

## What to do if you're about to be towed:

- Your safety is imperative at all times. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PHYSICALLY STOP A TOW**, even if the tow operator is refusing to drop the vehicle when he should. **LET THE CAR GO** — and file a complaint with TDLR. Your life is more important than your car. See the next page for important information on how to file a complaint.
- If you return to your car and it's getting hooked up to a tow truck but **IS NOT FULLY** hooked up and ready for towing, you can keep your car **WITHOUT** paying a **CHARGE**. You do not need to prove ownership of the car.
- If you return to your car and **IT IS FULLY HOOKED UP, READY FOR TOWING, BUT HAS NOT LEFT THE PARKING LOT**, you may keep your car but **YOU MUST PAY A DROP FEE**. You do not need to prove ownership of the car. A tow truck driver **MUST ACCEPT CASH, CREDIT CARDS AND DEBIT CARDS** as payment for the drop charge.
- Please note that the information in this handout does not apply to tows initiated by law enforcement.
- Please note that TDLR does not have jurisdiction over the towing of repossessed vehicles.

## I got towed! What do I do next?

There should be a sign at the parking lot that gives you a phone number that must be answered 24 hours a day, so you can find out the location of your vehicle.

You have the right to claim or get access to your vehicle 24 hours a day and within one hour if the vehicle storage facility (VSF) accepts vehicles 24 hours a day. If the VSF does not accept vehicles 24 hours a day, you have the right to claim or get access to your vehicle between 8 a.m. and midnight Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays, except for nationally recognized holidays. VSFs with these hours are not required to release a vehicle after midnight.

### Before you go to the VSF, collect the items you will need to claim your vehicle:

- payment (cash, debit card or credit card);
- a valid state or federally-issued photo ID card; and
- one document that shows ownership or possession of the car. These documents could include: your car insurance card or policy; name and address information that matches the information on the Motor Vehicle Registration obtained through TxDMV; or a current automobile lease or rental agreement in the name of the person picking up the vehicle or a person holding a power of attorney of the person named on the lease agreement. (for a more detailed list, please see <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/towing/consumerinfo.htm>)

Now you can go to the VSF to claim your vehicle. At the VSF, you have the right to access your vehicle to get ownership documents and recover personal property without paying a fee.

### You'll need to pay all fees for towing and storage at the VSF before they will release your vehicle.

The VSF must make reasonable efforts for storing your vehicle, such as locking doors, rolling up windows, and closing doors, hatchbacks, sunroofs, trunks, hoods, or convertible tops. These actions are included in the storage fee.

#### COMPLAINTS

TO REPORT COMPLAINTS, CONTACT:  
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING & REGULATION  
P.O. BOX 12157  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711  
(800) 803-9202  
[WWW.TDLR.TEXAS.GOV/complaints](http://WWW.TDLR.TEXAS.GOV/complaints)

## TOWING CONSUMER PROTECTION



Fees for Private Property Tows*	Amount	Maximum Drop Charge
Tow Charge, car weighing up to 10,000 lbs. (Light Duty)	\$272 (max).	\$135
Tow Charge, car weighing between 10,001 and 24,999 lbs (Med. Duty)	\$380 (max).	\$190
Tow Charge, car weighing 25,000 lbs or more (Heavy Duty)	\$489 per unit to \$978 max.	\$244
Daily Storage fee (car length 25 feet or less)	\$21.03 per day max	
Daily Storage fee (car length more than 25 feet)	\$36.80 per day max	
Notification fee	Up to \$50; if cost of publication is more than 50% of the fee, can charge the difference	
Impoundment fee	Not to exceed \$21.03 per day; must specify exact services performed to the fee and dates when services were provided	
Governmental or Law Enforcement fees	May vary	
Additional fees	None other than those listed above	

\* Private property non-consent towing fees may not exceed these amounts.

## I'm thinking about not claiming my car

**Please note that TDLR does not have jurisdiction over the storage of repossessed vehicles.**

If you do not claim your vehicle, it will be considered abandoned 10 days after the date the first notice is sent to the owner and lienholder. Once abandoned, law enforcement can claim the vehicle under Chapter 683 of the Texas Transportation Code. The VSF may sell the vehicle at a public sale starting 30 days after the date the second notice is mailed.

**Please remember that this document is a summary of the laws and administrative rules and is not a complete description of your rights or the requirements for license holders.**

## Your rights if you've been towed

If you think your vehicle should not have been towed, or if you were charged more than the allowed fee, you can request a tow hearing at any Justice of the Peace court in the county where your vehicle was towed. You must request a court hearing before the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the vehicle was removed and placed in a VSF. The court can charge you \$20 for the hearing, which must be held within 21 calendar days of the court receiving your request.

Your tow hearing request must contain this information:

- your name, address, and telephone number of the owner or operator of the vehicle;
- where the vehicle was towed from;
- the date your vehicle was towed;
- the name, address, and telephone number of the person or law enforcement agency that authorized the tow;

- the name, address, and telephone number of the vehicle storage facility where your vehicle was towed;
- the name, address, and telephone number of the towing company that towed the vehicle;
- a copy of any receipt or notification that you received from the towing company or the VSF; and
- one or more photographs that show where the vehicle was towed from, plus the text of any sign posted at the parking facility that states that parking is restricted. If there wasn't a sign restricting parking posted at the parking facility, then you need to include a note saying that.

In addition to requesting a court hearing, you can also file a complaint online with TDLR. <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/Complaints/>

## You DO NOT have the right to:

- Remove or dismantle any part attached to the vehicle while it is at the VSF.
- Retrieve your vehicle from the VSF without paying the towing, storage or other allowed fees.
- Retrieve your vehicle from the VSF without demonstrating that you are the owner or authorized user of the vehicle.
- Obtain your vehicle after it has been removed from the parking facility but before it has been placed in a VSF.