

Towing Services Guide

The NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) licenses businesses that tow:

- Cars blocking private driveways,
- Cars parked on private property,
- Cars immobilized after an accident,
- Cars that have been stolen, appear to be abandoned, or have broken down.

To see if a tow truck company is licensed, [visit the check license page](#) or call 311. You can [file a complaint online](#) with DCWP about a tow truck company or a tow truck driver.

Tow Programs

DCWP regulates the City's DARP and ROTOW towing programs.

- Directed Accident Towing Program (DARP): Towing of vehicles that have been involved in an accident and cannot safely be driven under their own power
- Rotation Tow Program (ROTOW): Towing of a stolen vehicles that have been recovered or abandoned, and when a vehicle is parked inconsistently with posted instructions on private property

Tows By NYPD, City Marshal, and the Sheriff

Cars may be towed for various reasons by several different government agencies, including the [NYPD](#), the city marshal, and the sheriff. [Visit the Department of Finance website for more information about vehicles towed by NYPD or NYC Sheriff/Marshal.](#)

Booting

DCWP also licenses businesses that boot cars parked in private lots or on private streets that violate posted parking rules. To see if a booting company is licensed, [visit the check license page](#) or call 311. To file a complaint with DCWP about a booting company, [file a complaint online](#).

Auto Repairs

To file a complaint about auto repairs, call the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles at (518) 474-8943.

Towing Tips

Checking if a Tow Truck Company Is Licensed

Certain types of tows in NYC require the business and the driver to be licensed by DCWP. See above for a description of the types of tows that require a DCWP license. If your car fits that description, you can [check a company's license status online](#) or call 311 to make sure a tow truck company is licensed.

Check the driver's side of the vehicle for the company's name, address, phone number, and DCWP license medallion. The medallion is a metal plate. If this information is not displayed, the truck is either unlicensed or in violation of licensing rules and should be reported to the City. [File a complaint with DCWP](#).

Keep a record of the tow truck's medallion number. Additionally, every tow truck driver must carry their DCWP tow truck driver's license at all times. If you have a complaint about a specific driver, get his or her license number and [file a complaint with DCWP](#).

Don't Accept "Cash Only."

By law, DCWP-licensed tow truck companies must accept a credit card for payment for towing services. Be wary of additional fees imposed by tow truck companies. The rates for certain types of tows are set by law. See the fees listed below. If you believe a tow truck company overcharged you, or if the company demanded that you pay in cash, [file a complaint with DCWP](#).

If You're in an Accident...

If you are in an accident on any street or highway in New York City or if your car breaks down on a highway in New York City, you must use a DCWP-licensed towing company authorized by the police to tow your vehicle. You cannot call your own roadside assistance program or towing company. The towing company must take your car wherever you say, within New York City.

Check for Required Paperwork...

The business is required to provide you with an [Authorization to Tow form](#) and a receipt. Be sure the authorization you sign specifies towing only, not repairs or other services.

You are not required to sign an Authorization to Repair form to have your car towed. For any work you want done, get the details in writing. Never sign a blank form.

Always read forms carefully before you sign them. If you sign a Designated Representative form, you are designating the towing company to represent your interests with your insurance company. You are never required to sign a Designated Representative form.

Be sure the tow truck driver gives you a copy of the [Consumer Bill of Rights Regarding Towing](#), as required by law.

Choose Your Own Repair Shop

You have the right to have your car repaired by whomever you choose.

If you don't want the tow truck company to fix your car, clearly tell the truck driver not to repair it and don't sign the tow truck company's Authorization to Repair form.

If your insurer refers you to a repair shop, the insurer is responsible for the adequacy of the repairs. (In some cases, having your car repaired by anyone other than an authorized dealer may void your warranty or extended care agreement.)

Check your car carefully and note any damage before it is towed. Remove all valuables from inside the car, including those in the trunk and glove compartment.

Get a clearly itemized bill. You will need it if you want to challenge any charges. Your insurance company may also require it.

If Your Car Breaks Down...

If your car breaks down and you are not on a NYC highway, you can call a tow truck company of your choice. Unlike rates charged by the City's DARP program, which are regulated, businesses can set their own rates.

If time permits, call around to different towing companies to compare prices. An inexpensive or free towing service may be available from an auto club, your insurance company, or your car's manufacturer. If you have a complaint against a tow truck company, you can still [file a complaint with DCWP](#) even if the business is not licensed.

Who to Contact When Your Car Is...

Towed From a Shopping Center or Other Private Property...

If a sign is posted that a parking lot is reserved for customers only and you visit any other business, even for a few minutes, your car may be towed.

Look for a posted sign with the name and number of the company that towed your car. Call the company to retrieve your vehicle. If you can't find a sign, call the local police precinct.

Towed From a Driveway That You Blocked...

Call the local police precinct.

Towed From the Street for a Parking or Traffic Violation...

[Visit the Department of Finance website](#) or call 311.

Booted in a Parking Lot or on a Private Street...

If your vehicle is booted in a parking lot, look for a posted sign saying which booting company applied the boot or wheel lock. Contact the company to have the boot removed. The company must remove the boot within 30 minutes, must accept payment by credit card, and may charge no more than \$25. If you are overcharged to remove the boot, you can [file a complaint with DCWP online](#).

Missing and You're Not Sure Why...

Call 311 or call or visit the local police precinct where the car was parked.

Rate Caps

DARP Towing Rate Caps:

Vehicles registered at 10,000 pounds or less:	\$125
Vehicles registered at more than 10,000 pounds:	\$140
First three days of storage:	\$25 per day
Fourth day of storage and after:	\$27 per day
Towing to location other than tower's storage facility:	Add \$4.00 per mile plus tolls

ROTOW Towing Rate Caps:

Vehicles registered at 10,000 pounds or less:	\$125
Vehicles registered at more than 10,000 pounds:	\$140
First three days of storage:	\$25 per day
Fourth day of storage and after:	\$27 per day
Towing to location other than tower's storage facility:	Add \$4.00 per mile plus tolls

Towing Rate Caps From Private Parking Lot:

Towing and three days of storage:	\$125
Fourth day of storage and after:	\$15 per day
"Drop fee" (for unhooking a car that is about to be towed):	\$62.50

Towing Rate Caps For Blocking a Driveway:

Towing and three days of storage:	\$125 plus tax
Fourth day of storage and after:	\$15 per day