>	_____ <b>SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT</b>
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Private property applicants, fill out sections **1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8**  
Towing companies, fill out sections **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8**  
Contracted Howard County towers, fill out sections **1, 2, 3, 7, and 8**

Howard County Police Department  
Attn: Investigations & Special Operations Command  
11226 Scaggsville Road  
Laurel, MD 20723 (410) 313-4778 Revised 1/15

**Public Property** (County / State) – “Abandoned vehicle,” means any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer. If you see a vehicle that is:

1. That is inoperable and left unattended on public property for more than 48 hours; 2. That has remained illegally on public property for more than 48 hours; 3. That has remained on public property for more than 48 hours and:
  - a. Is not displaying currently valid registration plates; or
  - b. Is displaying registration plates of another vehicle;
4. That has been left unattended on any portion of a "controlled access highway."
5. That has been left unattended on any portion of a primary or secondary highway or controlled access highway.

Contact the non-emergency number (410) 313-2200 for the Communications Center. An Officer will be dispatched to verify the circumstances of the vehicle. If applicable, the officer will tag the vehicle with an orange tag giving notice to the owner that the vehicle must be towed within 48 hours or the County will have the vehicle towed to a contracted towing facility.

**Private Property** - Homeowner/Community Association/Commercial/Management Company “Abandoned vehicle,” means any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer:

1. The vehicle has remained on private property for more than 48 hours without the consent of the owner or person in control of the property. A towing service shall not tow a vehicle from private property unless the property owner has directly or through an agent expressly authorized the towing of the particular vehicle. Authorization shall be in the form of a tow slip;
2. That has remained in a garage for more than 10 days after the garage keeper has given the owner of the vehicle notice;
3. That has remained in a garage for more than 10 days after the period when, by contract, the vehicle was to remain in the garage;
4. That was left for more than 10 days in a garage by:
  - a. Someone other than its registered owner; or
  - b. A person authorized to have possession of the vehicle under a contract of use, service, storage, or repair;
5. An unauthorized vehicle may be towed from private property without the express authorization of the property owner or the property owner's agent only if the vehicle is directly blocking access to the property or to a building on the property.
6. A property owner may tow a vehicle within a parking lot without prior notice to the vehicle owner if towing the vehicle is necessary to:
  - a. Remove large quantities of snow or debris;
  - b. Repair the parking lot; or
  - c. Respond to a threat to a person's safety or health.

**Private towing does not apply to:**

1. Towing initiated by the vehicle owner;
2. Towing approved or requested by a police officer, firefighter, or rescue squad member in the course of removing impediments to traffic or during the course of a criminal investigation or under state law regulating abandoned vehicles;
3. Towing a vehicle during a repossession of the vehicle;
4. Towing from a marked fire lane;
5. Towing from a designated handicapped parking space;
6. Towing from the yard or driveway of a single-family dwelling; or
7. Towing from land immediately adjoining an electric or telephone utility building or structure that is not open to the general public.

## **PROCEDURES**

***Towing Signs Posted*** - The owner or agent can request the tower to remove the vehicle.

***No Towing Signs Posted*** - The owner or agent can contact a registered trespass tower. The tower or owner must post a notice on the vehicle for 48 hours before towing the vehicle.

**Registered Howard County Trespass Towers** - Towers must be registered with the Office of Consumer Affairs to tow from private property in Howard County. The tow companies will make the required notification to the Police Department and  
Office of Consumer Affairs

**Application to Dispose of an Abandoned Vehicle** - The attached application must be filled out completely by the property owner or authorized representative and mailed to the Howard County Police Department, Attn: Operations Command. Once the application has been received, a police officer or auxiliary officer will respond to the property to confirm the vehicle identification number, computer inquiry will then be made to identify the last known registered owner and/or lien holder. A certified letter will be sent notifying them of the Intent to Dispose of the Abandoned Vehicle. The vehicle identification number will then be posted at the Circuit Court in Ellicott City for three (3) weeks. The process can take up to 2 months to complete depending on certified mailings and notifications. When the process has been completed, a Certificate of Authority to Dispose of the Abandoned Vehicle will be issued for the owner or agent to remove the vehicle, as they deemed appropriate.

**It is very important for the owner or agent to read the Howard County Code (Title 17. PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES, SUBTITLE 6. Towing from Private Property) and State Law (Transportation Code 25-201) on Abandoned Vehicles.**