



TO: Members of the Safety and Licensing Committee

FROM: Lt. Kelly Gady, Appleton Police Department Operations Coordinator

RE: Rotating Call List – Request to Revise Ordinance

DATE: October 31, 2016

For many years, the Appleton Police Department has relied upon a rotating call list of towing companies to provide towing services on behalf of the APD. The rotating call list is used, for example, to tow an illegally parked vehicle, to tow a vehicle subsequent to an arrest, and to tow a vehicle that is blocking traffic after an accident.

Background

Over the years the APD has received questions and complaints from citizens regarding the rotating call list. One reoccurring complaint has been the amount of money towing services charge vehicle owners. Right now, towing companies set their own rates, and any amount they charge is permitted as long as they are not over "the usual and customary fee rates."

The current basic tow fee charged by companies on the rotating call list ranges from \$130 to \$200 during regular hours and from \$150-\$275 after routine hours. This means a citizen could be charged anywhere from \$130 to \$275 for a tow depending on the time of day and which tow company is next up on the rotating call list.

In addition to receiving complaints about the variation in basic tow fees, there have also been complaints about towing companies charging additional fees, such as storage fees. A basic tow fee can easily increase 50% or 100% with these additional fees. There have also been complaints about how/where a person has to go to retrieve their towed vehicle.

Proposed Changes

In the new ordinance, towing companies will no longer set their own fees. Instead, the fee amounts, including add-on fees like storage fees, will be set by the Common Council. The APD will provide suggested fee amounts, but the Common Council will make the final decision.

In addition, other changes to the ordinance help clarify the eligibility requirement and will ensure safety guidelines are met. For example, the new ordinance has:

- Additional language regarding the minimum eligibility requirements to be on the rotating call list,
- Clearer explanations of the responsibilities and expectations of a company on the rotating call list,
- New insurance and indemnification language, and
- New suspension and revocation language, including how a towing company can appeal.

It is the recommendation of the APD that the Committee recommend the approval of the revised ordinance, and that the Common Council approve the revised ordinance.

Please contact me, Lt. Kelly Gady, at 920-832-5928 with any questions.