

NEWSBREAK

September 2025 Publication of the Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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Members of the Public misusing Minnesota Towing Statutes at Minnesota Impound Lot’s



In the past two weeks, MPTA offices have been receiving communications from towing members about changes in impound lot legislation in Mn Statute 168. In two instances, the first was communication as an individual brought Statute 168B.035 to an impound lot with changes in statute 168B.035 towing authority and towing prohibited. The language had verbiage stating, “as introduced” and was from 2022 legislative session. The first sign this was fake, is this was language used in a committee hearing, was from 2022 and was “red-lined”.

The second communication was a bill that wasn’t introduced during the 2025 legislative session dealing with an individual that cannot be held financially responsible for a vehicle towed and impounded if their vehicle was stolen. In addition, the person stealing the vehicle cannot be held responsible for the cost of towing of the vehicle and impound charges. This particular bill wasn’t introduced in the 2025 legislative session due to many reasons including the MPTA working with the authors and legal aid.

MPTA members be careful of the information the general public provides at your impound lots. MPTA members can look up Minnesota Towing statutes by searching MN statutes/chapters 168 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/168B>

Please feel free to notify the MPTA if your place of business/impound lot has seen more of this. MPTA will investigate and will decide if legislation needs to be in place to bring penalties to this kind of illicit behavior.

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**If you would like to make a
contribution to help with the legislative
efforts, please send your donations to:**

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Message From MPTA President, Ron Gardas Jr.

Hello everyone and welcome to fall. Now that the state fair is over and the kids have went back to school we can start focusing on the coming winter. There is a few items coming this fall.

- First, is the advanced light duty class. In this class we go over rigging, weights on a truck, and snatch blocks. Anything that a front line recovery operator would need to know.
- Second, is my favorite thing. Our annual meeting and also the Hall of Fame banquet. This year the inductees are Todd Siewert, Ron Gardas, and Steve Schmit. If you have a chance please reach out to them and say congratulations.
- Third, is Introduction to Heavy Duty. This will cover air systems, hook ups, and drivelines. Anything that someone would need to know to get a truck towed from point A to point B.
- Fourth, is a new class! This will be our first Intermediate Heavy Duty class. This will be a stand alone class on heavy duty truck. How to tow cement trucks, garbage trucks, and coach buses. A student could attend both heavy duty classes or one or the other.

Hope to see everyone at the Hall of Fame or a towing school.

Ron Gardas Jr
Vice President - Twin Cities Transport & Recovery
President - Minnesota Professional Towing Association



South Dakota Expands 'Move Over' Law

Effective this past July, South Dakota drivers must take extra precautions on highways as the state's expanded "Move Over" law takes effect. The new law broadens protections beyond emergency responders, now requiring drivers to move over or slow down for any vehicle with flashing amber, yellow, or blue warning lights stopped on the shoulder.

This includes tow trucks, utility crews, highway maintenance teams, and Department of Transportation vehicles.

"These are real people—moms, dads, sons, and daughters—working on the roadside," said Colonel Casey Collins of the South Dakota Highway Patrol.



What to Do:

- Multi-lane roads: Move to the farthest lane away if safe.
- Two-lane roads: Slow down at least 300 feet in advance and reduce speed by 20 mph below the limit—or to 5 mph if the limit is 20 mph or less.

Failing to comply is a Class 2 misdemeanor (\$270 fine). If a crash occurs, it becomes a Class 1 misdemeanor with harsher penalties.

"Flashing lights mean slow down, move over, and give space," Collins said.

Source: <https://www.myxlg.com>

US DOT Numbers: What Tow Operators Must Know

By Brian J. Riker

It seems like the towing industry faces new regulations daily, and while that is an exaggeration, there are some regulations that get fresh scrutiny after something happens to trigger a renewed interest from regulators. The US DOT number is one such item facing renewed interest due to a sharp rise in fraud related to fake motor carriers or legitimate motor carriers having their id stolen by bad actors.

What is a US DOT number?

Any business that uses commercial motor vehicles to engage in interstate commerce, meaning their trucks with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) greater than 10,000 pounds, or the freight they haul (including cars), crosses a state or international border is required to register with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which in turn issues a unique identification number that is then required to be displayed on all their power units used in interstate commerce. Many states also require anybody that operates a commercial motor vehicle to obtain a US DOT number even if they only operate intrastate, meaning their trucks, nor the freight they haul, ever cross a state or international border.

Do I Really Need One?

For most towing companies the answer is yes. This is because most of the tow trucks on the road today are at least 14,500 GVWR, with many well over that, and we routinely tow vehicles that are coming from out of state, will be going out of state after they are repaired, or we cross state lines ourselves. This is known as “interstate commerce” and, as such, requires at least a US DOT registration number.

Just because the vehicles are wrecked or disabled does not relieve the towing company of its obligation to register with the US DOT before engaging in interstate commerce. While wrecked or disabled vehicles, when towed from their primary point of disablement (where they first broke down or were wrecked) are exempt commodities, that exemption only applies to the operating authority portion of the federal regulations and some specific hours of service rules when towed at the request of law enforcement.

Types of US DOT Numbers

There are three classes of US DOT registration that apply to towing operations.

- **Private Motor Carrier of Property** – Is exclusively for companies that only haul their own cargo or vehicles, i.e., if a product manufacturer owned trucks and hauled exclusively their own products, they would be a private motor carrier.
- **Exempt For-Hire Motor Carrier of Property** – Hauls exclusively exempt commodities, which can include wrecked or disabled motor vehicles when only hauled from the place where they first broke down or were first wrecked.
- **Authorized For-Hire Motor Carrier of Property** – Hauls stuff that is not exempt and belongs to other for compensation. This would include toolboxes, machinery, vehicles to the auction or other transport work.

What About Motor Carrier Authority?

If you haul anything other than exempt commodities, which are usually low value or unprocessed stuff like waste, rocks, dirt, etc., you will most likely need to obtain operating authority. Moving toolboxes, construction equipment, forklifts, sheds or even wrecked cars to the salvage auction usually requires operating authority in addition to a valid US DOT number.



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There are two types of authority to investigate, interstate and intrastate. If the stuff you haul is coming from out of state, or going out of state, then you probably need for-hire interstate motor carrier of property authority from the FMCSA. This is commonly called an MC number, and can be obtained by applying to the FMCSA and obtaining the required insurance filings.

If your trucks, and the stuff they haul, never leave the state or country, and the final destination is not out of state or the country, then you are most likely an intrastate motor carrier of property. Each state regulates this differently, but most control this work through the Public Utility Commission or the Department of Motor Vehicles. Check with your state to see what, if any, registration and authority documents may be needed.

Why is Auto Transport Almost Always Interstate Commerce?

Those of you that haul for the auto auctions such as Adesa, Manheim, Copart or IAA may have noticed a recent trend is requiring you to have a US DOT number and/or interstate operating authority to renew or keep your contracts.

Vehicles going to or coming from the auctions are usually interstate in nature because of how the auctions market these vehicles to buyers globally. As such, the intent of their marketing effort is to sell the vehicle to any buyer, local or foreign, and as such, the intent of the shipment of the vehicle to or from the auction can be considered interstate in nature. This means; to legally provide transport services to these auctions, you must be registered as a for-hire interstate motor carrier of property.

The FMCSA is very clear in their guidance that automobiles, including wrecked and disabled vehicles going to or from an auction, are not exempt commodities. The companies that haul these vehicles must be fully qualified interstate motor carriers if the movement is interstate in nature.

It is a best practice for these auctions to require all transporters to be fully qualified interstate motor carriers since the nature of each vehicle hauled can vary and it would be a logistical nightmare to figure out if each vehicle was part of an interstate or intrastate regulated shipment before selecting a contractor to dispatch it to. They are simply staying on the side of caution to avoid any regulatory issues they may face by dispatching unqualified transporters.

TOW INDUSTRY WEEK

Study Identifies Top Lighting Practices for Roadside Vehicles

A new study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety highlights the most effective lighting configurations for improving the visibility of roadside assistance vehicles, especially at night.

After reviewing 30 academic studies and analyzing regulations across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, researchers found that using two to four warning lights is ideal. More than four can increase glare and reduce effectiveness. Lights mounted above the driver's eye level were easier for approaching motorists to spot.

Amber and green lights stood out as the most visible from a distance but also produced more glare. Amber, in particular, remains the color most associated with roadside assistance vehicles.

Flash rate and pattern matter too. A faster flash rate—between 1 to 4 hertz—is recommended, and alternating left/right patterns are more easily detected than simultaneous flashes.

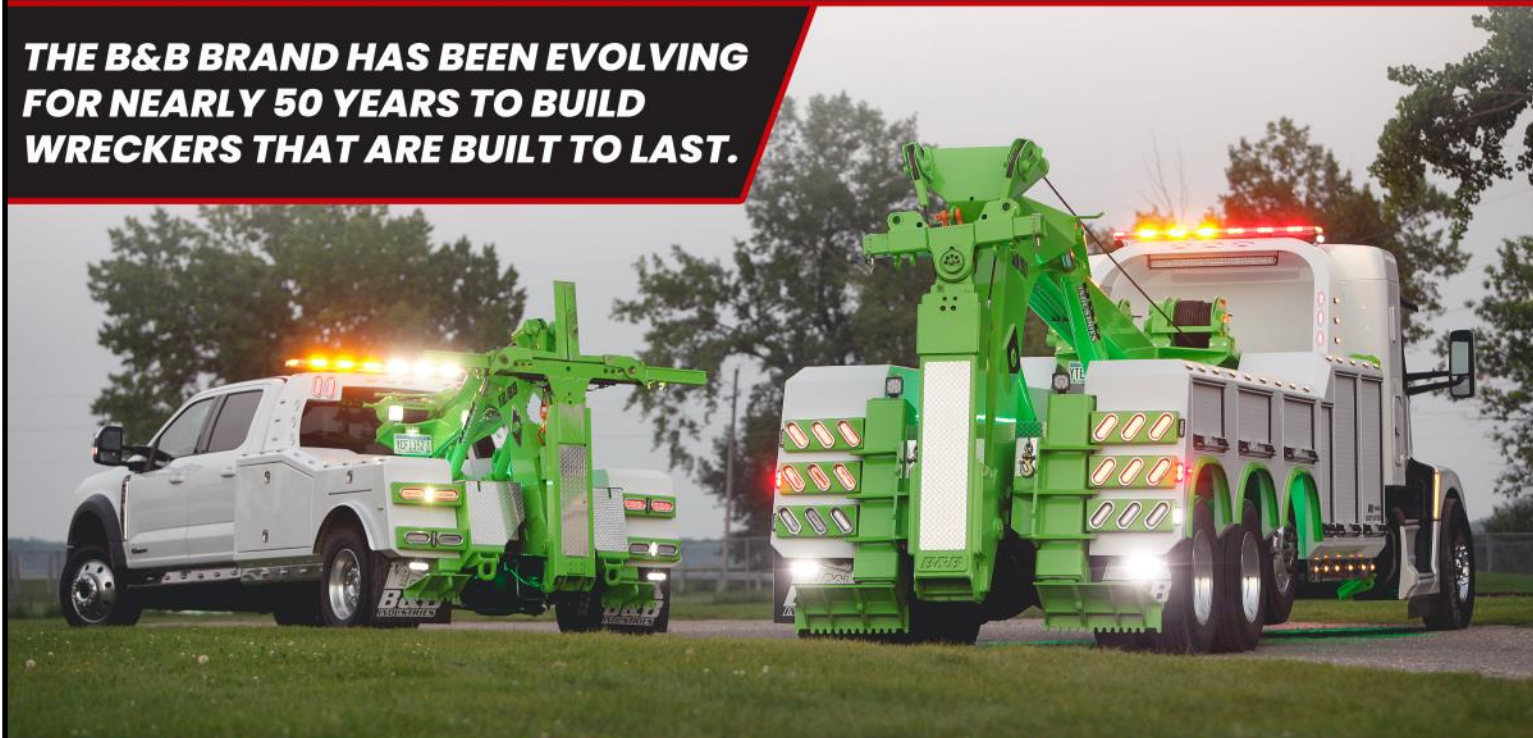
The study also found wide variation in state laws regarding warning lights and calls for more research into the impact of different light shapes and sizes on driver recognition and safety.

Source: <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/>

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California Moves Toward New Towing, Storage Rules

California is close to passing AB 987, a bill that would tighten rules on vehicle towing and storage fees. The measure, authored by Assemblymember LaShae Sharp-Collins, recently cleared the Senate's consent calendar after unanimous committee approval and is expected to reach Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk.

AB 987 expands the list of "presumptively unreasonable" fees that tow operators cannot charge. These include administrative, security, dolly, and gate fees—except in specific after-hours cases—as well as excessive holiday storage rates. The bill also limits fees for vehicles towed during emergencies and prohibits charging when repair shops are closed or on holidays.

Under the bill, towing and storage charges must remain "reasonable" and comparable to rates set by public agencies. Insurers remain responsible for covering reasonable charges, while facilities must release vehicles promptly after payment to avoid extra fees.

The legislation follows increased scrutiny of towing practices and aims to protect consumers from surprise charges while ensuring clarity for collision repair and storage facilities.

Source: <https://www.autobodynews.com/> and <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>



NEW Preventing Roadside & Work Zone Deaths Act

TRAA is thrilled to share that the bipartisan Preventing Roadside and Work Zone Death Act (H.R.2992) has officially been introduced! Many of you will recall from past notices that TRAA has been working with Congressman Troy A. Carter Sr. (LA-02) since the original version of the Prevent Roadside Deaths Act was introduced in the last Congress. Even better news is that this new version explicitly includes "traffic incident responders" as a direct result of TRAA's efforts.

Additionally, the successful constituent meetings held by many of our members during TRAA's Legislative Action Workshop & Hill Day in February have also resulted in three Members of Congress agreeing to join Congressman Troy Carter (D-LA 2) as original cosponsors of this legislation – Representatives Dina Titus (D-NV 1), Rudy Yakym (R-IN 2), and Rob Bresnahan (R-PA 8).

If enacted, the Preventing Roadside and Work Zone Death Act would establish a coordinated effort under the U.S. Department of Transportation, including data collection initiatives, enhanced Slow Down, Move Over campaigns, and the creation of a task force to develop concrete strategies to save lives.

2-Day Advanced Light Duty Hands-On Training Class

September 25th & 26th, 2025

Held at the DoubleTree Hotel - 2540 Cleveland Ave, Roseville, MN 55113

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 25, 2025 Agenda

7:30am Registration
8:00am-4:00pm Classroom & Hands-on Training
5:00pm Annual Meeting & Hall of Fame Induction
6:30 Dinner

DoubleTree Hotel
2540 Cleveland Ave
Roseville, MN 55113

September 26, 2025 Agenda

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

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided each day
- A pair of gloves 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 or
Nikki@mnssa.com

Hands-On Training

Members: \$455.00 per student
Non-members: \$555.00 per student

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Registration Form

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Phone _____

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

Grand Total _____

Method of Payment: ☐ Visa, Master Card, Discover, Amex ☐ Check

Credit Card # _____ CVS Code _____

Name on Card: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Address for Card: _____

(Including City, State & Zip)

FTC's "Junk Fees" Rule Puts Predatory Towing in the Spotlight

Tow companies nationwide should take note of new federal rules targeting so-called "junk fees." The FTC's regulation—now part of Title 16, CFR Part 464—prohibits hidden or misleading charges in any advertised pricing. This means if your company advertises rates, you're now federally obligated to honor them or risk legal action.

Attorneys John Dempsey and Martin E. Cain recently explained how this rule could become a tool for trucking companies disputing excessive charges. Examples of predatory billing include \$10,000 for a boot removal or extra charges for equipment already in use. If your invoices aren't transparent or itemized clearly, they could raise red flags.

North Carolina is also moving forward with a bill to criminalize booting commercial trucks and outlaw cargo "ransom" tactics. Similar reforms have passed in states like Virginia, Florida, and Colorado.

To protect your business, review your posted rates, ensure clarity in all documentation, and follow local and federal regulations.

Source: <https://www.overdriveonline.com>



You're Invited

MPTA Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame Ceremony

Thursday, September 25, 2025

Held at DoubleTree by Hilton
2540 North Cleveland Ave
Roseville, MN 55113

Meeting/Hall of Fame Ceremony
at **5:00pm**
Dinner to follow

Please RSVP by Friday, September 19, 2025 by contacting the
MPTA Office at
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Minnesota Towing Laws Report Card



Many MPTA members may know this website exists www.towinglaws.com as I have come across this a few times. This site grades each state's consumer protection towing laws. This site is also a host to where the public can access the state Attorney General, towing laws etc. Basically, a consumer protection website. As you will see, Minnesota gets a D+ which is better than some other states while ranking 34th out of 50 states. An interesting website with interesting grades. Our industry is always under attack, more than ever! Be professional, although the world isn't professional to us!

-Lance

Towing Laws in Minnesota REPORT CARD

D+

4

Strong Protections

2

Weak Protections

9

Missing Protections

Overall, Minnesota ranks **34th out of 51** states and districts in the United States, in terms of consumer protection towing practices.

Predatory towing is a nationwide issue, where profit-seeking property owners and towing companies tow cars without the owner's consent. Protections are crucial to prevent individuals from being taken advantage of. We've identified key safeguards and evaluated their implementation in Minnesota. Based on our criteria, Minnesota receives a grade of **D+**.

If you believe that you have been towed illegally contact a local attorney or your attorney general. To sum up all the laws that we have reviewed check out our overview. If you are interested to read more go to the Minnesota legislatures laws on towing Minnesota Statutes. See what steps to take when you have been towed.

<https://www.towinglaws.com/minnesota>

Electric Vehicles Being Towed? What You Need to Know (Re-refresh)

As electric vehicles (EVs) become more popular, many drivers are unsure about the correct way to tow them. Unlike traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, EVs have unique drivetrain and battery structures that require special handling by tow trucks. Using the wrong method can lead to serious damage, potentially costing thousands of dollars in repairs. In this guide, we'll explore the safest towing practices for EVs and highlight key factors to consider when roadside assistance is needed.

Why Towing an EV Is Different from a Gas-Powered Car

Electric vehicles do not have a conventional transmission system like gasoline or diesel cars. Instead, they rely on an electric motor directly connected to the wheels. When an EV is towed improperly—such as by dragging it with two wheels on the ground—the motor can generate electricity without proper regulation, leading to overheating and potential damage to the inverter or battery pack.



Additionally, regenerative braking systems, designed to recover energy while driving, can interfere with traditional towing processes, causing further complications. This is why manufacturers recommend specific towing methods to protect the vehicle's essential components.

Safe Methods for Towing an Electric Vehicle

It's crucial to follow manufacturer guidelines. The safest options include:

1. Flatbed Tow Trucks (Recommended Method)

A flatbed tow truck is the best and safest way to transport an electric vehicle. With all four wheels lifted off the ground, there is no risk of drivetrain damage, regenerative braking activation, or unwanted electricity generation. This method is preferred for most modern EVs, including models from Tesla, Nissan, Ford, and Hyundai.

2. Tow Dolly (Front-Wheel Drive EVs Only)

For front-wheel-drive EVs, a tow dolly can be used, lifting the front wheels while allowing the rear wheels to roll freely. However, this is only suitable for EVs without active rear-wheel regenerative braking systems. Always check the manufacturer's manual before using this method.

3. Wheel-Lift Tow Trucks (Use with Caution)

While wheel-lift tow trucks can be an option for some electric vehicles, they should only be used if they can safely lift and support the driven wheels off the ground. Incorrect usage can cause drivetrain stress, leading to costly repairs.

How to Avoid Battery Damage During Towing

To protect your EV's battery and electrical system during towing, consider these precautions:

Follow the Owner's Manual – Every EV has specific guidelines for safe towing procedures. Always refer to the manual before calling for roadside assistance.

Turn Off the Vehicle Completely – Many EVs remain in a standby state even when parked. Ensure the power system is fully shut down before towing.

Use Neutral or Transport Mode – Some EVs, like Tesla, have a dedicated "Transport Mode" that disengages the parking brake and allows for safer movement.

Avoid Long-Distance Towing with Wheels on the Ground – Even if allowed by the manufacturer, prolonged towing with wheels in contact with the road can overheat components.

Final Word

Towing an electric vehicle requires special considerations to prevent drivetrain and battery damage. The safest method is using a flatbed tow truck, while other techniques should only be used if specifically approved by the manufacturer. By following best practices and choosing experienced towing services, EV owners can ensure their vehicle is transported safely and without unnecessary risks.

When in doubt, always consult the owner's manual and understand the unique requirements of electric vehicles.



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Corrective Action Recovery Solutions, LLC (C.A.R.S)
Greg Schafer 507-530-5032

Management Consulting

Professional Transport Management Company
Steve & Sue Schmit 612-366-0525

Uniforms

Cintas Kevin Gaskins 763-391-5266



UPCOMING EVENTS

MPTA Annual Meeting And Hall of Fame Ceremony

September 25, 2025

**Meeting/ Hall of Fame Ceremony at 5:00pm
Dinner to follow**

**DoubleTree by Hilton
2540 North Cleveland Ave
Roseville, MN 55113**

MPTA 2-Day Advanced Light Duty Training Class

September 25-26, 2025

**DoubleTree Hotel
2540 Cleveland Ave
Roseville, MN 55113**

Registration Form on page 8

MPTA Intro to Heavy Duty Training Class

October 7, 2025

More Information Coming

MPTA Intermediate Heavy Duty Training Class

October 8, 2025

More Information Coming

Meetings may be cancelled due to weather please
check <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mnprotow> for all
event updates.