



Oregon State Board of Towing  
Discussion – Local Jurisdictions  
June 9, 2026

*This document does not represent formal Board decisions or policy; the document facilitates board discussion to:*

- 1. Define or clarify ambiguity in Oregon law.*
- 2. Address situations and scenarios submitted in complaints*
- 3. Answer questions or provide clarification to the public, towing industry, and board partners.*

*ORS 98.850 Legislative findings and declaration*

*(2) The Legislative Assembly declares that: (a) Statutes that assist members of the public in avoiding involuntary loss of use of motor vehicles and in expediting recovery of motor vehicles and the personal property in the motor vehicles promote the safety and welfare of members of the public.*

**Discussion:**

The Oregon State Board of Towing's role in investigation and assessing disciplinary actions when there is a local city program or ordinances.

**ORS 822.265 Rulemaking authority**

- (1) In accordance with applicable provisions of ORS chapter 183, the State Board of Towing may adopt rules:
- (b) To implement [ORS 98.853 \(Conditions allowing towing\)](#) to [98.862 \(Exceptions to requirements of ORS 98.856\)](#).

**ORS 98.859 Maximum rates for towing**

- (1) Each city or county may establish the maximum rates that a tower may charge for towing a motor vehicle, and for all related services for towing a motor vehicle, in response to a request for towing of a vehicle parked within the city or county that is made by a person other than the owner or operator of the motor vehicle. The rates for related services include charges for hookup, storage, gas mileage, pictures, unlocking the motor vehicle and any other services reasonably related to towing as determined by the city or county. Rates established by a city or county under this subsection apply in all portions of the city or county.
- (2) When establishing the maximum rates under this section, the city or county shall take into consideration the size of the motor vehicle towed and the distance traveled by the tower from the location of the motor vehicle to a storage facility.
- (3) Each city or county that establishes maximum rates under this section shall also establish a process by which the city or county will receive and respond to complaints relating to violations of this section.
- (4) If a city establishes the maximum rates under this section, the county rates do not apply to towing a vehicle that is parked within the boundaries of that city and the tower is required to comply with only the city's established maximum rates. [2013 c.691 §3]

**ORS 98.861 Licenses for towing**

- (1) Subject to subsection (5) of this section:
  - (a) A tower may not tow vehicles parked within the boundaries of a city without a license issued by the city, if the city has established the maximum rates that a tower may charge under ORS 98.859 (Maximum rates for towing).
  - (b) A tower may not tow vehicles parked within the boundaries of a county without a license issued by the county, if the county has established the maximum rates that a tower may charge under ORS 98.859 (Maximum rates for towing). The tower is not required to obtain a license from a county when the tower tows a vehicle that is parked within the boundaries of a city located within the county and the tower is licensed by that city.
- (2) Application for a license under this section must be made in writing in the form prescribed by the city or county, and must contain the name and address of the applicant and any other information that the city or county may require.

- (3) The fee for issuing a license under this section shall be established by the city or county, but may not exceed the cost of administering the licensing program and administering ORS 98.859 (Maximum rates for towing).
- (4) A license issued under this section expires annually on December 31 or on a date that may be specified by the city or county by ordinance.
- (5) The requirement to get a license under this section applies only to towers that tow a motor vehicle without the prior consent or authorization of the owner or operator of the motor vehicle.
- (6) A city or county may suspend or revoke a license issued under this section for violation of ORS 98.853 (Conditions allowing towing), 98.854 (Prohibitions placed on tower), 98.856 (Tower responsibility of disclosure to owner or operator of vehicle) or 98.859 (Maximum rates for towing). [2013 c.691 §4; 2017 c.480 §12]

**ORS 822.995 Civil Penalties (1)** In addition to any other penalty provided by law, any person who violates ... or any rule adopted by the State Board of Towing is subject to payment of a civil penalty to the board.

**ORS 181A.350 Eligibility of towing business to be placed on department list**

The Superintendent of State Police may make rules governing the eligibility of towing businesses to be placed and remain on any list of such businesses used by the Department of State Police when it requests towing services on behalf of any person.

**ORS 822.230 City or county regulation of towing businesses**

(1) Notwithstanding [ORS 822.200 \(Operating illegal towing business\)](#) to [822.225 \(Failure to remove injurious substance\)](#), and except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a city or county may, by charter or ordinance, regulate towing businesses if the city or county charter or ordinance provisions pertain only to towing authorized by [ORS 98.812 \(Towing of unlawfully parked vehicle\)](#) and the provisions:

- (a) Regulate an aspect of a towing business that is not regulated by [ORS 822.200 \(Operating illegal towing business\)](#) to [822.225 \(Failure to remove injurious substance\)](#); or
- (b) Regulate an aspect of the towing business that is regulated by [ORS 822.200 \(Operating illegal towing business\)](#) to [822.225 \(Failure to remove injurious substance\)](#) and the provisions of the charter or ordinance are more stringent than those of the statutes.
- (2) This section does not authorize imposition of any license fee or tax on a towing business by a city or county.
- (3) The governing body of a city or county may adopt ordinances that include, but are not limited to, the following requirements:
  - (a) That towing businesses accept methods of payment other than and in addition to cash.
  - (b) That towing businesses post fees in a conspicuous place at the location of the towed vehicles.
  - (c) That any posted signs that warn of the possibility of towing or that give information about recovery of a towed vehicle be prominently displayed and show the fees charged to recover a towed vehicle.
  - (d) That towing businesses offer transportation at a reasonable cost from within the immediate vicinity of the place from which the vehicle was towed to the towed vehicle.
  - (e) That towing businesses establish locations for towed vehicles in such a way that no vehicle will be towed a greater distance than is necessary and reasonable.
  - (f) That towed vehicles be stored in a public location that has at least one attendant on duty at all times. [1987 c.765 §2]

Current Board policy: defer to the agency, city, or county that has established ordinances or program guidelines for first jurisdictional compliance enforcement.

Board discussion on effectiveness of current policy.