

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · MINNETONKA

Vehicles, Winter Parking and Towing in Minnetonka 2026

There is no declared snow-emergency concept in this city at all. What there is instead is a year-round overnight ban and a six-hour limit on the street, and the reflex learned in a neighboring settlement gets your car towed here.

SHORT ANSWER

Keep three things apart. **Registration is the state's job:** there is no inspection and no emissions test, because the metro emissions program was repealed in 1999; the money goes instead into a **registration tax based on the vehicle's value**. **Insurance follows state statute:** Minnesota is a **no-fault** state, so a quote you received in another state tells you nothing here. And **the winter parking rule is municipal**, but in this city it resembles none of its neighbors: **there is no declared snow-emergency regime**. You have two fixed rules and both run year-round: **no parking on any city street between 2 and 6 a.m.**, and **no vehicle may be parked on the street for more than six hours**.

Registration and insurance: the state's job, in brief

- **No inspection, no emissions test.** The state closed that program and the statute now appears as repealed. So there is no annual inspection appointment, no inspection fee and no tailpipe test to expect.
- **A value-based registration tax takes its place.** The higher the vehicle's value, the higher the annual registration charge; put that line in your budget when you buy. The formula and the counter fees are in [the vehicle section of the state guide](#).
- **Studded tires are banned, chains are allowed**, and there is no snow-tire mandate; what people actually buy is a studless winter tire. **The foreign-plate exception does not apply to someone employed or studying in Minnesota**, so if you work or study here do not rely on it.
- **Insurance costs more here and statute is the reason.** The mandatory package includes personal injury protection and uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage. Two protections are written into statute for a newcomer: **if no score can be produced because you have no credit history, the insurer must remove credit as a factor**, and **the scoring methodology may not include gender, race, nationality or religion**.
- **And a first in this series:** the mandatory coverage pays for **translation and sign language services** connected to medical care. It is excluded when a family member performs the service. That means you should not be paying an interpreter out of pocket at a post-accident doctor visit; confirm the line once when you buy the policy.
- **One thing not to confuse:** the statutory rule about a "single rating territory in a city of the first class" concerns **home insurance, not auto insurance**. If you hear that argument in an auto quote, ask for the source.

- **One question we cannot answer:** we **could not verify** whether a Social Security number or an ITIN is required to register a vehicle. The license section has an explicit provision removing the number requirement; we found no counterpart in the vehicle sections. Call the deputy registrar and ask before you go.

Winter: what all four neighbors have, and this city does not

The real job of this section is to show you a gap. In this state a snow emergency is not a statewide regime but **municipal business**, and five settlements run five different logics. What sets Minnetonka apart is this: **there is no declared-emergency concept here at all**. So you do not have to track whether an emergency has been declared, because the rules are in force every day already.

TEST	IN NEIGHBORING SETTLEMENTS	HERE
A declared emergency	Minneapolis, St. Paul, Plymouth and Crookston each have a version	None at all
Overnight street parking ban	2 to 5 a.m. in Plymouth; separate regimes in Minneapolis and St. Paul	2 to 6 a.m., year-round
Time limit on the street	No verified limit found in the other four settlements	Six hours
Switching sides by address number	Minneapolis and Crookston do this	Not in the snow rule
Plowing threshold	Varies by settlement	Two inches, citywide plowing

THE MOST EXPENSIVE LINE IN THAT TABLE IS THE THIRD

- In another settlement in this region, as long as you obey the overnight ban, a car left on the street during the day causes no problem. **Here the six-hour limit runs in daylight too.**
- So leaving the car on the street while you fly out, parking there for a week of travel, or keeping a guest's car on the street for a day is a violation in this city.
- **There is a third prohibition:** a vehicle may not be parked so as to **interfere with snow removal**, and a vehicle or trailer that obstructs removal may be **towed at the owner's expense**. That is not a possibility, it is a written authority on the City's own page.
- **A vehicle that is not towed is simply plowed into the snow**, so even if you escape a citation, digging the car out is on you.
- **If there is no driveway or garage, the street is not a permanent solution**, and in this city that is a leasing decision. Ask for the parking arrangement in the lease when you look at a place.

How plowing works

- **The threshold is two inches.** When accumulation reaches or passes two inches, citywide plowing begins. We will say again that this is an operational measure and not a declaration: **the announcement you are waiting for is not coming.**

- **Operations typically start between 2 and 4 a.m.**, so the crews work squarely inside the overnight ban and a car left on the street is right in front of them.
- **In an average snowfall the target is nine hours.** The City aims to open streets and cul-de-sacs within that window.
- **Pushing, throwing or blowing snow into the roadway is prohibited.** Throwing your driveway snow into the street is both a citation risk and a problem with the neighbors. Keeping the **downstream** side of your driveway clear reduces how much comes back after the plow, and keeping the hydrant clear is expected in every settlement in this region.

THE CONFLICT WE PRINT, AND A SOURCE CAVEAT

- The City **cites the same parking rules on two different pages under two different ordinance numbers. We do not pick which one is current**, because picking would rest the reader on a possibly wrong number.
- **The practical consequence:** if you are contesting a citation or relying on the letter of a rule, read **the text of the city ordinance itself** and take the number from there.
- **Second caveat:** the sources for this section are the City's snow plowing page and the Minnetonka Police Department traffic and parking page, but those pages did not open directly during research and the content was read through a search index. The substance of the rules is reliable, but **confirm the hours and the threshold from the City's own page before your first winter.**
- **Parking enforcement** runs through the Minnetonka Police Department traffic and parking side. We **could not verify** which unit a citation is paid to; if you receive one, read the payment address off the ticket and do not pay on an assumption.

If your car is towed: the order of operations

- 1 **Find out whether it was actually towed.** Make the first call to Minnetonka Public Works and the parking side at **952-988-8400**. Ask about the second possibility too: the car may not have been towed but **plowed into the snow**.
- 2 **Ask which lot it went to and who may claim it.** We **could not find** an official list of the lot address, the fee schedule or who may take a vehicle, which is why this guide prints no amount and no address. The neighbors' rules differ from one another: in one a relative with the same last name may claim, in another **only the registered owner** may. Ask three questions on the phone: who may claim the vehicle, what documents are required, and which payment methods are accepted.
- 3 **Gather documents in advance.** What is common across the region: proof of ownership (title, bill of sale or lease), **valid photo identification**, proof of insurance for that vehicle, and the key. The person driving the vehicle out usually must hold a **valid driver license**.
- 4 **Track the citation as a separate matter.** The tow charge and the parking fine are two different items; paying one does not close the other. And in this city a violation can arise from **two different rules**: the overnight ban and the six-hour limit.

A VEHICLE LEFT BEHIND AFTER A DETENTION: THE NEIGHBOR'S PROVISION DOES NOT TRAVEL

- City of Minneapolis's own impound page states that **vehicles abandoned because of an ICE detention are released free of charge against proof of the detention and proof of ownership**. That is a valuable provision, **but it belongs to Minneapolis**.
- **Research could not verify a counterpart in Minnetonka**. We do not say there is none; we say **we could not find one**, so do not plan around such a waiver.
- **The practical consequence: do not assume, ask**. The sentence to use on the phone is plain: is there a fee waiver or a payment arrangement for a vehicle that cannot be collected because of a detention. Ask for the answer in writing and note who you spoke to, the date and the time. Storage charges in this region run **daily**, so delaying that call costs money directly.
- **What to prepare today: a notarized authorization** in the name of a relative or friend, that person's valid license, and a copy of the ownership document kept somewhere reachable at home. If a family member is detained, the first hours go to phone calls, a lawyer and childcare; the car is the last thing anyone thinks of.
- **And do not confuse two things**: the Minneapolis provision is a **fee waiver** and has no effect on the detention itself or its outcome. The vehicle side and the immigration side are two separate files.

Driving downtown: the express lane and two traps

The main corridor from the western suburbs into downtown Minneapolis is **I-394**, and it carries an E-ZPass express lane; this city sits right on it. It works like this: at weekday peak hours a solo driver pays a **dynamic toll** that changes every few minutes, and **two or more occupants ride free**. The corridor also has **reversible lanes** with longer hours, and those are tolled **whenever they are open**. The statewide framework is in [the state guide](#).

- **First trap**: on one segment of the corridor the **E-ZPass option is unavailable in both directions from February through November because of construction**. Having a transponder does not mean it works on every segment.
- **Second trap is a fraud filter**: MnDOT warns on its own page about **toll scam text messages**. Do not tap the link in an "unpaid toll" message on your phone; check any balance only through the official channel.
- **Remember the two-occupant rule**: riding in with a coworker zeroes the toll, and for a suburban commuter that is a real line of savings.

- 1 Look at the age of the car when you buy**. The tax tracks value; a new car is expensive here on an annual basis.
- 2 Call the deputy registrar before you go** and ask about the identification number and the document list; this guide does not answer that question.
- 3 Compare quotes by the coverage list**, not by the premium, and ask two questions plainly: if no score can be produced because I have no credit history, do you remove credit as a factor, and is translation connected to medical care included.
- 4 Buy studless winter tires**. Studs are banned and the foreign-plate exception does not apply to someone working or studying here.

- 5 **Tell the household two numbers: 2 to 6 a.m., and six hours.** Both run year-round and both apply when it is not snowing.
- 6 **Do not wait for an announcement.** Drop the reflex you learned in a neighboring settlement; there is no emergency declaration to track here.
- 7 **Settle where the car will sit before you sign,** and ask for a driveway or garage in the lease. A car towed twice in one winter usually costs more than a seasonal parking space.
- 8 **Save the public works number in your phone: 952-988-8400.** That is the first call when your car disappears.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN MINNETONKA

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Minnetonka and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

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