



Report Number: EC2024-1248

Meeting: Executive Committee

Meeting Date: 2024 November 07

NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Tow Truck Tricks

Sponsoring Member(s) of Council: Councillor Peter Demong

WHEREAS... there is a growing local trend where tow companies showing up at collision scenes prior to being called upon, as is happening in other major cities across Canada.

AND WHEREAS... “poachers” or individuals representing tow companies are using scanners to pick up the Calgary Fire Department calls for service and arriving there quickly - in some cases before CFD, and attempting to solicit tow services regardless of the condition of the vehicles involved.

AND WHEREAS: these individuals are being asked to move away from the scene so emergency responders can assess the scene only to receive verbal abuse from the “poachers” and in some cases near physical confrontations.

AND WHEREAS: there are currently no restrictions in place preventing tow companies and their representatives from entering the scene of a collision where first responders are present, resulting in additional distractions and major conflicts.

AND WHEREAS: not only are these tactics preventing the attention of emergency responders from doing their jobs, but these actions are creating greater hazards by blocking free lanes of traffic and creating additional safety concerns.

AND WHEREAS: information being given to those involved in collisions is not always truthful, people are being told their vehicles need a tow when they do not, under the threat of further ramifications or further liability of causing damage to other vehicles while leaving the scene.

AND WHEREAS: poachers are preying on Calgarians involved in collisions by giving false information on the potential cost of the tow and equipment required for the tow, resulting in ridiculously inflated invoices once they try to get their vehicles out of the lots they are towed to.

AND WHEREAS: in some cases, there are relationships between the tow companies and auto body businesses outside of the recommended carrier’s insurance companies and with the inflated costs insurance companies are refusing to pay these costs resulting in lengthy legal disputes.

AND WHEREAS: some tow invoices that should have been in the hundreds are seeing totals in the thousands of dollars even tens of thousands.

AND WHEREAS: if this isn’t immediately addressed and the proper parameters put in place, we will see this trend result in substantial problems for Calgarians.

AND WHEREAS: establishing crash scene parameters will prevent CFD from having to retrofit the department with encrypted radios, a cost savings up in around half a million dollars.

AND WHEREAS: the municipality of Ottawa recently made bylaw amendments that requires tow companies to remain outside a 100m radius of the scene of a collision and if in violation of this they will be given a fine of \$197.00.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED ... that Council direct Administration to bring a report to the Community Development Committee no later than Q1 2025 to:

1. Address predatory behaviors by towing companies at vehicle collisions – potentially including amendments to the Business License Bylaw 32M98 and other regulations as appropriate, such as:
 - a. A prohibition on towing companies or their agents stopping within a recommended radius of a collision unless called upon by Calgary Police Service (CPS), Calgary Fire Department or a party to the collision.
 - b. Establish a fine structure that will act as an effective deterrent to chaser or poacher behaviors by towing companies, including escalating fine amounts for repeat offenders.

Attachment:

1. Notice of Motion Checklist