

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM:  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF A DRAFT RESOLUTION TO INCREASE BOOT REMOVAL FEES

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**ISSUE:** Discussion of a draft resolution to increase boot removal fees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council discuss the draft resolution with staff and determine if it wishes to docket the resolution at the second legislative meeting in October.

**DISCUSSION:** The Alexandria City Code Section 3-2-355 (d) currently authorizes the City to impose a fee to cover the reasonable costs incidental to the immobilization of a motor vehicle. The City places immobilization boots on vehicles when they have three or more outstanding or otherwise unsettled parking citations issued for violations of any provision of title 10, chapter 4, or title 5, chapter 8, article C through G of the Alexandria City Code. **Boots can only be released upon confirmation that the underlying parking citations have been paid.** If the outstanding delinquency is not paid within 24 hours or is greater than \$300, the vehicle is removed and stored at the City impound lot. The City currently imposes a \$75 boot removal fee, which is charged to the vehicle owner when a boot is removed from an immobilized motor vehicle. The attached resolution would change the fee from \$75 to \$120 to cover the costs of a third party vendor self-releasing immobilization device and 24/7 live operator help center for booted motorists. This process keeps the cost of enforcement with the vehicle with the delinquencies.

The Police Department has Parking Enforcement Officers (PEO) who currently issue boots. At this time, PEOs must return to the location where the vehicle was immobilized to manually remove the boot. Changing the fee to a \$120 boot removal fee will allow the use of self-releasing immobilization devices on most vehicles and allow the Police Department to better utilize the PEO to focus on other tasks. PEO's would still do assisted removals for motorists who are physically unable to remove the devices themselves due to disability or other physical impairment and motorists who do not have credit cards to provide as collateral for return of the device.

With self-releasing immobilization devices, the PEO immobilizing the vehicle places a conspicuous notice on the vehicle that provides a 24-hour toll free number for the motorist to call to make a credit or debit card payments. (Residents unable to make payments by phone are still afforded the opportunity to make payment at the Treasury Division or the impound lot during normal business hours.) After payment is verified by the third party vendor, the motorist is given a 6-digit release code to immediately unlock the boot. The motorist would then return the device

to the City's impound lot during normal business hours. Motorists with physical impairments and those unable to provide a credit card for collateral would still have the option of having a PEO remove the device.

In order to ensure the return of the self-release boot, the vehicle owner may be assessed additional fees by the vendor, such as a fee of \$25 for late return or \$500 for a lost boot device. The late boot fee may be assessed when the motorist does not return the boot within 24-48 hours after the device is released with allowances for extenuating circumstances. The lost boot fee is assessed when the device is never returned or when it is returned damaged to the extent where it is no longer operable.

Switching to self-releasing immobilization devices has the benefit of allowing vehicle owners with delinquent citation payments to remedy the delinquency and remove the boot 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on location. Currently, when a vehicle is booted, the motorist has to bring the boot notice and any ticket(s) issued at the time of booting to the Treasury Division during normal business hours or the impound lot after business hours to make payment for the delinquent citations, depending upon the type of fine. Citations for expired City decals or failure to register with the City can only be paid at the Treasury Division during normal business hours. Based on PEO availability, motorists may have to wait anywhere from 45 minutes to a few hours for removal of the device.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Increased fee collections from vehicle operators will cover the costs of the new self-releasing immobilization devices and program management. Staff does not anticipate a net financial impact on the City. The City has a contract in place and could implement this process within a few months.

**ATTACHMENT:** Proposed Resolution

**STAFF:**

Laura B. Triggs, Acting Chief Financial Officer  
Debbie Kidd, Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer  
David Clark, Assistant Director of Finance, Treasury  
Christina Zechman Brown, Assistant City Attorney

# DRAFT

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, under Section 2.07 of the City Charter City Council has the authority to establish fees to be charged for services provided by the City;

**WHEREAS**, under City Code section 3-1-8(a) except as otherwise provided in this code or in the zoning ordinance all fees and charges for applications submitted to; for permits and approvals issued by; and for activities, programs and services provided by the City of Alexandria shall be established by resolution of the City Council;

**WHEREAS**, under City Code section 3-2-355(d) the City of Alexandria is authorized to impose a fee to cover the reasonable costs incidental to the immobilization of a motor vehicle that is found parked within the City and which has three or more outstanding or otherwise unsettled parking citations issued for a violation of any provision of Title 10, Chapter 4, or Title 5, Chapter 8, Articles C through G, of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia 1981; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council has now determined that it is necessary and desirable to increase the fee for the removal of a motor vehicle immobilization device from \$75.00 to \$120.00.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Alexandria Virginia:

1. That beginning in fiscal year 2012, the fee for the removal of a motor vehicle immobilization device shall be \$120.00.
2. That the fee established in Section 1, above, shall remain in effect during subsequent fiscal years until it is revised by the City Council.
3. That this resolution shall be effective on the date and at the time of its adoption.

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2011

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WILLIAM D. EUILLE, MAYOR

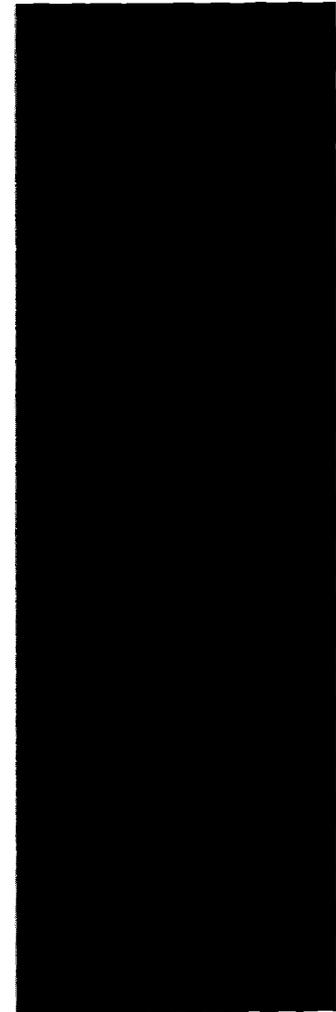
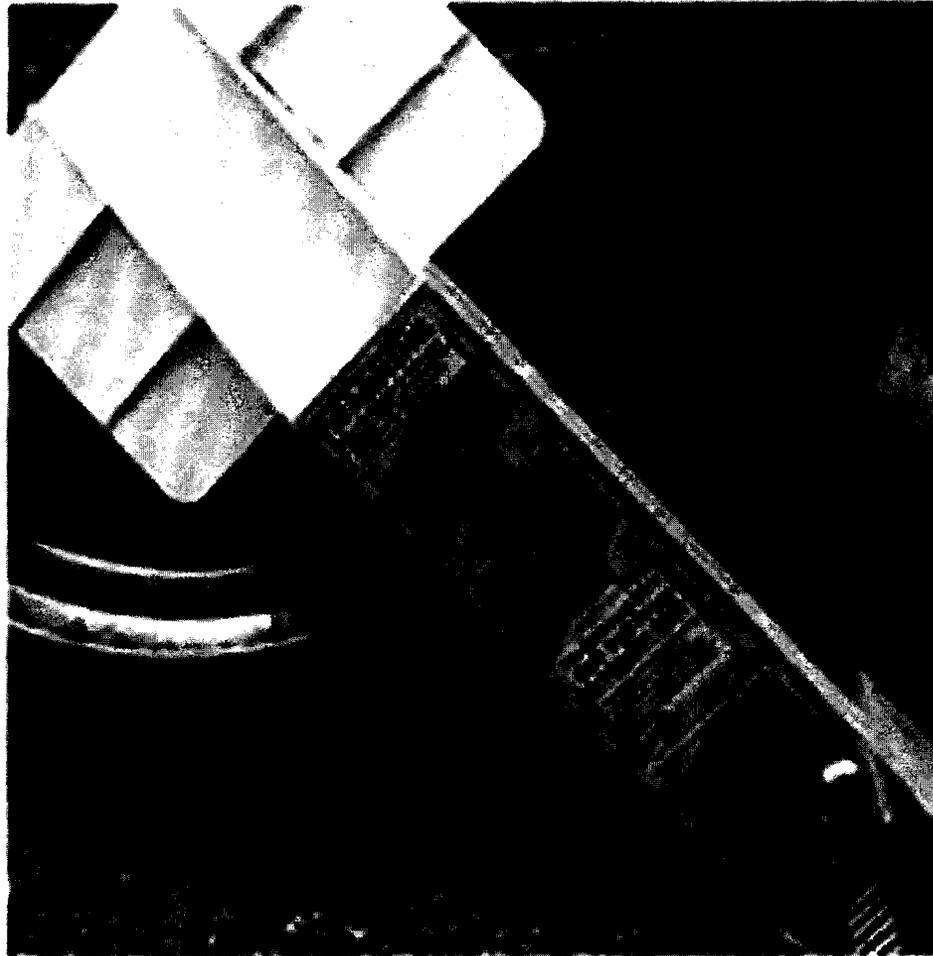
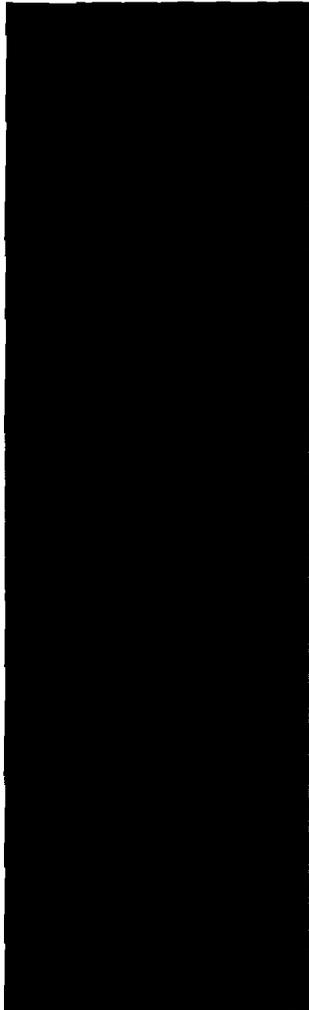
ATTEST:

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Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC, City Clerk

# DRAFT

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# Self Release Booting



# Overview

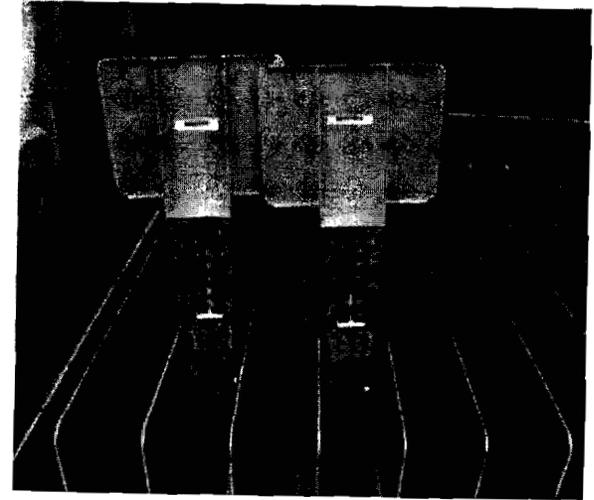
Boot Release Process

Customer Service

Financial Impact

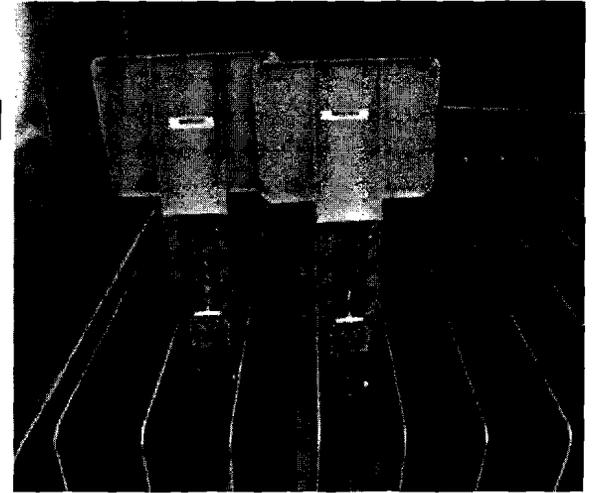
Benefits

# Boot Release Process



- Boot Placement - Includes notice to the vehicle explaining the process for the payment of citations and fees and boot removal.
  
- Toll Free Number - Notice provides a 24-hour toll free number for the motorist to call to make payment. After payment, the motorist is provided a release code to remove the boot.
  
- Boot returned to drop-off location.

# Current Boot Release Program



- 14 locations in US including:
  - Richmond, Virginia
  - Fredericksburg, Virginia
  - Montgomery County, Maryland
  - Prince George's County, Maryland
  - Baltimore, Maryland

# Customer Service

- ❑ **Help** – The help center is open 24/7.
- ❑ **Time** – Transactions usually take less than five minutes.
- ❑ **Payment Assistance** – Call friends and family members to help pay on the motorist's behalf.

# Customer Service

- Self-Release Boot** – Allows most motorists to remove the boot upon phone payment.
  - Assisted Release** - If the motorist is physically unable to remove the device due to disability or other physical impairment, he or she can receive assistance.
  - Charging As Last Resort** –Late fees may be assessed for VERY late return or a lost boot.
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# Financial Impact

- ❑ Proposed fee increase:

  - Collected from booted vehicle operators

- ❑ Covers:

  - Costs of the self-release boot equipment

  - Vendor support for immediate release

# Benefits

- ❑ Better utilization of Parking Enforcement Officers
  
- ❑ Quicker motorist access to vehicles
  
- ❑ Convenient Payment Options:
  - ❑ Help Center 24/7
  - ❑ Credit/Debit Card Payments and Conference Calls