CHAPTER 15

Miscellaneous Liens for Services, Damages, Storage or Materials

**SECTION 29‑15‑10.** Liens for repairs or storage; sale of articles.

(A) A proprietor, an owner, or an operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or furnishes any material for repairs to an article may sell the article at public auction to the highest bidder if:

(1) the article has been left at the shop for repairs or storage and the repairs have been completed or the storage contract has expired;

(2) the article has been continuously retained in his possession; and

(3) thirty days have passed since written notice was given to the owner of the article and to any lienholder by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking that the repairs have been completed or the storage contract has expired.

The article must be sold by a magistrate of the county in which the repairs were done or the article was stored.

(B) A proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or furnishes materials for repairs to an article may charge the owner and lienholder for only such storage costs that accrue for a maximum period of seven (7) business days before notice of the location of the article is sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking to the owner and lienholders of the article. No other storage costs can be charged to the owner or lienholders for such time period before the notice of the location of the article is sent to the owner and lienholders. The notice must be sent within five business days after receiving the owner's and lienholder's identities from the search required in subsection (C). The notice must include a description of the article and the amount of daily storage costs that will accrue after the notice is sent. A proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or furnishes materials for repairs to an article may charge the owner and lienholders storage costs that accrue for the time period after such notice is sent as required herein.

(C)(1) Before the article is sold, the proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article must apply to the appropriate titling facility for the name and address of any owner or lienholder. The appropriate titling facility may include, but is not limited to:

(a) the Department of Motor Vehicles;

(b) a vendor authorized by the DMV to provide real‑time access to title and lienholder information;

(c) if the vehicle is not titled in South Carolina, the titling governmental entity in the state in which the vehicle was last titled as provided by a search of the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS);

(d) if the vehicle is not titled in South Carolina, a vendor authorized by the state in which the vehicle was last titled to provide real‑time access to the most current title and lienholder information; or

(e) the Department of Natural Resources.

(2) For nontitled articles, where the owner's name is known, a search must be conducted through the Secretary of State's Office to determine any lienholders. The application must be on prescribed forms as required by the appropriate titling facility or the Secretary of State. If the article has an out‑of‑state registration, an application must be made to that state's appropriate titling facility. When the article is not titled in this State and does not have a registration from another state, the proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article may apply to the sheriff or chief of police in the jurisdiction where the article is stored to determine the state where the article is registered. The sheriff or chief of police shall conduct a records search. This search must include, but is not limited to, a search on the National Crime Information Center and any other appropriate search that may be conducted with the article's identification number. The sheriff or chief of police must supply, at no cost to the proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs the name of the state in which the article is titled.

(D) The magistrate, before selling the article, shall ensure that the owner or any lienholder of record has been notified of the pending sale. The magistrate must advertise the article for at least fifteen days by posting a notice in three public places in his township. The magistrate must pay to the proprietor, owner, or operator of any towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article the money due, receiving a receipt in return. Any remainder of the sale proceeds must be held by the magistrate for the owner of the vehicle or entitled lienholder for ninety days. The magistrate must notify the owner and all lienholders by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking, that the article owner or lienholder has ninety days to claim the proceeds from the sale of the article. If the article proceeds are not collected within ninety days from the day after the notice to the owner and all lienholders is mailed, then the article proceeds must be deposited in the general fund of the county or municipality.

(E) A proprietor, an owner, or an operator of the towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article may hold the license tag of any vehicle until all towing and storage costs allowed under this section have been paid, or if the vehicle is not reclaimed, until it is declared abandoned and sold.

(F) A proprietor, an owner, or an operator of the towing company, storage facility, garage, or repair shop, or any person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article must place a minimum bid of one dollar on the article being sold at public auction. If no higher bid is offered, the article must be awarded to the proprietor, owner, operator, or person who repairs or who furnishes material for repairs to the article at no cost.

(G) For purposes of this section, "article" means a motor vehicle, trailer, mobile home, watercraft, or other item or object that is subject to towing, storage, or repair and applies to any article in custody at the time of the enactment of this section. "Article" includes:

(1) an item that is towed and left in the possession of a towing, storage, garage, or repair facility; and

(2) personal property affixed to the article.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑550; 1952 Code Section 45‑550; 1942 Code Section 7219; 1932 Code Section 7219; Civ. C. '22 Section 3933; Civ. C. '12 Section 2614; Civ. C. '02 Section 1739; G. S. 1667; R. S. 1447; 1875 (15) 878; 1912 (27) 624; 1922 (32) 935; 1925 (34) 207; 1933 (38) 221; 1941 (42) 61; 1977 Act No. 134, Section 2; 1990 Act No. 394, Section 1; 2003 Act No. 71, Section 3; 2004 Act No. 269, Section 11; 2011 Act No. 22, Section 1, eff May 9, 2011; 2022 Act No. 233 (H.3729), Section 2, eff June 17, 2022.

Effect of Amendment

The 2011 amendment rewrote subsection (G).

2022 Act No. 233, Section 2, in (A), in (3), inserted "by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking"; rewrote (B) and (C); in (D), in the fifth sentence, substituted "registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or certified mail with electronic tracking" for "certified or registered mail, return receipt requested; and in (E), inserted "allowed under this section" following "storage costs".

**SECTION 29‑15‑20.** Lien on motor vehicle for damages.

When a motor vehicle is operated in violation of the provisions of law or negligently, carelessly, recklessly, wilfully or wantonly and any person receives personal injury or property is damaged thereby or a cause of action for wrongful death arises therefrom, damages recoverable therefor shall be and constitute a lien next in priority to the lien for State and county taxes upon such motor vehicle, recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction, and the person sustaining such damages or the personal representative of the deceased or any one or more of the beneficiaries for whom such cause of action shall be brought under Sections 15‑51‑10 and 15‑51‑20 for the benefit of all such beneficiaries may attach such motor vehicle in the manner provided by law for attachments in this State. But this lien shall not exist if the motor vehicle was stolen by the breaking of a building under a secure lock or when the vehicle is securely locked.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑551; 1952 Code Section 45‑551; 1942 (42) 1471.

**SECTION 29‑15‑30.** Liens on railroads for labor performed or materials furnished.

Any person to whom a debt is due for labor performed or furnished or for materials furnished and actually used in the construction, alteration or repair of any railroad by virtue of an agreement with or by consent of (a) the owner or person controlling and operating it, (b) any person having authority from or rightfully acting for such owner or person in procuring or furnishing such labor or materials or (c) any person rendering services for such railroad company shall have a lien upon such railroad and upon all the interests of such owner or person as aforesaid in such railroad to secure the payment of the debt so due him and the costs which may arise in enforcing such lien under the provisions of Chapter 5 of this Title. Such lien shall be subject to all the provisions and be enforced in the same manner as provided for in said Chapter 5 of this Title.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑552; 1952 Code Section 45‑552; 1942 Code Section 8794; 1932 Code Section 8786; Civ. C. '22 Section 5691; Civ. C. '12 Section 4161; Civ. C. '02 Section 3056; 1898 (22) 779.

**SECTION 29‑15‑40.** Lien on watercraft for damages.

When a watercraft is operated or maintained in violation of the provisions of law or negligently and carelessly and any person receives personal injury or property is damaged thereby, the damages done to such person or property shall be and constitute a lien next in priority to the lien for State and county taxes upon such watercraft, including any outboard motor that may be attached to it, recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction and the person sustaining such damage may attach such watercraft, including any outboard motor that may be attached to it, in the manner provided by law for attachments in this State. But this lien shall not exist if the watercraft or any outboard motor attached to it shall have been stolen by the breaking of a building under a secure lock or when the watercraft or any outboard motor attached to it is securely locked, nor when the damage is sustained upon waters within the jurisdiction of Federal admiralty courts.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑553; 1952 Code Section 45‑553; 1942 Code Section 8793; 1933 (38) 461.

**SECTION 29‑15‑50.** Lien of owners of certain animals on issue.

The owner of any stock horse, jack, bull, boar or ram, kept by him for the purpose of raising from, having a claim by contract against the owner of any mare or cow or other stock for service shall have a prior lien on the issue of such mare, cow or other stock for the amount of such claim, provided an action shall be instituted to enforce such claim by suit before a magistrate or other officer having jurisdiction within twelve months from the time such claim shall have accrued.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑554; 1952 Code Section 45‑554; 1942 Code Section 8788; 1932 Code Section 8781; Civ. C. '22 Section 5702; Civ. C. '12 Section 4172; Civ. C. '02 Section 3068; G. S. 2349; R. S. 2523; 1875 (15) 943.

**SECTION 29‑15‑60.** Animal boarding facilities; liens upon animals for boarding expenses.

The owner of an animal boarding facility, at the end of an agreed upon term of boarding, shall have a lien upon any animal which is left with him for upkeep, rest, and training until the cost of the upkeep, rest, and training has been paid by the owner of the animal. The owner of the animal shall also be responsible for payment of the cost of upkeep, rest, and training of the animal after notice of the lien. If the owner of the animal has not paid the cost of upkeep, rest, and training of the animal after actual notice of the lien within ten days of such notice, the animal boarding facility owner may sell the animal after having advertised the time and place of the sale in a newspaper having general circulation in the county wherein the animal boarding facility is located at least seven days before the sale is to be held. After the sale of the animal, the owner of the animal boarding facility may deduct the cost of the upkeep, rest, and training of the animal before and after date of the notice of the lien, plus all expenses incurred from the advertising and sale provided in this section, and shall submit the balance of the proceeds of the sale to the previous owner of the animal. If the animal is not purchased at the advertised sale, the owner of the animal boarding facility shall become the owner of the animal with all the rights, privileges, and obligations of ownership. A transfer of ownership pursuant to this section entitles the new owner of the animal to obtain the breed registration certificate for the animal from the organization or association which issued the certificate.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑554.1; 1961 (52) 135; 1997 Act No. 119, Section 1.

**SECTION 29‑15‑70.** Lien on textiles for labor performed or materials furnished.

A lien on account of work, labor and materials furnished in manufacturing, finishing, bleaching, mercerizing, dyeing and printing or otherwise processing natural or man‑made fibers or goods of which natural or man‑made fibers form a component part, as against goods in the lienor's possession, shall extend to any unpaid balance of account for work, labor and materials furnished in the course of any such process in respect of any other such goods of the same owner whereof the lienor's possession has terminated. The word "owner," as used in this section and Section 29‑15‑80, shall include a factor, consignee or other agent intrusted with the possession of the goods held under such lien or of a bill of lading consigning them to him with authority to sell them and delivered by such factor, agent or consignee to the lienor for the purposes aforesaid.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑555; 1952 Code Section 45‑555; 1942 Code Section 8795; 1932 Code Section 8795; 1928 (35) 1168; 1969 (56) 75.

**SECTION 29‑15‑80.** Enforcement of lien on textiles.

If any part of the amount for which goods are held under such lien remains unpaid for a period of sixty days after the earliest item of such amount became due and payable, the lienor may sell such goods at public auction, first (a) publishing a notice of the time and place of such sale once in each of two successive weeks in a newspaper published in the city or town, if any there be, and otherwise in the county, in which the goods are situated, the last publication to be not less than five days prior to the sale, (b) giving five days' notice of such sale by posting in five or more public places in such county, one whereof shall be in the town or city ward in which such goods are situated and (c) if the residence or business address of the owner of the goods is known or can be ascertained, sending by registered mail a copy of such notice to such owner at such address at least five days before the day of sale. But if such goods are readily divisible no more thereof shall be so sold than is necessary to discharge the underlying indebtedness and cover the expenses of the sale. The proceeds of sale shall be applied to the payment of such indebtedness and expenses and the balance, if any, shall be paid to the owner or person entitled thereto. The remedy herein provided to enforce such lien shall be in addition to any other provided by law.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑556; 1952 Code Section 45‑556; 1942 Code Section 8796; 1932 Code Section 8796; 1928 (35) 1168.

**SECTION 29‑15‑90.** Lien of laundries, dyers, and the like.

(A) Except as otherwise provided in this section, when personal property has been left at a laundry, dyer, dry cleaning establishment, retail store, or any other establishment for the purpose of cleaning, dry cleaning, dyeing, washing, alteration, or repairs and is not called for within six months and the charges paid in full, the establishment may dispose of the property by whatever means it chooses. An establishment, at the time of receiving the property, shall give to the person delivering it conspicuous notice in writing of disposal after six months. If notice is not given upon delivery, the property must not be disposed of until after twelve months.

(B) Except as otherwise provided in this section, when personal property has been left at a laundry, dry cleaning establishment, retail store, or any other establishment for the purpose of storage and is not called for within six months and thirty days and the charges paid in full, the establishment may dispose of the property by whatever means it chooses. Notice first must have been sent by certified mail to the last‑known address of the person, his agent, or employee, who left the goods at the establishment thirty days before disposal. An establishment, at the time of receiving the property, shall give to the person delivering it conspicuous notice in writing of disposal after six months and thirty days. If notice is not given upon delivery, the property must not be disposed of until after twelve months and thirty days and until after notice by certified mail pursuant to this subsection.

(C) If the property is insured through the establishment, the time periods provided for in this section do not begin to run until the insurance expires.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 45‑557; 1952 Code Section 45‑557; 1942 Code Section 7221; 1939 (41) 125; 1987 Act No. 140, Section 1; 1990 Act No. 507, Section 1.

**SECTION 29‑15‑100.** Lien on aircraft for labor performed, materials furnished, or contracts of indemnity provided.

(a) Every person engaged in servicing or furnishing supplies or accessories for aircraft or providing contracts of indemnity for aircraft shall have a lien on such aircraft for his reasonable charges therefor, including reasonable charges for labor, for the use of tools, machinery and equipment, and for all accessories, materials, fuel, oils, lubricants, earned premiums, and other supplies furnished in connection with the servicing or furnishing of supplies or accessories, or providing contracts of indemnity for such aircraft. Such lien shall be dissolved unless the person claiming it shall file, within ninety days after such service, supplies, accessories or contracts of indemnity are furnished, in the office of the register of deeds or clerk of court of the county within which the aircraft was located at the time such service, supplies, accessories or contracts of indemnity were furnished, a statement, subscribed and sworn to by himself or by some person in his behalf, giving a just and true account of the demands claimed to be due to him, with all just credits, and also the name of the person to whom the service, supplies, accessories or contracts of indemnity were furnished, the name of the owner of the aircraft, if known, and a description of the aircraft sufficient for identification. Such statement shall be recorded by the register of deeds or clerk in a book kept by him for that purpose, for which he shall receive the same fees as for recording other papers of equal length.

(b) The lien on aircraft authorized by the provisions of subsection (a) may be enforced as provided in Sections 29‑9‑50 through 29‑9‑80 of the 1976 Code.

HISTORY: 1976 Act No. 739, Sections 1, 2.

Code Commissioner's Note

1997 Act No. 34, Section 1, directed the Code Commissioner to change all references to "Register of Mesne Conveyances" to "Register of Deeds" wherever appearing in the 1976 Code of Laws.