

The 2013 Florida Statutes
Chapter 513
MOBILE HOME AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS

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513.01 Definitions.—As used in this chapter, the term:

- (1) "Department" means the Department of Health and includes its representative county health departments.
- (2) "Lodging park" means a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the operator of the place, in which 75 percent of the mobile homes or recreational vehicles or combination thereof are owned by the operator and offered for rent to the public and which is not licensed under chapter 509.
- (3) "Mobile home" means a residential structure that is transportable in one or more sections, which structure is 8 body feet (2.4 meters) or more in width, over 35 feet in length with the hitch, built on an integral chassis, and designed to be used as a dwelling when connected to the required utilities, and includes the plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, and electrical systems contained in the structure.
- (4) "Mobile home park" means a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the owner, lessor, or operator of such place, for the parking, accommodation, or rental of five or more mobile homes.
- (5) "Occupancy" means the length of time that a recreational vehicle is occupied by a transient guest and not the length of time that such vehicle is located on the leased recreational vehicle site. A recreational vehicle may be stored and tied down on site when not in use to accommodate the needs of the guest. The attachment of a recreational vehicle to the ground with tie-downs or other removable fasteners, and the attachment of carports, porches, screen rooms, and similar appurtenances with removable attaching devices, do not render the recreational vehicle a permanent part of the recreational vehicle site.

- (6) "Operator" means the owner, operator, keeper, lessor, proprietor, manager, assistant manager, desk clerk, agent, or employee of a mobile home, lodging, or recreational vehicle park or a recreational camp who is designated by the permittee as the individual solely responsible for the daily operation of the park or camp and its compliance with this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter.
- (7) "Permittee" means a person who applies for and is granted a permit under this chapter and who is ultimately responsible for the operation of the mobile home, lodging, or recreational vehicle park or the recreational camp and the compliance of the park or camp with this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter.
- (8) "Person" means an individual, association, partnership, corporation, or governmental unit.
- (9) "Recreational camp" means one or more buildings or structures, tents, trailers, or vehicles, or any portion thereof, together with the land appertaining thereto, established, operated, or used as living quarters for five or more resident members of the public and designed and operated for recreational purposes.
- (10) "Recreational vehicle" has the same meaning as provided for the term "recreational vehicle-type unit" in s. 320.01. However, the terms "temporary living quarters" and "seasonal or temporary living quarters" as used in s. 320.01, in reference to recreational vehicles placed in recreational vehicle parks, relate to the period of time the recreational vehicle is occupied as living quarters during each year and not to the period of time it is located in the recreational vehicle park. During the time the recreational vehicle is not occupied as temporary or seasonal quarters, it may be stored and tied down on the recreational vehicle site. The affixing of a recreational vehicle to the ground by way of tie-downs or other removable fasteners, and the attachment of carports, porches, screen rooms, and similar appurtenances by way of removable attaching devices, does not render the recreational vehicle a permanent part of the recreational vehicle site.
- (11) "Recreational vehicle park" means a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the owner, lessor, or operator of such place, for the parking, accommodation, or rental of five or more recreational vehicles or tents; and the term also includes buildings and sites set aside for group camping and similar recreational facilities. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms "campground," "camping resort," "RV resort," "travel resort," and "travel park," or any variations of these terms, are synonymous with the term "recreational vehicle park."
- (12) "Transient guest" means any guest registered as provided in s. 513.112 for 6 months or less. When a guest is permitted with the knowledge of the park operator to continuously occupy a recreational vehicle in a recreational vehicle park for more than 6 months, there is a rebuttable presumption that the occupancy is nontransient, and the eviction procedures of part II of chapter 83 apply.

513.012 Public health laws; enforcement.—It is the intent of the Legislature that mobile home parks, lodging parks, recreational vehicle parks, and recreational camps be regulated under this chapter. As such, the department shall administer and enforce, with respect to such parks and camps, laws and rules relating to sanitation, control of communicable diseases, illnesses and hazards to health among humans and from animals to humans, and the general health of the people of the state. However, nothing in this chapter qualifies a mobile home park, a lodging park, a recreational vehicle park, or a recreational camp for a liquor license issued under s. 561.20(2)(a)1. Mobile home parks, lodging parks, recreational vehicle parks, and recreational camps regulated under this chapter are exempt from regulation under the provisions of chapter 509.

513.014 Applicability of recreational vehicle park provisions to mobile home parks.—A mobile home park that has five or more sites set aside for recreational vehicles shall, for those sites set aside for recreational vehicles, comply with the recreational vehicle park requirements included in this chapter. This section does not require a mobile home park with spaces set aside for recreational vehicles to obtain two licenses. However, a mobile home park that rents spaces to recreational vehicles on the basis of long-term leases is required to comply with the laws and rules relating to mobile home parks including but not limited to chapter 723, if applicable.

513.02 Permit.—

- (1) A person may not establish or maintain a mobile home park, lodging park, recreational vehicle park, or recreational camp in this state without first obtaining a permit from the department. Such permit is not transferable from one place or person to another. Each permit must be renewed annually.
- (2) The department may refuse a permit to, or refuse to renew the permit of, any park or camp that is not constructed or maintained in accordance with law and with the rules of the department.

(3) The department may suspend or revoke a permit issued to any person that operates or maintains such a park or camp if such person fails to comply with this chapter or the rules adopted by the department under this chapter.

(4) A permit for the operation of a park or camp may not be renewed or transferred if the permittee has an outstanding fine assessed pursuant to this chapter which is in final-order status and judicial reviews are exhausted, unless the transferee agrees to assume the outstanding fine.

(5) When a park or camp regulated under this chapter is sold or its ownership transferred, the transferee must apply for a permit to the department before the date of transfer. The applicant must provide the department with a copy of the recorded deed or lease agreement before the department may issue a permit to the applicant.

513.03 Application for and issuance of permit.—

(1) An application for a permit must be made in writing to the department, on a form prescribed by the department. The application must state the location of the existing or proposed park or camp, the type of park or camp, the number of mobile homes or recreational vehicles to be accommodated or the number of recreational campsites, the type of water supply, the method of sewage disposal, and any other information the department requires.

(2) If the department is satisfied, after reviewing the application of the proposed or existing park or camp and causing an inspection to be made, that the park or camp complies with this chapter and is so located, constructed, and equipped as not to be a source of danger to the health of the general public, the department shall issue the necessary permit, in writing, on a form prescribed by the department.

513.045 Permit fees.—

(1)(a) Each person seeking a permit to establish, operate, or maintain a mobile home park, lodging park, recreational vehicle park, or recreational camp must pay to the department a fee, the amount of which shall be set by rule of the department.

(b) Fees established pursuant to this subsection must be based on the actual costs incurred by the department in carrying out its responsibilities under this chapter. The fee for a permit may not be set at a rate that is more than \$6.50 per space or less than \$3.50 per space. Until rules setting these fees are adopted by the department, the permit fee per space is \$3.50. The permit fee for a nonexempt recreational camp shall be based on an equivalency rate for which two camp occupants equal one space. The total fee assessed to an applicant may not be more than \$600 or less than \$50, except that a fee may be prorated on a quarterly basis.

(c) A recreational camp operated by a civic, fraternal, educational, or religious organization that does not rent to the public is exempt from the fee requirements of this subsection.

(2) Each local county health department shall collect the fees established pursuant to subsection (1) but may not collect any other fees for such permit.

1(3) Fees collected under this section shall be deposited in the County Health Department Trust Fund, to be administered by the department, and shall be used solely for actual costs incurred in implementing and enforcing this act.

(3) All fees collected by the department in accordance with this section and the rules adopted under this section shall be deposited into the respective county health department trust fund administered by the department for the payment of costs incurred in administering this chapter.

513.05 Rules.—The department may adopt rules pertaining to the location, construction, modification, equipment, and operation of mobile home parks, lodging parks, recreational vehicle parks, and recreational camps, except as provided in s. 633.206, as necessary to administer this chapter. Such rules may include definitions of terms; requirements for plan reviews of proposed and existing parks and camps; plan reviews of parks that consolidate space or change space size; water supply; sewage collection and disposal; plumbing and backflow prevention; garbage and refuse storage, collection, and disposal; insect and rodent control; space requirements; heating facilities; food service; lighting; sanitary facilities; bedding; an occupancy equivalency to spaces for permits for recreational camps; sanitary facilities in recreational vehicle parks; and the owners' responsibilities at recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps.

513.051 Preemption.—The department is the exclusive regulatory and permitting authority for sanitary standards for all mobile home parks, lodging parks, recreational vehicle parks, and recreational camps in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

513.052 Inspection of premises.—The department or its agent shall inspect, at least annually, each park or camp that the department determines qualifies as a mobile home, lodging, or recreational vehicle park or a recreational camp; and, for that purpose, the department has the right of entry and access to such park or camp at any reasonable time.

513.053 Prosecution for violation; duty of state attorney.—The department or an agent of the department, upon ascertaining by inspection that a mobile home, lodging, or recreational vehicle park or a recreational camp is being operated contrary to the provisions of this chapter, shall make a complaint and cause the arrest of the violator; and the state attorney, upon request of the department or agent, shall prepare all necessary papers and conduct the prosecution. The department shall proceed in the courts by mandamus or injunction whenever such proceeding is necessary to the proper enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, of the rules adopted pursuant to this chapter, or of orders of the department.

513.054 Penalties for specified offenses by operator.—Any operator of a mobile home park, lodging park, or recreational vehicle park or a recreational camp who obstructs or hinders any agent of the department in the proper discharge of the agent's duties; who fails, neglects, or refuses to obtain a permit for the park or camp or pay the permit fee required by law; or who fails or refuses to perform any duty imposed upon the operator by law or rule is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. On each day that such park or camp is operated in violation of law or rule, there is a separate offense.

513.055 Revocation or suspension of permit; fines; procedure.—

(1)(a) The department may suspend or revoke a permit issued to any person for a mobile home park, lodging park, recreational vehicle park, or recreational camp upon the failure of that person to comply with this chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter.

(b) A permit may not be suspended under this section for a period of more than 12 months. At the end of the period of suspension, the permittee may apply for reinstatement or renewal of the permit. A person whose permit is revoked may not apply for another permit for that location prior to the date on which the revoked permit would otherwise have expired.

(2)(a) In lieu of such suspension or revocation of a permit, the department may impose a fine against a permittee for the permittee's failure to comply with the provisions described in paragraph (1)(a) or may place such licensee on probation. No fine so imposed shall exceed \$500 for each offense, and all amounts collected in fines shall be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer to the credit of the County Health Department Trust Fund.

(b) In determining the amount of fine to be imposed, if any, for a violation, the department shall consider the following factors:

1. The gravity of the violation and the extent to which the provisions of the applicable statutes or rules have been violated.
2. Any action taken by the operator to correct the violation.
3. Any previous violation.

513.065 Enforcement; citations.—

(1) If the department reasonably believes that a permittee has committed a violation of this chapter which affects the public health, safety, or sanitation, then the department may serve a citation on the permittee for such violation. However, the department must have previously notified the permittee of the violation and the permittee must have failed to timely correct the violation. Citations issued under this section are proposed agency action.

(2) Citations shall be in writing and shall describe the particular violation, including a specific reference to the provision of this chapter or rule promulgated hereunder alleged to have been violated.

(3) The department may seek to impose a fine not to exceed \$500 for each violation cited under this section. Each day a violation continues after an initial citation is issued is a separate violation for which a subsequent citation may be issued. However, if the initial citation is not upheld through an administrative hearing under chapter 120, any subsequent citation for the same violation is void.

(4) Citations shall contain a conspicuous written notice of the permittee's right to request a hearing under chapter 120 within 21 days after the date of receiving the citation and shall contain a description of the procedures to be

followed to request such a hearing. Citations shall contain a conspicuous statement that if the permittee fails to timely request an administrative hearing, the permittee may be deemed to have waived the right to an administrative hearing. The statement shall also warn that if the permittee does not request a hearing, the citation becomes final agency action and if the permittee fails to pay the fine within 60 days after the date of receiving the citation, the permittee will be required to pay the maximum fine or penalty.

(5) The department may reduce or waive any civil penalty initially sought to be imposed through a citation. In determining whether to reduce or waive a fine under this section, the department shall use the criteria in s. 513.055(2)(b).

(6) This section is an alternative means of enforcing this chapter. Nothing contained in this section prohibits the department from enforcing this chapter or the rules adopted thereunder by any other means permitted under this chapter. However, the department may only use a single enforcement procedure for any one violation.

(7) Citations issued under this section shall be served on the permittee or individual at the park or camp designated by the permittee except that service may be made by a department designee if designated by rule to effect such service.

513.08 Disposal of sewage.—

(1) It is unlawful to empty any receptacle or fixture containing human excreta, human urine, or any other liquid waste from a mobile home or recreational vehicle or at a recreational campsite except into a sewerage system approved by the department.

(2) The operator or permittee of a mobile home park, lodging park, recreational vehicle park, or recreational camp shall provide such means for the emptying of such receptacles and for their cleaning as specified in the rules of the department.

513.10 Operating without permit; enforcement of chapter; penalties.—

(1) Any person who maintains or operates a mobile home park, lodging park, recreational vehicle park, or recreational camp without first obtaining a permit as required by s. 513.02, or who maintains or operates such a park or camp after revocation of the permit, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(2) This chapter or rules adopted under this chapter may be enforced in the manner provided in s. 381.0012 and as provided in this chapter. Violations of this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter are subject to the penalties provided in this chapter and in s. 381.0061.

513.1115 Placement of recreational vehicles on lots in permitted parks.—

(1) Separation distances between recreational vehicle sites within a recreational vehicle park must be the distances established at the time of the initial approval of the recreational vehicle park by the department and the local government.

(2) Setback distances from the exterior property boundary of the recreational vehicle park must be the setback distances established at the time of the initial approval by the department and the local government.

(3) This section does not limit the regulation of the uniform firesafety standards established under 1s. 633.022.

History.—s. 3, ch. 2013-91.

1Note.—Redesignated as s. 633.206 by s. 23, ch. 2013-183.

513.112 Maintenance of guest register and copy of laws.—

(1) It is the duty of each operator of a recreational vehicle park that rents to transient guests to maintain at all times a register, signed by or for guests who occupy rental sites within the park. The register must show the dates upon which the rental sites were occupied by such guests and the rates charged for the guests' occupancy. This register shall be maintained in chronological order and shall be available for inspection by the department at any time. An operator is not required to retain a register that is more than 2 years old.

(2) Such operator shall maintain at all times a current copy of this chapter in the park office, which shall be made available to a member of the public upon request.

513.114 Liability for property of guests.—

(1) The operator of a recreational vehicle park is not under any obligation to accept for safekeeping any moneys, securities, jewelry, or precious stones of any kind belonging to any guest; and, if such properties are accepted for safekeeping, the operator is not liable for the loss of any of the properties unless such loss was the proximate result of fault or negligence of the operator. However, if the recreational vehicle park gave a receipt for the property, which receipt had a statement of the property value on a form which stated, in type large enough to be clearly noticeable, that such park was not liable for a greater amount than \$1,000 for any loss exceeding \$1,000 and was only liable for an amount up to \$1,000 if the loss was the proximate result of fault or negligence of the operator, the liability of the operator is limited to \$1,000 for such loss.

(2) The operator of a recreational vehicle park is not liable or responsible to any guest for the loss of wearing apparel, goods, or other property, except as provided in subsection (1), unless such loss occurred as the proximate result of fault or negligence of such operator; and, in case of fault or negligence, the operator is not liable for a greater sum than \$500, unless the guest, prior to the loss or damage, filed with the operator an inventory of the guest's effects and their value and the operator was given an opportunity to inspect such effects and check them against such inventory. The operator of a recreational vehicle park is not liable or responsible to any guest for a greater amount than \$1,000 for the loss of effects listed in such inventory as having a value of a total amount exceeding \$1,000.

513.115 Unclaimed property.—Any property having an identifiable owner which is left in a recreational vehicle park by a guest, other than property belonging to a guest who has vacated the premises without notice to the operator and with an outstanding account, which property remains unclaimed after having been held by the park for 90 days after written notice was provided to the guest or the owner of the property, becomes the property of the park.

History.—s. 13, ch. 84-182; s. 1, ch. 85-65; s. 64, ch. 87-225; s. 36, ch. 92-78; s. 19, ch. 93-150.

513.117 Park rules and regulations.—Any operator of a recreational vehicle park may establish reasonable rules and regulations for the management of the park and its guests and employees; and each guest or employee staying, sojourning, or employed in the park shall conform to, and abide by, such rules and regulations so long as the guest or employee remains in or at the park. Such rules and regulations are deemed to be a special contract between the operator and each guest or employee using the facilities or services of the recreational vehicle park and control the liabilities, responsibilities, and obligations of all parties. Any rules or regulations established pursuant to this section must be printed in the English language and posted, together with a copy of ss. 513.114, 513.121, and 513.13 and a notice stating that a current copy of this chapter is available in the park office for public inspection, in the registration area of such recreational vehicle park.

513.118 Conduct on premises; refusal of service.—The operator of a recreational vehicle park may refuse accommodations or service to any person whose conduct on the premises of the park displays intoxication, profanity, lewdness, or brawling; who indulges in such language or conduct as to disturb the peace or comfort of other guests; who engages in illegal or disorderly conduct; or whose conduct constitutes a nuisance. Such refusal of accommodations or service shall not be based upon race, color, national origin, sex, physical disability, or creed.

513.121 Obtaining accommodations in a recreational vehicle park with intent to defraud; penalty; rules of evidence.—

(1) Any person who obtains accommodations in a recreational vehicle park which have a value of less than \$300 on a transient basis, with intent to defraud the operator of the park, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083; if such accommodations have a value of \$300 or more, such person is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(2) In a prosecution under subsection (1), proof that the accommodations were obtained by false pretense; by false or fictitious show of property; by absconding without paying, or offering to pay, for such accommodations; or by surreptitiously removing, or attempting to remove, a recreational vehicle, park trailer, or tent constitutes prima facie evidence of fraudulent intent. If the operator of the park has probable cause to believe, and does believe, that any person has obtained accommodations at the park with intent to defraud the operator of the park, the failure to make payment upon demand for payment, there being no dispute as to the amount owed, constitutes prima facie evidence of fraudulent intent.

513.122 Theft of personal property; detention and arrest of violator; theft by employee.—

- (1) Any law enforcement officer or operator of a recreational vehicle park who has probable cause to believe, and does believe, that theft of personal property belonging to such park has been committed by a person and that the officer or operator can recover such property or the reasonable value thereof by taking the person into custody may, for the purpose of attempting to effect such recovery or for prosecution, take such person into custody on the premises and detain such person in a reasonable manner and for a reasonable period of time. If the operator takes the person into custody, a law enforcement officer shall be called to the scene immediately. The taking into custody and detention by a law enforcement officer or an operator of a recreational vehicle park, if done in compliance with this subsection, does not render such law enforcement officer or operator criminally or civilly liable for false arrest, false imprisonment, or unlawful detention.
- (2) Any law enforcement officer may arrest, either on or off the premises and without warrant, any person if there is probable cause to believe that person has committed theft in a recreational vehicle park.
- (3) Any person who resists the reasonable effort of a law enforcement officer or an operator of a recreational vehicle park to recover property that the law enforcement officer or operator has probable cause to believe had been stolen from the recreational vehicle park and who is subsequently found to be guilty of theft of the subject property is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, unless such person did not know, or did not have reason to know, that the person seeking to recover the property was a law enforcement officer or the operator of the recreational vehicle park. For purposes of this section, the charge of theft and the charge of resisting apprehension may be tried concurrently.
- (4) Theft of any property belonging to a guest of a recreational vehicle park permitted under this chapter, or of property belonging to such a park, by an employee of the park or by an employee of a person that has contracted to provide services to the park constitutes a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

513.13 Recreational vehicle parks; eviction; grounds; proceedings.—

- (1) The operator of any recreational vehicle park may remove or cause to be removed from such park, in the manner provided in this section, any transient guest of the park who, while on the premises of the park, illegally possesses or deals in a controlled substance as defined in chapter 893 or disturbs the peace and comfort of other persons; who causes harm to the physical park; or who fails to make payment of rent at the rental rate agreed upon and by the time agreed upon. The admission of a person to, or the removal of a person from, any recreational vehicle park shall not be based upon race, color, national origin, sex, physical disability, or creed.
- (2) The operator of any recreational vehicle park shall notify such guest that the park no longer desires to entertain the guest and shall request that such guest immediately depart from the park. Such notice shall be given in writing. If such guest has paid in advance, the park shall, at the time such notice is given, tender to the guest the unused portion of the advance payment. Any guest who remains or attempts to remain in such park after being requested to leave is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.
- (3) If a guest has accumulated an outstanding account in excess of an amount equivalent to three nights' rent at a recreational vehicle park, the operator may disconnect all utilities of the recreational vehicle and notify the guest that the action is for the purpose of requiring the guest to confront the operator or permittee and arrange for the payment of the guest's account. Such arrangement must be in writing, and a copy shall be furnished to the guest. Upon entering into such agreement, the operator shall reconnect the utilities of the recreational vehicle.
- (4) If any person is illegally on the premises of any recreational vehicle park, the operator of such park may call upon any law enforcement officer of this state for assistance. It is the duty of such law enforcement officer, upon the request of such operator, to place under arrest and take into custody for violation of this section any guest who violates subsection (1) or subsection (2) in the presence of the officer. If a warrant has been issued by the proper judicial officer for the arrest of any violator of subsection (1) or subsection (2), the officer shall serve the warrant, arrest the person, and take the person into custody. Upon arrest, with or without warrant, the guest is deemed to have given up any right to occupancy or to have abandoned the guest's right to occupancy of the premises of the recreational vehicle park; and the operator of the park shall employ all reasonable and proper means to care for any personal property left on the premises by such guest and shall refund any unused portion of moneys paid by such guest for the occupancy of such premises.
- (5) In addition to the grounds for eviction established by law, grounds for eviction may be established in a written lease agreement between a recreational vehicle park operator or permittee and a recreational vehicle park occupant.

513.151 Recreational vehicle parks; guests in transient occupancy; operator's rights and remedies; writ of distress.—This section applies only to guests in transient occupancy in a recreational vehicle park.

(1) OPERATOR'S RIGHT TO DISCONNECT UTILITIES.—

(a) If an operator of a recreational vehicle park makes a reasonable determination that a guest has accumulated a large outstanding account at such park, the operator may disconnect all utilities of the recreational vehicle or tent, except that the operator must not by such actions create a sanitary nuisance. The operator may also take such other measures considered necessary for the purpose of requiring the guest to confront the operator and arrange for payment on the guest's account. Such arrangement must be in writing, and a copy shall be furnished to the guest.

(b) Once the guest has confronted the operator and made arrangement for payment on the guest's account, the operator shall reconnect the utilities of the recreational vehicle or tent, or otherwise reverse the measures taken under paragraph (a).

(2) OPERATOR'S RIGHT TO RECOVER PREMISES.—If the guest of a recreational vehicle park vacates the premises without notice to the operator and the operator reasonably believes the guest does not intend to satisfy the outstanding account, the operator may recover the premises by removing the recreational vehicle or tent from the site. The operator shall take all reasonable and proper means to care for the recreational vehicle or tent until a settlement or a final court judgment is obtained on the guest's outstanding account. Upon recovery of the premises, the operator shall seal, or cause to be sealed, the recreational vehicle in the presence of at least one other person who is not an agent of the operator or shall make an itemized inventory of any property belonging to the guest and store such property until a settlement or a final court judgment is obtained on the guest's outstanding account. Such inventory shall be conducted by the operator and at least one other person who is not an agent of the operator.

(3) OPERATOR'S WRIT OF DISTRESS.—If, after there has been a disconnection of utilities pursuant to subsection (1), a guest fails to make the agreed-upon payments on the guest's account, or, notwithstanding subsection (1), if a guest vacates the premises without making payment on the guest's outstanding account, the operator may proceed to prosecute a writ of distress against the guest and the guest's property. The writ of distress must be predicated on the lien created by s. 713.77.

(a) An action under this subsection must be brought in a court of appropriate jurisdiction in the county where the property is located. If the property consists of separate articles, the value of any one of which articles is within the jurisdictional amount of a lower court but the total value of which articles, taken together, exceeds that jurisdictional amount, the plaintiff may not divide the property to give jurisdiction to the lower court so as to enable the plaintiff to bring separate actions for the property.

(b) To obtain an order authorizing the issuance of a writ of distress upon final judgment, the plaintiff must first file with the clerk of the court a complaint reciting and showing the following information:

1. A statement of the amount of the guest's account at the recreational vehicle park.
2. A statement that the plaintiff is the operator of the recreational vehicle park in which the guest has an outstanding account. If the plaintiff's interest in such account is based on written documents, copies of such documents must be attached to the complaint.
3. A statement that the operator has made a reasonable attempt to obtain payment from the guest for an outstanding account, either by confronting the guest or by a disconnection of utilities pursuant to subsection (1), and a statement that the guest has failed to make any payment or that the guest has vacated the premises without paying the outstanding account.
4. A statement that the account is outstanding and unpaid by the guest; a statement of the services provided to the guest for which the outstanding account was accumulated; and a statement of the cause of such nonpayment according to the best knowledge, information, and belief of the plaintiff.
5. A general statement as to what property the plaintiff is requesting levy against, including the property included in the inventory conducted pursuant to subsection (2) if the operator has recovered the premises, and a statement of the authority under which the plaintiff has a lien against such property.
6. A statement, to the best of the plaintiff's knowledge, that the claimed property has not been taken for a tax, assessment, or fine pursuant to law or taken under an execution or attachment by order of any court.

(c) The officer of the court to whom a writ of distress is directed shall execute the writ of distress by serving it on the defendant and by levying on the property distrainable for services rendered, if such property is found within the area of the officer's jurisdiction. If the property is not found in that jurisdiction but is in another jurisdiction, the officer shall deliver the writ to the proper authority in the other jurisdiction. The writ shall be executed by levying on such property

and delivering it to the officer of the court in which the action is pending, and the property shall be disposed of according to law, unless the officer is ordered by such court to hold the property and dispose of it according to law. If the defendant cannot be found, the levy on the property suffices as service of the writ on the defendant if the plaintiff and the officer each file a sworn statement stating that the whereabouts of the defendant are unknown.

(4) OPERATOR'S PREJUDGMENT WRIT OF DISTRESS.—

(a) A prejudgment writ of distress may issue, and the property seized may be delivered forthwith to the plaintiff, if the nature of the claim, the amount of the claim, and the grounds relied upon for the issuance of the writ clearly appear from specific facts shown by the verified petition or by a separate affidavit of the plaintiff.

(b) The prejudgment writ of distress may issue if the court finds, pursuant to paragraph (a), that the defendant has failed to make payment as agreed and that the defendant is engaging in, or is about to engage in, conduct that may place the claimed property in danger of being destroyed, being concealed, being removed from the state, being removed from the jurisdiction of the court, or being transferred to an innocent purchaser during the pendency of the action.

(c) A prejudgment writ of distress may issue only upon a signed order of a circuit judge or a county court judge. The prejudgment writ of distress must include a notice of the defendant's right to an immediate hearing before the court issuing the writ.

(d) The plaintiff must post bond in the amount of twice the estimated value of the goods subject to the writ or twice the balance of the outstanding account, whichever is the lesser amount as determined by the court, as security for the payment of damages the defendant may sustain if the writ is wrongfully obtained.

(e) The prejudgment writ issued under this subsection must command the officer to whom it may be directed to distrain the described personal property of the defendant and hold such property until final judgment is rendered.

(f)1. The defendant may obtain release of the property seized under a prejudgment writ of distress by posting bond with a surety within 10 days after service of the writ, in the amount of 125 percent of the claimed outstanding account, for the satisfaction of any judgment that may be rendered against the defendant, conditioned upon delivery of the property if the judgment should require it.

2. As an alternative to the procedure prescribed in subparagraph 1., the defendant, by motion filed with the court within 10 days after service of the writ, may obtain the dissolution of a prejudgment writ of distress, unless the plaintiff proves the grounds upon which the writ was issued. The court shall set such motion for an immediate hearing.

(5) INVENTORY OF DISTRAINED PROPERTY.—When the officer seizes distrainable property, either under paragraph (3)(c) or paragraph (4)(e), and such property is seized on the premises of a recreational vehicle park, the officer shall inventory the property; hold those items which, upon the officer's appraisal, would satisfy the plaintiff's claim; and return the remaining items to the defendant. If the defendant cannot be found, the officer shall hold all items of property seized. The officer may release the property only pursuant to law or a court order.

(6) EXECUTION ON PROPERTY IN POSSESSION OF THIRD PERSON.—If the property to be distrained is in the possession of the defendant at the time of the issuance of a writ under subsection (3) or a prejudgment writ under subsection (4) and the property passes into the possession of a third person before the execution of the writ, the officer holding the writ shall execute it on the property in the possession of the third person and shall serve the writ on the defendant and the third person; and the action, with proper amendments, shall proceed against the third person.

(7) CLAIM BY THIRD PERSON TO DISTRAINED PROPERTY.—A third person claiming any property distrained pursuant to this chapter may interpose and prosecute a claim for that property in the same manner as is provided for similar cases of claim to property levied on under execution.

(8) JUDGMENT.—

(a) For plaintiff.—

1. If it appears that the account stated in the complaint is wrongfully unpaid, and the property described in such complaint is the defendant's and was held by the officer executing the prejudgment writ, the plaintiff shall have judgment for the damages sustained by the plaintiff, which judgment may include reasonable attorney's fees and costs, by taking title to the defendant's property in the officer's possession or by having the property sold as prescribed in subsection (9).

2.a. If it appears that the property was retained by, or redelivered to, the defendant on the defendant's forthcoming bond, either under subparagraph (4)(f)1. or subparagraph (4)(f)2., the plaintiff shall take judgment for the property, which judgment may include reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and against the defendant and the surety on the forthcoming bond for the value of the outstanding account; and the judgment, which may include reasonable

attorney's fees and costs, shall be satisfied by the recovery and sale of the property or the amount adjudged against the defendant and the defendant's surety.

b. After the judgment is rendered, the plaintiff may seek a writ of possession for the property and execution for the plaintiff's costs or may have execution against the defendant and the defendant's surety for the amount recovered and costs. If the plaintiff elects to have a writ of possession for the property and the officer returns that the officer is unable to find the property or any part of it, the plaintiff may immediately have execution against the defendant and the defendant's surety for the whole amount recovered less the value of any property found by the officer. If the plaintiff has execution for the whole amount, the officer shall release all property taken under the writ of possession.

c. In any proceeding to ascertain the value of the property so that judgment for the value may be entered, the value of each article must be found. When a lot of goods, wares, or merchandise has been distrained, it is sufficient to ascertain the total value of the entire lot found, and it is not necessary to ascertain the value of each article of the lot.

(b) For defendant.—

1. If property has been retained by, or redelivered to, the defendant on the defendant's forthcoming bond or upon the dissolution of a prejudgment writ and the defendant prevails, the defendant shall have judgment against the plaintiff for any damages of the defendant for the taking of the property, which judgment may include reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

2. If the property has not been retained by, or redelivered to, the defendant and the defendant prevails, judgment shall be entered against the plaintiff for possession of the property, which judgment may include reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

3. The remedies provided in this paragraph do not preclude any other remedies available under the laws of this state.

(9) SALE OF DISTRAINED PROPERTY.—

(a) If the judgment is for the plaintiff, the property in whole or in part shall, at the plaintiff's option pursuant to subparagraph (8)(a)1. or subparagraph (8)(a)2., be sold and the proceeds applied to the payment of the judgment.

(b) Before any property levied on is sold, it must be advertised two times, the first advertisement being at least 10 days before the sale. All property so levied on may be sold on the premises of the recreational vehicle park or at the courthouse door.

(c) If the defendant appeals and obtains a writ of supersedeas before sale of the property, the officer executing the writ shall hold the property, and there may not be any sale or disposition of the property until final judgment is had on appeal.

(10) EXEMPTIONS FROM DISTRESS AND SALE.—The following property of a guest is exempt from distress and sale under this chapter:

(a) From final distress and sale: clothing; and items essential to the health and safety of the guest.

(b) From prejudgment writ of distress: clothing; items essential to the health and safety of the guest; and any tools of the guest's trade or profession, business papers, or other items directly related to such trade or profession.