



DEPARTMENT NOTICE

20-076
04/29/20

Towing of Vehicles – COVID-19

The state of California has closed Department of Motor Vehicle offices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The DMV currently offers limited service online, but many individuals will not be able to obtain or correct suspension status of a driver license, and/or correct vehicle registration issues. The DMV has requested law enforcement agencies, ***“Exercise flexibility and discretion when reviewing driver license or identification and vehicle registration records.”***

Therefore, the department has determined that vehicles routinely subject to tow under the following tow authorities **shall** only be towed if there are exigent circumstances and with approval of a supervisor.

TOW AUTHORITY	CITE SECTION	ACTION
14602.6(a)(1) CVC	12500(A) CVC No DL issued	Park legally or release to licensed driver within 30 minutes.
14602.6(a)(1) CVC	14601.1(a) CVC Susp/Rev DL	Park legally or release to licensed driver within 30 minutes.
14602.6(a)(1) CVC	23247 (e) CVC No ID	Park legally or release to licensed driver within 30 minutes.
22651(g) CVC	N/A	Park legally
22651(h) CVC	N/A	Park legally
22651(i) CVC	N/A	Do not tow (SCOFLAW)
22651(o) CVC	4000(a)(1) CVC (mover)	Do not tow (Exp. reg over 6 months)
22651.5 CVC	N/A	Do not tow (SCOFLAW)
22651.5 CVC	3704(b) MPC	Do not tow (audible alarm sounding)

In cases where the member and their supervisor deem a tow to be necessary, individuals who meet the criteria for road side vehicle release delineated in DB 18-117, but are not able to arrange the response of a licensed driver to the traffic stop location, will be allowed to obtain release of their towed vehicle. Members should direct affected individuals to respond to the STOP Window in Room 154 at 850 Bryant St. with an eligible, licensed driver who can take control of the towed vehicle.

The following are some examples of when a vehicle **may** be towed based on the ***Community Caretaking Doctrine*** with a supervisor’s approval:

- When the vehicle is impeding traffic or jeopardizing public safety and convenience;
- When the vehicle is blocking a driveway or crosswalk or otherwise preventing the efficient movement of traffic (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle);

- When the location of the stopped vehicle may create a public safety hazard (e.g., vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle);
- The validly licensed owner is not immediately available to prevent the immediate and continued unlawful operation of the vehicle.

Members should continue to prioritize necessary vehicle tows for criminal investigations and arrests pursuant to 22655.5(a) VC.

This Department Notice shall be in effect until rescinded or superseded.



WILLIAM SCOTT

Chief of Police

Per DB 19-156, sworn members are required to electronically acknowledge receipt and review of this Department Notice in HRMS. Any questions regarding this policy should be made to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional guidance about the directive.