

Sergeant Mark Moderson
Operations Coordinator – Appleton Police Department



October 24, 2022

Attn: City of Appleton Safety and Licensing Committee

As you are likely aware, the City of Appleton Police Department utilizes a rotating list of approved wreckers for towing of certain vehicles. As prescribed by ordinance, there is a fee schedule, approved by Common Council, that lists the maximum fees a towing company may charge a customer for providing services as a next-up wrecker. Those fees are listed in a fee schedule, implemented on January 1, 2018, which outlines towing fees and various additional costs that may be charged to consumers. The goal behind the ordinances and fee schedule, which were implemented prior to my current assignment at APD, is to protect the consumer from excessive charges.

The tow companies may, if they choose, charge less than these maximum fees, although they normally follow the fee schedule. Ordinance 9-751(b) allows, on an annual basis, the Chief of Police or designee, to recommend amendments to the fee schedule to the Common Council by way of the Safety and Licensing Committee. I have been assigned to the Operations Coordination Unit since July, 2018. One of my duties as Operations Coordinator is managing the rotating call list for towing services, and to ensure that tow operators are adhering to that schedule. I also receive and approve the annual rotating call list applications from the tow companies, investigate citizen and APD staff complaints about those companies, conduct inspections of their operations and equipment, and meet with the tow services, as a group, on an annual basis.

Several tow company owners have requested that the Appleton Police Department examine the fee schedule for possible changes. Early this year, I notified all seven of the companies that are currently on the rotating call list that I would be accepting proposals for changes. Of the seven companies, I have received proposals from five of them. One of those owners told me that they felt that the majority of our fee schedule (except for winching) is in line with industry norms, and I received no response from two tow companies. The proposed changes to the schedule involve an increase in certain fees as well as language changes.

I have attached two documents to this memo. The first is a clean copy of our current fee schedule. Secondly, I have attached a copy of that fee schedule, with the tow companies' names color-coded in colored font, and their proposed change(s) highlighted in yellow.

I believe that the fee schedule, which has remained unchanged since January, 2018, is due for updates. Many costs, including insurance costs and fuel for tow vehicles, have gone up significantly since this schedule was enacted. My recommendation would be to increase the allowable tow charges to \$165 for tows during regular hours, and \$175 for after-hours tows. I would also recommend that cleanup be increased to \$50/hour (prorated after first 30 minutes). In addition, I would recommend that outside storage be increased to \$50/day, and inside storage be increased to \$55/day.

There are two additional specific areas where I would propose to change language. The first involves cases of a winch without a tow, often referred to as a "winch out." In those cases, I feel that it would be appropriate for companies to be able to charge the regular tow fee, instead of just the prorated winching charge of \$60/hour. For example, if a car slides into the ditch on STH 441 during a snowstorm, but suffers only minor damage and is driveable, a wrecker would be dispatched to winch that vehicle back onto the roadway, so that it can be driven from the scene. In that case, since the vehicle isn't being towed, our Fee Schedule would only allow for that prorated winching charge of \$60/hour. From my many years of law enforcement experience, I can attest to the fact that winching a vehicle can often be a difficult and dangerous task, and would certainly warrant a full tow fee, even if the vehicle is not actually towed from the scene. The tow service is still incurring the cost of driving to and from the scene.

For winches where the vehicle is ultimately towed, I would recommend that there be a \$60 minimum winching charge. As mentioned previously, winching is a dangerous task, and much attention needs to be paid to ensuring the safety of the driver and preventing damage to the winched vehicle. A \$60 minimum fee, with a rate of \$60 per hour for anything exceeding one hour, would be appropriate. In that previous example of a vehicle in the STH 441 ditch, if the vehicle were found to have damage that prevents it from being driven from the scene, then the winch fee of \$60 minimum could be charged along with the standard tow fee.

In addition, A&W Towing recently proposed the ability to charge a "Gate Fee" in certain cases. Tow companies often store vehicles until another tow company picks up the vehicle to take it to a body shop, salvage yard, etc. A&W has a small yard, and recently experienced an incident where another company's truck collided with another vehicle inside their yard. To prevent this, A&W prefers to move non-drivable vehicles out of their yard with their own equipment, for pickup at the gate by other tow companies, and would like the ability to be reimbursed for the costs involved in doing so. I am not opposed to tow companies being able to charge to move vehicles out of their own yard, only in such instances that said vehicle is non-operable.

I would ask that the Safety and Licensing Committee review these documents and make any changes to the Rotating Tow List Fee Schedule that are deemed appropriate. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Respectfully,



SGT Mark Moderson
Operations Coordinator
Appleton Police Department

CITY OF APPLETON
ROTATING CALL LIST FEE SCHEDULE*

Effective Date: January 1, 2018

<u>SERVICE PROVIDED</u>	<u>MAXIMUM FEE - REGULAR HOURS</u>	<u>MAXIMUM FEE - AFTER HOURS</u>
STANDARD TOW (wheel lift/flatbed)	\$150.00	\$160.00
PARTIAL TOW (at discretion of towing company)	\$50.00	\$60.00
<u>ADD ON/ADDITIONAL FEES</u>		
Administrative Fees, Mailing Fees, Etc. (if vehicle is not claimed after two days)	\$20.00 total	--
Cleanup (prorated after first 30 minutes)	\$40.00/hour	\$40.00/hour
Mileage for Out-of-City Trips	\$4.00/mile	\$4.00/mile
Motorcycles	\$25.00	\$25.00
Snow Shoveling (prorated)	\$10.00 minimum/ \$60.00/hour	\$10.00 minimum/ \$60.00/hour
Use of Dolly	\$60.00 total	\$60.00 total
Standby Time (prorated)	\$60.00/hour	\$60.00/hour
Winching (prorated)	\$60.00/hour	\$60.00/hour
<u>STORAGE FEES</u>		
After-Hours Release of Vehicle/Property (at discretion of towing company except pursuant to code)	--	\$50.00
Outside Storage (not prorated)	\$40.00/day	\$40.00/day
Inside Storage (not prorated and at owner request/as reasonably required)	\$45.00/day	\$45.00/day
Cover Vehicles (not prorated and at owner request/as reasonably required)	\$30.00	\$30.00

*For additional information see the Municipal Code of the City of Appleton, Sec. 9-746 et. seq.

CITY OF APPLETON

ROTATING CALL LIST FEE SCHEDULE (with suggested changes)*

Effective Date: January 1, 2018

<u>SERVICE PROVIDED</u>	<u>MAXIMUM FEE - REGULAR HOURS</u>	<u>MAXIMUM FEE - AFTER HOURS</u>
STANDARD TOW (wheel lift/flatbed)	\$150.00 \$160 (Femals) \$175 (A&W) (Fox Citys)	\$160.00 \$170 (Femals) \$195 (Fox Citys) \$200 (A&W)
PARTIAL TOW (at discretion of towing company)	\$50.00	\$60.00
<u>ADD ON/ADDITIONAL FEES</u>		
Administrative Fees, Mailing Fees, Etc. (if vehicle is not claimed after two days) (D&D requests changing to after one day)	\$20.00 total \$25 (Fox Citys) \$50 (A&W)	--
Cleanup (prorated <u>after</u> first 30 minutes)	\$40.00/hour \$50/hour (Femals) \$50 min - \$100/hr (A&W) \$50 min - (Fox Citys)	\$40.00/hour \$50/hour (Femals) \$50 min - \$100/hr (A&W) \$50 min - (Fox Citys)
Mileage for Out-of-City Trips	\$4.00/mile	\$4.00/mile
Motorcycles	\$25.00 \$30 (Femals) \$75 (A&W) (Fox Citys)	\$25.00 \$30 (Femals) \$75 (A&W) (Fox Citys)
Snow Shoveling (prorated)	\$10.00 minimum/ \$60.00/hour	\$10.00 minimum/ \$60.00/hour
Use of Dolly	\$60.00 total \$75 (A&W) \$80 (D&D)	\$60.00 total \$75 (A&W) \$80 (D&D)
Standby Time (prorated)	\$60.00/hour \$80/hour (D&D)	\$60.00/hour \$80/hour (D&D)
Winching (prorated) ***For winching w/o tow, D&D and Bob's Towing request changing to allow full tow cost to be charged. If winched and towed, charges to the right apply in addition to tow fee	\$60.00/hour \$60 min - \$60/hour (Bob's) \$75 min - \$175/hr (A&W) \$80/hr (Femals) \$100/hour (D&D) (Fox Citys)	\$60.00/hour \$60 min - \$60/hour (Bob's) \$75 min - \$200/hr (A&W) \$80/hr (Femals) \$100/hour (D&D) (Fox Citys)
<u>STORAGE FEES</u>		
After-Hours Release of Vehicle/Property (at discretion of towing company except pursuant to code)	--	\$50.00 \$60 (D&D)
Outside Storage (not prorated)	\$40.00/day \$50/day (A&W) (Fox Citys) (D&D) (Femals)	\$40.00/day \$50/day (A&W) (Fox Citys) (D&D) (Femals)
Inside Storage (not prorated and at owner request/as reasonably required) ***D&D requests addition of language: "or when justified for the protection of the vehicle and personal property"	\$45.00/day \$55/day (Fox Citys) (Femals) \$60/day (A&W) \$75/day (D&D)	\$45.00/day \$55/day (Fox Citys) (Femals) \$60/day (A&W) \$75/day (D&D)
Cover Vehicles (not prorated and at owner request/as reasonably required)	\$30.00 \$35 (Femals) \$40 (D&D)	\$30.00 \$35 (Femals) \$40 (D&D)
***Gate Fee (if car is not driveable) - proposed by A&W	\$20 (A&W)	\$20 (A&W)

*For additional information see the Municipal Code of the City of Appleton, Sec. 9-746 et. seq.