Tow Bulletin

"Tow Contractors providing quality towing services to public agencies and citizens of Portland since 1974."

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PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL CONTRACT TOW EMPLOYEES

To Surcharge, Or Not?. . . At the May Tow Board meeting, a temporary fuel surcharge of $3.00 was approved for all "citizen-paid" tow services. At this time, the surcharge does not apply to Agency-paid tows (i.e.; *Any tow of an Agency-owned vehicle or any vehicles towed in error by order of an Agency, for which the Agency bears financial responsibility.*) So, what does this mean for vehicles towed to Rivergate or the Hansen Building?

In such cases, the City or Multnomah County collects the towing fees from the citizen when they get their release, and **the tower is correct to bill the Agency for the collected towing fees, *including the fuel surcharge*.**

If only I'd left it at that…

Unfortunately, the Towing Coordinator confused herself when answering a question for one of the City's bill-payers and sent out a hastily composed memo instructing towers not to bill for the fuel surcharge on Rivergate and Hansen Building tows. Please disregard the June 4th "correction" memo. **T**he information in the May 22nd surcharge notice is correct. ***Did you ever have one of those days...***

Criminal Background and DMV Records . . . The Board recently voted to tighten the standards for tow employees regarding criminal history and driving records. So how does a tower avoid spending time and money on a new hire that ultimately won't be approved? Industry Rep, Bob Wilson has done some checking to learn what resources are available to private businesses for pre-qualifying job applicants. There are several local providers that for a reasonable fee can give you an idea of what a background/DMV check is likely to turn up. If you are interested in this service, call Bob Wilson at Newhouse and Hutchins for contact information. ***Know who you're dealing with. . .***

With the Permission of "*Tow Times*" Magazine. . . Many towers subscribe to the industry publication, Tow Times. One of the recurring monthly features is a column called, "Safety Meeting 2008." In the January, 2008 issue the author gave an excellent outline of vital information that every tow contractor should be providing to ***every*** new tow employee, even if they have previously worked for another company on

the Tow Contract. Tow Times has graciously agreed to allow me to re-print this article (attached) for your information. ***Take time to look it over carefully and ask yourself if your new employee training is adequate…?***

Notifying Tow Desk of a Release . . .

The Tow Contract requires that a tower send a fax to Tow Desk with information about the release of a vehicle within 8 hours of the time of the release. It also requires that the tower use the standard "Vehicle Release Notification to Tow Desk" form. So far, so good. However, some towers are not very careful about how they fill out the form. Here's a reminder about how this should be done:

- Fill out all the information – the actual release time is required on release to owners (RO)
- If you want to re-use a form, draw one neat line through the earlier releases. (Stamping the previous entries with "FAXED" is also acceptable.) Be sure to start a new form for each day. DON'T put releases from more than one day on a single form.
- Take time to PRINT LEGIBLY!
- BE ACCURATE! Don't guess about the time of a release. Remember there are two places on the invoice (with two different purposes) for information about the time of a release:
  1)"Released by/Release time" – this is where you note the ID number of the person notifying Tow Desk and the **time of the notification fax**; **and**
  2)"(Release) Date" and "Rls Time." These are located next to the signature line because they are the date and time that the vehicle owner signs the invoice. The "Rls Time" on the fax notification sheet is the time that the invoice is signed.
- Check that all your machines – credit card receipt printer, fax, etc. – have accurate time stamps that match up with the Tow Desk time. If there is a question about the time of a release, the VISA receipt given to a citizen may be used for verification.

Sloppiness in release reporting can cost you!. . .

April Response Times – April, 2008 out of **2570** tow requests:

21 to 30 minutes - 94 tows (down from 110)
31 + minutes - 32 tows (up from 24)
9 Failure to Respond (down from 11)

This represents an average late response rate of 5.06% . . .

April Stats -

Less than 5% late responses:

21st Century D5	Loop Hwy
A & B D2	Newhouse D5
A & B D8	Oregon Towing
A & B D7	Retriever
Andy's Towing	Sam's Towing
Beaver Towing	Security Towing
Emerald's D2	Sergeant's D8
	Speeds D8

5 to 9.9% late responses:

21st Century D4	Newhouse D8
21st Century D7	Newhouse D4
Northwestern	Sergeant's D3

Speeds D5

10% or more late responses

Buck's/9T9	Handy Andy's
Handy Andy's	United Service Alliance

<u>May Response Times</u> - May, 2008 out of **2356** tow requests:

21 to 30 minutes 100 tows (up from 94)
31 + minutes 25 tows (down from 32)
10 Failure to respond (up from 9)

Overall 5.31% in late responses…

<u>Less than 5% late responses:</u>

21st Century D5	Loop Hi-Way
21st Century D7	Northwestern
A&B D2	Oregon
A&B D7	Retriever
A&B D8	Sams
Gerlock	Security
Sergeants D8	
Speeds D8	

5 to 9.9% late responses:

21st Century D4	Newhouse D8
Andy's Towing	Newhouse D4
Beaver Towing	Newhouse D4
United Service Alliance	

10% or more late responses

Buck's/9T9	Sergeants D3
Handy Andy's	Speeds D5

<u>100% Response</u> . . . In the month of May, there were 9 Tow Contractors that responded to all requests for Contract tows.

21st Century D4	104 requests
21st Century D5	95 requests
21st Century D7	102 requests
Andy's Towing	99 requests
Beaver Towing	87 requests
Newhouse D5	95 requests
Oregon Towing	98 requests
Sam's Towing	111 requests
Security Towing	149 requests

In addition, the following companies passed only 1 tow in May:

Gerlock 8 requests
Loop 68 requests
Retriever 164 requests
Sergeants D3 **77** requests

The overall pass percentage for May was 2.37%...

<u>Next Contract Workshop</u>. . . The next Contract Workshop is scheduled for

Thursday, June 26th, 2008.
1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Room 600, Rivers Conf room
111 SW Columbia Street

Don't wait until the last minute. ***Register by Tuesday, June 24th…***

…mg

The foundation of a great towing safety program is based on the employee training records and reliable documentation. This month's ***Tow Times*** *safety meeting topic discusses the importance of providing consistent, structured training for all new hires, experienced or not. Take a moment to see how your company stacks up to this list.*

Towing Safety Meeting 2008 #1 – Starting a New Driver Out Right

BY PATRICK GRATZIANNA

When hired, a new towing operator may have some previous towing experience but does that translate well at your company? Does he know your trucks? Does he grasp your paperwork? Does he understand what you expect from him? The following topics address several critical points that every new tower should be trained on, yours being no exception.

New Hire Orientation

- Once hired, a new driver should be introduced to all the key supervisors, dispatchers, and to as many veteran drivers as possible. The initial introductions help the new hire match the names and faces of the company.
- All required forms including tax, health, benefit and DOT compliance paperwork should be completed before the driver ever steps foot in a truck. Get them now or never.
- The new towing operator should be given a formal tour of the facility, the trucks and the offices, noting where they are allowed to be and where they are not, including parking.
- Review your written company policies (you do have written company policies?) including salary expectations, scheduling, vacations, periodic evaluations and uniform standards. There should be no surprises.

Paperwork

Because every towing company is different, take the time to show your new driver what forms and reports need to be completed on a regular basis. Some may include:

- Towing invoices/motor club invoices (including where and when to turn them in)
- Towing rate sheets
- Pre-tow vehicle inspection reports
- DOT driver vehicle inspection report
- Police impound forms and reports
- Credit card receipts and related paperwork
- Timecards or tow log sheets
- Business cards and other company advertising materials
- Clipboard inventories

Basic Driving Skills

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulation §391.31 requires that every driver (of a truck greater that 10,001 lbs.) must successfully pass a "Road Test." The test must include:

- Completing a vehicle inspection report
- Coupling/Uncoupling (commonly referred to as hooking and unhooking)
- Basic driving skills and operation of emergency equipment
- Passing, turning and braking
- Backing and parking

If the driver has a valid CDL, the company may accept a copy of that in lieu of performing a road test. Whether required or not, it is still a good idea to have any new hire demonstrate their driving skills before going solo.

Basic Towing Skills

Prepare a checklist of basic towing skills that every professional towing operator should know and have your new hire demonstrate each one. Safety should be considered over speed. Some of the skills should include:

- Simple wheel-lift loading and unloading; both front and rear
- Car-carrier loading and unloading; one-car, two-cars, no keys and no wheels
- Safety chains and tag lights
- Driveshaft removal–transmission linkage removal
- Trailer hitch towing, motorcycle towing and dollies

Basic Recovery Skills

- Simple, single line winching and complex multi-part winching
- Basic light-duty rollover using a tow truck or a car carrier
- Accident scene clean-up and management

Basic Roadside Service Skills

- Customer service
- Roadside safety skills including protective and reflective gear
- Tire changes, jump-starts, out-of-fuel and lockouts

Additional Discussion Points

- Does your company have a structured training program?
- Does your towing business have a written employee policy manual?
- How long does it take to train a new driver and who is responsible to do it?
- What are some other items that every new driver should be trained on?

For more information please call me at 847-991-8246 or e-mail me through my Web site, www.midwestfleetsafety.com.