



Tow Ordinance: Chapter 46 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Traffic and Vehicles

Purpose

The City is responsible for maintaining clean, safe and functional streets. Residents and visitors are entitled to a safe and well-managed vehicle towing system for non-consensual vehicle tows that affords them a high level of customer service, convenience, courtesy, and professionalism.

There are a few words that have been added to the ordinance that you should be aware of:

Department means the Detroit Police Department.

Hook-up means attached a motor vehicle to another vehicle fashioned with implements that can be used to tow a vehicle to a storage lot or other location.

Non-consensual tow means the owner, or other person having lawful custody of the vehicle, has not provided affirmative consent to the tow prior to hook-up.

Tow company means any entity or individual who performs wrecker or recovery services for financial gain.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

Detroit Police Department Tows

- City Council will be responsible for reviewing the administrative, towing, service and storage fees every two years.
- Tow contracts will be evaluated to determine whether an income based rate structure or tow hardship policy is feasible.

Administrative Fees

- The owner of the vehicle that has been towed will be responsible for paying an administrative fee once the vehicle is redeemed and/or sold. That fee will be set by City Council.

Unhooking and Service Fees

- As long as the owner returns to its vehicle before the actual towing, the tow company is required to unhook their vehicle and return to the owner.
- The owner must pay a service fee.
 - Tow companies must accept cash, cashier's check, debit cards and at least three major credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express.
 - Receipt will be provided from the tow company for each transaction.

Towing from Private Property

- Tow companies can **only** remove cars from public or private property if a request is made.
 - If a request is made, then the tow company must notify the Police Department and get approval before they hook-up the vehicle.
- Tow companies will keep a written log of approvals. The log contains the following information:
 - Time and Date of approval
 - Make, model and vehicle identification number
 - Condition of vehicle
 - Location where vehicle is being towed
 - Name, address, and phone number of the owner of the property
 - Name of Tow Company employee
 - Name, badge number of DPD employee who approved tow
- The towed vehicle will be at an authorized location within two hours of hook-up.
- Car owner has a right to request all documents and tow companies must provide all documents as requested.

Towing Companies and Storage Lot

- Tow companies have the authorization to allow police officers to inspect their facilities as long as it is constitutional.
- Facilities will keep hard copy records of towing, storage, redemption, scrap, salvage, or sale of a vehicle for at least six months.
- Each facility will have a recording system with DVR.
- Tow companies must have a visible sign displayed at their storage lot with the following information:
 - Towing fees, storage fees, and additional charges
 - Procedures for contesting towing and storage charges at the district court
 - Procedures for filing a claim for damages
 - List of documents needed to retrieve impounded vehicle
 - Statement that the owner will not be charged for retrieving the title, registration, insurance documents, or personal property from the vehicle.