



# Louisville Metro Government

## Legislation Text

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**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_, SERIES 2022**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING LOUISVILLE/ JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 71 REGARDING VEHICLE SPEED CONTESTS AND RECKLESS DRIVING EXHIBITIONS.**

**SPONSORED BY: COUNCIL MEMBER CASSIE CHAMBERS ARMSTRONG AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT DAVID JAMES**

**WHEREAS**, the use of a vehicle to engage in vehicle speed contests or reckless driving exhibitions upon the streets of Louisville Metro results not only in unsafe traffic conditions for other vehicles, playing children and pedestrians, but also attracts rowdy, uncivil, intimidating, and criminal activity to the vicinity of the such events, including gambling upon the outcome of such events, which engenders fear and disinvestment among neighborhood residents and prevents the full and peaceful enjoyment of the use of their property, or otherwise negatively impacts on the health, safety and welfare of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the promotion of such vehicle speed contests or reckless driving exhibitions, or the aiding and abetting of such vehicle speed contests or reckless driving contests by obstructing or placing a barricade or obstruction or assisting or participating in placing a barricade or obstruction on any street in Louisville Metro also results in unsafe traffic conditions for other vehicles, playing children and pedestrians, but also attracts rowdy, uncivil, intimidating, and criminal activity to the vicinity of such events, including gambling upon the outcome of the events, which engenders fear and disinvestment among neighborhood residents and prevents the full and peaceful enjoyment of the use of their property, or otherwise negatively impacts on the health, safety and welfare of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, such vehicle speed contests and reckless driving exhibitions have been occurring

with greater frequency, including recent incidents where part of the Watterson Expressway and Broadway were shut down to other motor vehicles; and

**WHEREAS**, such vehicle speed contests and reckless driving exhibitions can result in damage to the streets, which costs are born by the public and surrounding property owners, and can also necessitate the assignment of Metro Government personnel or equipment to protect the health, safety or property of citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, these activities are therefore declared to be a public nuisance, which justifies taking firm action to abate the public nuisance, including impoundment and forfeiture of the property; and

**WHEREAS**, the Metro Council wishes to enact a provision regulating vehicle speed contests and reckless driving.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION I:** The Louisville Metro Code of Ordinances (“LMCO”) § 71.01 is hereby amended as follows:

**§ 71.01 DEFINITIONS.**

***ARTERIAL ROADWAY.*** The class of roads in Jefferson County that serve major traffic movements (high-speed, high volume) for travel between major points, which include any roadway listed in subsection § 71.10 of this chapter.

**BOARD.** The Code Enforcement Board created pursuant to § 32.276.

**BURNOUT.** A maneuver performed while operating a vehicle whereby the vehicle is kept stationary, or is in motion, while the wheels are spun, resulting in friction which causes the vehicle’s tires to heat up and emit smoke.

***CENTRAL TRAFFIC DISTRICT.*** The area bounded on the north by Washington Street, on the

south by Broadway, on the east by Hancock Street, and the west by 9<sup>th</sup> Street, each of the above-named streets being included within this area.

**CHIEF OF POLICE.** The Chief of the Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Police Department or such police officer as he or she shall designate from within the Police Department.

**COMMERCIAL VEHICLE.** Any vehicle which is required to be registered under the terms of KRS 186.050(3).

**CROSSWALK.** That part of a roadway at an intersection within the connections of the lateral lines of the sidewalks on opposite sides of the highway measured from the curbs or in the absence of curbs, from the edges of the traversable roadway; or any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface.

**DIRECTOR.** The Director of the Louisville Metro Department of Public Works and Assets or such person as he or she shall designate.

**DOUGHNUT.** A maneuver performed while operating a vehicle whereby the front or rear of the vehicle is rotated around the opposite set of wheels in a continuous motion which may cause a circular skid-mark pattern of rubber on the driving surface or the tires to heat up and emit smoke from friction, or both.

**DRIFTING.** A maneuver performed while operating a motor vehicle whereby the vehicle is steered so that it makes a controlled skid sideways through a turn with the front wheels pointed in a direction opposite to that of the turn.

**GORE.** A longitudinal point where a physical barrier or the lack of a paved surface inhibits road users from crossing from a ramp or channelized turn lane or channelized entering lane to the adjacent through lane(s) or vice versa.

**INTERSECTION.** That part of the public way embraced within the extensions of the street lines of two or more streets which join at an angle whether or not one street crosses the other.

**MEDIAN.** The area between two roadways of a divided highway measured from edge of traveled way to edge of traveled way, which includes median refuge island. The median excludes turn lanes and that portion of a median that contains a sidewalk beyond the marked crosswalk or other legal pedestrian crossing and which is not part of a median refuge island. The median width might be different between intersections, interchanges, and at opposite approaches of the same intersection.

**MEDIAN REFUGE ISLAND.** Protected spaces placed in the center of an arterial roadway to facilitate pedestrian crossings which may include a portion for walking or standing on such island while awaiting safe and legal crossing of such roadway.

**PEDESTRIAN.** Any person afoot or in a wheelchair.

**PERSON.** An individual, partnership, corporation, or unincorporated group or association.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT.** The Louisville Metro Police Department.

**PUBLIC WAY.** The entire width between property lines of every way, dedicated passway, road, or street set aside for public travel, except bridle paths and foot paths.

**RECKLESS DRIVING EXHIBITION.** To perform or engage in any burnouts, doughnuts, drifting, wheelies, or other dangerous vehicle activity on a street.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY.** The privilege of the immediate and preferential use of a street.

**STOPPING.** To stop a vehicle longer than is actually necessary to receive or discharge passengers.

**STREET.** Every public road, interstate highway, avenue, alley, or boulevard, bridge, viaduct or trestle and the approaches to them and includes off-street parking facilities offered for public use, whether publicly or privately owned, except for-hire parking facilities listed in KRS 189.700.

**TRAFFIC.** Pedestrians, vehicles, buses and other conveyances, individually or collectively, while using any street for the purposes of travel.

**TRAFFIC-CONTROL DEVICE.** All signs, signals, warnings, directions, markings and devices

placed or erected or maintained by authority of the Director.

***VEHICLE* or *MOTOR VEHICLE*.** Every vehicle in, on or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn on any street

**VEHICLE SPEED CONTEST.** A vehicle race against another vehicle, a clock or other timing device.

**WHEELIE.** A maneuver performed while operating a vehicle whereby a vehicle is ridden for a distance with the front wheel or wheels raised off of the ground.

**SECTION II:** LMCO § 71.20 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.20 Vehicle Speed Contests and Reckless Driving Exhibitions**

No person who operates a vehicle shall engage in a vehicle speed contest or a reckless driving exhibition on any street within Louisville Metro.

**SECTION III:** LMCO § 71.21 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.21 Coordinating or Promoting Vehicle Speed Contests and Reckless Driving Exhibitions**

A person shall not coordinate through social media or otherwise, encourage persons to gather, or collect moneys at any location, for any such vehicle speed contest or reckless driving exhibition.

**SECTION IV:** LMCO § 71.22 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.22 Obstruction of Streets**

A person shall not, for purposes of facilitating or aiding or abetting or otherwise as an incident to any vehicle speed contest or reckless driving exhibition, in any manner obstruct or place a barricade or obstruction or assist or participate in placing a barricade or obstruction on any street in Louisville Metro.

**SECTION V:** LMCO § 71.23 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.23 ENFORCEMENT.**

The provisions of §§ 71.20-71.24 shall be enforced by any law enforcement officer or officer of the

Louisville Metro Code Enforcement Division.

**SECTION VI:** LMCO § 71.24 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.24 IMPOUNDMENT OF VEHICLES PURSUANT TO LMCO § 71.20**

(A) *Impoundment.* Metro Government shall impound a motor vehicle used in a violation of the provisions of § 71.20 for a period of six (6) months. The length of impoundment imposed may be decreased by the Board during an appeal under § 71.24(C). The Board should evaluate all relevant factors when considering a modification to the impoundment period, including but not limited to the following:

(1) Whether any property was damaged, or persons harmed in connection with the offense; and

(2) Whether this is a first offense or a subsequent offense.

Any release of any impounded vehicle under this section shall also meet the release requirements of § 71.24(J).

(B) *Enforcement.*

(1) Any official authorized to enforce any provision of this section shall be permitted to seize and impound a vehicle for a violation of § 71.20 based on video surveillance, photographs, the official's personal observation and/or the sworn testimony by one or more eyewitnesses.

(2) In addition to the impoundment authorized under § 71.24(B)(1), any official authorized to enforce any provision of this section shall be permitted to seize and impound a motor vehicle after a violation of § 71.20 when the operator or owner of the vehicle is not present, provided that the requirements of § 71.24(B)(2) are met. Before any seizure or impoundment under this subsection, the authorized official shall send to the owner of record of the vehicle to be seized and impounded, either by first class mail or by personal service to the address of the owner of record as indicated in state registration records, a notice of intent to seize and impound the vehicle that

includes (i) a statement that Metro Government has evidence sufficient to establish probable cause that an operator of the vehicle violated § 71.20 and the nature of such evidence, (ii) a copy of the police report that contains the source of the evidence for the violation; (iii) a copy of § 71.24(B)(2), (iv) the date, approximate time and approximate location of the alleged violation; (v) a description of the vehicle, including the vehicle make and color, and the issuing state and number of the license plate of the vehicle; and (vi) notice of the owner's opportunity to contest eligibility for impoundment. A copy of the notice shall be forwarded to the Board. A notice is presumed delivered upon being deposited with the United States Postal Service with proper postage affixed.

An owner of record who receives a notice pursuant to § 71.24(B)(2) may contest eligibility for impoundment by written request delivered to the Board, postmarked within 14 days after the delivery of the notice. The Board shall set a date for a hearing on the eligibility of the vehicle for impoundment and shall notify the owner of the date, time and place of the hearing. The hearing date must be no more than 30 days after a request for a hearing has been filed. At the hearing, Metro Government's evidence of probable cause shall be considered prima facie correct. In order to disprove the motor vehicle's eligibility for impoundment, the owner of record must prove that: (i) at the time and date of the alleged violation as described in the notice, the described vehicle was not operated at the location of the alleged violation; (ii) at the time and date of the alleged violation, the vehicle had been reported stolen; or (iii) the license information described in the report does not match the listed make of the described vehicle. If the owner of record prevails, the notice of intent to impound the owner's vehicle shall be withdrawn and the vehicle shall not be eligible for impoundment under § 71.24(B)(2).

If a vehicle owner receives a notice pursuant to this subsection § 71.24(B)(2) and (i) fails to contest eligibility for impoundment or (ii) does not prevail at the hearing regarding eligibility for impoundment, the vehicle described in the notice shall be eligible for impoundment if found on the street within 12 months following the date of the Board's determination regarding the hearing, if a

hearing was requested, or following the last date to request a hearing on eligibility for impoundment, if none was requested. Provided, however, if the owner of the vehicle that is eligible for impoundment under this subsection pays both the fine under § 71.99 and a civil penalty of \$1,000 any time before such vehicle is impounded, the vehicle shall not be eligible for impoundment.

*(C) Appeal of vehicle impoundment to the Board.*

(1) Within ten days of the impoundment of a vehicle, the owner of a vehicle that has been impounded pursuant to this section, or other person entitled to possession, may challenge the validity of such impoundment and request in writing a hearing before the Board. The hearing shall be conducted within ten business days of the date of the request, unless the owner or other person entitled to possession waives the limitation or Metro Government shows good cause for such delay. Metro Government shall retain possession of the vehicle pending the hearing, unless the owner or other person claiming right of possession posts a bond in an amount equal to the fines and fees accrued as of the date of the hearing request, or \$2,500, whichever is less.

(2) No less than five days prior to the date set for the hearing, Metro Government shall notify the person requesting the hearing of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

(3) Any person who refuses or, except for good cause as determined by the Board, fails to appear at the time and place set for the hearing shall be deemed to have conceded on his or her and the owner's behalf the validity of the impoundment.

(4) At the hearing, after consideration of the evidence, the Board shall determine whether the impoundment was valid and reasonable. Where it has not been established that the impoundment was justified, an order releasing the vehicle shall be entered. All fines and fees paid or amounts posted as bond because of the impoundment of the vehicle shall be returned. Where it has been established that the impoundment was justified, the Board shall uphold the impoundment and condition the release of the vehicle upon payment of all fines and fees accruing thereto set out in §



71.24(J). If bond has been posted as security for release of the vehicle, said bond shall be forfeited to Metro Government. Any fines or fees in excess of the amount of the bond posted shall be ordered to be paid by the owner of the vehicle to Metro Government. The Board shall furnish the owner or person appearing on the owner's behalf with a copy of its order.

(5) Any person appealing the impoundment of a vehicle pursuant to this subsection, who also seeks to appeal a citation in conjunction with such impoundment, shall proceed pursuant to the appeals process set forth in § 71.24(E)(1). Both the citation and impoundment appeal shall be heard within the same hearing and shall require a separate finding and final order of the Board as to such matter.

(D) *Additional Requirements for release of a vehicle.* Before the release of a vehicle pursuant to § 71.24(C), the owner or other person entitled to possession must establish proof of ownership or right to possession and the meeting of all other provisions of the Vehicle Impoundment Division of the Louisville Metro Government. Metro Government may require reasonable security, bond, or other assurances of indemnification from a person who is not the registered owner of the vehicle prior to releasing the vehicle.

(E) *Appeal from Board to District Court.*

(1) An appeal from the Board's determination that impoundment was justified may be made to the Civil Division of Jefferson District Court within 30 days of the Board's determination. The appeal shall be initiated by the filing of a complain and a copy of the Board's order in the same manner as any civil action. The action shall be tried de novo and the burden shall be on Metro Government to establish that impoundment was justified. If the Court finds that the impoundment was justified, the owner shall be ordered to pay all fees and fines accruing as of the date of judgement. If the Court finds that the impoundment was not justified, Metro Government shall be ordered to release the vehicle, if applicable, and to return all fines and fees paid as a result of the impoundment.

(2) The judgment of the Jefferson District Court may be appealed to the Jefferson Circuit Court in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure.

(F) *Impoundment; response to notice required.* If a hearing has not been requested pursuant to § 71.24(C), and a vehicle impounded by Metro Government has not been claimed, notice shall be mailed by certified mail to the registered owner, if known, and lien holders of record, if any, affording the parties the right within ten days from the date of notice to claim the vehicle or request a hearing pursuant to KRS § 82.625. The notice shall state that, if no hearing is requested, the vehicle shall be deemed abandoned unless the charges thereon are paid within 45 days of the certified mailing of the notice.

(G) *Impoundment; escheat to Metro Government if no response to notice.*

(1) After 45 days from the date of impoundment, if no appeal is filed, or an appeal is filed, 45 days from the date of a final order of the last presiding administrative body or court with jurisdiction, an impounded vehicle shall be deemed abandoned and the vehicle shall escheat to Metro Government.

(2) If the vehicle is judged suitable for use, Metro Government may obtain a certificate of registration and ownership from the Jefferson County Clerk, pursuant to KRS § 186.020 and either use the vehicle for governmental purposes or sell the vehicle at public auction to the highest bidder. If the vehicle is not suitable for use it may be sold for its scrap or junk value.

(H) *Metro Government lien on vehicles impounded.* Metro Government shall possess a lien on all vehicles impounded pursuant to KRS § 82.625 for all fines, penalties, and towing, handling, and storage charges and fees imposed thereon. Such a lien shall be superior to and have priority over all other liens thereupon.

(I) *No Effect on Security Interest in Vehicle.* Nothing in these provisions shall otherwise affect the rights or obligations between the owner of the vehicle and those persons who claim a security

interest therein.

(J) *Release of impounded vehicle; impoundment fees paid.* Any vehicle impounded under this section shall be held for a minimum of 72 hours. After 72 hours, Louisville Metro may release the motor vehicle to the owner or other person entitled to possession, and Metro Government shall condition the release of a vehicle impounded under this section, only upon:

(1) Payment of the citation amount in full; and

(2) Payment of all towing, handling, impoundment and storage charges imposed.

In addition to the release requirements imposed under this section, a vehicle may be released to the owner or other person entitled to possession, only upon proof of ownership or right to possession. Metro Government may require reasonable security, bond, or other assurances of indemnification from a person who is not the registered owner of the vehicle prior to releasing the vehicle to such person.

**SECTION VII:** LMCO § 71.25 is hereby created as follows:

**§ 71.25 APPEALS.**

(A) Any appeal of civil penalties shall be made by filing a written notice of appeal with the Board, as provided in § 32.275 et seq., or as such sections may be amended.

(B) Appeals of civil penalties issued pursuant to § 71.20 in which the impoundment of a motor vehicle has not taken place, shall be made by filing a written notice of appeal with the Board, as provided in § 32.275 et seq., or as such sections may be amended.

**SECTION VI:** LMCO § 71.99 is hereby amended as follows:

**§ 71.99 PENALTIES.**

(A) Any person who violates § 71.02 of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty and fined not less than \$25 nor more than \$250.

(B) Any person who violates §§ 71.86 or 71.87 of this chapter, or who violates any other

ordinance of the Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government or any statute of the state restricting speeding, shall be fined as provided by KRS 189.394.

(C) Any person who violates § 71.85 of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty and fined not less than \$20 nor more than \$100.

(D) Any person who violates § 71.20 of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty and fined \$1,000 for the first offense, and \$2,000 for each subsequent offense. Any civil penalty fine issued pursuant to § 71.99(D) shall be a separate and distinct fine and shall not be included as any portion of the costs associated with the towing and impoundment of any vehicle.

(E) Any person who violates §§ 71.21 or 71.22 of this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty and fined up to \$1,000 for the first offense, and up to \$2,000 for each subsequent offense.

**SECTION VII:** This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval or otherwise becoming law.

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Sonya Harward Metro Council Clerk

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David James President of the Council

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Greg Fischer Mayor

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Approval Date

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:**

Michael J. O'Connell  
Jefferson County Attorney

By: \_\_\_\_\_

O-306-22 - Ordinance Amending LMCO 71 Regarding Vehicle Speed Contests and Reckless Driving Exhibitions (lf)