

Enhancing Public Safety through Roadside Assistance Regulation

Prepared for:
Oregon State Board of Towing Annual Meeting
October 28, 2025

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- This presentation is prepared to facilitate discussion at the October 28, 2025 Board meeting.
- The Board is reviewing Oregon's roadside assistance practices at the request of towers, consumers, insurance companies, and collaborative partners within state and local government agencies.
- The presentation is for discussion purposes only and does not represent legal advice, formal board action or opinion, and makes no changes to Oregon's existing laws or rules.
- Written public comments may be submitted to the Board's office by email to: info@towboard.oregon.gov



The Issue:

- Roadside assistance is largely **unregulated** in Oregon.
- **Illegal tow operators** and **unvetted and untrained** roadside assistance providers are contracted by insurers and apps to provide emergency and roadside assistance to their customers.
- This creates **safety risks, risk to the public and consumers, and unfair competition.**



Why This Matters


Unregulated roadside assistance leads to:

- On-road worker injuries
- Consumer disputes
- Vehicle damage
- Unauthorized vehicle access
- Unsafe, untrained operators
- No recourse for misconduct




Current Regulatory Gap:

- **Tow Companies:** Regulated
 - Vehicle registration, insurance requirement, appropriate operator license
 - Towing laws and regulations
 - Equipment requirements
 - Training
- **Roadside assistance:** Not regulated
- **Loopholes** exploited by illegal or underqualified providers



Real-World Consequences

- Documented: Complaints, investigations, arrests
- Unlicensed operators often avoid:
 - Compliance enforcement and regulation
 - Insurance requirements
 - Vehicle and personal safety standards
 - Worker training
- **Result:** Public risk and unfair competition



Risks to Public & Workers

- Misconduct or damages (intentional or negligent) without accountability
- No background or drivers license checks
- Unsafe service and roadside assistance practices
- Inadequate insurance coverage for commercial activities
- Traffic hazards during assistance
 - Inappropriate lane blocking
 - Lack of flagging or other safety equipment
 - Lack of personal protective equipment

Evaluation of Potential Regulators

Oregon State Police

- Limited Capacity
- Jurisdiction: highways and freeways
- Uses non-preference tow rotational program to provide assistance.

ODOT

- Compliance enforcement may not include disciplinary action for violation
- Budget/Staffing concerns
- Jurisdiction: highways and freeways


Towing Board

- Enforcement authority exists in current statute
- Adaptive and responsive regulatory process
- Existing framework



Why the Towing Board is the Best Option

- Already regulates a similar industry
- Can receive and act upon complaints, issue disciplinary actions for violations
- Has software in place for a registration system
- Can implement a registration process requiring training and insurance compliance



Roadside Assistance Providers Would:

- Register as a Provider with the State
- Confirm vehicles and equipment meet minimum safety requirements and state regulations
- Carry commercial liability insurance
- Pass criminal and driver background checks
- Maintain active business license, comply with Oregon's business requirements
- Ensure training in roadside assistance and incident management

Roadside Assistance Vehicle - *Not registered as a tow or recovery vehicle**

Operational Restrictions

- Cannot tow or recover vehicles
- Must not display misleading markings
- Must meet basic safety and visibility standards

Safety & Identification

- Business name clearly marked
- No red/blue lights or enforcement-style logos
- Compliant safety lighting required

Towers operating under an active tow business license would be exempt from the roadside registry requirement



Exemptions:

- Tow companies operating under an Oregon tow business license
- Law Enforcement and other first responders
- Any government or tribal agency authorized providing roadside or motorist assistance in their official capacity
- Good Samaritan law: A person who provides assistance to another motorist, whether or not compensation is received, if the assistance is not provided as part of the business operation of the person providing the assistance.



Consumer Protection:

- Public registry available
- Transparent pricing before service
- No unauthorized upselling
- Adherence to safety SOPs
- Display of business name on vehicle



Benefits of Regulation:

- Protects consumers & workers
- Ensures fair business practices
- Increases accountability
- Builds trust in roadside assistance providers
- Improves coordination with law enforcement & responders

Fiscal Impact

Minimal cost:

- \$5,000 one-time system update
- \$3,000 annual software license
- Registration fees fund staff time (0.25–0.5 FTE)
- No significant added cost for already legal operators.
- Free TIM training available



A Necessary Step Forward

Roadside assistance is no longer
a gray area

Regulation will:

- Ensure safety
- Prevent abuse
- Level the playing field
- Provide public trust and transparency

STAKEHOLDERS

State Agencies

- Dept. of Justice
- DCBS – Division of Financial Regulation
- ODOT & OSP

Private

- Oregon Tow Truck Association
- Local law enforcement
- Towing Industry Professionals
- Motor Clubs & roadside assistance companies
- Insurance Companies
- Consumer Advocacy and Safety Groups



Questions & Discussion

Let's Collaborate

Feedback, collaboration, and engagement is critical to shaping a fair, transparent, and enforceable system for Oregon.