

Newsbreak

September 2020 Publication of the
Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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Final Farewell to Eddie Nicholson at Cedar Lake Speedway



A final lap for Eddie Nicholson's tow truck around Cedar Lake Speedway and the Tow Man's Prayer read by Ron Gardas Jr.

On Saturday, August 15th Towing entities from all over the Midwest said their final goodbyes to Eddie Nicholson in a memorial event at Cedar Lake Speedway in New Richmond, WI.

Eddie passed away on May 16th of this year as he and the safety crew were at Cedar Lake Speedway tending to damaged school buses after a collision on the racetrack. Nicholson was a member of the safety crew, helping clear the track — when one of the damaged buses rolled onto him.

Eddie a 30-year veteran with the River Falls, Wi Fire Department, honored a decade ago, as “Fire Fighter of the year”.

Eddie, a longtime team member of Twin Cities Transport & Recovery will be greatly missed within the towing community. Thank you to all MPTA members and our towing families attending Eddie’s final farewell! Eddie- you will be missed!

**“So may the tow gods be at my side-
As I take this final ride”**

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efforts, please send your donations to:**

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Presidents Letter

Written by President, Ron Gardas, Jr.

Well, it's a small step in the right direction but at least we are going in the right direction. MPTA has decided to move forward with two tow schools this mid-September. MPTA's first school is a 2-day Advanced light duty on the 15-16th. We have had great responses to this school in the past. A lot of rigging, snatch blocks, recovery's and more while going out into the field and pushing the trucks to their full potential.

A week later, September 23rd, MPTA is hosting a one-day introduction to Heavy Duty. This school is focused on basic hook ups, air systems, driveshafts, and anything you would need to tow a truck from point A to point B. After the intro to Heavy 1-day tow school, feel free to stick around as we invite each and every member to the annual meeting at 6:00pm that meeting. This is a great way to meet your peers, talk to someone in another part of the state while sharing scenarios and other towing information implementing ideas into your business. The Annual Meeting is where we will give an assessment on how the association did the past year. We will also be opening the ballots from the general election. If you haven't voted yet make sure to get your votes in. We have 4 great candidates.

Don't forget, September 8th, "Slow Down- Move Over" rally in Willmar, MN hosted by local MPTA towing members. Please visit MPTA's Facebook page and see invite inside Newsbreak!

As always, if you need anything or have any questions don't hesitate to reach out. We are all in this together.

Ron Gardas Jr
Vice President - Heavy Operations
President - Minnesota Professional Towing Association

Office: 651.642.1446
Cell: 612.867.5549



Basic Use of Fire Extinguishers

All tow trucks are equipped with a fire extinguisher or multiple fire extinguishers due to DOT regulations. In our MPTA tow schools, we take a few minutes and discuss type of fire extinguishers are required and other basic information (all should know). However, there are a few tow truck drivers that may not feel comfortable about using a fire extinguisher or know the basics of one. Below is an article written by Randall C. Resch featured in Tow Industry Week talking about the basic use of a fire extinguishers- you learn some basic knowledge every day.

Basic Use of Fire Extinguishers by Randall C. Resch

I happened upon a vehicle fire not far from home. About that same time, a local tow company swooped-in behind the burning car.

The young tower looked to be in full, first-responder mode as he jumped from the truck's cab and immediately ran the deck rearwards. He quickly accessed an extinguisher stowed atop the driver's side storage box then hurriedly headed towards the smoking car. In an instance, he swung the smoking vehicle's door open and pulled the latch.

He moved to the front of the car and started to open the hood when someone yelled at him not to do so. At the moment he lifted the hood, fire flashed flames in his direction. As adrenaline pulsed to his fumbling fingers, he dropped the extinguisher. While his actions were admirable, he, or someone, could have been seriously burned. Because tow operators aren't fire fighters, does your company's training include having the employee demonstrate how-to use one (less shooting it off)?

Required by Law

Per federal requirements, Title 49, CFR § 393.95 –Emergency equipment on all power units is required to have and maintain a fire extinguisher on commercial vehicles like tow trucks and carriers.

In a nutshell, the tow truck's extinguisher should be:

- Solidly mounted; not mounted under the seat
- For tow truck storage, never store a fire extinguisher loose in side-boxes or atop a carrier's side-box
- Fully functional with pull-pin, handle and operable nozzle
- Dated and stickered proving the unit's expiration
- Gauged "In the Green"

For, "Emergency Use and Deployment," know the acronym PASS, which stands for:

P = Pull the extinguisher's safety pin

A = Aim at the base of the fire

S = Squeeze the handle

S = Sweep at the base of the fire from side to side

Remember, smaller fire extinguishers have limited amount of time in-dispersing dry chemical. Typically, an extinguisher's blast, that's in full-open position, lasts approximately eight to ten seconds. Note: For most engine fires and where there's visible smoke, unless the user can aim a direct hit at the fire's base, a small extinguisher has minimal effect on an engine fire.

Hybrid Fires

In today's hybrid and electric vehicle market, they're powered in-part with Lithium Ion batteries. When impact or systems catch fire, regular extinguishers are useless in-attempting to put fire out. Hybrid vehicles fires produce a different set of fire-characteristics beyond the effective range of standard fire extinguishers.

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

While fire extinguishers have no effect on hybrid (battery) fires, only copious amounts of strategically placed water will overcome Lithium battery burns.

Dead Red Gauge

Learn this ditty, “A gauge in red means the unit is dead.” Don’t wait until it’s too late to learn your extinguisher expired and has no pressure. If you suspect the extinguisher is better than five-years old, get a new one. Drivers - it’s your daily responsibility to ensure your truck’s extinguisher is in-proper operating order and not expired. If you’re inspected (at the scales) and an expired fire extinguisher is discovered, expect a citation.

Take into consideration that most extinguisher users or “Good Samaritans” use their devices “Free Gratis.” Unless you’re going to tow the burned vehicle, you won’t get paid for using your extinguisher. Depending on the size extinguisher used, they cost \$20 to \$50 to recharge. While being a hero is one thing, throwing away your company’s hard-earned dollars is something totally different.

As a means to conduct mock training, turn a garden hose with water “On,” meaning the hose is pressurized; select a visual target like a tow truck’s rim; stand eight to ten feet back and conduct PASS in the same action one would deploy a fire extinguisher. Although it’s not exactly the same, participants can see the value of how-to aim a fire extinguisher?

Danger: Car fires are one of the most- deadly forms of live-fires because of different materials and plastics cars are made of. The potential of explosion is always danger close. Because car fires tend to smolder and re-ignite, it’s always a smart decision to initiate 911 and let the fire guys do their thing.

Written by: Randall C. Resch
Source: Tow Industry Week

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Treasury Secretary Clarifies Executive Order
Regarding Social Security
Withholding

As previously reported on, President Trump has issued an Executive Order deferring the employee portion of Social Security taxes from September 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. The deferral is only available to employees who are paid less than \$4,000 bi-weekly (\$104,000 per year).

The Order directs the Secretary of the Treasury to issue guidance; no such guidance has been issued as of yet. However, subsequent to the Order being issued, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin stated that the deferral would not be mandatory for employers to implement.

In light of this announcement and the specific language in the Order, SESCO is now recommending that employers do not implement the change to withholding unless employees affirmatively elect to do so.

Disclaimer- The above information was retained from SSSA (Service Station Dealers of America) as all members should consult with their accounting organizations and/or counsel regarding the upcoming Payroll tax Holiday. The Secretary of the Treasury may issue guidance anytime in the next week. Members of the Association will be updated immediately when the Secretary of the Treasury issues additional and prompt guidance. Stay tuned...

**Need for requesting licensing information
for DPS/MNLARS Data**

MPTA has been receiving phone calls and emails regarding MNLARS/ Dept. of Public Safety asking for Minnesota Towing Companies for their city license information. MPTA's Counsel and lobbyist has checked into this and here is what they found.

If any towing entity's city requires a license, they are required to provide the license number. Most cities do not require a license, so the towing company enters in "Not Required or N/A" in the field and DVS accepts that the towing company does not need a license to operate in the city they are located in. Most towing companies we have contracts with put "N.A as the city they operate in does not require a towing license. So... if your city doesn't require you to have a license, just place N/A or if the city requires a license, that towing entity will need to fill that in.

Any questions, please feel free to contact Lance at the MPTA office at lance@mnssa.com.

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The Central Minnesota Tow Truck drivers
are hosting their 6th annual

**“SLOW DOWN
MOVE OVER”**

CAMPAIGN ON SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2020



Please meet at the Kandi Entertainment Center

(500 19th Ave SE Willmar, next to Wal-Mart) around 4:30

From there we will travel to Business 71/23 by Robbins Island

Please spread the word so we can have as many trucks as possible!!

Any questions, please call City Line Towing at 320-231-3869

Important Time sensitive PPP (Payroll Protection Plan) Loan Forgiveness Application Information (Expires 10/31/2020)

Please see the below frequently asked questions received during the first week of PPP loan forgiveness. I will continue to update you as we process applications.

What is the deadline for a business to submit their forgiveness application?

A business may submit a loan forgiveness application any time on or before the maturity date of the loan. However, if the business does not submit their complete loan forgiveness application within 10 months after the end of the forgiveness covered period, they will be required to start paying principal and interest on the PPP loan.

What supporting documentation does a business need to provide with their PPP Forgiveness Application?

Businesses should refer to the Instruction documents that go along with each of the forgiveness applications for a complete list of documents required. For the SBA Form 3508, this can be found on page 6 of the instructions, and for SBA Form 3508EZ, page 4 of the instructions.

For individuals who are self-employed, and qualified for PPP loans using Schedule C or Schedule F, what form of documentation should they utilize to support payroll costs?

The individual will need to provide bank account statements and other documentation of cash compensation paid, as well as 2019 tax forms (Schedule C or F).

Where can we find the SBA PPP Loan Number and Lender PPP Loan Number as required on the forgiveness application?

All Banks have loaded all SBA PPP Loan Numbers and Lender PPP Loan Numbers into their systems in order for the forgiveness application be filed.

Business type

Applied for the PPP loan as self-employed, an independent contractor or a sole proprietor with no employees.

Employee hours

Did not reduce salary or wages for any employee by more than 25%, and did not reduce the number or hours of their employees (excepting laid-off employees who refused an offer to return).

Business impact

Did not reduce salary or wages for any employee by more than 25% during the covered period and experienced reductions in business activity as a result of health directives related to COVID-19.

Members will find the PPP loan forgiveness application and additional information at <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/3245-0407%20SBA%20Form%203508%20PPP%20Forgiveness%20Application.pdf>

At this time most banks are not processing PPP forgiveness applications for loans less than \$150,000. MN banking trade association has recommending not processing these loans as they feel congress will eventual-ly forgive them without having to complete an application. (From MSSA banker at Peoples Bank)

All members should follow up with their bank/banker regarding PPP loan documents that were executed and to discuss the PPP Loan forgiveness application.

2-Day Advanced Light Duty Tow Truck Operator

Two Day Hands-On Training Class - September 15th & 16th, 2020

Held at "Together Place Church" - 3860 Flowerfield Road, Blaine, MN 55014

This two day course will focus on the advanced towing and recovery including basic/advanced hook-ups and roll-overs/embankments with hands-on training instructed by Ron Feist, Ron Gardas Jr. and the Minnesota Professional Towing Association Board of Directors.



September 15, 2020 Agenda

7:30am Registration
8:00am to 5:00pm Classroom & Hands-on Training

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- A pair of gloves, a mask and work clothes will be needed, expect to get dirty.

September 16, 2020 Agenda

8:00am to 4:00pm Classroom & Hands-on Training

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- A pair of gloves, a mask and work clothes will be needed, expect to get dirty.

****All Participants will receive MPTA Certification Of Attendance****

Please send completed form to:

MPTA
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117
Phone: 651-487-2231
Fax: 651-487-2447

Hands-On Training
Members: \$325.00 per student
Non-members: \$425.00 per student

Registration Form

Business Name _____ Member #: _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name of Student (s): _____ **Total \$** _____

Grand Total _____

Method of Payment: Discover MasterCard Visa Check

Credit Card # _____

Signature _____

Exp. Date: _____ CVS Code _____

- Minimum of 15 participants to hold class
- Cancellation Policy - credit only for future schools

Hotel:
Country Inn & Suites
5995 Rice Creek Pkwy
Shoreview, MN 55126
651-784-6000

A block of rooms available— just mention MPTA.

Basic Heavy Duty Tow Truck Operator

One Day Hands-On Training Class

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Held at "Together Place Church"

3860 Flowerfield Road

Blaine, MN 55014



The one day course will focus on the basics of everyday towing of heavy duty equipment with hands-on training instructed by the Minnesota Professional Towing Association Board of Directors.

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 Agenda

7:30am Registration

8:00am to 4:30pm Classroom and Extensive Hands-On Training

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- A pair of gloves, mask and work clothes will be needed, expect to get dirty.

****All Participants will receive MPTA Certification of Attendance****

Please send completed form to:

MPTA
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117
Phone: 651-487-2231
Fax: 651-487-2447

Hands-On Training:

Members: \$295.00 per student
Non-members: \$395.00 per student

- Minimum of 15 participants to hold class
- Cancellation Policy - credit only for future schools



Registration Form

Business Name _____ Member #: _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name of Student (s):

Total \$

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Grand Total _____

Method of Payment: Discover MasterCard Visa Check

Credit Card # _____ CVS Code _____

Name on Card _____ Exp. Date: _____

Address for Card _____
(including City, State & Zip)

Customer Service in the Age of COVID-19

By Brian J Riker

Source: Tow Industry Week

Customer service has traditionally meant the customer is always right. In many instances this is still the prudent way to conduct business. Even if they may not be right it is often easier on your public image to do your level best to satisfy a customer rather than to prove your point.

In the current social climate dominated by fear of COVID-19, it is very easy to upset, offend or outright enrage a person by appearing to either take the virus too seriously or not seriously enough. As customer service specialists, which is the heart of what towers are, we must be empathetic to concerns even when we may not share the same beliefs as others. This point is highlighted by the mask v. no-mask debate currently raging across the U.S. Either way sounds like a no-win situation to me!

I have noticed a trend of towing companies not wanting to transport passengers, instead offering to arrange a ride with a taxi service or rideshare app. This is reasonable in many areas where these services are readily available but is it fair to your customer if they were accustomed to the tower providing a ride along with the vehicle? Who is responsible for the additional costs associated with the third-party ride service? What purpose does it serve in protecting your customer's health when you "pass the buck" down the line to another company, one that you do not control how they sanitize and respond to this viral threat. Sure, your health may be better protected but what happens if the customer becomes ill and can trace it to the ride you recommended? Who is responsible then?

What about towing companies in the more rural areas where these alternate transportation arrangements are not available? Is it reasonable to leave your customer to fend for themselves? What type of liability does this leave your company exposed to if you fail to assure their safety before towing their vehicle away? Towers have been held liable for death and injury in similar situations.

Is it reasonable to tow or transport a vehicle with passengers inside it? Is it even legal in your state? I do not believe it is prudent except in the most unusual of cases to tow or transport a vehicle with passengers inside it. My only exception to this is when it is more unsafe to offload the passengers at the scene of the disablement because of safety concerns such as high speed traffic or direct orders from the law enforcement officer on scene.

These questions must be answered for multiple points of view.

First, how do they affect the safety, health and mental wellbeing of your entire company? Most tow operators I have spoken with are fearful of having passengers in the cab of their tow truck. I can understand this fear, especially with regular cab trucks that do not allow for adequate separation between the driver and passengers although there are effective measures to mitigate this risk even in confined spaces.

Next, we must look at it from the customer's point of view. They are already having one of the worst experiences they can have - a vehicle breakdown or crash. Our duty is to provide them with safe service while helping them to deal with their misfortune. The last thing they want to think about is how they are getting off the highway or catching COVID-19. Most likely they are just as worried about the virus as you may be.

Lastly, we must consider the liability point of view. What are our legal obligations under our various law enforcement or club contracts as well as our state laws? OSHA, State and Federal health agencies and even local municipalities have all enacted various rules we must follow regarding access to services during this pandemic. We may not have the legal right to refuse transport service or maybe we don't have the authority to provide it. This will vary depending upon where you are conducting business and the source of the call.

The bottom line is, regardless of our personal opinion on the severity of COVID-19, as professionals we have a duty to protect the public and our fellow team members even if it means being somewhat uncomfortable while doing so. Earning a reputation as a company that takes health and safety seriously while still providing the best possible customer service experience will help you retain call volume and stay in business to fight another day.

TOW INDUSTRY  WEEK

MPTA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Held at "Together Place Church"

3860 Flowerfield Road

Blaine, MN 55014

Meeting at 6:00p.m.

Dinner to follow

Happy Labor Day! Many of us will be enjoying this day off of work to celebrate the end of summer with family and friends at picnics, pool parties and BBQs. Here are some fun and interesting facts about Labor Day that might help you out in the next game of Trivial Pursuit!



1. The first U.S. Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882 in New York City, planned by the Central Labor Union. The Labor Day parade of about 10,000 workers took unpaid leave and marched from City Hall past Union Square uptown to 42nd street, and ended in Wendel's Elm Park at 92nd Street and 9th Avenue for a concert, speeches, and a picnic.
2. Oregon was the first to declare Labor Day an official holiday in 1887.
3. Labor Day is considered the 'unofficial NFL season kickoff.' 99.44 percent of the time, the NFL plays its first official season game the Thursday after Labor Day.
4. The first Waffle house opened on Labor Day. In 1955, in Avondale Estates, GA, the very first Waffle House opened its doors to the public.
5. What are we celebrating? The contributions and achievements of the 155 million men and women who are in the U.S. workforce.
6. On June 28, 1894, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

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St. Cloud	Collins Brothers Towing Of St. Cloud, Inc. 320-257-5525 Andy's Towing 320-251-5691	Bismarck Berg's 24 Hour Towing 701-663-6491	
St. Francis	Ark Towing & Recovery 763-434-1686	Grand Forks Nordic Towing 1-833-667-3421	
St. Paul	Twin Cities Transport & Recovery, Inc. 651-642-1446	<u>SOUTH DAKOTA</u>	
Stillwater	Stillwater Towing 651-439-5744	Big Stone The Shop, Inc. 605-862-8215	
Strandquist	Nordic Towing 1-833-667-3421	Sioux Falls Ace Towing Inc. 605-332-2173	
Sunburg	Dans Diesel Inc 320-264-5852	<u>WISCONSIN</u>	
Vernon Center	Giefer Towing & Service, Inc. 507-549-3300	Baldwin Day & Nite Towing, LLC 715-684-3359	
Virginia	Armory Shell Towing & Service 218-741-6050	Balsam Lake Lake Services Unlimited 715-857-5753	
Waseca	Bocks Service Inc. 507-835-5407 Tesch Service Center 507-835-4610	LaCrosse Goldbeck Towing Service 608-781-4869	
		Independence Kabus Auto Body & Recovery 715-985-2252	
		Roberts Jerry's Towing 715-749-4450	
		Superior Lake City Towing 218-722-7781	

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars: MPTA Educational Sessions for 2020!

Sept 15-16, 2020:
Two-Day Advanced Light Duty
Tow School



Mark Your Calendars: MPTA Educational Sessions for 2020!

Sept 23, 2020:
Basic Heavy Duty Tow School



MPTA Board Meetings

Please watch Facebook
for future Board meeting
dates and times

