



Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
920 Colorado St.
Austin, Texas 78701
Phone: (800) 803-9202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2022

Tela Mange

Public Information Officer

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

512.463.3208

TDLR Revokes Houston Vehicle Storage License For Flipping Scheme

AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation has revoked the vehicle storage facility and vehicle storage facility employee licenses of Alaa Eid Yousef of Houston and assessed an administrative penalty of \$3,500.

Yousef owns the Express Auto vehicle storage facility at 5930 Highway 6 in Houston.

Express Auto was accused of convincing a customer to sign a document that allowed him to transfer her vehicle from his vehicle storage facility to a body shop under false circumstances. This process is known as “flipping.”

Flipping often results in body shops taking possession of a vehicle and charging thousands of dollars in unnecessary fees. When the insurance company refuses to pay those fees -- and the vehicle owner can't afford to pay them -- the body shop ends up gaining ownership of the vehicle, selling it and keeping the money.

Texas law requires that vehicles involved in an accident be taken directly to a licensed vehicle storage facility, unless the towing company agrees to take it to a location designated by the vehicle's owner. In an effort to protect consumers from fraud, the law also limits the storage fees that licensed vehicle storage facilities can charge.

However, body shops and the fees that they charge are not similarly regulated. When a tow truck operator takes a vehicle directly to a body shop following an accident, or when a licensed vehicle storage facility transfers a vehicle to a body shop, the vehicle owner can end up paying thousands of dollars in unnecessary costs to recover the vehicle.

Consumers who have been involved in an auto accident – especially those in Harris County and the surrounding area -- are urged not to sign any documents relating to their vehicle until speaking to their

Contact: Tela Mange | Public Information Officer | Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation

512-463-3208 | tela.mange@tdlr.texas.gov | media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov | www.tdlr.texas.gov

TDLR Customer Service | (512) 463-6599 | Toll-Free (in Texas) | (800) 803-9202 | Relay Texas-TDD: (800) 735-2989

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)



Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
920 Colorado St.
Austin, Texas 78701
Phone: (800) 803-9202

insurance company. This includes documents that may be presented by a tow operator responsible for removing their vehicle from the accident scene.

Anyone who has information on flipping cases within the city of Houston limits, or who may be a victim, is urged to contact the HPD Auto Dealers Detail at 832-394-4800 or 832-394-4969 (after-hours) or send an email to hpd.autodealers@houstonpolice.org. For incidents outside the city of Houston limits, but within Harris County, individuals can contact the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Consumer Fraud Division, at 713-274-555 or file their complaint on-line at <https://www.harriscountyda.com/complaint-form>.

TDLR maintains a database so that consumers can protect themselves against using unlicensed service providers. To see ALL violations by licensees – including license revocations, suspensions, and fines – search TDLR's Administrative Orders database (<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/cimsfo/fosearch.asp>).

To report unlicensed activity, file a complaint online: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/complaints/>.

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 38 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

##