

WAC 204-91A-180

Additional Towing and Tow Operator Qualifications, Restrictions, and Requirements.

In addition to the requirements contained in WAC [204-91A-170](#), registered tow truck operators appointed pursuant to this chapter must conform to all laws and administrative rules pertaining to the tow industry and must observe the following practices and procedures:

(1) When called by the patrol during normal business hours, the tow operator must dispatch a tow truck, from within the assigned zone within five minutes after receiving the call. Tow trucks must be registered to and belong to the particular tow business that is called and assigned only to that tow zone. If an officer at the scene deems it necessary, the officer may authorize additional assistance from a registered tow operator outside of the tow zone.

(2) When called by the patrol after normal business hours, the tow operator must dispatch a tow truck from within the assigned zone within fifteen minutes after receiving the call.

(3) The tow truck that is dispatched must arrive at the stated location within a reasonable time considering distance, traffic, and weather conditions.

(4) If for any reason a tow operator is unable to dispatch a tow truck within the stated time or if the dispatched truck will be delayed for any reason, the tow operator must advise the patrol stating the reason and estimated time of arrival. In the event the tow truck fails to arrive at the scene within a reasonable time, the patrol will contact another tow operator to respond to the scene and will cancel the original tow.

(5) A tow operator on rotation who is unable to dispatch or arrive within the times stated in subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of this section will forfeit the tow operator's turn and be placed at the bottom of the rotation list as if the tow operator had responded.

(6) Repeated refusal or failure of the appointee to respond to calls from the patrol for towing services or to provide the requested services may result in the suspension or revocation of the tow operator's letter of appointment.

(7) If the tow operator will be unavailable for twenty-four hours or more to respond to rotational calls with a class "A," "B," or "C" tow truck, the tow operator must advise the appropriate patrol office. Unavailability may occur due to conditions including, but not limited to, other tow truck commitments, tow truck disabled and/or under repair, unforeseen driver shortage due to illness. The tow operator must give the reason for unavailability and the approximate date and time when the company will be available to respond to calls.

The tow company will be removed from the rotational list and will not be called until the tow operator advises the patrol that the company is once again able to respond to calls with an "A," "B," or "C" class truck. In all such cases, the tow company will resume its normal position on the rotational list without regard to any missed calls or its position prior to being unavailable.

(8) The tow operator must advise the patrol whenever a private call is received for a tow with circumstances that indicate that the tow is for a vehicle that has been involved in a collision, incident, or equipment breakdown on the public roadway. The tow operator also must advise the patrol of all private calls to motor vehicle collisions on private property resulting in bodily injury or death.

(9) The tow operator must notify the patrol before moving any vehicle involved in a collision on a public highway under the jurisdiction of the patrol as defined in the motor vehicle code, Title [46](#) RCW, or where it appears that the driver of the vehicle to be moved is under the influence of intoxicants or drugs, or is otherwise incapacitated.

(10) Other than a service patrol established and funded by the department of transportation, a tow operator must not solicit tow or roadside services by patrolling the public roadways searching for disabled vehicles or vehicles involved in a traffic collision.

(11) When the patrol is in charge of a collision scene or other such incident, a tow operator must not respond to such scene unless his services have been specifically requested by the patrol, the vehicle's owner or operator, or the owner's authorized representative.

(12) The tow operator must be available, or will ensure that specific employees are available, twenty-four hours a day for the purpose of receiving calls or arranging for the release of vehicles. Business hours will be posted conspicuously at the tow operator's place of business so they can be seen during business hours and nonbusiness hours. A copy must also be sent to the inspector of the district in which the tow operator does business. Changes of business hours must be sent to the department and the inspector ten days before their effective date.

(13) The tow operator must post a current copy of tow and storage rates, on a form approved by the department and the patrol, in the following locations:

(a) At the entrance to the place of business, in a conspicuous location, plainly visible and capable of being read by the public, whether the business is open or closed. If, in order to meet this requirement, the rate sheets must be placed in a location, exposed to the elements, they must be protected so as to remain legible.

(b) Inside the business location, where business is commonly transacted. The rate sheets must be posted in such manner as to be clearly and plainly visible and read at all times by customers of the business.

(c) A copy of the current rates will be sent to the department, the section, and the patrol district commander of the district in which the tow operator has applied for a letter of appointment. Notice of any change(s) in service rates will be forwarded to the department, the section, and the district commander of the area ten days before the effective date of the changes. Charges made for towing services arising from calls initiated by the patrol must be consistent with current posted towing rates and must be based only upon services listed on the prescribed form.

(d) In the event that a tow operator has only a class "B" truck and utilizes it for class "A" and "B" type tows, the tow operator must file a rate sheet that specifies the rates charged for the different types of tows.

(e) Whenever any tow operator utilizes a larger truck than the towed vehicle warrants, the tow operator must charge fees based on the size of the towed vehicle not the size of the truck used.

(14) Charges made for towing services arising from calls initiated by the patrol must not exceed the maximum rates established by the chief.

(15) Unless other arrangements are made with commissioned patrol personnel at the scene, all impounded vehicles must be taken to the tow operators nearest approved storage location within the tow operator's assigned tow zone.

(16) The tow operator will maintain, for three years, records on towed and released vehicles which were towed at the request of the patrol. Such records will be available for inspection by the patrol during normal business hours at the tow operator's place of business. Records will include, but not be limited to:

(a) An itemized receipt of all charges for the services provided.

(b) A tow impound record inventory or copy thereof made out by the trooper at the scene of the tow and signed by the tow operator.

(c) All other records required by the department.

(17) The first and last name of the tow truck driver will be placed on the tow impound inventory record made out by the patrol officer at the scene and the officer may verify their driver's license; except that the signature may be provided on existing forms with form number 3000-110-076 (R 7/11) until current stock is depleted.

(18) Tow operators must obtain and maintain a current registration certificate as required by RCW [46.55.020](#).

(19) Tow operators must perform towing tasks competently. The standard of competence will be that quality of work which is accepted as efficient and effective within the towing industry. The tow operator must ensure tow truck drivers responding to calls initiated by the patrol have completed a minimum of one four-hour tow truck driver training course every five years. The tow operator must keep a file documenting training.

(20) No tow operator, employee, or agent will misappropriate, wrongfully convert to his/her own use, or abuse property belonging to another and entrusted to his/her care or storage.

(21) Tow operators must use emergency lights to warn other motorists only when at the scene of collisions, disabled vehicles, and/or recoveries. Such lighting must not be used when traveling to or from the scene.

(22) Tow operators are required to clean collision/incident scenes of all vehicle glass, debris, and vehicle liquid spills of one gallon or less.

(23) Specific operating restrictions and/or requirements, by truck class, are as follows:

(a) The standard air brake release tools (caging stud assemblies) required to be carried in the class "B," "B-2," and "C" trucks must be used, whenever necessary, to preserve potential evidence involving brake equipment or adjustment settings. When a tow operator is attempting to move a vehicle equipped with locked spring parking brakes that cannot be released by external air supply, the caging assemblies must be used to release the brake tension. Under no circumstances will the towed vehicle's brake assemblies or adjustments be moved or disturbed in any way that will prevent later determination of the precollision or incident settings.

(b) Class "B" or "B-2" trucks in excess of twenty-three thousand pounds gross vehicle weight rating need not carry dollies when towing or recovering heavy vehicles.

(24) Whenever a "special event or overflow" storage lot is approved by the department, the patrol and appropriate city/county jurisdictions, the following must apply:

(a) The tow operator must maintain personnel at the lot twenty-four hours per day for security and vehicle and/or personal property release. If necessary, reimbursement for such labor must be part of the contract for the "special event" if appropriate or by amended storage rates with a waiver of the ten-day rate change notice requirement approved by the department and the patrol.

(b) At the conclusion of a "special event or overflow" situation, all vehicles not reclaimed by the vehicle's owner or the owner's authorized representative must be towed to the tow operator's regular storage facility and processed in the normal fashion. No additional fee must be charged for towing the vehicle from the overflow lot to the regular storage facility.

(25) All work performed by the tow operator and/or employee must be in the most professional and expeditious manner. Tow operators and employees must refrain from any unprofessional actions while towing for or conducting towing business at the request of the patrol. The actions include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

(a) Lack of service, selective service, or refusal to provide service which the tow operator should be capable of performing;

(b) Exhibiting any signs of either alcohol, drug use, or both;

(c) Displaying any objects, logos, slogans, or graphic material within the view of the public that contains any form of pornography, profanity, or prejudice toward any person or group of persons; and

(d) Directing toward a vehicle's owner, operator or the owner's authorized representative any profanity or slurs based on the person's culture, race, gender or sexual preference.

(26) Tow operators must, when required by the patrol or the department, cause to be displayed on each approved truck, decals indicating truck class, patrol district, and/or assigned tow zone.

(27) When responding to a patrol call, tow truck driver must wear clothing identifying the company and the driver's first name. The driver's first name is the first name used on the person's driver's license or a nickname that the person commonly uses and by which the person is commonly known.

(28) Tow truck drivers performing recovery, impounding, or towing must wear work vests of highly visible materials, or equivalent distinguishing apparel when outside of the towing vehicle as outlined in WAC [296-155-200](#)(5) and Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 Part 634.3.

(29) Tow operators must not display any sign, shield, marking, accessory, or insignia on uniforms or vehicles indicating the equipment or vehicle marking are similar to or belong to any public law enforcement agency. Tow operators must not engage in any advertisement indicating an official connection with the patrol or other law enforcement agency.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [46.55.115](#), WSR 17-10-029, § 204-91A-180, filed 4/26/17, effective 5/27/17. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.37.005](#), [46.55.050](#), and [46.55.115](#), WSR 13-18-065, § 204-91A-180, filed 9/3/13, effective 10/4/13. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.55.050](#), [46.55.115](#), and [46.55.075](#), WSR 13-11-112, § 204-91A-180, filed 5/21/13, effective 6/21/13. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.37.005](#), [46.55.050](#), and [46.55.115](#), WSR 09-09-118, § 204-91A-180, filed 4/21/09, effective 5/22/09. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.37.005](#) and [46.55.115](#), WSR 07-02-025A, § 204-91A-180, filed 12/22/06, effective 1/22/07. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.37.005](#), [46.55.050](#), and [46.55.115](#), WSR 02-07-056, § 204-91A-180, filed 3/15/02, effective 4/15/02. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.37.005](#) and [46.55.050](#), WSR 94-18-083, § 204-91A-180, filed 9/2/94, effective 10/3/94. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.61.567](#), WSR 89-21-044, § 204-91A-180, filed 10/13/89, effective 11/13/89. Statutory Authority: RCW [46.35.005](#) [46.37.005], WSR 89-14-015 (Order 89-04-ESR), § 204-91A-180, filed 6/23/89.]

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