

Business Impact Estimate Form (see F.S. § 125.66(3)(a))

For:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF PINELLAS, PROVIDING THAT THE PINELLAS COUNTY CODE BE AMENDED BY REVISING CHAPTER 122 OF SAID CODE: PROVIDING FOR REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 122 BY ADDING A REQUIREMENT TO PHOTOGRAPH VEHICLES/VESSELS PRIOR TO TOWING; PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITION OF AN AFTER-HOURS GATE FEE; PROVIDING FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN EMERGENCY FUEL SURCHARGE DURING PERIODS OF EXTREME FUEL PRICE SPIKES; PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITION OF AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE FEE; PROVIDING FOR CPI-BASED ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS TO RATES; PROVIDING FOR CLARIFICATION OF DROP FEE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RECORDS; PROVIDING FOR REMOVAL OF PAYMENT TYPE REQUIREMENTS TO ALIGN WITH STATUTE; PROVIDING FOR A FORTY-EIGHT HOUR EXCLUSION ON ASSESSMENT OF LIEN FEES; PROVIDING FOR RATE SIGNAGE POSTED AT TOW LOCATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AREAS EMBRACED; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the Pinellas County Commission on Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:00PM at Pinellas County Communications – Palm Room, 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater, Florida 33756

** Unless an attachment is expressly referenced, the content in this Form encompasses the entire Business Impact Estimate for the Ordinance.*

1. Summary of the Ordinance, including a statement of the public purpose to be served by the Ordinance, such as serving the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the County: *[This Section does not need to be lengthy. The Recitals ("WHEREAS" Clauses), or the "Purpose" or "Legislative Intent" Sections of the Ordinance, may be helpful to reference.]*

This amendment to Chapter 122 for towing operations is intended to provide for rate structure adjustments and increases to promote a competitive towing industry. Additionally, the amendment provides for adjustments to align with state statutory language for forms of payment and adds a documentation requirement for improved documentation to protect operators and consumers. The whereas clauses include:

WHEREAS, Pinellas County enacted a Towing Ordinance ("Ordinance") in 2000 in order to address public concerns and to protect the safety, health and welfare of Pinellas County citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Ordinance was initially amended in 2016, and again in 2019 and 2023 in order to clarify language, enhance several areas related to consumer protection, and adjust towing rates to balance consumer and industry interests; and

WHEREAS, as a part of the 2019 amendment, it was proposed that the Ordinance be reviewed every three years to account for industry changes and look for potential improvements, as a result, the Ordinance was reviewed and amended in 2023; and

WHEREAS, in addition to approving the 2023 amendments, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners requested that the Ordinance be reviewed to address concerns amongst the towing operators within Pinellas County; and

WHEREAS, Consumer Protection met with the Professional Wreckers of Florida, Inc. (PWOFF), as well as local industry partners and law enforcement, in order to obtain feedback on local trends, operations and rates; and

WHEREAS, during these meetings, industry representatives indicated significant increases in staffing and operational costs as well as growing difficulties in maintaining competitive operations under the current fee schedule; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTY wishes to ensure rates allow for a competitive industry while ensuring effective protections and balance with the needs of local consumers; and

WHEREAS, as an additional part of the review, opportunities were identified by PWOFF to accommodate concerns such as late-night gate fees, emergency gasoline surcharges and a requirement to utilize video/photograph technology prior to towing. Additionally, acceptable payment type requirements were removed to comport with recent statutory changes; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners agrees with the recommendations and desires that Chapter 122 be modified and updated.

2. An estimate of the direct economic impact of the Ordinance on private, for-profit businesses in the County, including the following, if any:

(a) An estimate of direct compliance costs that businesses may reasonably incur if the Ordinance is enacted; [Because many ordinances do not require that direct costs be incurred for compliance, this estimate will often be “zero dollars.” Generally speaking, direct costs are clearly connected to a specific objective and readily ascertainable.]

(b) Identification of any new charge or fee on businesses subject to the Ordinance for which businesses will be financially responsible; [Because many ordinances do not result in the levy of any new charges or fees on businesses, there will often be nothing to identify here.] and

(c) An estimate of the County’s regulatory costs, including estimated revenues from any new charges or fees that will be imposed on businesses to cover such costs. [Because many ordinances entail regulatory costs, an estimate will often be warranted here. For example, the County may incur costs for any number of the following factors: implementation, outreach, construction/maintenance, monitoring, enforcement, and procurement. However, the estimate must only account for direct costs (briefly described above).]

This ordinance amendment provides for recommended rate increases which provides a direct benefit to towing operators including:

- *Add a new Electronic Vehicle (EVs) Fee of \$35 per 15 minutes on scene with a maximum of \$70 to offset costs of EVs on a typical Class A tow.*
- *Adjust base trespass tow rates for vehicle Classes B (\$315.35), C (\$476.00), and D (\$618.80) in line with recent adjustments to Class A rates. This proposed increase is intended to address operational cost pressures inclusive of modernization costs requiring increased use of dollies, go jacks and other tools for modern vehicles.*

- Adjust base police directed tow rates for vehicle Classes A (\$200.00), B (\$340.35), C (\$501.00), and D (\$643.80) in line with recent adjustments to Class A rates. This proposed increase is intended to address operational cost pressures inclusive of modernization costs requiring increased use of dollies, go jacks and other tools for modern vehicles.
- Adjust mileage rates for Classes B (\$7.00), and D (\$8.00) vehicles by \$1.00 per mile up to 10 miles and increase daily storage fees across vehicle Classes B, C, and D classes by \$5.00.
- Add a new after-hours gate fee for opening to allow vehicle release of \$70.00. This proposed, new fee addresses the operational cost of opening for release of vehicles after hours and aids with accountability when responding to customer release requests.
- Add an emergency fuel surcharge to allow for a \$1.00 per mile adjustment in the event of a temporary surge in fuel pricing. This proposed fee will utilize the standard U.S. Energy Information Administration pricing for the Southeast region to track fuel diesel fuel pricing. If pricing surges to \$5.50 per gallon, CP will initiate and post a temporary surcharge for a minimum of two (2) months and continuing until pricing indicators drop below the threshold.
- Add a CPI-based rate adjustment to the base tow rates with a 3% cap for the next five (5) years. The new CPI will be applied annually and will be reviewed after five (5) adjustment years.

In addition to the rate adjustments, this amendment:

- Adjusts payment types to align with statutory changes.
- Requires additional documentation by photo or video prior to tow. This is a new documentation requirement to aid with responding to consumer complaints. Mirroring Hillsborough ordinance language.
- Requires new tow rate signage at locations of private trespass tows in addition to statutorily required signage.
- Restricts lien fees to forty-eight hours from the time of storage. Mirroring Hillsborough ordinance language.
- Clarifies Drop Fee prior to arriving at storage site.
- Clarifies requirement to provide records to investigators.

3. A good faith estimate of the number of businesses likely to be impacted by the Proposed Ordinance:

[This Section is self-explanatory: All that is required is a good faith estimate of the number (note: not costs) of businesses likely to be impacted.]

During previous inspection efforts, Pinellas County identified 30 towing operators within Pinellas County, of which, approximately 20 indicated that they do trespass towing within the County.

4. Any additional information the BCC deems useful: *[This Section is not legally required.]*

Pinellas County Consumer Protection was directed to meet with the towing industry to review the rate structure. CP collaborated with the Public Wrecker Operators of Florida (PWOFF) to discuss and explore options. Meetings were held November 2023, December 2023, February 2024, and June 2024 to work through rate options and suggestions. CP received additional industry recommendations in 2025 and May 2026. In June 2026, the BCC adjusted some rates by resolution and directed CP to return with additional recommendations. As a result, CP is bringing forward recommended amendments to the ordinance.