


FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT	POLICY NUMBER
	WRECKER QUALIFICATION AND ALLOCATION SYSTEM	17.02
	APPLICABLE CALEA STANDARDS	ISSUE DATE
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		EFFECTIVE DATE
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17.02.01 PURPOSE

To establish Florida Highway Patrol policy, procedures, and responsibilities concerning a Wrecker Qualification and Allocation System, provide guidelines for the use of Department forms associated with wrecker operations, provide guidelines for the selection of wrecker operators for placement on rotation lists, and to enumerate the responsibilities of those wrecker operators.

17.02.02 AUTHORITY

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Division of Florida Highway Patrol, is granted authority to establish rules for a Wrecker Qualification and Allocation System by Section 321.051, Florida Statutes, and Rule 15B-9, Florida Administrative Code.

17.02.03 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to design rules to assist private and commercial users of the highways of this State by ensuring that only qualified and reputable wrecker operators and equipment are provided for removal of wrecked, disabled, stolen or abandoned vehicles in the event the owner or operator is incapacitated, unavailable or leaves the procurement of wrecker service to the discretion of the investigating officer.

17.02.04 DEFINITIONS

- A. ABANDONED VEHICLE - An unattended vehicle which is directed by a member to be removed because it is improperly parked in violation of Sections 316.194, 316.1945 or 316.1951, Florida Statutes. This shall not apply to an abandoned vehicle being removed because it has been involved in a crash.
- B. SERVICE CALL - Any rotation wrecker response in which the removal of the vehicle is not required. Such calls may include but not be limited to changing a flat tire, providing gas or use of jumper cables, assisting in starting a vehicle or unlocking a vehicle.

- C. WRECKER OPERATOR - The individual, partnership, or business entity engaged for hire in the recovery, towing or removal of wrecked, disabled, stolen or abandoned motor vehicles. A hired driver or employee shall be considered an agent of the wrecker operator and will be governed by these rules.

17.02.05 OBJECTIVES

- A. To safeguard property in those cases where the actual owner or person in charge of such property is for any reason unable to provide ordinary care and protection for such property.
- B. To protect those persons who actually remove and take custody of a vehicle towed by authority of the Florida Highway Patrol.
- C. To protect the interests of the Florida Highway Patrol.
- D. To provide a record of towed vehicles.
- E. To provide a record of recovered stolen vehicles.

17 02.06 PROCEDURES

A. CALL ALLOCATION SYSTEM

1. Each troop commander shall divide his/her troop into zones with clearly defined boundaries for the purpose of establishing wrecker rotation lists in each Florida Highway Patrol station.
2. Wrecker operators located within a zone shall be called by the duty officer for the removal of a wrecked, disabled, stolen or abandoned vehicle according to the wrecker operator's placement on a wrecker rotation list in each Florida Highway Patrol station and according to the wrecker classification for the size of the vehicle to be towed.
3. Wrecker operators will be called in succession from the top of the list. Following each call a wrecker operator will be rotated to the bottom of the list, unless it is an owner's request call.
4. A wrecker operator may respond to a call with a wrecker classified to meet or exceed the size of the vehicle to be towed.
5. Wrecker requests from the member will be transmitted to the duty officer who will contact the proper wrecker operator for the zone in which the vehicle to be removed is located. Wrecker operators called at the owner's request shall not be rotated and will maintain their position on the list.

6. The member may cancel a request for service of a participating wrecker operator at any time. In the event of cancellation or response without rendering service, the wrecker operator shall not be rotated, but will maintain his/her position on the list. In all cases of cancellation of service of a wrecker operator, the member shall advise the duty officer the reason for cancellation for documentation in the wrecker log.
7. A member shall not advise the duty officer to tell a wrecker operator to respond 10-18 (emergency) to a scene.
8. Out-of-zone wrecker requests are permitted only in the event of an emergency or the absence of an approved wrecker of proper classification within the crash or removal zone. An owner/driver may not request a rotation wrecker from another zone. They may, however, make an owner's request, by name, from another zone.
9. The investigating member may call for specialized recovery equipment on a nearest available basis, in the event of specialized recovery requirements not otherwise met by the wrecker operators within the given zone. The member shall advise the duty officer the reason for such request for documentation in the wrecker log.
10. For multiple car crashes involving multiple disabled vehicles, the member shall advise the duty officer of the total number of wreckers needed to separately remove each vehicle. The duty officer shall call the wrecker operator on top of the rotation list and advise him of the total number of Division approved wreckers needed from that operator to accomplish the removal. If the wrecker operator lacks the capacity to handle multiple removals, he/she shall nevertheless be called as needed from the rotation list. The first wrecker on the list shall have a choice of vehicles. If the first listed wrecker does not arrive on the scene within a reasonable time, the investigating member will assign vehicles to available wrecker operators.
11. Wrecker operators shall be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Wrecker operators shall be allowed to be placed on "Temporarily out of Service" status only once in any 90 day period. The wrecker operator is to be placed on the bottom of the wrecker rotation list upon return to service.
12. An answering service or pager shall not be permitted except as provided in this section. The troop commander may approve the use of an answering service by a wrecker operator if, due to the limited number of operators in a zone, no undue burden is placed on the Division. The wrecker operator must acknowledge the

rotation call by contacting the duty officer within five minutes after the rotation call was received by the answering service. If the wrecker operator does not acknowledge the call as required by this subsection, the duty officer shall cancel the call, rotate the wrecker operator to the bottom of the list and request the services of the next available wrecker operator.

B. GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING WRECKERS

Members at the scene, who are requesting a wrecker from the duty officer, shall adhere to the following guidelines to ensure compliance with the Wrecker Qualification and Allocation System rules.

1. Ascertain from the owner/driver of the vehicle to be towed, if they have a preference of wrecker operator. If they have an owner's request, the member shall advise the duty officer to call that wrecker operator, regardless of whether or not they are on the rotation list. If they have no particular request of a wrecker operator, the member shall advise the duty officer to dispatch the next rotation wrecker for that zone and class.
2. Request wreckers by classification (class). The classification shall be determined by type and GVW of the vehicle to be towed. (Refer to Section 17.02.06(C)).
3. Use good judgment when requesting Slide-Back or Roll-Back carriers as there is not a separate class or rotation list for these type wreckers. A request for a carrier wrecker may necessitate calling a wrecker operator out of rotation from the list and this procedure, if used, must be justified. In most instances, a typical wrecker with a wheel-lift or dollies, will be able to accomplish most removal tasks for their class of wrecker.
4. If there is no roadblock or emergency situation present, the member should wait until he is ready for the vehicle to be removed before calling for a wrecker. This will prevent a wrecker operator from sitting idly by waiting for the member to release the vehicle. Wrecker operators may charge an hourly rate after the first thirty minutes on the scene and a mileage charge for miles outside the ten mile radius of the operators business. This may result in additional charges to the motorist.
5. Members will not inquire of the duty officer as to which rotation wrecker operator is next on the list. This could lead to accusations or suspicions of "picking" wreckers from the rotation list to suit a member's personal wishes.
6. An Inventory and Vehicle Storage Receipt (HSMV 61801) shall be completed on all vehicles removed by a wrecker.

7. The investigating member shall advise the duty officer of all vehicle information needed for the completion of the wrecker log (i.e., vehicle year, make, tag number, and VIN). This should be done prior to leaving the scene or immediately upon completion of the assignment. This shall apply in all instances where a wrecker is used, whether called by the Division or not.

C. ROTATION WRECKER(S) AT THE SCENE

1. When a wrecker operator responds to a rotation wrecker call and determines that he/she cannot handle the removal with his/her own Division approved wrecker(s) and equipment, they shall not be allowed to call a different wrecker operator, whether that operator is approved or not, to assist them. The wrecker operator shall be rotated to the bottom of the rotation list and the next rotation wrecker operator for that zone will be called. However, Class C operators may utilize approved Class C units from adjacent zones or another Class C operator, provided the response time is reasonable.
2. Wrecker operators who remove a wrecked or damaged vehicle shall sweep glass from the roadway and remove all debris or hazards from the scene and comply with the requirements of Section 316.2044(2), Florida Statutes.

D. ROTATION OF WRECKER OPERATORS

1. When a wrecker operator responds to a rotation wrecker call and removes a vehicle from the scene, the wrecker operator will be rotated to the bottom of the rotation list.
2. When a wrecker operator responds to a service call or to remove a vehicle that is later determined to require only a service call, the wrecker operator will not be rotated to the bottom of the rotation list.
3. When a wrecker operator removes an abandoned vehicle, the wrecker operator will not be rotated to the bottom of the rotation list.
4. When a call for a rotation wrecker is canceled, the wrecker operator will not be rotated.
5. Members will advise the duty officer of the nature of the rotation wrecker request and any subsequent changes in or cancellation of the request.

E. ROAD SERVICE/MOTORIST AID CALL BOXES

The wrecker rotation list shall be used for all "roadside service requests" and "motorist aid call box calls" in the absence of an owner's request. The wrecker call shall be logged the same as any other wrecker rotation call. However, the responding wrecker will not be rotated unless a tow occurs.

17.02.07 REGULATIONS

A. APPROVED ROTATION WRECKERS

1. All wreckers and equipment shall be inspected by a Division designee and approved by the local troop commander to ensure they meet the Division's requirements before being placed on the rotation list according to zone and class. It shall be the responsibility of the member on the scene to determine if the wrecker operator dispatched by the duty officer on a rotation call arrives at the scene with a Division inspected and approved wrecker. If the wrecker operator responds with a non-approved wrecker, he/she shall be denied the call, rotated to the bottom of the list and the next wrecker called from the rotation list. The member shall advise the district supervisor in charge of wrecker inspections of any non-approved wreckers, equipment or operator violations.
2. Each tow truck must be equipped with the following:
 - a. At least one heavy duty push broom with a minimum width of 14 inches.
 - b. One square shovel.
 - c. One ax.
 - d. One crowbar or prybar with a minimum length of 30 inches.
 - e. A minimum of one (1) five pound CO₂ or dry chemical fire extinguisher or equivalent (must be approved type and have a current inspection tag attached).
 - f. One pair of bolt cutters with a minimum opening of one-half inch.
 - g. One set of jumper cables.
 - h. One four-way lug wrench.
 - i. One flashlight.

- j. Five thirty-minute fuses.
- k. At least three safety cones or triangle reflectors.
- l. Fifty pounds of sand or equivalent.

B. WRECKER ZONES

All Division approved wrecker operators shall be placed on the wrecker rotation list according to the zone in which the business is located. Each Florida Highway Patrol station shall maintain a separate rotation list for each wrecker zone within the district.

C. WRECKER CLASSIFICATION (CLASS)

Each Florida Highway Patrol station shall maintain a separate wrecker rotation list for each classification of wrecker (i.e., Class A, Class B, Class C). The classification of each wrecker is governed by manufacturer's rated capacities of the tow truck and the weight of the vehicle to be towed. The following specifications and requirements shall apply:

1. Class A Wrecker - (To be used for the removal of cars, light trucks or vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW or less.) It shall consist of a truck chassis with a manufacturer's rated capacity of at least 10,000 pounds GVW with a boom and winch having a manufacturer's rating of at least 4+ ton capacity mounted on the chassis. In addition, operators who wish to remove cars and light trucks may use Roll-Back or Slide-Back carriers (Addendum 17.02-1).
2. Class B Wrecker - (To be used for the removal of medium duty trucks or vehicles weighing 20,000 pounds GVW or less.) It shall consist of a truck chassis with a manufacturer's rated capacity of at least 20,000 GVW with a boom and twin winches having a manufacturer's rating of at least 10+ ton capacity mounted on the chassis (Addendum 17.02-2).
3. Class C Wrecker - (To be used for the removal of heavy trucks, house trailers, buses or vehicles weighing over 20,000 pounds GVW.) It shall consist of a truck chassis with a manufacturer's rated capacity of at least 30,000 pounds GVW and 50,000 pounds GVW for tandem axle trucks with a boom and twin winches having a manufacturer's rating of at least 25+ ton capacity mounted on the chassis (Addendum 17.02-3).
4. Roll-Back/Slide-Back Carrier - (To be used for the removal of cars, light trucks or vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds GVW or less.) It shall consist of a truck chassis with a manufacturer's rated capacity of at least 10,000 pounds GVW, with a minimum

of a sixteen foot bed, dual rear wheels and a winch with at least 8,000 pound capacity (Addendum 17.02-4). This is not a separate class of wrecker.

D. MAXIMUM RATES CHARGED BY ROTATION WRECKER OPERATORS

1. Except where towing and storage rates are established by a county or municipal commission, rates will be set by the Division and shall consist of the following rate schedule. Separate rates may be established for each tow truck classification.
 - a. Base Rate - The basic charge for responding to a call within a 10-mile radius from the wrecker operator's place of business. It includes attaching to the disabled vehicle and towing it to a place of storage. It also includes no more than a 30-minute wait at the crash scene before commencing actual retrieval.
 - b. Hourly Rate - The per hour charge for use of a wrecker in retrieving submerged vehicles, uprighting overturned vehicles, retrieval from ditches or the attachment of dollies. It does not include travel time or the first 30 minutes of working or waiting on the scene. There shall be no separate charge for winching
 - c. Mileage - The rate charged per mile for travel or towing outside of the 10-mile radius from the wrecker operator's place of business.
 - d. Daily Outside Storage - The daily rate for a vehicle in outside storage based on a 24-hour day, each day starting at 12:01 a.m. The initial six hours of storage shall be without charge. Thereafter, the daily rate will apply and any fraction of a day will count as a full day.
 - e. Daily Inside Storage Rate - The separate charge for inside storage according to the same criteria as set forth above for outside storage.
2. When a wrecker responds and performs a service call, he/she may charge a fee not to exceed \$35. The fee does not include the cost of parts or labor required for any authorized vehicle repair made at roadside. A wrecker operator shall not charge the base towing rate fee for a call resulting in service only to a disabled motorist which does not involve towing the vehicle from the scene.

E. WRECKER FILES AND WRECKER LOGS

1. Each Florida Highway Patrol station shall maintain wrecker files and wrecker logs until a written order of destruction is received from the DHSMV Records Management Section. There shall be an individual wrecker file kept on all approved wrecker operators that participate in the Division's Wrecker Qualification and Allocation System.
2. Each wrecker file shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:
 - a. Application for inclusion on the wrecker rotation list form (Addendum 17.02-5).
 - b. Insurance certificate (current).
 - c. Wrecker insurance statement of compliance. (Addendum 17.02-6).
 - d. Wrecker inspection form(s) (Addenda 17.02-1 through 17.02-4).
 - e. Wrecker driver information form (Addendum 17.02-7).
 - f. Approval for inclusion (letter from troop commander).
 - g. Notice of non-compliance form (insurance requirement) (Addendum 17.02-8).
 - h. Notice of suspension form(s) (if applicable)(Addenda 17.02-9A and 17.02-9B).
 - i. Order to Show Cause (if applicable).
 - j. Administrative actions taken by the Department (if applicable).
3. Wrecker logs shall be maintained in the communications center.

F. DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

1. When a wrecker operator violates any provisions of the wrecker rules, it shall be grounds for denial of inclusion, removal or suspension from the rotation list.
2. Generally, for violations of the wrecker rules which do not pose an immediate threat to the safety, health and welfare of the public or for violations which do not have specific penalties stated in the rules, the violators will receive an Order to Show Cause for first offenses. The purpose of the Order to Show Cause is to formally advise the wrecker operator that action will be taken to suspend

or remove the wrecker operator from the rotation list unless the wrecker operator complies with the wrecker rules. It also allows the wrecker operator an opportunity to prove that he/she has not violated the wrecker rules or had a valid reason for the violation.

3. If a wrecker operator fails to respond to the Order to Show Cause or continues to violate the wrecker rules, a request for suspension or removal of the wrecker operator from the wrecker rotation list is to be forwarded through channels to the Director with all supporting documentation.
4. In cases where a wrecker operator is immediately suspended from the wrecker rotation list per the emergency provisions of the wrecker rules, the Director will be immediately notified through channels of the action taken. A complete report and all supporting documentation are to be forwarded through channels to the Director.