

Council Information Memo

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Selena Campbell, Director – Municipal Enforcement Services

Date: April 11, 2025

Subject: Immobilization of Vehicles on Private Property Using Parking Boots or Other Such Devices

Comments

It has recently come to Municipal Enforcement Services' attention that certain tow operators/property owners have been using parking boots to immobilize unauthorized vehicles parked on private property/vehicles parked contrary to the parking regulations on their property rather than issuing parking penalty notices (parking tickets) and towing. Parking boots also known as Wheel Locks, Wheel Clamps or Denver Boots lock onto a vehicle's wheel to immobilize the vehicle. There are other immobilizing devices as well such as the "barnacle" which is laid across the front windshield.



Wheel Clamp



Barnacle

In the past, when property owners wanted parking rules enforced, they utilize towing in addition to the issuance of parking tickets since towing immediately frees up the parking space. Immobilizing a vehicle does not address the primary issue of unavailable parking since a vehicle that has been immobilized remains parked until the owner contacts the enforcement company/property owner and pays a fee to have the immobilization device removed.

The new Towing Without the Vehicle Owner's Consent By-law 2024-187 was intended to better regulate towing and avoid predatory towing and is based on the premise that the private property owner wanted/needed to "free up" parking spaces and so needed

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something more than parking tickets to deal with unauthorized parking or parking contrary to the applicable parking regulations, which is why By-law 2024-187 does not account for the use of immobilizing devices to enforce parking prohibitions or regulations.

The use of immobilizing devices does not align with the original intent of Council or By-law 2024-187. If vehicle immobilization was to be permitted in Oakville, appropriate regulations to prevent predatory immobilization would have to be put in place. Neither Municipal Enforcement Services or the Halton Regional Police have the resources available to properly enforce legalized immobilizing devices.

Municipal Enforcement Services expects to bring a report forward for Council's consideration at the May 26, 2025 Council meeting, recommending that vehicle immobilization in the Town of Oakville to enforce unauthorized parking or parking regulations through any immobilizing devices whatsoever, be they parking boots like wheel locks, wheel clamps, Denver boots, or barnacles, be prohibited.