

Abandoned Vehicles Policy

We have a duty to remove vehicles that have been abandoned without lawful authority. We will remove the vehicle from the highway or council owned land as quickly as appropriate within the law using the following process:



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- When reports are received, we will look at the evidence provided and make a judgment on whether the vehicle is likely to be abandoned. Things we look at:
 - Does the vehicle have tax? (Untaxed vehicles on the highway are sent directly to the DVLA and reports closed)
 - Does the vehicle have an MOT?
 - Is the vehicle displaying number plates?
 - Is there mould growing within the vehicle?
 - Is the vehicle driveable?
 - Does the ground under and around the vehicle indicate the vehicle has not moved recently?
 - Has the vehicle been burnt out?
 - Are any windows smashed?
 - Are there any flat tyres?
- If it is decided that the vehicle is likely abandoned, an inspection will be scheduled. An inspection will be completed by an authorised officer. An inspection involves writing vehicle details (location, VIN, wheel valves etc), taking photographs of the vehicle and an abandoned notice attached to the vehicle. The following notices will be attached to a vehicle:
 - Burnt out/dangerous vehicles: 24-hour notice will be fixed to the vehicle
 - Vehicles on highway: 7-day notice
 - Vehicles on private land: 15-day notice
- Once the vehicle inspection has been completed and the details logged, we will obtain the registered keeper details through the DVLA and send a letter informing them of the vehicles location and our intention to remove it within 7/15 days if it remains in situ.
- A review of the vehicle is scheduled after 7/15 days and an uplift notice attached to the vehicle. Seven days from the issuing of the uplift notice, we will pass all the vehicle information to Kent County Council's contractor for vehicle removal. The vehicle now becomes the property of Kent County Council and will be removed.
- The vehicles may be stored or destroyed by the assigned collection agent. Vehicles in good condition will be kept for up to two weeks. Legislation does not

dictate a time in which they must retain the vehicle. Vehicles in a poor or untraceable condition will be destroyed immediately.

If the owner wants the vehicle returned, they must pay the appropriate fees and provide proof of ownership to KCC. The vehicle has to be returned to a legal location; off road if it is untaxed.

We have the right to remove vehicles immediately under certain circumstances, e.g. if the vehicle is a danger to the health and safety of the public, or if there is no registered keeper.

Police Checks

If, at the stage of preparing an uplift, we have had no contact from the owner of a vehicle, we will complete checks with Kent Police to ensure they have no concerns with regards to the vehicle in question to rule out a vehicle having been stolen and dumped.

Further Information

Abandoned vehicle reports are logged onto an internal system. After two years worksheets will be deleted, in line with the DVLA's data retention guidelines.

DVLA enquiries are made via the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN). Any requests not deemed to be necessary will be refused by NAFN.

It is the responsibility of the police to move or remove vehicles that are on the highway and in a position to endanger other road users, i.e. obstruction.

Vehicles that have been involved in a road traffic collision become the responsibility of the owner's motor insurance company.

Minimum Notice Periods

Vehicle abandoned on the highway: Immediate removal or 7-day notice attached to the vehicle with a follow up letter to the registered keeper as appropriate.

Private land: 15-day notice attached to the vehicle with a follow up letter to the registered keeper as appropriate.

Under extreme circumstances vehicles can be removed and notice periods served elsewhere at the discretion of a council officer. This may be the case for locations such as children's play areas or sheltered housing accommodation, where 'risk' or 'fear of crime' are significant factors.

Private land owners

Private land owners can have vehicles that do not belong to them removed from land within their control by making a written request to the Abandoned Vehicles Team. This service will entail a 15-day notice being attached to window or windscreen, photographs taken (including the VRM (number plate), VIN, any damage, the vehicle in situ from a distance (for the contractor) and any accessibility or height restriction issues). After the inspection a DVLA check is undertaken, details printed out, and a follow up letter sent to the registered keeper further notifying them of 15 days' notice of removal. If a notice was not served at the time of the inspection, a DVLA check will not be undertaken. The vehicle will be removed 15 days from the date the notice was served. However, if there is no registered keeper removal can be immediate. A review of the vehicle is scheduled 15 days after the notice was served to confirm whether vehicle is still in situ and further photographs taken, before instructing our contractor to uplift.

Reporting an abandoned vehicle

Reports of an abandoned vehicle can be made on our website: [Report Abandoned Vehicle](#)

How quickly are fire damaged or dangerous vehicles removed?

Damaged and obviously abandoned vehicles which have been left in a position where they are a risk or danger to the public will be removed as quickly as possible. An investigation will be carried out and details sent to Kent County Council's contractor for vehicle removals. In the case of burnt out or unidentifiable vehicles, however, the police may need to carry out a forensic investigation before the vehicle can be removed.

How quickly are other vehicles removed?

Vehicles on the highway or verge that are reported abandoned, but pose no immediate risk to the amenity or local residents are removed after at least a seven day period. A seven day notice letter is sent to the registered keeper informing them of our intention to remove the vehicle and the charges for getting the vehicle back. A vehicle typically issued with a seven day notice may take up to 28 days to be removed.

Why wasn't the vehicle I reported moved?

There may be a variety of reasons including the fact that the vehicle had not been abandoned but merely broken down, the owner had been on holiday, on private land, and covered by a SORN declaration.

How much does it cost to remove an abandoned vehicle?

The amount allowed by government for councils to recover from the keeper of a vehicle known to be abandoned is currently £150 for removal, £20 a day storage and £75 for disposal. I.e. £505 per vehicle, because vehicles are stored for a minimum of 14 days.

What percentage of materials is recycled or reclaimed?

The disposal of 'end of life' vehicles is very heavily controlled by the Environment Agency. As such, all fluids, batteries and other components containing dangerous substances are removed, tyres are sent for recycling and the remaining shell shredded. 80 per cent of the total weight of the vehicle is recycled.

Can you remove untaxed vehicles?

Reports of untaxed vehicles on the public highway are forwarded to the DVLA to demobilise the vehicle until a time in which the registered keeper can prove to the DVLA that they have the necessary tax relevant for their vehicle. Untaxed vehicles on private land in the open air will be dealt with using the 15-day abandoned vehicle method.

What is a SORN?

A SORN is a Statutory Off Road Notification which must be declared to the DVLA when a vehicle is not going to be used for a period of time. The vehicle must be kept away from the highway and on private land which the registered keeper owns or has permission from the owner to use for storage. For example, a driveway to a house, in a garage or on an allocated parking space. The SORN conditions are quite often misunderstood or flaunted, even though the penalties are severe (£5000 fine and/or imprisonment). Over half of vehicles reported as abandoned (especially in local authority or housing association residential parking areas) have a SORN. In these cases, unless the relevant landowner specifically forbids the parking of SORNed vehicles on their land, there is nothing we can do.

Legislation The legislation that allows us to remove abandoned vehicles is as follows:

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 746 (Removal & Disposal of Vehicles)
- Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 2095 (Charges for Removal & Disposal of Vehicles)

- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978

Fines and charges

It is a criminal offence to abandon a motor vehicle or anything that has formed part of a motor vehicle on any land in the open air or on any other land forming part of a highway. A person found guilty of such an offence may be punished on summary conviction with a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term not exceeding three months in prison, or both.

Note: Making a false SORN declaration is an offence for which the maximum fine is £5,000 and imprisonment

Fixed penalty notices of £200 can be issued to offenders.

Once the vehicle has been removed, it may only be released on proof of ownership and the payment of the following statutory charges:

Initial removal: £150, Storage: £20 per day from the date of removal