



## ARTICLE VIII. ABANDONED AND JUNKED VEHICLES

*Purpose: This Article shall be known as the Abandoned and Junked Vehicle Chapter for Catawba County and may be referred to as the "Abandoned and Junked Vehicle Chapter."*

### **Division 1. Generally.**

**\*State law references:** Authority to prohibit the abandonment of motor vehicles on public ground and private property, NCGS 153A-132; authority to abate nuisances, NCGS 153A-140.

#### **Sec. 44-800. Authority and purpose.**

This Article is enacted pursuant to the powers granted to the County by NCGS 153A-121, 153A-132 and 153A-132.2. The purpose of this Article is to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the County, natural scenic beauty, and property values, of the County from potential adverse effects caused by the proliferation and improper disposal of junked motor vehicles.

#### **Sec. 44-801. Jurisdiction.**

In accordance with NCGS 153A-122, this Article applies to, and is enforceable in, unincorporated part of the County and areas within the city's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) jurisdiction. However, the governing board of any city within the County may by resolution permit this Article to be enforced within the city. The board of commissioners may approve to accept a resolution by the city to set the date and terms of enforcement of this Article within the city. The city may, by resolution, withdraw its permission to enforce this Article within the city. The city must give the County at least 30 days advance, written notice of its intent to withdraw permission.

(Ord. No. 2008-17, 10/20/08)

#### **Sec. 44-802. Administration.**

The planning director is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this Article.

#### **Sec. 44-803. Definitions.**

The following definitions apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

*Abandoned vehicle* means any motor vehicle that is left:



- (a) Upon a public street or highway in violation of a law or Chapter prohibiting parking;
- (b) On a public street or highway for longer than 7 days;
- (c) On property owned or operated by the County for longer than 24 hours; or
- (d) On private property without the consent of the owner, occupant or lessee, for longer than two hours.

*Enclosed building* means a garage or building structure that provides a complete enclosure (all sides of building enclosed) so that the contents of the building cannot be seen from a street or from adjacent property.

*Junked motor vehicle* means any motor vehicle that does not display a current North Carolina license plate that:

- (a) Is partially dismantled or wrecked;
- (b) Cannot be self-propelled or moved in the manner in which it originally was intended to move. This includes dismantled truck trailers or truck bed boxes which were originally attached to a motorized vehicle; or
- (c) Is more than 5 years old and appears to be worth less than \$100.

*Magistrate* means the magistrate for the County or in any other office designated to receive requests by the chief district court judge.

*Motor vehicle or vehicle* means all machines designed or intended to travel over land or water by self-propulsion or while attached to a self-propelled vehicle.

*Nuisance vehicle* means a vehicle on public or private property that is determined and declared to be a health or safety hazard, a public nuisance, and unlawful, including a vehicle found to be:

- (a) A breeding ground, nest or harbor for mosquitoes, other insects, rats or other pests;
- (b) A point of heavy growth of weeds or other noxious vegetation over 8 inches in height;
- (c) A point of collection of pools or ponds of water;
- (d) A point of concentration of quantities of gasoline, oil or other flammable or explosive materials;
- (e) Having areas of confinement that cannot be opened or in the alternative, operated from the inside of the area of confinement, such as trunks, hoods, etc.;
- (f) So situated or located that there is a danger of the vehicle falling, dislodging or turning over;
- (g) A point of collection of refuse, trash, garbage, food waste, animal waste, or any other rotten or decaying matter of any kind;
- (h) Having parts which are jagged or contain sharp edges of metal, plastic or glass; or
- (i) Any other vehicle specifically declared a health and safety hazard and a public nuisance by the planning director.



*Planning director* means the planning director or designee, for the County.

*Sheriff* means the sheriff of the County.

*Vector* means any organism that carries disease-causing microorganisms from one host to another (i.e. rats, mosquitoes, etc.).

## **Division 2. Regulations.**

### **Sec. 44-804. Abandoned vehicle unlawful; removal authorized.**

- (a) It shall be unlawful for the registered owner or person entitled to possession of a motor vehicle or for the owner, lessee, or occupant of the real property upon which the vehicle is located to leave, or allow the vehicle to remain on the public property after it has been declared an abandoned vehicle.
- (b) If a motor vehicle is abandoned on public property, the board of commissioners may direct the sheriff, or designee to removal the vehicle to a designated storage area determined by the sheriff.

### **Sec. 44-805. Nuisance vehicle unlawful; removal authorized.**

- (a) It shall be unlawful for the registered owner, or person entitled to possession of a motor vehicle, or for the owner, lessee, or occupant of the real property upon which the vehicle is located, to leave or allow the vehicle to remain on the property after it has been declared a nuisance vehicle.
- (b) Upon investigation, the planning director may determine and declare that a vehicle is a health or safety hazard and therefore a nuisance vehicle, and order the vehicle removed. Notice of the planning director's determination may be combined with any other notices required under this Article. Notices shall be provided to the registered owner or person entitled to possession of the motor vehicle and/or the owner, lessee or occupant of the real property by first class mail except in situations where a name and address cannot be ascertained, notice may be given by affixation on the windshield or some other conspicuous place on the vehicle.
- (c) In cases where it is impractical or impossible to find and/or prosecute the responsible party the County may, at its discretion, have the vehicle towed in accordance with NCGS 153A-132.

### **Sec. 44-806. Right to enter premises.**

The planning director shall have the right, upon presentation of proper credentials and identification, to enter any premises within the jurisdiction of this Article during daylight hours to determine if any vehicle is in violation of this Chapter.



**Sec. 44-807. Junked motor vehicles regulated; removal authorized.**

- (a) All junked vehicles must be kept in a garage or building structure that provides a complete enclosure so that vehicle(s) cannot be seen from a public street or from adjacent property. For purposes of this Chapter, a garage or building structure means either a lawful, nonconforming use or a garage or building structure erected pursuant to the lawful issuance of a building permit and which has been constructed in accordance with all zoning and building code regulations. A carport shall not be treated as an acceptable garage or enclosure under this Chapter.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for the registered owner, or person entitled to the possession of a junked motor vehicle, to place, store, leave or allow a vehicle to remain on any property in violation of this Chapter or to allow a vehicle to remain on any property after the vehicle has been ordered removed from that property.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for the owner, lessee or occupant of the real property, upon which a junked motor vehicle is located, to leave, or allow the vehicle to remain on the property in violation of this Chapter after the vehicle has been ordered removed.

**Sec. 44-808. Enforcement provisions.**

The planning director shall enforce this Chapter. He may call upon other agencies as necessary to assist in the enforcement of this Chapter.

- (a) Whenever the planning director receives a complaint alleging a violation of this Chapter, he shall investigate the complaint and take whatever action is warranted.
- (b) The owner, tenant, or occupant of any building or land, and agent or other person who participates in, assists, directs, creates, or maintains any situation that is contrary to the requirements of this Chapter may be held responsible for the violation and be subject to all penalties and remedies.
- (c) Upon discovery of a violation, the following procedures apply:
  - (1) The planning director shall send a written notice to the person responsible for such violation, indicating the nature of the violation, the action necessary to correct it, and the number of days within which the violation must be corrected.
  - (2) In cases that pose an immediate danger to the public's health, safety, or general welfare, the planning director may seek enforcement without proper written notice by invoking any of the penalties or remedies authorized in this Section.
- (d) The County may assess the following civil and criminal penalties:
  - (1) A violation subjects the violator to a civil penalty in the amount of \$50.00. Each day's continuing violation is a separate and distinct offense.
  - (2) A violation of this Article shall be a criminal misdemeanor, punishable as provided in NCGS 14-3.



- (3) In addition to the foregoing enforcement provisions, this Article may be enforced by any remedy provided in NCGS 153A-123. Each day's continuing violation is a separate and distinct offense.

**Sec. 44-809. No liability.**

The County, or any person acting on behalf of the County in the enforcement of this Article, may not be held to answer in a civil or criminal action to any owner or other person legally entitled to the possession of an abandoned, junked, lost or stolen vehicle for the enforcement of this Chapter.

**Sec. 44-810. Exceptions.**

This Article does not apply to any motor vehicle that is located:

- (a) In an enclosed building;
- (b) On the premises of a business enterprise being legally maintained and operated primarily for the purpose of making repairs to motor vehicles or wholesale or retail sales of items or parts routinely used in motor vehicles, in a lawful place and manner if the vehicle is necessary to the operation of the business;
- (c) On the premises of a business enterprise being operated in a legally zoned place and manner if the vehicle is necessary in the operation of the enterprise or needed in the operation of a bona-fide farm; or
- (d) In an appropriate storage place or depository maintained by the County.

**Sec. 44-811. Changes in state law.**

Should NCGS 153A and NCGS 153A-132.2, or any other section of the general statutes incorporated herein by reference or otherwise referred to herein be changed or amended, or should such statutes require or mandate a different procedure or change or impose new, different or additional requirements, then, in that event, this Chapter shall be deemed to have been amended without further action to have complied with such new, additional or amended requirements.

**Sec. 44-812 - 899. Reserved.**