

Vehicle Towing

502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides the procedures for towing a vehicle by or at the direction of the Reno Police Department and under the authority of NRS 484B.443.

502.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes, a motor vehicle is abandoned if:

- (a) The motor vehicle has been abandoned for 24 hours on any freeway, U.S. highway or other primary arterial highway (NRS 484B.443).
- (b) The motor vehicle has been abandoned for 72 hours (48 hours per RMC) on any other highway (NRS 484B.443).
- (c) The vessel is left unattended and is adrift, moored, docked, beached, run aground, trailered, or made fast to land in a location owned or administered by a public entity or in such a position as to interfere with navigation or in such a condition as to create a hazard to other vessels using the waterway, to public safety, or to the property of another (NRS 488.291(3)(a)).
- (d) The vessel seriously interferes with navigation or otherwise poses a critical and immediate danger to navigation or to the public health, safety, or welfare (NRS 488.291(3)(e)).

502.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of those employees storing or impounding a vehicle are as follows:

502.2.1 COMPLETION OF VEHICLE IMPOUND REPORT

Department members requesting storage of a vehicle shall complete a departmental tow form, including a description of property within the vehicle. A copy is to be given to the tow truck operator and the original is to be submitted to the Records Division as soon as practicable after the vehicle is stored.

The Records Division shall promptly enter pertinent data from the completed Vehicle Impound Report into the records management system.

502.2.2 REMOVAL OF VEHICLE DUE TO HAZARD

When a vehicle should be towed because it presents a hazard, the owner or operator should arrange for the towing. Department members may assist by communicating requests through Dispatch to expedite the process.

If the owner or operator is unable to arrange for towing and the vehicle presents a hazard, the vehicle may be towed at the direction of the department member.

When an officer encounters a disabled vehicle, vehicle cargo or property that is unattended and constitutes an obstruction to traffic, interferes with traffic or otherwise endangers public safety, the

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officer may take steps to have the obstruction moved to a position where it no longer obstructs, interferes with traffic or endangers the public safety.

502.2.3 DRIVING A NON-CITY VEHICLE

Vehicles which have been towed by or at the direction of the Department should not be driven by police personnel unless it is necessary to move a vehicle a short distance to eliminate a hazard.

502.3 TOWING SERVICES

The City of Reno periodically selects one or more firms to act as official tow services and awards contracts to those firms. Those firms will be used in the following situations:

- (a) When it is necessary to safeguard a vehicle due to the inability of the owner or operator to take the required action.
- (b) When a vehicle is being held as evidence in connection with an investigation.
- (c) When it is otherwise necessary to store a motor vehicle. This would include situations involving the recovery of stolen or abandoned vehicles, and the removal from the streets of vehicles obstructing traffic in violation of state or local regulations.

If more than one firm has been awarded contracts, they should be placed in a rotation list. Nothing in this policy shall require the Department to tow a vehicle.

502.4 ARREST SCENES

Whenever a person in charge or in control of a vehicle is arrested, it is the policy of this department to provide reasonable towing or securing the arrestee's vehicle subject to the exceptions described below. However, a vehicle shall be towed whenever it is needed for the furtherance of an investigation or prosecution.

The following situations may be considered when leaving a vehicle at the scene in lieu of tow, provided the vehicle can be lawfully parked and left in a reasonably secured and safe condition:

- Traffic related warrant arrest.
- Situations where the vehicle was not used to further the offense for which the occupant was arrested.
- Whenever the vehicle otherwise does not need to be towed and the owner requests that it be left at the scene.

502.5 VEHICLE INVENTORY

All property in a stored or impounded vehicle shall be inventoried and listed on the vehicle storage form. This includes the trunk and any compartments. Members conducting inventory searches should be as thorough and accurate as practicable in preparing an itemized inventory. These inventory procedures are for the purpose of protecting an owner's property, to provide for the safety of officers and to protect the Department against fraudulent claims of lost, stolen or damaged property.

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502.6 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

An officer may remove a vehicle provided he/she has probable cause to believe that the vehicle or its contents constitute any evidence which tends to show that a criminal offense has been committed, or tends to show that a particular person has committed a criminal offense. An officer removing a vehicle shall ensure that all legally required and reasonably necessary efforts to preserve the evidence, including but not limited to safe storage, are taken until the evidence is released to the owner or otherwise disposed of according to law (NRS 484B.447).

502.7 SECURITY OF VEHICLES AND PROPERTY

After a thorough inventory of the vehicle has been completed and all contraband, evidence and weapons have been removed, the officer should make reasonable accommodations to permit a driver or owner to retrieve small items of value or personal need (e.g., cash, jewelry, cell phone, prescriptions).

If a search of a vehicle leaves the vehicle or any property contained therein vulnerable to unauthorized entry, theft or damage, personnel conducting the search shall take such steps as are reasonably necessary to secure and/or preserve the vehicle or property from such hazards.

Firearms found in vehicles which will be left on scene or towed due to arrest shall be collected and booked into Reno Police Department Evidence section as evidence or safe keeping.