



**City of Santa Barbara
Police Department**

Memorandum

DATE: 03/01/22
TO: Santa Barbara Fire & Police Commission
FROM: Officer Kamin
SUBJECT: Tow Company Fee Adjustment Proposal

Commissioners,

I've requested suggestions for fee schedule updates from the seven tow companies on the tow rotation roster with the Santa Barbara Police Department. Per section 5.30.040 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code, the Fire and Police Commission is tasked with setting maximum rates and charges for any emergency or involuntary towing assignment for the City (i.e., rotation towing for the Santa Barbara Police Department).

I've spoken with the other local law enforcement agencies (Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol) regarding their rate schedules. The last SBPD rate schedule adjustments were in 2018 and no adjustments have been made since. The CHP last evaluated their rates and any adjustments made were completed in the summer of 2021. The SBSO relies on their contracted tow services to provide "reasonable" rates to their department based on current fair market pricing.

Attached is a current fee schedule for all seven tow companies. Those companies provided current rates for the services they provide to the Santa Barbara Police Department.

Also attached is comparative rates collected from other tow companies in the San Louis Obispo County, Los Angeles County, Ventura County, and Orange County. Comparatively, South Santa Barbara County tow rates were the highest out of any of the four other counties.

When reviewing the attached data please note the abbreviated titles:

- Light**"= light duty (Class A) tow truck billed per hour
- Medium**"= medium duty (Class B) tow truck billed per hour
- Heavy**"= heavy duty (Class C) tow truck billed per hour
- Super**"= super heavy (Class D) tow truck billed per hour

- “**Storage Day/Light**”= outdoor storage rate per day/car or pickup
- “**Storage Day/Medium**”= outdoor storage rate per day/box truck or RV
- “**Storage Day/Heavy**”= outdoor storage rate per day/semi-truck
- “**Motorcycle storage**”= outdoor storage rate per day/two or three-wheeled motorcycle

Current hourly rates:

Holzer’s Towing:

- Light: SBSO/CHP- \$250/hour
SBPD- \$265/hour
- Medium: SBSO/CHP- \$275/hour
SBPD- \$325/hour
- Heavy: SBSO/CHP- \$325/hour
SBPD- \$375/hour
- Storage: SBSO/CHP- \$90/day outside, \$100/day inside, \$110 oversize
SBPD light- \$90/day outside, \$95/day inside
SBPD oversize- \$125/day
Motorcycle storage (all three agencies)- \$85/day
- After-hours Gate Fee: \$120

Santa Barbara Towing:

- Light: CHP- \$280/hour (2021-2022 rate sheet)
SBPD- \$265/hour
- Medium: CHP- \$280/hour (2021-2022 rate sheet)
SBPD- \$325/hour
- Storage: CHP light & medium- \$95/day inside & outside (2021-2022 rate sheet)
CHP motorcycle- \$95/day
SBPD light- \$95/day inside & outside
SBPD medium- \$125/day
SBPD motorcycle- \$85/day
- After-hours Gate Fee: \$132.50

Love’s Towing:

- Light: CHP- \$280/hour (2021-2022 rate sheet)
SBSO- \$250/hour
SBPD- \$265/hour
- Medium: SBPD- \$325/hour
- Storage: CHP light- \$95/day outside (2021-2022 rate sheet)
SBSO light- \$80/day

SBSO oversize- \$110/day
SBPD light- \$95/day
SBPD oversize- \$125/day
SBPD motorcycle- \$85/day
After-hours Gate Fee: CHP- \$140
SBSO- \$125
SBPD- \$130

Nieves Towing:

Light: SBPD- \$265/hour
SBSO/UCPD- \$265/hour
Medium: SBPD- \$325/hour
SBSO/UCPD- \$325/hour
Heavy: SBPD- \$365/hour
SBSO/UCPD- \$365/hour
Storage: SBPD/SBSO/UCPD light- \$95/day (inside & outside)
SBPD/UCPD oversize- \$125/day (inside & outside)
SBPD/UCPD motorcycle- \$80/day (inside & outside)
After-hours Gate Fee: all three agencies- half the hourly rate

Smitty's Towing:

Light: SBSO- \$300/hour (day), \$325/hour (night)
SBPD- \$265/hour
CHP- \$300/hour, \$325/hour after hours (2021-2022 rate sheet)
Medium: SBSO- \$375/hour (day), \$405/hour (night)
SBPD- \$325/hour
CHP- \$375/hour, \$405/hour after hours (2021-2022 rate sheet)
Heavy: SBSO- \$475/hour (day), \$513/hour (night)
SBPD- \$375/hour
CHP- \$475/hour, \$513/hour after hours (2021-2022 rate sheet)
Industrial/Class D: SBSO/CHP- \$600/hour, \$648/hour after hours
Storage: SBSO/CHP- \$100/day (cars)
SBPD- \$95/day (cars)
SBSO/SBPD: \$135/day (medium duty vehicles)
SBPD- \$120/day (medium duty vehicles)
SBSO/UCPD/SBPD: \$165/day (heavy duty vehicles)
SBPD- \$135/day (heavy duty vehicles)
SBSO- \$185/day (industrial)
CHP- light duty: \$100/day outside, \$110/day inside
medium duty: \$135/day outside
heavy: \$165/day outside

industrial: \$185/day outside
SBPD- \$85/day (motorcycles)
After-hours Gate Fee: half of the hourly rate per class of vehicle
After-hours fees: SBSO/UCSB- \$308/hour light duty towing
\$378/hour medium duty towing
\$513/hour heavy duty towing

Thomas Towing:

Light: SBSO/UCPD/CHP (2021/2022 rate sheet)- \$290/hour
SBPD- \$265/hour
Medium: SBSO/UCPD- \$300/hour
SBPD- \$325/hour
Heavy: SBSO/UCPD- \$325/hour
SBPD- \$375/hour
Storage: SBSO/UCPD- \$100/day (cars)
CHP- \$100/day outside (2021-2022 rate sheet)
SBPD- \$95/day (cars), \$85/day (motorcycles)
SBSO/UCPD/SBPD: \$125/day (class B vehicles)
SBPD- \$135/day (heavy duty vehicles)
After-hours Gate Fee: CHP/SBSO/UCPD- \$142.50
SBPD- \$132.50

805 Towing:

Light: SBSO/UCPD- \$285/hour
SBPD- \$265/hour
CHP- \$299/hour (2021-2022 rate sheet)
Medium: SBSO/UCPD- \$325/hour
SBPD- \$325/hour
Heavy: SBSO/UCPD- \$325/hour
SBPD- \$375/hour
Storage: SBSO- \$95/day (cars), \$85/day (motorcycles)
SBPD- \$95/day (cars), \$85/day (motorcycles)
SBSO/SBPD: \$125/day (medium duty vehicles)
SBPD- \$125/day (medium duty vehicles)
CHP- \$99/day outside, motorcycles \$85/day (2021-2022 rate sheet)
After-hours Gate Fee: CHP/SBSO/UCPD- \$149.50
SBPD- \$142.50

Comparative out-of-county fee schedules:

Los Angeles County:

Los Angeles City:

“Standard Vehicle Rates”: \$137/hour
Heavy: \$263/hour
Storage: \$42.50/day (standard vehicle)
 \$12/day (motorcycles)
City of L.A. release fee: \$115/vehicle

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Tow/Storage Rates:

Light: \$141/hour
Heavy: \$253/hour
Storage: Cars & trucks (up to one ton): \$37/day
 Motorcycles: \$21/day
 Trucks & boats: \$41/day under 21’ feet, \$47/day over 21’

San Luis Obispo County:

College Towing:

Light: \$240/hour
Storage: \$75/day outside, \$80/day inside

Ventura County:

Owl Towing and Storage:

Light (class A): \$220/hour
Medium (class B): \$250/hour
Heavy (class C): \$275/hour
Super Heavy (class D): \$315/hour
Outside storage: \$53/day for class A, \$55/day for class B/C/D

Bob Carlson’s Towing:

Light (class A): \$225/hour
Medium (class B): \$275/hour

Heavy (class C): \$275/hour
Super Heavy (class D/3-axle truck, min 35 tons): \$320/hour
Outside Storage: \$58/day
Inside Storage: \$58/day

I personally and professionally feel the City of Santa Barbara's ability to involve the Fire & Police Commission and allow the Commissioners to determine the appropriate rates removes any possibility or threat of collusion with the Police Department interfering with private business operations that affect the citizens of this community.

The current rate cap imposed by the Police and Fire Commission were put into effect 3 years ago (2018). They are:

Light Duty Tow (hourly rate): \$265
Medium Duty Tow (hourly rate): \$325
Heavy Duty Tow (hourly rate): \$375
Light Storage per day: \$95
Medium Storage per day: \$125
Heavy Storage per day: \$135
Motorcycle Storage per day: \$85

Because the cost of operating a business has risen over the years, my only recommendation to the Fire & Police Commission would be to consider a \$25/hour increase with regards to allowable light, medium and heavy-duty hourly tow rates. This would allow SBPD-contracted tow companies a slightly higher ceiling in permissible hourly rate charges:

Light Duty Tow (hourly rate): ~~\$265~~ **\$290**
Medium Duty Tow (hourly rate): ~~\$325~~ **\$350**
Heavy Duty Tow (hourly rate): ~~\$375~~ **\$400**

My suggestion is that all storage fee caps remain as they are.

As you can see by the aforementioned rate comparisons with other local agencies, towing and storage fees are comparable. Many tow companies will choose on their own accord to charge fees lower than the maximum cap in order to stay competitive in a free marketplace. However, local tow and storage rates higher than those charged by tow companies in the surrounding region. I'm aware of the high cost of doing business in the Santa Barbara region and that local economic factors play a role in necessitating higher rates. I believe in leaving it to the Police and Fire Commission to decide whether or not an allowable rate increase/higher rate cap is appropriate and acceptable.

As a final note, one of my duties as tow compliance officer is to make sure all the local tow companies on the SBPD rotation list are in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth in the Santa Barbara Police Department Tow Rotation List Rules and

Regulations document. These rules include (but aren't limited to) proper exterior signage identifying the business as a tow service to the public, clear posting of phone numbers for after-hours contact, proper display of "Towing Fees and Access Notice" for customers to view, minimum requirements for storage yard size and facilities for the storage for vehicles impounded as evidence. I conducted inspections on all seven tow companies during the week of 01/10/22-01/14/22 and all were within compliance.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Officer Kamin
Tow Compliance Officer
Santa Barbara Police Department