



Policy & Procedure for the Management of Abandoned Vehicles

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Legal Framework

Under Section 71 of the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended, it is a criminal offence to abandon a vehicle on any land. Both the person who places a vehicle in such a location and the registered owner are liable to prosecution, with fines of up to €5,000 and/or 12 months in prison.

Longford County Council is empowered under this and other legislation, including the Roads Act 1993, to investigate, remove, store, and dispose of vehicles suspected to be abandoned on public roads or lands under its control.

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure sets out the formal process adopted by Longford County Council for the identification, investigation, removal, storage, and disposal of abandoned vehicles. It ensures compliance with national waste management and road safety legislation and promotes environmental integrity, public safety, and proper use of public infrastructure.

This procedure applies to:

- Public roads and public lands under the jurisdiction of Longford County Council.
- Vehicles that have not been moved for six consecutive weeks and appear to be abandoned.

Note: In certain circumstances, Longford County Council reserves the right to seize a vehicle without prior notification to the registered owner, particularly where it poses an immediate hazard or risk.

2. Definitions

Abandoned Vehicle: A vehicle left in a public place without apparent owner oversight, usage, or maintenance, showing signs of neglect or damage, and remaining in-situ for a period of six consecutive weeks.

Vehicles Not Deemed Abandoned: The following are *not* considered abandoned under this procedure:

- Vehicles obstructing traffic or creating a hazard → Refer to An Garda Síochána.
- Untaxed/uninsured vehicles → Enforcement by An Garda Síochána.
- Vehicles involved in residential parking disputes.
- Burnt-out vehicles → Report to An Garda Síochána.
- Vehicles on private lands or not in the ownership, control, or management of LCC.
- Vehicles with foreign registration plates.
- Vehicles known to be in temporary disrepair or owner-maintained.

3. Procedure

Step 1: Reporting a Suspected Abandoned Vehicle

Reports may be submitted by:

- Members of the public
- An Garda Síochána
- Employees of Longford County Council

To submit a report, contact:

Email: environment@longfordcoco.ie
Phone: 043 3343462
On line: [Environmental Complaint Form](#)
Post: Environment Section,
Longford County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Great Water Street,
Longford,
N39,NH56

Please provide the following:

- Exact location (with Eircode or GPS coordinates).
- Vehicle details (make, model, colour, and registration).
- Physical condition (flat tyres, broken windows, fire damage, etc.).
- Duration the vehicle has been at the location.
- Your name and contact information.

Step 2: Initial Inspection

- In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), compliant Vehicle Registration Check will be forwarded to Motor Tax.
- Longford County Council personnel will carry out an on-site inspection within five working days of the report.
- Photographic documentation will be taken.
- Tax, insurance and NCT status will be verified where possible.
- An initial assessment will be made to determine whether the vehicle is likely to be abandoned.
- The vehicle will be observed over a four-week period, (or a shorter period if deemed necessary by the Environment Section), to determine if it is abandoned.

Step 3: Affixing a Legal Notice

If the vehicle appears abandoned after the initial inspection and four-week observation period:

- A Notice of 'Intention to Remove', within seven days, will be affixed to the vehicle under Section 71 of the Waste Management Act.
- Longford County Council will remove the vehicle 14 days after the affixing of the notice.
- A further period may be facilitated if the vehicle owner contacts the Council, within the initial 7 days.
- The vehicle will be monitored for a total of up to 6 weeks (incorporating step 2 and step 3) by Council staff, with photographic evidence and contemporary notes recorded on each visit.

Step 4: Owner Contact & Investigation

- The Council will attempt to trace and contact the registered owner using official vehicle registration data, at the earliest possible opportunity. A GDPR Compliant Vehicle Registration Check will be forwarded to Motor Tax – see Step 2 above.
- Where the vehicle owner's identity and address are known, the local authority will send a copy of the Notice of 'Intention to Remove' the vehicle, by post or in person.
- If contact is made and a reasonable explanation is provided, enforcement action may be paused pending further review.

Step 5: Removal of Vehicle

- If the vehicle is not removed within the six week period as outlined above, Longford County Council will arrange for the vehicle's safe removal to an authorised storage facility.
- An Garda Síochána will be notified in advance where necessary, for health and safety purposes and to avoid legal complications.
- Where the vehicle owner's identity and address are known, the local authority shall serve a notice informing the owner of the removal of the vehicle and address of the place of storage, and the process for reclaiming the vehicle.
- The owner will have **four weeks** from the date of said notice, to claim or recover the abandoned vehicle.

Step 6: Storage and Disposal

- The vehicle will be retained in storage for a period of four weeks.
- If unclaimed within that period, the vehicle will become the legal property of Longford County Council.
- The vehicle may then be scrapped, auctioned, or recycled, in compliance with waste and environmental legislation and regulations, to include End of Life Vehicle (ELV) disposal at an Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATFs).

Step 7: Recovery of Costs

The registered owner, if identified, shall be held financially responsible for:

- Towing and recovery charges.
- Storage fees.
- Administrative processing.
- Disposal or recycling costs.
- Legal costs.

The payment of costs will be a prerequisite to the reclaiming of the vehicle.

4. Record Management

- All reports, photographs, notices, inspection records, correspondence, and enforcement actions will be logged in Longford County Council's Pollution Complaints System, in compliance with GDPR requirements.
- Records will be retained for a minimum period of two years.

5. Review and Continuous Improvement

This document will be formally reviewed in line with:

- Legislative changes.
- Operational feedback/suggested improvements.
- Internal or External Audit recommendations
- Legal rulings.

6. Contact Information

For further information or to report a suspected abandoned vehicle:

Email: environment@longfordcoco.ie

Phone: 043 3343462

On line: [Environmental Complaint Form](#)

Post: Environment Section,
Longford County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Great Water Street,
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