

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AMENDING CHAPTER 6

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 6, ARTICLE XI OF THE CITY CODE,
ENTITLED "TOWING AND BOOTING BUSINESSES"

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE, NORTH
CAROLINA THAT:

Section 1: Article XI. Towing and Booting Business of the City Code is
amended as follows:

Sec. 6-561. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Booting service includes any person or other entity, whether licensed or not, that engages in or who owns or operates a business which engages, in whole or in part, in the booting or immobilization of motor vehicles for compensation.

Completed trespass tow means a trespass tow resulting in the complete removal of the motor vehicle from a private parking lot or private property.

Motor Vehicle means a Class A, B, or C Motor Vehicle as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(23).

Private parking lot means any parking lot or area owned by a private entity or individual that provides parking spaces for a fee or requires the permission of the owner, lessee or agent before a person may park at that location. A private parking lot includes vehicle parking spaces in an apartment or condominium complex. A private parking lot does not include the driveway, lawn or what is commonly referred to as the yard, of property owned or leased as a family residence.

Tow means to haul, carry, pull along, or otherwise transport or remove a motor vehicle by means of another vehicle.

Towing or tow service includes any person or other entity, whether licensed or not, that engages in or who owns or operates a business which engages, in whole or in part, in the towing or removal of motor vehicles for compensation.

Trespass towing or trespass tow means the towing or removal of a motor vehicle, without the consent of the motor vehicle's owner or operator, that is parked on a private parking lot without the property owner's or agent's consent.

Wheel lock means a boot, wheel lock or any other device that is attached to a motor vehicle that is manufactured and designed to immobilize the motor vehicle.

Sec. 6-562. Towing of vehicles for compensation.

No towing service shall conduct a trespass tow of a motor vehicle from a private parking lot for compensation when the point of origin of the tow is within the jurisdictional limits of the city without complying with the provisions of this article.

Sec. 6-563. Trespass towing of vehicles from private parking lots; Signs required.

(a) It shall be unlawful to tow or remove or immobilize by use of any wheel lock or other method, a motor vehicle that is parked on private property or private parking lot without the permission of the owner or lessee of the motor vehicle unless notice is posted in accordance with the provisions of this section on the private property from which the towing, removal, or immobilization occurs. The notice shall meet the following requirements:

(1) The notice must be in the form of a sign structure and not less than 24 inches by 24 inches and not larger than 6 square feet and constructed of metal, plastic or other type of material that is enduring in nature. The notice shall be prominently posted on the private property at each access or curb cut allowing vehicle access to the property and within five feet of the street right of way line. If there are no curb or access barriers, notices shall be posted not less than every 50 feet facing the frontage of the public street and facing the private parking lot. In addition, a sign not less than 12 inches by 18 inches in size may be posted with lettering on both sides at each parking space from which an unauthorized vehicle could be towed, removed, or immobilized.

(2) The notice shall clearly display the following:

a. In not less than one and one-half inch high letters red in color on a contrasting white background, the words "tow-away-zone" or "towing enforced."

b. In not less than one inch high letters red in color on a contrasting white background, a statement that parking is never authorized by stating "private property - no parking" or where parking is permitted under limited circumstances, by stating "authorized parking only" or "leased parking only", or "parking for _____ customers only", or "parking for residents only", or a similar phrase that specifically identifies the conditions under which someone may park on the property. If parking is only allowed for a specified time, then the sign shall specifically state the days and hours when parking is permitted.

c. In not less than one-half inch high letters red in color on a contrasting white background, the phone number that a person can call to retrieve the towed vehicle and the name and address of the storage facility where the vehicle is stored.

d. In not less than one-half inch high letters red in color on a contrasting white background, the maximum fees and charges for booting or immobilizing a vehicle by use of a wheel lock, securing a vehicle to a tow truck by a hook, chain, cable or similar device, a completed trespass tow, and storing a towed vehicle; a statement that credit and debit cards may be used for payment; and the amount or percent of additional fees and charges which may be added for the use of credit and debit cards.

(3) The sign displaying the required notices shall be permanently installed with the bottom of the sign not less than 3 feet above ground level and the top of the sign not more than 8 feet above ground level.

Sec. 6-564. Booting service; Fees.

(a) Any booting service engaged in the booting or immobilization of a motor vehicle on a private parking lot shall upon the request of the vehicle owner or operator, display and exhibit a photo identification card issued by the booting service. The photo identification card shall contain a picture of the employee, the first name of the employee, and the name, address and telephone number of the booting service. This subsection shall not apply to booting services in uniform which contains the first name of the employee and the name of the booting service.

(b) Booting service motor vehicles shall be marked with the name and address of the booting service on each side of the vehicle in letters not less than three inches in height. This subsection shall not apply to motor vehicles subject to North Carolina General Statute § 20-101(d) or 49 C.F.R. Part 390.

(c) A booting service must accept cash and at least two major credit and debit cards.

Sec. 6-565. Trespass towing of vehicles from private parking lots; Practices.

(a) Any towing service that has initiated a trespass tow by, securing the motor vehicle to the tow truck by a hook, chain, cable or similar device, but has not completely removed the trespass motor vehicle from the private parking lot, shall upon the request of the vehicle owner or operator, release said vehicle upon payment of the fees and charges noticed pursuant to Sec. 6-563(a)(2)d.

(b) Any towing service that is engaged in a trespass tow shall, upon request of the owner or operator of the motor vehicle, permit the owner or operator access to the trespass vehicle for the purpose of retrieving personal property from the vehicle. If

personal items are removed from the motor vehicle by the towing service, then upon request those items will be returned to the owner or operator.

(b) Any towing service that engages in a trespass tow or any storage facility that receives motor vehicles that have been towed as a result of a non-consensual tow from private property shall accept cash and at least two major credit cards and any debit card for all fees and charges required to be noticed pursuant to this article. Upon request, the employee for the towing service or storage facility will provide a receipt to the owner or operator of the towed motor vehicle.

(d) Any towing service that engages in a trespass tow or any storage yard that receives motor vehicles that have been towed as a result of a non-consensual tow from private property shall have a person on call 24 hours every day who acknowledges requests to retrieve a towed motor vehicle within 15 minutes of receiving an inquiry from the owner or operator of the towed motor vehicle. If the owner or operator wishes to retrieve the motor vehicle, then the towing service or storage facility must make the vehicle available within 45 minutes of the request.

(e) The lot or facility to which a trespass towed vehicle is removed shall be located within the city limits of the City of Charlotte.

(f) No towing service shall remove a motor vehicle from a private lot from the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. unless the owner or agent of the private lot signs a contemporaneous specific written authorization for such removal which is presented to the wrecker driver of the towing service. The agent must be someone other than an employee of the towing service. The written authorization shall contain the reason for the tow, the make, model, year, color, vehicle identification number (VIN) and license plate number. The wrecker driver shall contact the non-emergency number for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and provide the above information. The motor vehicle will not be removed from the private lot until the driver has been advised of a complaint number.

(g) Subject to the express limitations described in this Article, towing services and owners, lessees and agents of private parking lots shall be entitled to pursue all rights and remedies available at law regarding the enforcement and collection of past due charges for parking violations.

Sec. 6-566. Interference with a towing service.

(a) It shall be unlawful for anyone to obstruct or interfere with a towing service that is carrying out a trespass tow on private property or a tow conducted pursuant to a contract with the City of Charlotte except:

(1) When the owner or operator verbally requests the towing service to release the motor vehicle pursuant to this Article;

(2) When the owner or operator verbally requests the towing service to release the motor vehicle pursuant to the provisions of a towing contract with the City of Charlotte; or

(3) When the owner or operator verbally requests the towing service to retrieve personal property from their motor vehicle.

Sec. 6-567. Penalty.

Any person who violates a provision of this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor as provided by G.S. 14-4, and subject to a maximum fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

Section 2: This ordinance shall become effective January 22, 2016.

Approved as to form:

City Attorney