

Towing

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Towing services primarily consist of consent and nonconsent towing. Consent towing usually involves towing a consumer’s inoperable vehicle to a designated location, such as a repair facility. In consent towing situations the consumer orders and pays for the towing. Nonconsent towing generally is ordered by law enforcement or private property owners and is paid for by the vehicle’s owner. Vehicles are usually subject to nonconsent towing if parked in clearly marked tow-away zones, or after an accident. Nonconsent towing can also involve additional services such as vehicle storage or cleaning up debris after an accident



Towing Industry – Driver Safety

Tow truck drivers transport vehicles that are wrecked, non-functional, repossessed and illegally parked. They are the saviors of many motorists who find themselves stranded due to an accident, mechanical breakdown or other problem with their vehicle. Drivers are available 24 hours each day, 7 days a week. Providing roadside vehicle assistance can be fraught with hazards, especially when towing is involved. To stay safe, drivers should take into account the following safety concerns.



COMMUNICATION

You should make certain that someone is aware of your destination and planned route. You should also inform them of the location that the vehicle will be delivered to along with the name of the person requesting the service and their telephone number.



CAUTION LOADING VEHICLES

Tow truck drivers must be particularly cautious when standing outside of their truck. Caution is required when they are loading a vehicle or otherwise helping a stranded motorist. This is how many accidents occur which can result in the death. A recent California case involved a tow truck driver who was struck and killed upon impact by a hit-and-run driver.

PLANNED ROUTE

Take the time to plan your route carefully. Once you arrive at the destination you should proceed with caution especially if something appears to be amiss. An Illinois case highlighted a situation where a tow truck driver stopped to assist a broken down vehicle. The occupants robbed the tow truck driver at gunpoint and fled the scene. Fortunately, the driver was not injured.

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Towing Safety



Safe towing operations must take a number of things into consideration including driver safety, scene safety and traffic management. These things fluctuate as the scene changes, so it's imperative all towing employees to be aware of these hazards. Below are some common safety measures for towing safety.

- Carry fuel in a labeled and approved portable container with a tight cap and pouring spout.
- Keep gasoline and diesel fuels in separate containers.
- When refueling a vehicle, maintain contact between the container and the filler opening.
- Tow (rather than push) a vehicle when possible.
- Before towing a vehicle, check the type of transmission and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for towing front-wheel drive, rear-wheel drive or four-wheel drive vehicles.
- Be sure to use ample lights around the pick-up area. Avoid using flares in case of fuel leaks.
- Turn on the flashers of the disabled vehicle.
- Outfit service trucks with emergency equipment, warning signal devices, wheel chocks and a properly rated fire extinguisher.
- Post the maximum hoisting capacity of the towing unit on the winch mast. Never remove or paint over information on the manufacturer's data plate.
- Do not exceed the towing capacity of the truck, or exceed the limits of the cables, chains or tow bar.
- Leave at least three wraps of cable on the winch.
- Operate hoist controls away from the wheel drum, traveling cables and sheaves.

Risk Management Safety Bulletins – Towing-Safety

Click the links below to access additional resources on towing.

<i>In the News: Vehicle Towing Industry Injury & Fatality Rate Higher Than Other Emergency Responders</i> English	<i>OSHA: Driver Safety Overview</i> eLearning Course English	<i>Tow Truck Driver Hit by Passing Car</i> Fatality Report English
<i>Check Your Following Distance</i> Toolbox Talk English		