

# Tow Bulletin

January, 2009



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*PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL CONTRACT TOW EMPLOYEES*

## This Month . . .

### Martin Luther King, jr. Birthday

**Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>**

(Gate Fee applies all day)

During the 1950s and '60s, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. Initiated by Congress in 1994, King Day of Service builds on that legacy by transforming the federal holiday honoring Dr. King into a national day of community service grounded in his teachings of nonviolence and social justice. The aim is to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the "Beloved Community" that Dr. King envisioned. Thousands of projects are planned across the country, if you're interested, *check out* <http://www.mlkday.gov/> *for more information...*

### Blizzards and Ice Storms and Floods,

*Oh My!* . . . December certainly packed a wallop weather-wise. ODOT activated the special staging procedures more times in December, 2008 than all previous years, combined! Despite the bad weather, *the*

*number of tow requests was higher than October and November...*

**Tow Types...** Tows of several different types are covered by the Contract for Vehicle Towing and Storage. The different categories are identified in the monthly summary by codes: PR (police request), PNP (private non-preference), PP (private preference) and CR (city request). When Tow Desk dispatches a tow request, they are very careful to inform the tower of the type of request, in order to avoid confusion about how the tow is handled and how much to charge.

A tow ordered as "Private Non-Preference" is subject to all the requirements of the tow contract, including contract rates. It makes no difference whether a vehicle is picked up by the registered owner, towed to a repair shop, or collected by another tower on behalf of an insurance company, etc. the **prices are limited to the amount allowed by contract**. It's a good rule of thumb that if you get a tow from the Tow Desk, it will be limited to contract rates. *Don't risk your whole contract for a few extra dollars!..*



### **Title Surrenders and PPB Releases...**

It's time to remind the towers about what happens when you accept a title surrender on a tow that requires a police release. When a tower accepts a title in lieu of payment on a towed vehicle, the tower is actually becomes the owner of the vehicle, contrary to a liened vehicle. If you accept a title, you become responsible for getting a release (and paying for it!) from the police agency. Most towers will only accept the title if the registered owner presents it with the release, if required. Of course, if you process a lien on a vehicle, a release won't be necessary on Portland Police tows. **Note: Multnomah County requires releases on all liened vehicles and the Port requires lien releases on all except hazard tows and recovered stolen vehicles...**

### **Get Out Your Calendars...** Here is the list

- of official City holidays for 2009:
- New Year's Day** – Thursday, Jan. 1
- M L King, Jr. Birthday** – Monday, Jan. 19
- Presidents' Day** – Monday, Feb. 16
- Memorial Day** – Monday, May 25
- Independence Day** – Friday, July 3
- Labor Day** – Monday, Sept. 7
- Veterans' Day** – Wednesday, Nov. 11
- Thanksgiving Day** – Thursday, Nov. 26
- Christmas Day** – Friday, Dec. 25

**Billing the City...** I've gotten complaints from several Bureaus about towers sending the wrong invoice copy when billing for services provided to the City. **Remember:** It is treasury policy that they can only pay if they have the *pink* copy ~ not the white and not the yellow. **Be sure to send the pink invoice copies with your bill to speed up the process of being paid by the City...**

### **And While We're on the Subject...** As

everyone should know, the City's "Code Hearings Officer" (CHO) hears citizen appeals and makes rulings on whether a contract tow is valid – should the officer have ordered the tow? When a tow is ruled invalid, the CHO refunds the entire tow bill to the citizen and sends a "Notification of Invalid Tow" form indicating the types of fees and the amounts that CHO will pay.

If a tower wishes to be paid for expenses incurred when filing for a possessory lien, documentation of such expenses must be provided to CHO. The Contract says:  
5.4.14.1 *After a vehicle has been in storage for 7 days, the Tow Contractor may recoup lien-filing expenses actually incurred.*

So, if you want the City to pay for the cost of processing your lien, you must also provide receipts or other itemized list of expenses you have borne. **No documents-no lien fee..**

### **Important Reminder: How to**

**Handle a Hold...** Now and then we need to be reminded of the proper handling of a vehicle when a temporary or formal hold has been applied to it. There are two types of hold – Formal and Temporary. Here are the characteristics of each type:

- Formal:**
- Ordered by any Agency officer
  - Restricts access to both the towed vehicle and its contents
  - **For an indefinite period – does not expire**
  - Allows for completion of investigation
  - May go to a police facility (Rivergate or Hansen Building) **or** to the tower's lot
  - Tower should refer all inquiries about the vehicle to the police agency that towed it
  - Must be stored inside police hold storage at the tower's lot
- Temporary:**
- Ordered by any Agency officer



- Restricts access to both the towed vehicle and its contents
- **Limited duration – expires after 72 hours, not counting weekends or holidays – may be lifted earlier**
- Goes to the tower’s lot
- Allows for completion of investigation
- Tower should refer all inquiries about the vehicle to the police agency that towed it
- Must be stored inside police hold storage at the tower’s lot

**Notice:** Temporary and formal holds are handled the same except for the length of time. If a citizen calls about a car with a hold, don’t even acknowledge that you have the car – refer them to the agency. ***Make sure all staff members understand these conditions. . .***

### **Reporting Vehicle Info to Tow Desk . . .**

It is very important that the information that you report to Tow Desk at the completion of a tow is ***accurate***. This means that the VIN and license plates must be reported based on your actual observation of the vehicle.

**Don’t** Report the plate number from your pager – you must check both the front and back plates on the vehicle

**Don’t** Report a plate ***or*** VIN from paperwork inside the car – you must check the VIN plate inside the windshield on the dashboard and both the front and back license plates

**Don’t** Forget to tell Tow Desk the issuing state of a vehicle’s license plates – if nothing is specified, it will be assumed to be an Oregon plate

***Accurate records are just as important as hooking up the car – don’t quit until the job is done! . . .***

**Neatness Counts . . .** Make sure that VINs and license plates are entered accurately and

legibly on the invoice. When writing license plates or VINs on tow invoices and release sheets, **make letters twice as big as the numbers**. For example:

1GNDU06E8WP311984

***This will help to prevent mistaking 5’s and S’s or 1’s and L’s, etc.***

### **Jack Frost Nipping at Your Nose? . .**

After the adventure of the last three weeks, it may seem like these tips to help you avoid hypothermia are a little late. But January has historically been the month when the worst winter weather hits in Portland! So, here’s the annual run-down on how to prevent dangerous loss of body heat:

**Radiation** – if you have uncovered skin, you radiate! Cover your hands, head and feet.

**Conduction** – water and steel both conduct heat away from your body if you touch them – it’s the old “tongue stuck to the flagpole” trick – “*I triple-dog dare ya!*”

**Convection** – this is conduction when one of the objects is in motion, think “wind chill”

**Evaporation** – sweating and breathing both cool your body.

The measure of “*cold challenge*” is the combination of all the conditions that make it cold: temperature, wetness, wind.

Think it’s not cold enough for hypothermia? Think again- ***any temperature below 98.6 can be linked to hypothermia!***

**Signs of hypothermia:**

***Shivering*** – if it can be stopped voluntarily, the hypothermia is mild. If not, the level is moderate to severe.

***Loss of motor coordination***, confusion. Blue tint to the skin.

What should you do?

1. **Reduce Heat Loss** – add dry clothing, blankets, shelter.



2. **Give food and fluids** – carbohydrates, protein and fat – a candy bar can help. Give them liquids, warm- *not too hot* - in temperature.
3. **External heat source** – crank up the heater, but be careful not to put them too close. They might not feel a burn.

Signs of frostbite:

- Area may be painful or numb.
- May look red or bluish. In severe cases, the tissue may be white and hardened.
- Ears, nose, fingers and toes are most susceptible.

What do you do?

1. **Re-warm** the affected area gently. Try blowing warm air on it or placing it against a warm body part like an armpit. Immersion in warm, **not hot**, water is also effective.
2. **Don't rub the area!** This can cause tissue damage because ice crystals within the cells may cause tearing.

**One last caution:** Always wear gloves when handling fuel in the cold. Spilling white gas on bare skin can result in instant frostbite from evaporative cooling.

This information is provided only to give you a few tips for recognizing hypothermia and frostbite. It is not a substitute for real medical help. If you think you or someone near you is hypothermic or has frostbite, get medical attention as soon as possible. *Thanks to Rick Curtis and Princeton University for this information. . .*

**There's a Reason They're Called**

**Standard Invoices** . . . When re-printing invoice forms for Contract tows, it may be tempting to re-arrange the boxes or change wording. However, **do not make any change** to this standard form without first checking with the Towing Coordinator. The reason for standardizing the information and locations of

information on the invoice is to make it easier to see that it is correctly filled out and to facilitate auditing. *Use of a non-standard invoice on a Contract tow may be grounds for invalidation of the tow and a full refund of fees. . .*

**For The Record** . . . Here's the annual list of contact information for the Agencies. (Agency readers, please let me know if this information is not accurate.) Tow Contractors ~Save this information for easy reference:

- Correspondence, complaint responses, penalty waiver requests, monthly reports, service fee payments, driver numbers, truck inspections, insurance papers, bond certificate, etc....

Towing Coordinator

P.O. Box 8572

Portland OR 97207-8572

(503) 865-2489

FAX: (503) 823-9068

e-mail: [mgaylord@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:mgaylord@ci.portland.or.us)

- Police records questions  
**Portland Police Records**  
1111 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Room 1126  
Portland OR 97204  
(503) 823-0044
- Billings to the Portland Police Bureau  
Police Fiscal Services  
1111 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Room 1406  
Portland OR 97204  
(503) 823-0486
- Billings to City of Portland Fleet Services  
**Janice Young**  
Bureau of General Services  
1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 1204  
Portland OR 97204  
(503) 823-6943
- TBTH billing to Maintenance Bureau



**Emilie Ibanez**  
2929 N Kerby  
Portland OR 97227  
(503)823-7040

- Portland Streetcar billings:  
Carol Cooper, Office Manager

**Portland Streetcar**  
1516 NW Northrup Street  
Portland OR 97209  
(503)823-2900

- City of Portland Parking Enforcement  
**Parking Enforcement Information**

1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 730  
Portland OR 97204  
(503) 823-5195

- Billings to Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

MCSO Auto Records  
12240 NE Glisan St  
Portland OR 97230  
(503) 251-2520  
FAX: (503) 261-2812

- Billings to Multnomah County Fleet

**Adrianna Lucas**  
Multnomah County Transportation  
1620 SE 190<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland OR 97233-5999

- Port of Portland  
Port of Portland Police  
(503) 460-4221

- Tri-Met

**Anna Turner**  
HOP 1  
4012 SE 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
PORTLAND OR 97202  
(503) 962-5883

- ODOT

**Geoff Bowyer**  
**ODOT- Incident Response**

123 NW Flanders St  
Portland OR 97209  
(503)731-4703

*Don't sabotage yourself by sending time-sensitive materials to the wrong address! . . .*

**Driver ID Numbers** . . . Drivers are not allowed to perform Contract tows until they have been assigned a City ID number. If you have a new driver who needs a number, you must complete and submit the "Immediate Notice of New Hire/Notice of Termination" form with a signed Confidentiality Agreement, and copies of the driver's license and social security card. Until Allison's replacement is hired, feel free to fax or e-mail this information to the Towing Coordinator. *Numbers are not assigned without submission of all required documentation...*

**December Response Times** . . . Two weeks of snow and its aftermath resulted in a skewed response record for the month. Thanks for everyone's exceptional effort during the "Arctic Blast!" Out of the non-snowy tow requests:

**21 to 30 minutes – 44 tows**

**31 + minutes – 18 tows**

**Failures to Respond:**

**No snow = 2**

**Snow (12/14-12/28) = 11**

*Between 12/14 and 12/28 the average Class A response time was 34 minutes... not bad, considering what it was like out there!*

**100% Response** . . .

**21<sup>st</sup> Century D4** 74 requests

**21<sup>st</sup> Century D5** 57 requests

**21<sup>st</sup> Century D7** 76 requests

**Andy's** 46 requests

**Beaver** 55 requests

**Sergeant's D8** 64 requests



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

**Gerlock** 30 requests  
**Security** 224 requests

The overall pass percentage for December was 5.17%..

**Hail and Farewell . . .** Allison Madsen, who has been the assistant to the Towing Coordinator for the past year and a half, has accepted another position in the Revenue Bureau. She's still helping out until her replacement is hired, but she already has a considerable stack of work in her new job. If

you have questions, feel free to call the TC.  
*Congratulations, Allison, and thanks. . .*

**Next Contract Workshop . . .**

1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 29, 2009

Room 600, Rivers Conf room

111 SW Columbia Street

Register by Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> to be sure of a seat. Class starts by 1:35 so be on time! *Late-comers may be turned away...*

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*...mg*

