

Austin Police Department Highway Enforcement Command Tow Fee Study

Request for Increase

The Austin towing companies are requesting an increase for **non-consent tow police impounds** performed in the City of Austin **from the current rate of \$150 to \$195.**

- Current Austin Rate \$150.00
- Current Local Metropolitan Average \$ 195.54
- Current Major Texas City Average \$148.00

History of Tow Fee Increases

Year	Increase	Non-Consent Tow rate
19-Jun-2006	58%	\$150.00
18-Mar-2001	46%	\$95.00
18-Jul-1996	18%	\$65.00
26-Jan-1989		\$55.00

13-6-141 TOWING FEE STUDY :

A “towing fee” study is a study to determine fair market value of non-consent tows originating in the City of Austin – including the consideration of financial information provided to the city by the towing company that requested the study.

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumers goods and services.

Consumer Price Index plus tow rate

Consumer price index from January 2006 to January 2019 has increased 27.5% at an average rate of 2.1% per year.

Using the CPI increase since 2006, the \$150 rate for non-consent tows would now equal \$191.25.

Travis County

In January 2018, the Travis County Commissioner's Court agreed with the Austin Towing Association on an increase in non-consent tow fees from \$175 to \$275.

Williamson County

In June 2013, the Williamson County Commissioner's Court accepted a request from the Williamson County Towing Association to increase the non-consent tow rate from \$110 (Set in October 2006) to a new rate of \$195.

City Comparisons

APD Wrecker Enforcement surveyed agencies from the 10 largest cities in Texas, as well as the surrounding Austin Metropolitan Area.

Austin is the 4th largest city in the survey.

Austin Metropolitan Area

Austin Metro Area: Travis County Sheriff's Office has the highest tow rate at \$275.00. Round Rock Police Department has the lowest tow rate of \$130.00

The average non-consent tow rate for the Austin Metropolitan area is \$195.54

Austin Metropolitan Area

AUSTIN METRO	\$150.00
TRAVIS COUNTY	\$275.00
WILLIAMSON COUNTY	\$195.00
HAYS COUNTY	\$250.00
ROUND ROCK	\$130.00
CEDAR PARK	\$175.00
SAN MARCOS	\$150.00
GEORGETOWN	\$195.00
PFLUGERVILLE	\$175.00
KYLE	\$250.00
LEANDER	\$195.00

Large Texas Cities

Of the nine other large cities surveyed, San Antonio has the highest tow rate of \$177.00. Laredo has the lowest tow rate of \$110.00

The average non-consent tow rate for Texas large cities is \$148.6

Large Texas City

Houston	\$160.00
San Antonio	\$177.00
Dallas	\$121.00
Austin	\$150.00
Fort Worth	\$135.00
El Paso	\$161.65
Arlington	\$165.00
Corpus Christi	\$150.00
Plano	\$127.50
Laredo	\$110.00

Traffic Incident Management program consideration

The TIMs program which is unique to the City of Austin, is used to rapidly clear disabled vehicles from high speed roadways during rush hour traffic.

The Austin Police Department towing rules state:

* A towing company must participate in the TIM program if it is on the Non-Preference List.

* This program requires tow truck companies to clear high speed roadways at no charge.

Austin towing companies report removing an average of three to four vehicles from the roadway per day – free of charge, during the TIM's program six hour operation.

Tow Fee Increase considerations

In 2015, the City of Austin Wrecker Ordinance was updated to accommodate the use of AutoReturn, APD's contracted tow truck dispatching vendor.

Private property impounds and incident management tows, collisions, service calls on roadways and police impounds, were separated in the ordinance.

The ordinance allows for separate fee schedules.

Recommendation

- * Austin Police recommends an increase on non consent police tows from the current rate of \$150 to \$195.
- * Austin Police does not recommend an increased rate of private property impounds or Incident Management Tows (collisions, services calls on roadways).