

TOWING: Rules for YOUR Protection

Trap

Mary Jane attended a dance contest at a local night club. When she arrived the lot was full, so she parked behind several other cars on the side of the road. Mary Jane asked a bystander if her vehicle was safe. The person told her, "Cars always park there." When Mary Jane left the club her car was gone. She immediately decided it was stolen, until a man across the street told her the car was towed and gave her a number to call. Mary Jane called the number, and a man told her, "Two-hundred dollars cash to get your car back." Mary Jane felt she had no choice but to agree. The tow truck returned to the club scene, and Tina paid the driver \$200 cash. After calling Consumer Affairs, Mary Jane discovered it was a scam because the company was unlicensed.

Tips

Parking scams often involve unlicensed towing companies which routinely charge large recovery fees. Here are some tips:

- All companies towing vehicles without the consent of the vehicle owner must be licensed by the Consumer Affairs Division and show proof of insurance.
- To protect consumers, Palm Beach County Commissioners have established maximum allowable non-consent towing and storage rates.
- Licensed towing companies are required to accept cash, valid bank debit/credit card, or valid personal check (with your name/address imprinted).
- Look for tow-away signs that show the name and telephone number of the towing company. If signs are posted, get permission from the business or property manager before parking your car because you can never assume you are talking with someone who has authority.

**For 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/consumer