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Tow Bulletin

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PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL TOW CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Holidays Galore! . . . Official dates for the Christmas and New Year's holidays this year are:

Christmas Eve ½ Day
Thursday, December 24th
May be closed 12:00 noon to 1800
(towers need not staff the office after noon on Christmas Eve. GATE FEE starts after 1800)

Christmas Day
Friday, December 25th
(Gate Fee applies all day)

New Year's Eve ½ Day
Thursday, December 31st
May be closed 12:00 noon to 1800
(towers need not staff the office after noon on New Year's Eve. GATE FEE starts after 1800)

New Year's Day
Friday, January 1, 2010
(Gate Fee applies all day)

Remember that even when your office is closed, you must be available to release a car 24/7. ***Mark your calendars!. . .***

Use of Reflective Gear. . . When we inspect a truck to be used on the contract, the tower must show that every truck is supplied with an ANSI standard reflective garment . It follows that there is also a requirement that tow drivers use this gear!

3.33 *All tow drivers **must wear reflective clothing**, that meets ANSI standards for visibility, **whenever** hooking a vehicle or providing road service.*

I know that some companies have jackets with reflective strips, which should be okay, as long as they meet the standard. But every driver needs to wear reflective gear every time they provide service under the Tow Contract. ODOT has begun making note of drivers who don't. ***Disregard for their own safety could get a driver temporarily excluded from contract work. . .***

Slow Payments?. . . Are you sure you're sending your bills to the right place? Recently, several towers have asked for my help in getting more timely payment from the City. While it's true that the City's accounting system (now, a year old) has contributed to some slow payments, in many cases, the bills were simply sent to the wrong place for payment!
Most City offices have decided now that if a bill for another agency's tow comes to them, the City will not return it or pass it

ton, so it may take awhile for you to know tha there's a problem. Here are a few tips for handling Agency billing, to avoid such costly and time-consuming errors:

1. **Tow by the Hour** – It is the tower's responsibility to get billing information at the tow scene. There should be someone at the scene to sign for the tow – get the address and other details from them before hooking up the vehicle.
2. **Road Service –** Pay attention to which agency requests the service: Portland Police? Multnomah County?, etc. Tow Desk gives you this information – make note of it. Each agency has its own "fleet" function. Don't assume it's for the City.
   and… If an officer requests road service for a citizen's vehicle, the contract only obligates you to provide road service for Agency vehicles. If you choose to accept a request for a citizen's vehicle, you must either:
   Arrange for payment by the citizen before you do the service, **OR**, if the officer says the Police Bureau will pay for it, make sure you know if it should go to Police Fiscal Services or the officer's specific precinct for payment.
3. **Staging** – Bills for staging tow trucks will always go to the Agency that requests the staging. Snow staging is usually for ODOT, but there could also be other reasons for staging. It's up to your drivers and dispatchers to record all the information about a tow request so you have it for billing.
4. **Tows to Rivergate** – Drivers are to have the attendant at Rivergate sign the completed invoice and leave a copy of the invoice with them. Then, at least once a month, the tower sends a statement with the pink copies of each Rivergate tow invoice to PPB Fiscal Services. Again, pay attention to which Agency ordered the tow because Rivergate is occasionally used by other police agencies.

Statements: When you send your statement with the invoice copies for payment by an agency, please apply the following courtesies:

- If your statement includes unpaid bills that have previously been submitted, please make note of where the current billing starts.
- Please be sure to list the Tow Number or Call Number issued by the Tow Desk, not just your invoice number.
- Please have your invoice copies in the same order as listed in your statement.

Following these simple practices will make payments quicker and prevent confusion. . .

Standby Time On Agency Invoices . .

Whenever you want to charge for having to standby for more than 30 minutes on-scene or at a drop-site, you must document the actual time and reason. This is especially true on agency tows. If, for some reason, you are required to wait to hook (or unhook) a vehicle, you have to be able to explain – on the invoice – why this was necessary.

Otherwise, the agency will not pay for it….

Excessive Lien-filing fees . . .

Do you know the maximum amount towers are allowed to recoup for lien filing fees? Contract Section 5.4.14 limits the amount to $40.00 for any vehicle valued $2,500.00 or less. What if the vehicle is worth more than

$2,500.00 and therefore, costs more to process the lien? The contract makes provision for recouping more than $40, (up to $98.00) but **only** if approved by the Towing Coordinator, first! If you have a vehicle that you know will be more expensive to lien, you must submit your proof – Blue book value, or receipts – to the TC **before** you charge the higher amount. All it takes is an email to the TC to get your approval, but if you skip this step, you could end up having to refund all the lien fees ***and possibly pay a penalty for overcharging!. . .***

November Response Times . . .

Out of 1721 tow requests:
21 to 30 minutes – 85 **tows (Down from 86)**
31 + minutes – 44 **tows (Up from 40)**
2 Failures to Respond **(Down from 4)**

Less than 5%:

21st Century D5	Retriever
21st Century D4	Safeguard
A&B D8	Sam's (0!)
Beaver	Security (0!)
Newhouse D5	Speed's D8
Northwestern	

5 to 9.9% :

21st Century D7	Sergeant's D3
A&B D2	
A&B D7	

10% or more

Buck's	Newhouse D4
Crown	Newhouse D8
Handy Andy's	Sergeant's D8
Loop	Speed's D5
Oregon	

100% Response . . .

21st Century D4 68 requests
21st Century D5 61 requests
21st Century D7 77 requests
Beaver 61 requests
Gerlock 4 requests
Loop Hiway 46 requests
Newhouse D5 52 requests
Northwestern 68 requests
Sam's 71 requests
Security 117 requests
Speed's D8 103 requests

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

A&B D2 119 requests
Handy Andy's 44 requests
Newhouse D8 84 requests
Retriever 120 requests
Sergeant's D8 58 requests
Speed's D5 61 requests

The overall pass percentage for November was 1.74% ...

Next Contract Workshop . . .

January 28, 2010
1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Room 600, Rivers Conf room
111 SW Columbia Street

<u>A Word of Appreciation from the Towing Coordinator</u> . . . 2009 is just about used up and, judging by the news reports, not a moment too soon! Despite ever-growing operating costs and a serious decline in the volume of tow requests, tow companies serving the City of Portland, Port of Portland, Multnomah County, City of Fairview and Tri- Met have, for the most part, maintained the high level of performance and cooperation we rely on. Thank you all for continuing to provide vital services to police and citizens of the Portland area, despite economic storms.

Kudos also to the folks at the Tow Desk and the Abandoned Vehicle program. They, too, have had to tighten their belts while still managing to faithfully carry out the duties of their contracts.

And … I musn't forget the members of the Towing Board of Review. We are very fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and dedicated group of folks on our Board. They come to each meeting ready to work to achieve a contract that serves the Agencys' needs while respecting the tow contractors' rights. And the Industry Representatives, Clark Tenney and Bob Wilson continue to be invaluable partners and a wealth of technical information.

Thank you for your hard work, and
Best wishes to all for peace and prosperity in 2010!