



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4511.195 Seizing and detaining vehicle if operator has prior conviction.

Effective: April 4, 2023

Legislation: Senate Bill 288

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Arrested person" means a person who is arrested for a violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or a municipal OVI ordinance and whose arrest results in a vehicle being seized under division (B) of this section.

(2) "Vehicle owner" means either of the following:

(a) The person in whose name is registered, at the time of the seizure, a vehicle that is seized under division (B) of this section;

(b) A person to whom the certificate of title to a vehicle that is seized under division (B) of this section has been assigned and who has not obtained a certificate of title to the vehicle in that person's name, but who is deemed by the court as being the owner of the vehicle at the time the vehicle was seized under division (B) of this section.

(3) "Interested party" includes the owner of a vehicle seized under this section, all lienholders, the arrested person, the owner of the place of storage at which a vehicle seized under this section is stored, and the person or entity that caused the vehicle to be removed.

(B)(1) The arresting officer or another officer of the law enforcement agency that employs the arresting officer, in addition to any action that the arresting officer is required or authorized to take by section 4511.19 or 4511.191 of the Revised Code or by any other provision of law, shall seize the vehicle that a person was operating at the time of the alleged offense and its license plates if the vehicle is registered in the arrested person's name and if either of the following applies:

(a) The person is arrested for a violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or of a municipal OVI ordinance and, within ten years of the alleged violation, the person previously has



been convicted of or pleaded guilty to one or more violations of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or one or more other equivalent offenses.

(b) The person is arrested for a violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or of a municipal OVI ordinance and the person previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code under circumstances in which the violation was a felony, regardless of when the prior felony violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code and the conviction or guilty plea occurred.

(2) A law enforcement agency that employs a law enforcement officer who makes an arrest of a type that is described in division (B)(1) of this section and that involves a rented or leased vehicle that is being rented or leased for a period of thirty days or less shall notify, within twenty-four hours after the officer makes the arrest, the lessor or owner of the vehicle regarding the circumstances of the arrest and the location at which the vehicle may be picked up. At the time of the seizure of the vehicle, the law enforcement officer who made the arrest shall give the arrested person written notice that the vehicle and its license plates have been seized; that the vehicle either will be kept by the officer's law enforcement agency or will be immobilized at least until the operator's initial appearance on the charge of the offense for which the arrest was made; that, at the initial appearance, the court in certain circumstances may order that the vehicle and license plates be released to the arrested person until the disposition of that charge; and that, if the arrested person is convicted of that charge, the court generally must order the immobilization of the vehicle and the impoundment of its license plates, or the forfeiture of the vehicle.

(3) The arresting officer or a law enforcement officer of the agency that employs the arresting officer shall give written notice of the seizure to the court that will conduct the initial appearance of the arrested person on the charges arising out of the arrest. Upon receipt of the notice, the court promptly shall determine whether the arrested person is the vehicle owner. If the court determines that the arrested person is not the vehicle owner, it promptly shall send by regular mail written notice of the seizure to the vehicle's registered owner. The written notice shall contain all of the information required by division (B)(2) of this section to be in a notice to be given to the arrested person and also shall specify the date, time, and place of the arrested person's initial appearance. The notice also shall inform the vehicle owner that if title to a motor vehicle that is subject to an order for criminal forfeiture under this section is assigned or transferred and division (B)(2) or (3) of section 4503.234



of the Revised Code applies, the court may fine the arrested person the value of the vehicle. The notice also shall state that if the vehicle is immobilized under division (A) of section 4503.233 of the Revised Code, seven days after the end of the period of immobilization a law enforcement agency will send the vehicle owner a notice, informing the owner that if the release of the vehicle is not obtained in accordance with division (D)(3) of section 4503.233 of the Revised Code, the vehicle shall be forfeited. The notice also shall inform the vehicle owner that the vehicle owner may be charged expenses or charges incurred under this section and section 4503.233 of the Revised Code for the removal and storage of the vehicle.

The written notice that is given to the arrested person also shall state that if the person is convicted of or pleads guilty to the offense and the court issues an immobilization and impoundment order relative to that vehicle, division (D)(4) of section 4503.233 of the Revised Code prohibits the vehicle from being sold during the period of immobilization without the prior approval of the court.

(4) At or before the initial appearance, the vehicle owner may file a motion requesting the court to order that the vehicle and its license plates be released to the vehicle owner. Except as provided in this division and subject to the payment of expenses or charges incurred in the removal and storage of the vehicle, the court, in its discretion, then may issue an order releasing the vehicle and its license plates to the vehicle owner. Such an order may be conditioned upon such terms as the court determines appropriate, including the posting of a bond in an amount determined by the court. If the arrested person is not the vehicle owner and if the vehicle owner is not present at the arrested person's initial appearance, and if the court believes that the vehicle owner was not provided with adequate notice of the initial appearance, the court, in its discretion, may allow the vehicle owner to file a motion within seven days of the initial appearance. If the court allows the vehicle owner to file such a motion after the initial appearance, the extension of time granted by the court does not extend the time within which the initial appearance is to be conducted. If the court issues an order for the release of the vehicle and its license plates, a copy of the order shall be made available to the vehicle owner. If the vehicle owner presents a copy of the order to the law enforcement agency that employs the law enforcement officer who arrested the arrested person, the law enforcement agency promptly shall release the vehicle and its license plates to the vehicle owner upon payment by the vehicle owner of any expenses or charges incurred in the removal and storage of the vehicle.

(5) A vehicle seized under division (B)(1) of this section either shall be towed to a place specified by



the law enforcement agency that employs the arresting officer to be safely kept by the agency at that place for the time and in the manner specified in this section or shall be otherwise immobilized for the time and in the manner specified in this section. The license plates shall remain on the seized vehicle unless otherwise ordered by the court. No vehicle that is seized and either towed or immobilized pursuant to this division shall be considered contraband for purposes of Chapter 2981. of the Revised Code. The vehicle shall not be immobilized at any place other than a commercially operated private storage lot, a place owned by a law enforcement agency or other government agency, or a place to which one of the following applies:

- (a) The place is leased by or otherwise under the control of a law enforcement agency or other government agency.
- (b) The place is owned by the vehicle operator, the vehicle operator's spouse, or a parent or child of the vehicle operator.
- (c) The place is owned by a private person or entity, and, prior to the immobilization, the private entity or person that owns the place, or the authorized agent of that private entity or person, has given express written consent for the immobilization to be carried out at that place.
- (d) The place is a street or highway on which the vehicle is parked in accordance with the law.

(C)(1) A vehicle seized under division (B) of this section shall be safely kept at the place to which it is towed or otherwise moved by the law enforcement agency that employs the arresting officer until the initial appearance of the arrested person relative to the charge in question. The license plates shall remain on the seized vehicle unless otherwise ordered by the court.

(2)(a) At the initial appearance or not less than seven days prior to the date of final disposition, the court shall notify the arrested person that, if title to a motor vehicle that is subject to an order for criminal forfeiture under this section is assigned or transferred and division (B)(2) or (3) of section 4503.234 of the Revised Code applies, the court may fine the arrested person the value of the vehicle. If, at the initial appearance, the arrested person pleads guilty to the violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or of the municipal OVI ordinance or pleads no contest to and is convicted of the violation, the court shall impose sentence upon the person as provided by law



or ordinance; the court shall order the immobilization of the vehicle the arrested person was operating at the time of the offense if registered in the arrested person's name and the impoundment of its license plates under section 4503.233 and section 4511.19 or 4511.193 of the Revised Code or the criminal forfeiture to the state of the vehicle if registered in the arrested person's name under section 4503.234 and section 4511.19 or 4511.193 of the Revised Code, whichever is applicable; and the vehicle and its license plates shall not be returned or released to the arrested person.

(b) If, at any time, the charge that the arrested person violated division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or the municipal OVI ordinance is dismissed for any reason, the court shall order that the vehicle seized at the time of the arrest and its license plates immediately be released to the person.

(D) If a vehicle and its license plates are seized under division (B) of this section and are not returned or released to the arrested person pursuant to division (C) of this section, the vehicle and its license plates shall be retained until the final disposition of the charge in question. Upon the final disposition of that charge, the court shall do whichever of the following is applicable:

(1) If the arrested person is convicted of or pleads guilty to the violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or of the municipal OVI ordinance, the court shall impose sentence upon the person as provided by law or ordinance and shall order the immobilization of the vehicle the person was operating at the time of the offense if it is registered in the arrested person's name and the impoundment of its license plates under section 4503.233 and section 4511.19 or 4511.193 of the Revised Code, or the criminal forfeiture of the vehicle if it is registered in the arrested person's name under section 4503.234 and section 4511.19 or 4511.193 of the Revised Code, whichever is applicable.

(2) If the arrested person is found not guilty of the violation of division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or of the municipal OVI ordinance, the court shall order that the vehicle and its license plates immediately be released to the arrested person.

(3) If the charge that the arrested person violated division (A) of section 4511.19 of the Revised Code or the municipal OVI ordinance is dismissed for any reason, the court shall order that the vehicle and its license plates immediately be released to the arrested person.



(4) If the impoundment of the vehicle was not authorized under this section, the court shall order that the vehicle and its license plates be returned immediately to the arrested person or, if the arrested person is not the vehicle owner, to the vehicle owner, and shall order that the state or political subdivision of the law enforcement agency served by the law enforcement officer who seized the vehicle pay all expenses and charges incurred in its removal and storage.

(E) If a vehicle is seized under division (B) of this section, the time between the seizure of the vehicle and either its release to the arrested person under division (C) of this section or the issuance of an order of immobilization of the vehicle under section 4503.233 of the Revised Code shall be credited against the period of immobilization ordered by the court.

(F)(1) Except as provided in division (D)(4) of this section, the arrested person may be charged expenses or charges incurred in the removal and storage of the immobilized vehicle. The court with jurisdiction over the case, after notice to all interested parties, including lienholders, and after an opportunity for them to be heard, if the court finds that the arrested person does not intend to seek release of the vehicle at the end of the period of immobilization under section 4503.233 of the Revised Code or that the arrested person is not or will not be able to pay the expenses and charges incurred in its removal and storage, may order that title to the vehicle be transferred, in order of priority, first into the name of the person or entity that removed it, next into the name of a lienholder, or lastly into the name of the owner of the place of storage.

Any lienholder that receives title under a court order shall do so on the condition that it pay any expenses or charges incurred in the vehicle's removal and storage. If the person or entity that receives title to the vehicle is the person or entity that removed it, the person or entity shall receive title on the condition that it pay any lien on the vehicle. The court shall not order that title be transferred to any person or entity other than the owner of the place of storage if the person or entity refuses to receive the title. Any person or entity that receives title either may keep title to the vehicle or may dispose of the vehicle in any legal manner that it considers appropriate, including assignment of the certificate of title to the motor vehicle to a salvage dealer or a scrap metal processing facility. The person or entity shall not transfer the vehicle to the person who is the vehicle's immediate previous owner.



If the person or entity that receives title assigns the motor vehicle to a salvage dealer or scrap metal processing facility, the person or entity shall send the assigned certificate of title to the motor vehicle to the clerk of the court of common pleas of the county in which the salvage dealer or scrap metal processing facility is located. The person or entity shall mark the face of the certificate of title with the words "FOR DESTRUCTION" and shall deliver a photocopy of the certificate of title to the salvage dealer or scrap metal processing facility for its records.

(2) Whenever a court issues an order under division (F)(1) of this section, the court also shall order removal of the license plates from the vehicle and cause them to be sent to the registrar of motor vehicles if they have not already been sent to the registrar. Thereafter, no further proceedings shall take place under this section or under section 4503.233 of the Revised Code.

(3) Prior to initiating a proceeding under division (F)(1) of this section, and upon payment of the fee under division (B) of section 4505.14 of the Revised Code, any interested party may cause a search to be made of the public records of the bureau of motor vehicles or the clerk of the court of common pleas, to ascertain the identity of any lienholder of the vehicle. The initiating party shall furnish this information to the clerk of the court with jurisdiction over the case, and the clerk shall provide notice to the arrested person, any lienholder, and any other interested parties listed by the initiating party, at the last known address supplied by the initiating party, by certified mail or, at the option of the initiating party, by personal service or ordinary mail.