

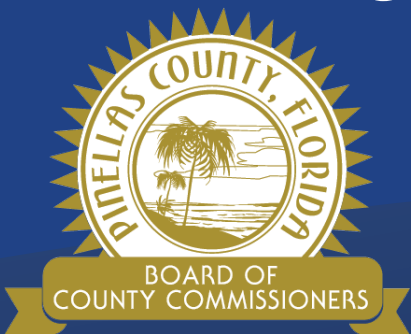
Towing Ordinance Review



Consumer Protection

Doug Templeton

Chief Investigator



Our Vision: To Be the Standard for Public Service in America



Towing Update



Previous Ordinance Updates

Administrative Lien Release Fee – Florida Statute 713.78

Current Rates - Updated by Resolution

Towing Industry Recommendations

Staff Ordinance Recommendations for Public Hearing

Consumer Complaint Summary

Ordinance and Rate History

- No increases occurred from 2000-2019
- 2019 Rates increased by 20%
- 2023 Rates increased by 18%, staff to bring back updates to BCC
- Worked with Towing Industry in 2024 to update rates and paused recommendations as average tow cost for consumers more than doubled.

Consumer Protection concurs that competitive rates are needed for industry, however our goal is to ensure protections for consumers are in place.

Under Florida Statute 713.78

- Allows tow operators to additionally charge a "lien release administrative fee" of up to \$250, which does not fall under the County's authority

Under Pinellas County ordinance

- \$60 Administrative fee may be charged after the first 24 hours of fee storage*
- \$40 Filing of Lien Notice fee may be charged to cover execution of mailing of the lien notice*
 - *Towing service must show compliance with requirements of FS 713.78

\$250 Administrative Lien Fee Impact



Hillsborough County

- Lawsuit surrounding application/timing of the administrative lien release fee of \$250
 - Hillsborough prevailed in circuit court (November 2025)
 - Case elevated to 2nd District Court of Appeal (November 2025)

Other Counties

- \$250 is assessed in few instances, or as allowed under ordinance
 - Fee may only be charged after specified time period has passed
 - Allow tow operator to charge actual costs, **up to \$250**, if they can provide supporting documentation/research costs to show a lien was filed

Class A Trespass Rate Comparison



CURRENT RATES	Pinellas	Hillsborough	Pasco	Manatee	Polk
Base Tow Rate	\$147	\$160	\$169	\$125	\$125
Mileage (10 mi max)	\$50	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$0
Storage (after 6 hrs)	\$30	\$35	\$35	\$25	\$30
Pre – 7/1/2024 Avg Cost	\$227	\$255	\$248	\$190	\$155
State Lien Release Admin Fee	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Avg Tow Cost	\$477	\$505	\$504	\$440	\$405

Tow Industry Recommendations



Tow operator existing fee recommendations

- Four meetings were conducted with tow operators in 2024. Updated rate recommendations were requested in 2025, and again on May 23, 2026, to confirm we have the latest information.

Class A Trespass Tow example	Pinellas County (current)	Tow Operator Recommendations
Trespass Tow Rate	\$147	\$210-250
Trespass Tow Mileage (\$/mile – 10 mile max)	\$5/mile	\$8-10/mile
Daily Storage Fee (> 6 hrs)	\$30	\$45-55
County Admin / Lien Notice Fees	\$100 (\$60 / \$40)	\$130-150
Cover / Tarp Fee	\$35	\$50

Tow Industry Recommendations cont.



Additional Fees requested not currently in ordinance	
After-Hours Gate Fee: \$78.75	Electric Vehicle Fee: \$52.50
Dollies / Go-Jaks: \$47.25 - \$125	CPI – 5%
Specialized Labor: \$52.50 / 15 min increment (exotic, lowered, custom)	Heavy Duty Special Equipment Charge Rotator: \$1,400 - \$1,500 / hr
Heavy Duty Truck Dollies: \$1,200 for 24k lbs., \$2,400 for 44k lbs. per use	Mileage Charge for Specialized Situations (water recoveries): \$25 / mile
Specialized Equipment for Clean-up and Recovery: TBD by class and hourly chrg	Detach/Lowboy Trailer: \$250 - \$550 / hr
Mileage Charge for Heavy Equip: \$250 - \$550 / hr	Landoll Trailer: \$250 - \$550 / hr
Mileage Charge for Buses, Coaches, Equipment: \$20 / mile	Wait Time: \$100 / hr
Fuel Surcharge: any 7 consecutive days over national average - Potential workload/enforcement concern	

Lien fee language update

- No lien and/or administrative fees can be charged until 48 hours after storage begins, excluding weekends.
- Staff do not recommend rate increases until a time limited mechanism can be put in place to protect consumers.

Emergency fuel surcharge

- Triggered when average monthly diesel exceeds \$5.50
- Adds \$1.00 per mile for actual miles towed
- Effective the 1st of the following month, lasting 30 days; extended in 30-day increments while diesel remains above \$5.50

CPI-based adjustments to base tow rates

- Annual review of January Bureau of Labor Statistics Transportation Index for Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater. Base tow rate adjustments effective May 1, capped at 3% and not below 0%
- Recent index values:
 - January 2024: 1.7%
 - January 2025: 1.9%
 - January 2026: -3.3%

After-hours gate fee

- Tow operators may charge up to \$70 for vehicle release between 6:01PM – 7:59AM or on closed days
- Operating hours are considered Monday – Saturday, 8AM – 6PM, excluding holidays
- Existing rules continue to prohibit any fee for accessing personal items during operating hours

Recommended ordinance clarifications

- Require photo or video documentation of violations
- Update “drop fee” language to clarify that no more than half of the base tow rate may be charged if a vehicle is released before arriving at the storage site
- Clarify that failure to provide required records to an investigating officer constitutes a violation
- Updates for statute changes related to acceptable payments

Class A Trespass Rate Comparison



CURRENT RATES	Pinellas	Hillsborough	Pasco	Manatee	Polk
Base Tow Rate	\$147	\$160	\$169	\$125	\$125
Mileage (10 mi max)	\$50	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$0
Storage (after 6 hrs)	\$30	\$35	\$35	\$25	\$30
State Lien Release Admin Fee	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Avg Tow Cost	\$477	\$505	\$504	\$440	\$405
2026 RECOMENDED RATES	Pinellas	Hillsborough	Pasco	Manatee	Polk
Base Tow Rate	\$175	\$160 (\$185)	\$169	\$125	\$125
Mileage (10 mi max)	\$60	\$60 (\$70)	\$50	\$40	\$0
Storage (after 6 hrs)	\$35	\$35 (\$40)	\$35	\$25	\$30
State Lien Release Admin Fee	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Avg Tow Cost	\$520	\$505 (\$545)	\$504	\$440	\$405

*Recently proposed to Hillsborough – April 2026

Consumer Protection Recommendations



Current vs Recommended Class A rates with 48-hr language applied

Current Rates	Class A	
	Trespass	Police-Directed
Base rate	\$147	\$153
Mileage (10 max)	\$50	\$50
Storage (> 6 hrs)	\$30	\$30
Pre – 48 hrs cost	\$162-\$257	\$168-\$263
Post - 48 hrs cost	\$572-\$607	\$578-\$613

Recommended Rates	Class A	
	Trespass	Police-Directed
Base rate	\$175	\$200
Mileage (10 max)	\$60	\$60
Storage (> 6 hrs)	\$35	\$35
Pre – 48 hrs cost	*\$193-\$305	*\$218-\$330
Post - 48 hrs cost	*\$613-\$655	*\$638-\$680

*An additional \$70 after-hours gate fee may also apply.

Consumer Protection Recommendations



Current rates with 48-hr language applied

Current Rates	Class A		Class B		Class C		Class D	
	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed
Base rate	\$147	\$153	\$265	\$270	\$400	\$415	\$520	\$530
Mileage (10 max)	\$50	\$50	\$60	\$60	\$70	\$70	\$70	\$70
Storage (> 6 hrs)	\$30	\$30	\$40	\$40	\$70	\$70	\$70	\$70
Pre – 48 hrs cost	\$162-\$257	\$168-\$263	\$283-\$405	\$288-\$410	\$421-\$610	\$436-\$615	\$541-\$730	\$551-\$740
Post - 48 hrs cost	\$572-\$607	\$578-\$613	\$713-\$755	\$718-\$760	\$911-\$960	\$926-\$975	\$1031-\$1080	\$1041-1090

Recommended rates with 48-hr language applied

Recommended Rates	Class A		Class B		Class C		Class D	
	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed
Base rate	\$175	\$200	\$315	\$340	\$476	\$501	\$619	\$644
Mileage (10 max)	\$60	\$60	\$70	\$70	\$70	\$70	\$80	\$80
Storage (> 6 hrs)	\$35	\$35	\$45	\$45	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75
Pre – 48 hrs cost	\$193-\$305	\$218-\$330	\$336-\$465	\$361-\$490	\$497-\$696	\$522-\$721	\$643-\$849	\$668-\$874
Post - 48 hrs cost	\$613-\$655	\$638-\$680	\$776-\$815	\$801-\$840	\$997-\$1046	\$1022-\$1071	\$1143-\$1199	\$1168-\$1224

- An additional \$70 after-hours gate fee may also apply.

Consumer Protection Recommendations



Recommended rates with 48-hr language applied

Recommended Rates	Class A		Class B		Class C		Class D	
	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed	Trespass	Police-Directed
Base rate	\$175 ↑19%	\$200 ↑31%	\$315 ↑19%	\$340 ↑26%	\$476 ↑19%	\$501 ↑21%	\$619 ↑19%	\$644 ↑22%
Mileage (10 max)	\$60 ↑20%	\$60 ↑20%	\$70 ↑17%	\$70 ↑17%	\$70 n/c	\$70 n/c	\$80 ↑14%	\$80 ↑14%
Storage (> 6 hrs)	\$35 ↑17%	\$35 ↑17%	\$45 ↑13%	\$45 ↑13%	\$75 ↑7%	\$75 ↑7%	\$75 ↑7%	\$75 ↑7%
Pre – 48 hrs cost	\$193-\$305	\$218-\$330	\$336-\$465	\$361-\$490	\$497-\$696	\$522-\$721	\$643-\$849	\$668-\$874
Post - 48 hrs cost	\$613-\$655	\$638-\$680	\$776-\$815	\$801-\$840	\$997-\$1046	\$1022-\$1071	\$1143-\$1199	\$1168-\$1224

- An additional \$70 after-hours gate fee may also apply.

Towing complaints

Fiscal Year	Number of Complaints	Number of \$250-related complaints
2022	130	0
2023	102	0
*2024	103	17
2025	168	112
2026-to-date	200	189

***July 1, 2024 - \$250 admin lien release fee effective**

Total: 318

Case Examples with current rates and tow operator recommendations

- Consumer parked at a CVS at 4:50PM, made a purchase and then walked to a neighboring Dollar Store to purchase additional items. Returned at 5:20PM, vehicle lawfully towed. Traveled to tow yard via Uber to pick up vehicle and arrived at 5:58PM.
- **Towing costs paid: \$463.21**
 - Base tow rate (\$147) + Mileage rate (10 x \$5/mile: \$50) + \$250 admin lien fee + ~3.625% credit card fee (\$16.21)
- **Cost with tow operator current recommendations: \$559.58 - \$621.75**
 - Base tow rate (\$210 - \$250) + Mileage rate (10 x \$8 - \$10/mile: \$80 - \$100) + \$250 admin lien fee + ~3.625% credit card fee (~\$20)
- **Towing cost pre-July 2024 (excludes \$250 admin lien fee): \$204.14**
 - Base tow rate (\$147) + Mileage rate (10 x \$5/mile: \$50) + ~3.625% credit card fee (\$7.14)

Case Examples with current rates and tow operator recommendations

- Consumer was towed from their assigned condominium parking spot for having an expired tag at 12:10AM on a Sunday. They paid cash and picked up their vehicle approximately 14 hours later that same day at 1:51PM.
- **Towing costs paid: \$464.10**
 - Base tow rate (\$147) + Mileage rate (7 x \$5/mile: \$35) + \$30 Storage Fee (>6 hrs) + \$250 admin lien fee + Storage Tax (\$2.10)
- **Cost with tow operator current recommendations: \$564.50 - \$628.50**
 - Base tow rate (\$210 - \$250) + Mileage rate (7 x \$8 - \$10/mile: \$56 - \$70) + \$45 - \$55 Storage Fee (>6 hrs) + \$250 admin lien fee + Storage Tax (~\$3.50)
- **Towing cost pre-July 2024 (excludes \$250 admin lien fee): \$214.10**
 - Base tow rate (\$147) + Mileage rate (7 x \$5/mile: \$35) + \$30 Storage Fee (>6 hrs) + Storage Tax (\$2.10)

Previous Towing Rate Increases



Vehicle Class	Updates	Trespass Tow Fee	Trespass Tow Fee (per mile)	Police-Directed Tow Fee	Police-Directed Fee (per mile)	Daily Storage Fee Amount	Labor (beyond initial 30 min, per 15 min)	Admin/Lien Fees (county authorized)	Cover/Tarp Fee
Class A Vehicles	2000	\$100	\$3	\$100	\$3	\$20	\$15 (\$60/hr)	\$30 + \$30 (\$60) \$40 + \$35 (\$75) ↑25% \$60 + \$40 (\$100) ↑33%	\$15 \$20 ↑33% \$35 ↑75%
	2019	\$125 ↑25%	\$4 ↑33%	\$130 ↑30%	\$4 ↑33%	\$25 ↑25%	\$25 (\$100/hr) ↑67%		
	2023	\$147 ↑18%	\$5 ↑25%	\$153 ↑18%	\$5 ↑25%	\$30 ↑20%	\$30 (\$120/hr) ↑20%		
Class B Vehicles	2000	\$200	\$3	\$200	\$3	\$30	\$50 (\$200/hr)		
	2019	\$225 ↑13%	\$5 ↑67%	\$230 ↑15%	\$5 ↑67%	\$35 ↑17%	\$50 (\$200/hr)		
	2023	\$265 ↑18%	\$6 ↑20%	\$270 ↑15%	\$6 ↑20%	\$40 ↑13%	\$60 (\$240/hr) ↑20%		
Class C Vehicles	2000	\$300	\$3	\$300	\$3	\$60	\$75 (\$300/hr)		
	2019	\$340 ↑13%	\$6 ↑100%	\$350 ↑17%	\$6 ↑100%	\$60	\$75 (\$300/hr)		
	2023	\$400 ↑15%	\$7 ↑17%	\$415 ↑19%	\$7 ↑17%	\$70 ↑17%	\$90 (\$360/hr) ↑20%		
Class D Vehicles	2000	\$400	\$3	\$400	\$3	\$60	\$100 (\$400/hr)		
	2019	\$440 ↑10%	\$6 ↑100%	\$450 ↑13%	\$6 ↑100%	\$60	\$100 (\$400/hr)		
	2023	\$520 ↑18%	\$7 ↑17%	\$530 ↑18%	\$7 ↑17%	\$70 ↑17%	\$120 (\$480/hr) ↑20%		

Thank you