

Consumer FAQ for State Police Towing

Q: A tow company has asked me to scan a QR code for my consumer rights. Do I need to do this?

A: This QR code was developed by the MSP to advise you, the consumer, of your rights pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws and Massachusetts Regulations. The Tow Service provider is required to provide this information to you. The information you submit on this form is sent directly to the MSP. If you are uncomfortable with this technology, you can request a paper copy of the form (form SP357A or SP357B) from the Tow Service Provider.

Q: I feel I was over-charged for my MSP involuntary tow. How do I find the list of maximum charges a Tow Service Provider is allowed to charge?

A: Every MSP contracted Tow Service Provider is required per contract to conspicuously post the maximum rates for MSP involuntary towing within their business facility, as well as provide a printed copy or scannable QR code of the rates (forms SP357A or SP357B) before entering into any private agreements (IE: bringing the vehicle to a location other than the carriers garage, additional mechanical work, etc.), at the time of settlement of charges related to the involuntary tow or at any time if requested by a consumer. Maximum rates are set per CMR 220 272.00 and the MSP contract and can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/consumer-guide-to-state-police-towing>

Q: A tow company asked me to sign a "Release Authorization Form" before they would release my car. Do I have to sign this?

A: No. You are not required to sign anything. You are only required to show proof you are the registered owner or designee and pay the applicable charges. See [list of maximum charges](#).

Note: You may be agreeing to pay additional charges when you sign a "Release Authorization Form". **Please read all forms carefully before signing them.**

Q: If my vehicle is broken down (DMV) upon a highway, but is safely within the break down lane, am I allowed to wait for my own tow?

A: Yes, so long as your vehicle is NOT deemed a hazard by an MSP Trooper and you feel safe waiting for your tow. Please note that the on-scene Trooper's decision will be final. Although you may feel you are not a hazard, the Trooper takes many factors into consideration when making these determinations, and makes these determinations in the interest of public safety.

Q: What is an INVOLUNTARY tow?

A: An involuntary tow is when a member of the MSP **orders** your vehicle to be towed due to a number of reasons, including but not limited to; registration issues, arrest of an operator, investigative purposes, weather concerns or if the vehicle is disabled and cannot safely remain where it is.

Q: How much can a TSP charge me for a Police ordered service call?

A: A Tow Service Provider who provides roadside service to get you back underway may charge the 220CMR272 rate of \$132, which includes 1 hour of on-scene service or wait time. In addition to this charge, the provider can charge a mileage fee and a fuel surcharge fee. They may also charge for supplies at the actual cost plus 15%, such as gasoline. Service calls of this nature would include, but not be limited to out of gas calls, jumpstarts, tire changes, winch-outs and/or any other services performed to get the vehicle back underway safely.

Q: How long should I have to wait for my State Police ordered tow to arrive?

A: Tow Service Providers are required to meet the following response times, regardless of time of day or day of week.

10-20 minutes response time to all limited access highways,

10-25 minutes response time to all other urban locations,

15-45 minutes response time to all other rural locations.

Q: Will my Police ordered tow still cost \$132.00 (not including additional fees allowed under 220 CMR 272) if I have my vehicle towed some place other than the Tow Service Provider's garage?

A: If you elect to have your vehicle towed to another location and is authorized by the Trooper, you are entering into a private agreement with that Tow Service Provider and the rates set forth in 220 CMR 272 and the MSP contract **no longer apply**. The Tow Service Provider may charge fees that are not regulated and may exceed those listed in 220 CMR 272. However, prior to entering into these private agreements the Tow Service Provider is required to provide you a copy of your consumer rights. The MSP approved copy of these rights is either the SP357A (non-commercial) or SP357B (commercial) and may be found at www.mass.gov/state-police-towing. These consumer rights may be presented as a scannable QR code or, if you prefer, in a paper form.

Q. How do I find out where my vehicle has been towed by a State Police contracted tow company?

A. If you are not provided a business card by the company that towed your vehicle, you can call the barracks that covers the area where the vehicle was towed from.

Q. What is the maximum charge per day for normal storage of my car or light truck?

A. \$35.00 per 24-hour period per Massachusetts General Laws. Indoor storage and storage of Commercial Vehicles will be subject to individual contractual terms.

Q. When does the 24-hour period start for storage?

A. This is **not** a calendar day fee. The 24-hour period begins when the vehicle arrives at the storage location.

Q. How do I determine if my vehicle is a Category I or a Category II for billing purposes?

A. A Category I vehicle is any vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of 10,000 pounds or less. This would include passenger cars and light duty trucks. A Category II vehicle is any vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of 10,001 pounds or more. This would include larger Commercial vehicles such as box trucks and Tractor Trailers. If your vehicle is registered in Massachusetts, you may check your registration to determine the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating.

Q: If my vehicle is towed, how do I and my passengers get off the highway?

A: The Safety of you and your passengers are paramount to not only the Massachusetts State Police but also to our contracted Tow Company providers. Tow service providers are required to transport occupants to a safe location, whether that be their own facilities or another reasonable alternative. Should the number of occupants exceed the capability of the Tow Service Provider to provide adequate transportation, the Trooper on scene will make other accommodations for you.

Q: While commuting to work on the MA PIKE in the Weston/Waltham area I got a flat tire. When I pulled into the breakdown lane and activated my emergency lights a van with yellow police style lights pulled up behind me. The van said MAPFRE and the man said he worked with the State Police and could assist. Once he fixed my tire he did not charge me and drove away. What tow service is this?

A: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division (MassDOT) is available to offset and assist our Tow Service Providers with their Emergency Services Programs. This service is sponsored by MAPFRE with a team of forty-five (45) vehicles positioned throughout the Commonwealths high traffic volume roadways.

The included areas are: the Highway Assistance Patrol (HAP) which covers (13) major state roadways and interstates; the Emergency Service Patrol (ESP) which covers I-90 from New York to Boston and the Incident Response Operators (IRO) which covers the Metropolitan Highway System and tunnels throughout the City of Boston and surrounding areas. Some of the services provided are: changing flat tires, fixing minor mechanical problems, removing debris from the road after an accident, providing gas and providing emergency medical help.

It should be noted that the HAP patrols Monday–Friday between the hours of: 6 a.m.–10 a.m. and 3 p.m.–7 p.m. During holidays, the HAP patrols extended routes in heavy traffic areas. On I-90, ESPs provide assistance 24/7, as do our IROs in Boston’s tunnel system.

Q: I have a complaint about the services I received from one of the MSP Tow Service Providers. Who do I let know about this?

A: Please visit www.mass.gov and search for: STATE POLICE TOWING. This page will provide you with a wealth of knowledge regarding any and all tow related material with the

Massachusetts State Police. You may file your complaint by clicking the SUBMIT A TOWING RESPONSE REPORT” button. This link will provide you with the opportunity to submit this incident so a member of the Massachusetts State Police Towing Compliance Team may review it and take appropriate action. Additionally, you may request a paper form (SP358) from any State Police facility. This form will list multiple submission options. You may also file a complaint with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Transportation Oversight Division at www.mass.gov/orgs/transportation-oversight-division.

Q: The Tow Service Provider that assisted me gave me great service! How do I let the MSP know about this?

A: The Towing Response Report (SP358) is designed to accept Compliments, Complaints or any other factor that should be reported. We really appreciate it when you let us know when our contracted Tow Service Providers go above and beyond! The form may be accessed through the State Police Towing Portal at www.mass.gov or at any State Police facility.

Q: What is the process once I submit a Towing Response Report?

A: All submitted Towing Response Reports (SP358’s) are reviewed by a member of the Towing Compliance Unit. If the report is a compliment, the Tow Service Provider is provided a copy of the report for their records, and the MSP will place a copy in our files for future evaluations. If the report is a complaint, an investigator from the Towing Compliance Unit will be assigned to thoroughly investigate the allegations. This investigation would include speaking directly with the complainant and the Tow Service Provider. After the investigation is completed, all involved parties will be notified.