

Austin Police Department Highway Enforcement Command

Tow Fee Study

Towing Services

Towing is vital to maintaining the infrastructure of a city. Without towing services, Austin would have a hard time functioning. Private property impounds performed and contracted by businesses/individuals alleviate use of city resources by:

- Clearing vehicles parked illegally in fire zones and handicap parking spaces
- Removing abandoned or junked vehicles
- Clearing right of way to access private properties
- Securing parking lot from unauthorized use of resident/tenant/merchant spaces

Request for Increase

Austin towing companies are requesting an increase for **non-consent private property tows (PPIs)**, performed in the City of Austin **from the current rate of \$150 to \$185.**

- Current Austin Rate \$150
- Current Local Metropolitan Average \$ 212.73
- Current Major Texas City Average \$199

Consent vs Non-Consent Tows

Consent Tows: a tow of a motor vehicle initiated by the owner or operator of the vehicle or by a person who has possession, custody, or control of the vehicle. The tow does not include a tow of a motor vehicle initiated by a peace officer investigating a traffic accident or traffic incident that involves the vehicle.

Non-Consent Tows: a tow that is not a consent tow.

The tow fee study is for non consent – private property tows, herein known as PPIs.

Light Duty Vehicle Tows

- * Light duty vehicle tows are the most common type of tow requested.
- * Light Duty Vehicle is your standard vehicle with a total GVW (Gross Vehicle Weight) of 10,000 lbs.
- * This tow fee increase request will only encompass light duty vehicle tows.
- * Examples: sedans, pickup trucks, SUVs, and vans

Current Light Duty Impound Fees

- * **Example of a vehicle impounded for 1 day. The following is a breakdown of the total cost:**
- * \$150.00 – tow fee
- * \$20.00 – impound fee
- * \$20.00 storage fee
- * \$3.30 – sales tax (taxed items are storage and impound fee)
- * **Total fee: \$ 193.30**

History of Tow Fee Increases

Year	Increase	Non-Consent Tow rate
19-Jun-2006	58%	\$150.00
18-Mar-2001	46%	\$95.00
18-Jul-1996	18%	\$65.00
26-Jan-1989		\$55.00

City of Austin Ordinance 20060608-019

13-6-141 TOWING FEE STUDY:

A “towing fee” study is used to determine fair market value of non-consent tows originating in the City of Austin, including the consideration of financial information provided to the city by the towing company that requested the study.

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services.

Consumer Price Index + Tow Rate

Consumer price index from January 2006 to December 2018 has increased 23.64% at an average rate of 1.85% per year as calculated by APD's Finance Office.

Using the CPI increase since 2006, the \$150 rate for non-consent tows would now equal \$185.46.

Living Wage Rate

- * In 2008, the City of Austin shows the Living Wage rate to be at a rate of \$10.90/hour
- * In 2016, the City of Austin shows the Living Wage rate to be at a rate of \$15.00/hour
- * This is an increase of 38% between 2008 and 2016. Using the Living Wage increase since 2008, the \$150 rate for non-consent tows would now equal \$207

Neighboring Agencies

Travis County

As of current date, Travis County private property tow fee is the state regulated rate of \$255.00.

Williamson County

As of current date, Williamson County private property tow fee is the state regulated rate of \$255.00.

City Comparisons

APD Wrecker Enforcement surveyed agencies from the 10 largest cities in Texas, as well as the surrounding Austin Metropolitan Area.

Austin is the 4th largest city in the survey.

Austin Metropolitan Area

Of the 10 surrounding counties surveyed, it was discovered that all maintain the state regulated tow fee rate of \$255.00

The average non-consent tow rate for the Austin Metropolitan area is \$212.73.

Austin Metropolitan Area

Average =
\$212.73

Lowest =
\$85

Highest =
\$255

San Marcos	\$85
Cedar Park	\$125
Austin	\$150
Leander	\$195
Georgetown	\$255
Williamson County	\$255
Round Rock	\$255
Pflugerville	\$255
Kyle	\$255
Hays County	\$255
Travis County	\$255

LOWER
Price
HIGHER



Large Texas Cities

Of the ten large cities surveyed, five of the cities maintain the state regulated tow rate of \$255.

Of the ten large cities surveyed, the city of El Paso maintains the lowest tow rate of \$100.

The average non-consent tow rate for Texas large cities is \$199.00

Largest Texas Cities

Average =
\$191.60

Lowest =
\$121

Highest =
\$255

El Paso	\$100
Dallas	\$121
Austin	\$150
Houston	\$167
San Antonio	\$177
Corpus Christi	\$255
Laredo	\$255
Plano	\$255
Arlington	\$255
Ft Worth	\$255

LOWER

Price

HIGHER



Tow Fee Increase Considerations

- * On June 6, 2019, the City of Austin Wrecker Ordinance was amended to adjust the non-consent tow fee, excluding the non-consent private property tows.
- * Private property tows represent over 58 % of all non-consent tows (obtained during the 12 month period of 5/1/2019-4/30/2019).
- * Consent tows are not part of this established fee schedule.

Conclusion

- * After extensive review and consideration of the tow fee study results and significant change in the Consumer Price Index, the Austin Police Department identified that an increase for non-consent, private property tows to \$185 is in line with the CPI.