



Owners' Bill of Rights for Towed Vehicles

Who Can Tow Your Vehicle, And Why It Matters
In Kansas City, vehicles can be towed by either a public agency or a private party.

Understanding the difference helps you:

- Know who to contact
- Understand your rights and responsibilities
- Avoid confusion about fees, documents, and next steps

Public Tows (City Ordered)

These tows are ordered by the City of Kansas City or another government agency. Your vehicle may be towed if it:

- Was involved in an accident
- Has no valid license plate, registration, or inspection sticker
- Is broken down or disabled
- Is parked in a tow-away or no-parking zone
- Blocks a private driveway
- Appears abandoned or left in a roadway
- Poses a public health or safety risk

Also: A private property owner can request a public tow if the vehicle is illegally parked on their property and has already been ticketed by the city.

Private Tows

These are ordered by individuals or companies outside of the city government. Private tows can be requested by:

- You, the vehicle owner
- Someone you authorize in writing (through an agreement with a tow company)
- Your lender, if they financed your vehicle and have repossession rights
- The person who was driving your vehicle at the time

Why it matters: If your car was towed privately, you'll likely need to contact the tow company directly, not the City. The rules and recovery process for getting your vehicle back may differ from a public tow.

What to Expect from a Towing Company

All towing companies in Kansas City, MO must:

- Follow all local towing regulations for licensed operators.
- If they operate a towing storage lot, they must have a separate license for it.
- Clearly post their rate list at the storage facility.
- Treat you with courtesy and respect, no matter your vehicle's condition or your race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, appearance, family status, education status, sexual orientation, disability, income source, caregiving responsibilities, political beliefs, age, or where you live or work.

Before the Tow

The towing company must give you (or the driver):

- A copy of the Owners' Bill of Rights for Towed Vehicles
- A signed, itemized estimate showing:
 - What services will be performed
 - The costs
 - Where the vehicle is being towed to and where it's being towed from
 - The name and address of the towing company
 - The name of the vehicle owner

Stopping the Tow as It's Happening

If the tow is a public tow, you can ask to stop the tow. If the official who ordered it agrees, the vehicle can be released on the spot, but you'll need to pay a \$50 drop fee.

If it's a private tow and you are able to move the vehicle before it leaves the property, you can also stop it. However, the maximum fee in this case is \$132.50

After the Tow

You have the right to:

- Receive an itemized bill showing each charge
- Hold the towing company responsible for any damage caused during a public tow
- Get a receipt, a copy of the ticket or legal order, and the **Owners' Bill of Rights**
- Pay by credit card, debit card, or money order (cash is not required)
- Inspect your vehicle at the storage facility and remove personal items with permission from the City Tow Lot
- Refuse any repairs unless you've given written permission
- Have your vehicle released once you prove your identity, show proof of ownership, and pay all charges.

What if Your Vehicle was Towed for Unpaid Tickets?

To get your car back, you must:

- Pay your tickets online at www.kcmo.gov/parking or in person at 1120 Oak St.
- Bring proof of payment to the tow lot
- Be prepared to pay towing and storage fees in addition to the ticket

How much can a company charge for a private tow?

When a tow company removes a vehicle from private property without the owner's permission or police involvement, there are strict fee limits. The following maximum fee criteria applies to most passenger vehicles:

- **For the Tow Itself:** The most they can charge for towing your vehicle is \$265
- **For Storage:** If your car is stored after being towed, the most they can charge is \$30.00 for every 24-hour period your car is stored, even if it's only there for part of that period. For example, if your car is stored for 25 hours, you'd pay \$60.00 (two 24-hour periods).

- **If Your Vehicle Was Stolen:** If your car was reported stolen, the maximum towing fee is reduced to \$120.00.
- **For Getting Your Car Back (Retrieval):** There's an additional maximum fee of \$25.00 to retrieve your towed vehicle.

Special Situations:

- **If You're There Before the Tow:** If you, as the vehicle owner, are present and can move your vehicle before the tow truck completely removes it, they are not allowed to tow your car.
- **"Drop Fee":** If your vehicle is already hooked up to the tow truck (meaning two of its tires are off the ground) but it's still on private property, the most the tow fee can charge you is \$132.50. They cannot tow it away if you are able to move it at this point, but they can charge this "drop fee."

How much can a company charge for a public tow?

These are the maximum rates allowed for public tows in Kansas City, MO.

Regular Duty or Standard Vehicles (Under 10,000 lbs or 4535 kgs)

- Tow fee (includes prep, hoist, and transport): up to \$265 per tow

Medium Duty Vehicles (10,001 lbs to 26,000 lbs or 4536 kgs to 11,793 kgs)

- Tow fee (includes prep, hoist, and transport): up to \$365 per tow

Heavy-Duty Vehicles (Over 26,001 lbs or 11,794 kgs)

- Tow fee (includes prep, hoist, and transport): up to \$440 per tow

Additional Services and Fees

- **Road Service: Up to \$50 per visit**
For basic roadside help like jump-starting a battery, unlocking your car, changing a flat tire, bringing fuel, or helping if you're stuck (without needing a tow).
- **Drop Fee: \$50**
If your car is already being hooked up for towing and you ask to stop it, you may pay this fee to have the vehicle released on the spot.
- **Storage Fee: \$30 per 24-hour period**
If your car is stored after being towed, the most they can charge is \$30.00 for every 24-hour period your car is stored, even if it's only there for part of that period. For example, if your car is stored for 25 hours, you'd pay \$60.00 (two 24-hour periods).

No Extra Barriers or Delays

Towing companies and impound lots:

- Can't create extra paperwork or requirements that aren't listed above to confirm you own the car
- Can't make you set an appointment to pick up your car
- Must release your car during normal business hours once you show the right documents

How to Prove You're Authorized to Pick Up the Car

You can pick up the car if you're:

- The registered owner
- Someone the owner has authorized to get the car, shown by a rental or lease agreement, bill of sale, insurance documents, a written or electronic message from the owner, along with a copy of the owner's ID
- An employee or agent of a business that owns the car, if you show proof of employment or agency and authorization from the business
- The owner doesn't have to be there in person if their authorization and ID can be verified electronically or remotely.
- A customer's behavior or how they speak (in person or on the phone) can't be used as an excuse to delay the release, charge extra fees, or refuse to release the car.

It doesn't matter if:

- Your car isn't registered with the Department of Revenue
- You bought it more than 30 days ago
- You don't have proof of insurance

What Documents do I Need to Pick Up My Car?

To get your car back, you need to show reliable documents that prove you own it or have the right to possess it. These can include:

- Title
- Bill of sale
- Valid temporary permit
- Lease or rental agreement
- Insurance documents (electronic, digital, or paper form)

How to Find Your Towed Vehicle

If your car was towed publicly or privately, you can:

- **Search Online**
Go to search.autoreturn.com to look up your vehicle.
- **Call the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) Non-Emergency Line:** (816) 234-5111
- **Visit or Contact the KCMO Public Tow Lot.** 7750 E. Front Street, Kansas City, MO 64120
- **Hours:**
Monday–Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.;
Closed Sunday

Phone: (816) 513-0688
Fax: (816) 513-0698

To file a complaint, you can make a report through the MyKCMO app or by calling 311.