

HB 581 -- TOW TRUCK COMPANY REGULATIONS

SPONSOR: Muntzel

This bill establishes several new regulations for the Missouri State Highway Patrol and tow truck companies which include:

- (1) A state trooper must call a towing company from a rotation list, if available, when a vehicle needs to be removed from an accident scene;
- (2) If a tow truck has already arrived at the accident scene, the responding state trooper has the authority to dismiss the previously arrived tow truck and call one from the rotation list, if one is available;
- (3) A state trooper may not use a towing company located outside the state of Missouri, except in specified circumstances;
- (4) A tow truck is prohibited from towing a vehicle from an accident scene if they were not called by the state trooper, the driver or owner of the vehicle involved in the accident, or their authorized agent. Any tow truck operator violating this provision is:
 - (a) Guilty of a class D misdemeanor for the first violation and the tow truck may be impounded;
 - (b) Guilty of a class A misdemeanor for the second violation; and
 - (c) Guilty of a class D felony for the third and subsequent offense;
- (5) A tow truck company must display their business address at their location and the display must be visible from the street or road;
- (6) The tow lot utilized by the towing company must have a total area for storage either inside or outside of at least 2000 square feet and fencing a minimum of seven feet high. The lot must be open for a minimum of eight hours per day between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. No additional fees can be charged to view or retrieve a vehicle during regular business hours;
- (7) The towing company must maintain an operational telephone with the telephone number published or available through directory assistance;

(8) The towing company cannot remove a towed vehicle from Missouri unless authorized to do so by the vehicle owner or his or her agent; and

(9) A tow may not be dispatched through a third party unless hired by the towing company. This provision does not apply in Kansas City.

Additionally, Franklin County, Missouri is now exempt from the law which allows counties to adopt ordinances in addition to Section 304.154.4, RSMo.