

Heavy Duty Police Authorized Tow Service Agreement (HD PATSA) Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the purpose of the HD PATSA?

A. The purpose is to improve the safety surrounding heavy duty towing and recovery incidents such as overturned trucks and lost loads. Establishing standards will improve incident management, scene clearance and reduce safety risks to our citizens and first responders.

Q. What are the current requirements to conduct Heavy Duty towing and recovery in the City of Houston?

A. The companies are required to have a wrecker license and a regular Police Authorized Tow Service Agreement. There are no current standards for experience, training or equipment.

Q. Was the industry notified of the proposed changes?

A. Yes. There are 10 Heavy Duty towing and recovery companies that work in the City of Houston and everyone has been involved in the development of this Agreement.

Q. What has been the response from the industry?

A. All 10 companies are in support of the Agreement.

Q. What new standards will be implemented in the Heavy Duty PATSA?

A. Standards will include:

1. Experience - Companies will be required to have three years' experience in a licensed Heavy Duty towing and recovery business.
2. Education - Each operator will have to complete a minimum of 16 hours of continuing education (including hands-on training) within the first 12 months of the Agreement. The training will be repeated at least once every five years.
3. Equipment - A minimum standard equipment list has been established to ensure companies are able to handle Heavy Duty scenes in the safest and most efficient manner.

Q. Are there new fees associated with this Agreement?

A. No, there are no new fees.

Q. Why do the Heavy Duty trucks operate on a rotational basis in three tow zones versus the standard five tow zones?

A. The Police Department could not ensure adequate coverage in all zones if the Heavy Duty trucks operated only in one particular zone. The rotational schedule ensures proper coverage for the entire City of Houston. Due to the small number of Heavy Duty trucks (approximately 30) and the significant amount of required equipment, the three zone system works better logistically and financially for the Heavy Duty companies.

Q. Does the Agreement allow for new Heavy Duty towing and recovery companies to join?

A. Yes, the Agreement will have an annual 90 day enrollment period for any new company that meets the minimum requirements.

Q. What is the length of the Heavy Duty Police Authorized Tow Service Agreement?

A. Once approved by City Council, the Agreement will be in effect for five (5) years.