



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations

Bill 21-0018

Study and Report – Towing Dispatch System

Sponsor: Councilmember Ryan Dorsey

Introduced: January 11, 2021

Purpose:

For the purpose of requiring that Baltimore City Information and Technology, in consultation with certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating methods and systems of dispatching towing vehicles within Baltimore City; and providing for a special effective date.

Effective: Date of enactment

Agency Reports

Department of Transportation	
Department of Finance	No Objection
Baltimore City Office of Information Technology	No Objection
Baltimore Police Department	No Objection
Baltimore City Fire Department	No Objection
Department of Public Works	No Objection
Office of the Mayor	

Analysis

Background

The City of Baltimore contracts certain towing services to Medallion Tow companies. Upon receiving a contract as a designated Medallion Tow company, the Traffic Section of the police department will provide them with decals. Those decals have a unique identification number specific to each Medallion Tow company, and the decal should be properly affixed to each one of the company's tow trucks. Medallion Tow companies assist the Baltimore Police Department with the removal of vehicles to include, but not limited to: Recovered Stolen Vehicles, Vehicles Seized as Evidence from crime scenes, Vehicles Seized due to Arrest, and Disabled Vehicles that may be impeding the free flow of traffic or the movement of pedestrians.

Note: The Baltimore City Department of Transportations – Towing Division is responsible for removing abandoned and illegally parked vehicles. They are generally dispatched through the city's 3-1-1 service request process.

Current Process

It is a responsibility of the Traffic Section within the Baltimore Police Department to maintain an active list of available Medallion Towing Service companies, and to ensure that the police department's Communications Section has a current list at all times. When any of the incidents mentioned above occurs, the police department follows this process:

- The on scene Police Officer will request a tow truck and provide the dispatcher with the location, make, model and condition of the vehicle that is going to be towed;
- The dispatcher will advise the Police Officer of the name, medallion number, and time of notification;
- If the assigned tow truck does not arrive within 20 minutes of the notification, the dispatcher will contact the tow company to get a reason for the delay;
- From the time that the phone call is placed, the tow truck has 5 minutes to arrive at the scene;
- If the tow truck does not arrive within the 25-minute window, and does not provide a considerable reason for the delay such as abnormal traffic conditions, adverse weather or another type of emergency then the dispatcher will cancel the tow truck, and it will not be permitted to tow the vehicle;
- The dispatcher will then select and request the next closest Medallion Tow company and advise the Police Officer of the new information.

Note: Police Dispatchers make request to the Medallion Tow company, and the company's dispatcher assigns the closest available tow truck to respond to the scene.

Computer-Aided Dispatch

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems consist of software packages used to initiate public safety calls for service, dispatch, and maintain the status of responding resources performing field operations. It is generally used by emergency communications

dispatchers, call-takers, and 911 operators in centralized, public safety call centers, as well as by field personnel utilizing mobile data terminals or mobile data computers. Since its development and implementation in the public safety industry, other sectors have adopted this technology such as taxicabs, mass transit vehicles, and other field service technicians.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): Article 15: Subtitle 22 – Trespass Towing, Article 31: Subtitle 22 Towing Services – Accident Towing, Baltimore Police Department Towing Policy

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Analysis Date: January 25, 2021

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