



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA ROTATIONAL TOW SYSTEM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CONSUMERS

Q: I was in an accident and my car requires a tow. What should I do?

A: Call 9-1-1 and report the accident. Along with the Police, an authorized tow truck will be dispatched to your location from a pre-approved list through the rotational tow program.

Q: What is the rotational tow program?

A: The rotational tow program dispatches authorized towing companies on a revolving basis to the scenes of accidents and disabled vehicles. The system is intended to ensure a timely response, reduce wreck chasing, allow many towing companies to participate, and protect consumers and vehicle owners from predatory behavior.

Q: Which tows fall within the scope of the rotational tow program?

A: According to Chapter 9-605(4) of The Philadelphia Code, a towing company must be dispatched through the rotational tow system when a vehicle is in an accident where police have been dispatched. Towing parked vehicles from private property or driveways, or disabled vehicles from legal parking spaces, does not fall within the scope of the rotational tow program. It is illegal for a towing company to respond to the scene of an accident in the City of Philadelphia where police have been dispatched unless that towing company was dispatched through the rotational tow system.

Q: What fees will I be charged?

A: In order to participate in the rotational tow program, towing companies must adhere to a strictly defined fee schedule as set forth in Chapter 9-605(4)(h) of The Philadelphia Code and the regulations governing the rotational tow program. Customers may only be charged for towing and storage fees as set forth in the Code and the regulations – towers may not charge any additional fees for any additional services.

The maximum towing fees permitted are as follows:

Vehicle Weight	Maximum Total Towing Fee Permitted to be Charged
Under 11,000 lbs	\$215
11,000 – 17,000 lbs	\$290
Over 17,000 lbs	\$400

No other towing-related charges may be charged in addition to the maximum total towing fee.

The maximum storage fees permitted are as follows:

Vehicle Weight	Storage Fee (per 24 hour day)
Under 11,000 lbs	\$25
11,000 – 17,000 lbs	\$40
Over 17,000 lbs	\$75

Storage fees shall be accrued for each 24-hour day. When a vehicle is stored for less than 24 hours on any day, storage fees shall be in the same proportion as the fractional part of the day the vehicle is stored.

Q: A tow truck just showed up to the scene of my accident. Should I let it tow my car?

A: No. Before allowing any tow truck to take possession of or relocate your vehicle, verify with the Police officer on the scene that the tow truck was properly dispatched through the rotational tow system. Tow operators are required to display a dispatch communication on their phone from AutoReturn proving that they were properly dispatched. You should not sign any paperwork or make any agreements with the tow operator unless they can provide that verification. Entering into a “consensual” towing agreement with a towing company that was not properly dispatched through the rotational system can put you at risk of paying exorbitant fees, as well as waiving other consumer protections.

Q: Multiple tow trucks showed up at the scene of my accident. Which one should I allow to tow my car?

A: You should verify with the Police officer on the scene which tow truck was properly dispatched through the rotational tow system, and only allow that towing company to tow your vehicle. You should *not* assume that the first tow truck to arrive on the scene was the properly dispatched one.

Q: I am a member of an auto club or organization that provides for towing. Can I choose my own tower through that program instead?

A: No. All tows associated with an accident or disabled vehicle to which police have been dispatched must go through the City's rotational tow program. However, a vehicle owner is free to use a towing company of their choice if their vehicle is disabled but parked in a legal parking spot and not obstructing the right-of-way, and if police were not dispatched.

Q: Where will they tow my car?

A: Tow trucks dispatched through the rotation must tow your vehicle to any location of your choice, as long as that location is within the City. If you are incapacitated and unable to provide a location, Police will instruct the towing company where to move your vehicle and will notify you where it was taken.

Q: How do I get my car released?

A: You can contact AutoReturn at www.autoreturn.com to locate your vehicle and make the necessary payments. You then must retrieve your vehicle from its storage location. If you cannot find your vehicle through the AutoReturn system, you may find it by contacting Philadelphia Police by calling 9-1-1. Towing companies are required to release your vehicle on the same day that the request is made, as long as the request was made during normal business hours, provided that all towing and storage fees authorized under the program are paid in full.

Q: Can I inspect my towed car?

A: Vehicle owners and their insurance companies have the right to inspect the vehicle at any time during normal business hours without charge, on the same day they make the request.

Q: Can I pay with credit cards?

A: Yes.

Q: The towing company wants me to agree to allow them to make repairs to my car. What are my rights?

A: No repairs may be made on a vehicle towed through the rotational program unless you sign an agreement which includes an estimate of the cost of repairs. No agreement for repairs may be entered into until 48 hours have elapsed from the time of accident, in the event the

owner/operator is injured and hospitalized. Any party who signs an agreement for repairs shall have 72 hours from the time of signing to reconsider the action and void the agreement.

Q: What are my rights as a consumer?

A: Each towing company dispatched through the rotation is required to give you a copy of a Consumer Bill of Rights, and provide you with an itemized invoice prior to accepting payment.

Vehicle owner/operators have the right to designate the location to which they want the vehicle to be towed. Vehicle owner/operators must designate in writing any subsequent location to which they want the vehicle towed. The vehicle may not be moved to a subsequent location without the owner's consent.

Vehicle owners have the right to inspect their vehicle at any time during normal business hours without charge, on the same day they make the request.

Q: I paid the towing and storage fees in full, but a towing company is refusing to release my vehicle unless I agree to pay more or agree to other services. What do I do?

A: Call Philadelphia Police at 9-1-1 immediately, and submit a formal complaint about the towing company to AutoReturn at www.autoreturn.com.

Q: I was over-charged for towing and storage for amounts and services beyond what is listed in the regulations. What do I do?

A: You should file a complaint with AutoReturn at www.autoreturn.com or by calling 215-933-5031. AutoReturn will then forward the complaint to the appropriate City agency for investigation.