

MOTOR VEHICLE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL PROGRAM THE MONTANA JUNK VEHICLE LAW



Q: What is the Montana Junk Vehicle Law?

A: The Montana Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act was enacted in 1973 for the establishment, control, operation, and licensing of public and private motor vehicle wrecking facilities. This law requires commercial and county motor vehicle storage and wrecking yards to obtain an annual license, keep pertinent records and shield their junk vehicles from public view. This law also requires the control of junk vehicles in your yard, alley, etc.

Q: What is a "Junk Vehicle"?

A: A junk vehicle is defined as any "discarded, ruined, wrecked, or dismantled motor vehicle, including component parts, which is not lawfully and validly licensed, and remains inoperative or incapable of being driven". A vehicle must meet **all three parts** of the definition to be classified as a junk vehicle.

Q: How can I comply with the law if a junk vehicle has been abandoned on my property?

A: Montana has specific laws regarding the disposition of abandoned vehicles. Contact your local law enforcement agency and request their help in contacting the owner or in obtaining authorization to have the vehicle removed.

Q: What are the penalties if I don't comply with the junk vehicle law?

A: The junk vehicle statutes provide for criminal penalties of up to \$250 and/or 30 days in jail. Civil penalties of up to \$50 for each day of violation may also be imposed.



Montana was one of the leading states to enact junk vehicle legislation. Its primary purpose is to control junk vehicles from being scattered throughout the countryside, thereby helping to preserve the beauty of our state. This program also provides for the recycling of the junk vehicles collected so that valuable resources may be utilized again. This program is paid for from the small fee you are assessed when you license your vehicle. The benefits of this program are available to all Montanans and you are encouraged to use them.

Q: What is "Public View"?

A: Public view is defined as "any point 6 feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which a junk vehicle can be seen". A public road is any publicly owned or maintained highway, street, road or alley or privately owned road open for public access.

Q: Do I have to shield my vehicles if I'm not in the commercial motor vehicle wrecking business?

A: Yes, all vehicles that meet the three-part definition of a junk vehicle must be shielded from public view.

Q: If I only have one junk vehicle do I need to shield it?

A: Yes, all junk vehicles, regardless of number must be shielded from public view.

Q: How can I shield my junk vehicles from public view?

A: You can move the vehicle to a location that will shield it, such as into a garage or behind a solid fence, hill or building. You may also construct shielding using permanent fencing materials. Certain construction specifications are required for proper shielding. If you intend to shield your vehicles, contact your County Junk Vehicle Program prior to construction. Placing tarps or plastics over the vehicles is not acceptable shielding.

Q: Can I do anything else other than removing or shielding the vehicle?

A: Yes, you may repair the vehicle to make it operable, or license it. Either action will remove the vehicle from the classification of a junk vehicle.

Q: What if I no longer want to keep the vehicle?

A: If the vehicle has value from its parts, contact a licensed private motor vehicle wrecking facility. Most commercial wrecking facilities will buy vehicles that have marketable parts. If the vehicle's value is low, they may haul it away free in exchange for its parts. Some vehicles have little or no parts value and the private wrecking facility may not be interested in hauling it. If this is the case, contact your local County Junk Vehicle Program. They will arrange to haul and dispose of your junk vehicle at no charge to you.

Q: Do I need to shield such items as engines, transmissions and fenders?

A: Yes, any component part of a vehicle must also be shielded.

Q: Do I need to obtain a motor vehicle wrecking facility license for my own junk vehicles?

A: If you have four or more junk vehicles at any one location, or if you buy, sell or deal in secondhand motor vehicle parts, you may need to obtain a license.

Q: If I have more than four junk vehicles and decide I want to start dealing in used parts, who do I contact for licensing information?

A: Information on the requirements for obtaining a Montana motor vehicle wrecking facility license can be obtained from your County Junk Vehicle Director, your County Sanitarian, or:

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