



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

SUBJECT: City of Somerville - Private Way Parking Restrictions

Dear Concerned Citizen:

In response to your inquiry, enclosed please find a copy of Chapter 537 of the Acts of 1974. This is the applicable state statute regarding the control of parking on a private way. In this document, the City's enforcement powers are very limited.

The City is limited to enforcing only those violations pertaining to fire lanes. The posting of fire lanes precludes everyone, including the residents of private ways, from parking in designated areas. In addition, private ways are not eligible for inclusion in the City's Residential Permit Parking Program.

The key points of the statute are the following:

1. The owners of a private way may post the street for no parking. The sign must read "Private Way - Parking By Permission of Owners Only - Violators Will Be Towed At Owners Expense". This sign must be conspicuously posted in a very visible location for any motorists to see.
2. The owners must file a petition, similar to the one attached, with the Somerville Police Department. In addition, the owners must notify the Police Department before having a vehicle towed.
3. The statute requires that the Police Department be notified where the vehicle is being towed to. The sample petition includes a reference as to the towing company performing the tow. We recommend that the residents of a private street enter into a contract with a single tow company so that the Police Department will always be aware which tow company tows on a particular street.

You may want to have an attorney interpret this information and the accompanying statute for you. This letter should not be used as definitive legal advice. This information is only provided to you so that you may make informed decisions about towing on your private way.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Department of Traffic & Parking at (617) 625-6600, extension 7900. We will provide you with as much assistance as we can within our capabilities. As always, we are at your service.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Rinfret
Director