Tow Bulletin

"Tow Contractors providing quality towing services to public agencies, citizens and visitors to Portland"

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PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL CONTRACT TOW EMPLOYEES

<u>*Number P-leeze!</u> . . . In case you haven't already heard, the folks in the Regulatory Section (including me) have new phone numbers, as of July 17th. For awhile, if you call me at the old number, you'll get a recording with the new number, **(503)865-2489**. Towing assistant, Allison Madsen's number is now (503)865-2482. ***My fax number (503)823-9068 will not change…***

<u>Don't tow without verifying vehicle ownership</u>… As I'm sure you are aware, state law requires that a tower must have authorization from a public agency (PPB, MCSO, Parking Enforcement, etc.) <u>or</u> the registered owner to legally hook up and tow a vehicle parked on public right-of-way. It's less clear when you're dealing with a private tow request. Recently, a local tower was asked to tow a vehicle several blocks and was paid cash for the job.

Unfortunately, it was not the registered owner of the vehicle making the request! The owner had been on vacation and came home to find his vehicle missing. It turns out that this may be part of a beef between a tenant and landlord, but the tower was in a very bad position, since he had failed to verify the ownership of the vehicle, and, because commercial tows aren't reported to police, no one could help the real owner when he came home to find his vehicle gone. Fortunately, the vehicle was found just a few blocks away. Don't take such a risk: ***Make sure your authorization is real before you touch a vehicle on public right-of-way…!***

<u>Fuel Surcharge: Reminder</u> . . . It's important that towers remember that the fuel 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*. When a tow is overturned by Code Hearings, you will not be paid for the fuel surcharge ***because the City pays for the tow . . .***

<u>Prevent Heat Stroke!</u> . . . Did you know that heat stroke can cause brain damage and even death in as little as 20 minutes? To avoid losing brain cells to heat exhaustion or

heat stroke, here are some good tips from the American Red Cross:

- ☹ Don't wait until you're thirsty to have a cool drink of water - in this kind of weather, a person should drink about twice the usual recommended amount or about a gallon per day, *minimum.*
- ☹ *Avoid* beverages with caffeine such as coffee, cola drinks, tea, Jolt, Mt. Dew. Caffeine and alcohol are diuretics and can cause further dehydration.
- ☹ Ice or a cool cloth applied to the wrists or the back of the neck can help to relieve early symptoms of heat exhaustion. It's also not a bad idea to carry a small cooler with ice and water in your truck.
- ☹ Watch for early signs of distress from too much heat – cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, clammy skin. If a person is exhibiting any of these signs and their skin is dry and hot, *they need medical attention, now!* Get out of the heat, drink cool liquids and rest.

Don't ignore these warning signs. ***I don't know about you, but these days I don't have any brain cells to spare!. .***

Please Mr. Postman . . . Occasionally, I get a call from a tower, angry that they haven't been paid timely for a "city" tow. I understand that it's frustrating when the money isn't rolling in as expected. Towers have more control of this than they realize. But first, they have to send the bills to the right place! Check out the January or July,2008 Tow Bulletins for a list of contacts.

Make sure your staff are filling out the invoices completely, and *read what it says*. If it isn't obvious who is responsible for paying, and you send it to the wrong place, it may simply be discarded without any explanation. The bill-payers don't have time to figure out who it should go to and to forward wayward statements. And one more thing ~ If you don't get your payment on time, don't just send a duplicate bill, call and find out why! ***Don't make it even harder to get paid for your work…***

Check Those Daily Reports!. . . Every day – except Sunday – Tow Desk sends every Tow Contractor a list of the previous day's release activity. Towers are *required* to check this list every day and inform Tow Desk right away if there are errors or omissions. If everyone is checking this report each day, ***we should never have the long lists of unreleased vehicles that we send out periodically.. .***

New Parking Enforcement Service fee . . . Beginning October 1, towers will collect from vehicle owners a new fee on tows ordered by Parking Enforcement. The new fee will add $13.00 to the cost of all PE tows, except Abandoned vehicle tows. Of this amount, the tower will keep $1.00. The other $12 will be billed monthly in the same way as the regular City service fees. It will only apply to vehicles that are released to the owner (RO), towed to Rivergate (POLICE) or Released at the Scene (RAS). The first billing for this fee will come to you in November for the PE tows that you did in October. ***More information will be sent out as we get closer to October 1. . .***

A Word About "Protection". . . What does it really mean when the Contract says *"Tow Contractor shall exercise reasonable care to protect stored vehicles and the personal effects thereof from vandalism, theft or burglary"*? Here is how the Contract defines it:

- Providing a fence that meets all Tow Board specifications
- Equipping all gates, doors and other openings into the storage facilities with locks and keeping all gates, doors and other openings closed and secured at all times except during authorized entry or exit
- When door keys are available, locking vehicle doors and keeping keys protected from unauthorized access
- Closing vehicle windows and sunroofs
- Using a tarp to protect a vehicle with broken windows or an uncloseable sunroof

All of these services are covered by the storage fees. There is no extra charge. ***Make sure your staff understands and takes these precautions with every towed vehicle…***

15th Annual Small Business Fair . . . Saturday, September 20th, 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Information for local businesses on many topics of interest. And it's all FREE! Hour-long sessions offered this year include:

- **How do I turn my dream into reality?**
- **What business entity is best for you?**
- **Understanding business licenses, taxes and regulations**
- **Home business…home office…tax issues**
- **Be found – get your Web site to customers**
- **Money... how can I get it for my business?**
- **Do you need a business plan?**
- **The art of selling**
- **Electronic Bookkeeping**
- **Obtaining and protecting your business name**
- **The future of business**
- **How to advertise your business**
- **Legal preventive medicine**
- **Record keeping – shoe box accounting**
- **Selling on the Web - E-commerce**
- **Successful networking – growing your business**
- **Going global**
- **Selecting and working with lawyers and CPAs**
- **Tips for construction contractors**
- **Cash – lifeblood of your business**

This event gives you an opportunity to get ***FREE*** counseling on critical business topics.

Oregon Convention Center
777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
On-site parking available -$8.00 per day
Want more information?
Call (503)329-4260 or visit
www.oregonbizfair.org *on the web.*

July Response Times - July, 2008 out of 2,324 tow requests:

21 to 30 minutes 105 tows (Down from 119)
31 + minutes 46 tows (up from 38)
10 Failure to respond (Up from 7)

Overall 6.32% in late responses (Down from 6.42%)…

Less than 5% late responses:

21st Century D4	Northwestern
21st Century D5	Oregon
A&B D2	Retriever
A&B D8	Security
Loop Hi-Way	Sergeants D8
United Service Alliance	Speed's D8

5 to 9.9% late responses:

21st Century D7	Buck's/9T9
A&B D7	Newhouse D5
Andy's	Newhouse D8
Beaver Towing	Sams
	Sergeants D3

10% or more late responses

Gerlock	Newhouse D4
Handy Andy's	Speeds D5

100% Response . . . In the month of July, there were 6 Tow Contractors that responded to all requests for Contract tows.

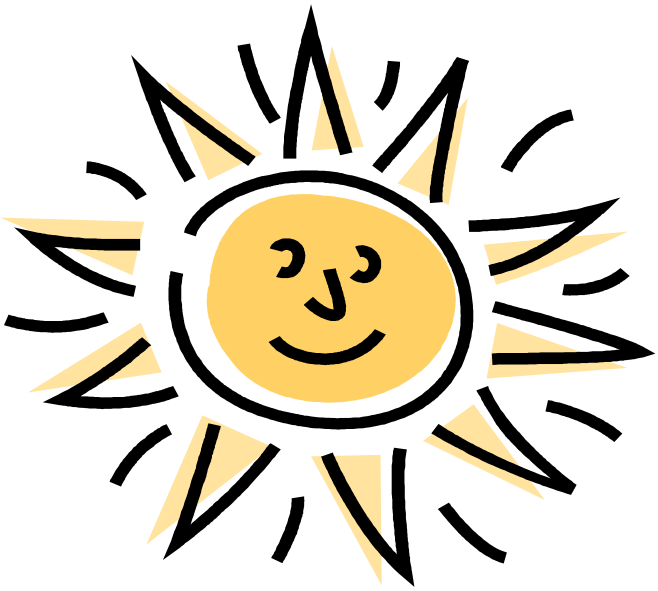
21st Century D4	85 requests
21st Century D5	88 requests
21st Century D7	92 requests
Gerlock	10 requests
Retriever	212 requests
Security Towing	202 requests

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

Andy's Towing	93 requests
Loop Hwy	71 requests
Sam's Towing	85 requests
Sergeant's D8	83 requests
Speed's D5	96 requests
Speed's D8	72 requests

The overall pass percentage for July was 2.79%...

Next Contract Workshop. . . The next Contract Workshop is scheduled for

Thursday, August 28, 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, August 26th…***