

WHERE'S MY CAR: TOWING 101

Trap

Joe was in town from Georgia to visit his sister, Tina in Wellington. Tina was out-of town on a quick business trip, and so she provided Joe with guest fgate pass and gate codes ahead of time to enter the gated community. Joe arrived late that evening and parked on the street to leave room for Tina to park her own car upon her return. The next morning, Joe looked outside and noticed his vehicle was missing. Joe thought his car had been stolen and contacted the Sheriff's Office. He was informed that his car was towed. Joe called his sister to let her know what was happening. Tina told Joe there was no overnight parking allowed in the community after 2:00 a.m. Tina apologized to Joe, and said she inadvertently forgot to warn him.

Tips

Be aware that homeowner or condominium associations can develop and enforce their own parking rules that must follow state and county towing laws. Here are some practical tips:

- Many residential communities ban overnight parking, and the ban may apply to the place and/or time that you've parked.
- Association residents should obtain and understand their parking regulations. It is important for residents to inform their guests about the association parking rules including details about when vehicles can be towed.
- County law requires associations to contract with a licensed towing company to remove vehicles in violation of their parking rules.
- Be cautious when entering a community. Look for "Tow Away" signs. They must provide the name of the towing company and a 24/7 phone number.
- Towing companies are not permitted to remove vehicles from property without the written approval of the association.
- Associations are liable to the vehicle owner for costs and damages if the parking rules were followed, but the vehicle was removed from the property anyway.
- When a vehicle is towed from private property, towing charges must follow the fee structure established by Palm Beach County.

For a list of all licensed towing companies in Palm Beach County, more information OR to file a complaint, contact
Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600
(Boca/Delray 888-852-7362 toll free) www.pbcgov.com/consumer