

1 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA,  
2 AMENDING CHAPTER 5.15 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE

3 The City Council of the City of Riverside does ordain as follows:

4 Section 1: Section 5.15.020 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
5 follows:

6 **“Section 5.15.020 Definitions.**

7 *Approved Driver* means that the Attendant or operator has passed the Police Department review for  
8 criminal history and driver history screening (California Vehicle Code § 2431). Approved Drivers  
9 are authorized to work for more than one official police tow service upon notification to the Police  
10 Department of the additional employer(s) and Police Department approval.

11 ...

12 *City* means the City of Riverside.

13 *City-generated tows* mean the towing of vehicles requested by the City to include, but not limited to,  
14 the following: tows of vehicles impounded by the City which said vehicles are held for investigation  
15 or as evidence in a criminal case; emergency tows of vehicles involved in accidents, and/or stalled  
16 vehicles obstructing traffic, and/or vehicles illegally parked, and/or tows of vehicles whose driver is  
17 incapacitated or physically unable to drive said vehicle, and/or tows of vehicles whose driver has  
18 been arrested and/or detained and cannot drive the vehicles, and/or tows of vehicles under the  
19 mandatory 30-day impound (i.e., California Vehicle Code § 14602.6).

20 ...

21 *Response Time* is defined as the elapsed time between the relaying of the tow service request from  
22 the Police Department dispatch to the Official police tow service and arrival of the tow vehicle on  
23 the scene.

24 *Service Calls* mean other services provided by the official police tow service, including, but not  
25 limited to, the unlocking of vehicles, battery service, and tire changes.

26 *State of California Vehicle Report* or *Vehicle Report* (also designated as form CHP 180) means a  
27 written authorization by a Police Officer or other authorized employee of the City of Riverside. It  
28 may also include a Vehicle Impound Report and/or an Electronic Impound Report.

1 *Tow Board* means a board which shall consist of the Traffic Bureau Commander or his or her  
2 designee, and two additional Police Sergeants, excluding the Traffic Bureau Administrative  
3 Sergeant, each of whom shall be designated by the Chief of Police. The Tow Board shall enforce the  
4 California Vehicle Code (CVC), Riverside Municipal Code (RMC), the Official Police Tow Service  
5 written agreement with the Riverside Police Department, and regulations as they apply to the  
6 Official Police Tow Service. The Tow Board shall hear evidence from all parties and make  
7 determinations and enforce corrective actions, up to but not including cancellation of the Official  
8 Police Tow Service written agreement (except in instances when the official police tow service fails  
9 to appear at the Tow Board hearing, in which case the Tow Board may cause the official police tow  
10 service written agreement to be cancelled), regarding complaints of misconduct, contractual  
11 violations, and violations of law concerning the Official Police Tow Service. Upon the conclusion of  
12 the Tow Board hearing at which the official police tow service duly appears, the Tow Board may  
13 make a recommendation to the City Manager to cancel the Official Police Tow Service written  
14 agreement and to the Police Chief to suspend the Official Police Tow Service written agreement.

15 *Tow car or tow truck* means a truck as defined in Section 615 of the California Vehicle Code, and  
16 shall also include slide back carriers and wheel lift vehicles. (“a motor vehicle which has been  
17 altered or designed and equipped for and primarily used in the business of transporting vehicles by  
18 means of a crane, hoist, tow bar, tow line, or dolly or is otherwise primarily used to render assistance  
19 to other vehicles. A ‘roll-back carrier’ designed to carry up to two vehicles is also a tow truck. A  
20 trailer for hire that is being used to transport a vehicle is also a tow truck. ‘Tow Truck’ does not  
21 include an automobile dismantler’s tow vehicle or a reposessor’s tow vehicle.”)

22 *Tow Coordinator* means the individual designated by the Police Chief of the City of Riverside or his  
23 or her designee to manage tasks including, but not limited to, contacting and receiving contacts from  
24 the official police tow service, helping facilitate City-generated tows and other Service Calls,  
25 approving of the official police tow service’s subcontractors if the official police tow service makes  
26 changes after commencement of the official police tow service written agreement, administering  
27 background checks, drafting and sending billing advices to the City of Riverside Finance  
28

1 Department, and ensuring the official police tow service complies with the official police tow  
2 service written agreement, and federal, state, and local law.

3 *Vehicle Release* means the written authorization from a Police Department employee to release a  
4 towed vehicle; all such authorizations must be in writing, and verbal authorizations shall not be  
5 permitted.”

6 Section 2: Section 5.15.030 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
7 follows:

8 **“Section 5.15.030 Application.**

9 The City of Riverside requires any towing company expressing interest in becoming an official  
10 police tow service to complete a written application. Such application shall require a physical  
11 inspection of the applicant’s equipment and/or tow yard. Such application must be completed in its  
12 entirety before any tow company will be considered. The application shall require each interested  
13 party’s owner, attendant, and/or operator to successfully clear the Police Department review for  
14 criminal history and driver history screen (California Vehicle Code § 2431).”

15 Section 3: Section 5.15.080(F) of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
16 follows:

17 **“Section 5.15.080 Agreements and tow rates.**

18 F. The Police Department has a business need to lawfully remove no/low value recreational  
19 vehicles, boats, watercraft, and trailers (as defined by C.V.C. §§ 362, 22670, 22851.2,  
20 22851.3) from the public right-of-way. For no/low value recreational vehicles, boats,  
21 watercraft, and trailers that require destruction, the Police Department shall, subject to  
22 availability of funds, reimburse for this service at the rate of up to \$1,500.00 per vehicle upon  
23 confirmation of destruction.”

24 Section 4: Section 5.15.095 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
25 follows:

26 **“Section 5.15.095 Per tow fee.**

27 Every official police tow service shall pay monthly to the City a per tow fee for each vehicle towed  
28 by request of the Police Department, and pursuant to the per tow fee charges as listed in the City’s

1 current Schedule of Fees and Charges. Terms and provisions for payment of the fees shall be in the  
2 agreement set forth in Section 5.15.080.”

3 Section 5: Section 5.15.110 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
4 follows:

5 **“Section 5.15.110 Standard rules of operation.**

6 A. All requests for towing service and the removal of traffic hazards shall be made through the  
7 Police Department. Official police tow services shall provide towing service when:

- 8 1. The owner or driver of a disabled vehicle requests or specifies a specific garage or a  
9 tow service that is currently an official police tow service with the City.
- 10 2. The owner or driver of a disabled vehicle is unable to or fails to specify a garage or  
11 tow service.
- 12 3. A disabled vehicle presents a hazard that renders any request by a driver or owner  
13 impractical.
- 14 4. A Police Department employee requests a towing service and the owner or driver of  
15 the towed vehicle is not present or not consulted due to an arrest or other public safety  
16 needs.

17 B. Official police tow services shall comply with the following requirements:

- 18 1. Official police tow service's business office shall be located within 150 feet from the  
19 storage yard and attended at all times for servicing the public and the City from 8:00  
20 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for the following state holidays of  
21 January 1, known as New Year's Day; third Monday in January known as Dr. Martin  
22 Luther King Jr.'s Birthday; third Monday in February, known as Washington's  
23 Birthday/President's Day; March 31, known as Cesar Chavez Day; last Monday in  
24 May, known as Memorial Day; July 4, known as Independence Day; first Monday in  
25 September, known as Labor Day; the second Monday in October, known as  
26 Columbus Day; November 11, known as Veteran's Day; fourth Thursday in  
27 November, known as Thanksgiving Day; and December 25, known as Christmas  
28 Day. If January 1, March 31, July 4, November 11, or December 25 fall upon a

Sunday, the Monday following is a holiday and if they fall upon Saturday, the preceding Friday is a holiday (California Vehicle Code § 22658(n)(2)(C)). Official police tow service may comply with this provision on the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve only by providing an on-call attendant provided that the attendant can respond to the lot in 45 minutes or less from the initial call.

...

6. An evidence-stored vehicle is any vehicle containing evidence of a criminal activity, or which in and of itself provides evidence of a criminal act, that is removed from a site and taken to the tow yard or a Police Department facility to be stored at the direction of a Police Department employee and for which a Vehicle Report (currently, form CHP 180) is provided to the official police tow service.

...

7. No vehicle stored at the direction of the Police Department using a Vehicle Report (currently, form CHP 180) shall be released without written authorization from the Police Department.
8. In the event a vehicle is not given an “evidence-stored” status, the official police tow service may charge the vehicle owner fees in accordance with Section 5.15.080. In the event a vehicle is given an “evidence-stored” status, the vehicle owner shall not be charged fees in accordance with Section 5.15.080.
9. The Police Department shall have sole authority for changing the “stored” or “evidence-stored” status of a towed vehicle. The Police Department shall pay the Official police tow service \$1.00 per day after the initial 30 days an “evidence-stored” vehicle has been held by Official police tow service at the direction of Police Department. When a vehicle’s “evidence-stored” status is removed, the Official police tow service may begin charging the vehicle owner a vehicle storage fee in accordance with Section 5.15.080.
10. With the exception of “evidence-stored” vehicles, all vehicles stored as a result of a tow ordered by the Police Department shall be made available to the owner of the

vehicle or his representative, any insurance agent, insurance adjuster, or any body shop or car dealer, for the purpose of estimating or appraising damages.

...

F. Official police tow services shall comply with the following requirements:

1. All official police tow services records, equipment, and storage facilities shall be subject to periodic checks by Police Department or other City investigators during normal business hours.
2. Official police tow services shall maintain all offices, storage facilities and equipment in a neat, clean and organized manner.
3. Official police tow services shall provide access to employees of the City at any time during normal business hours, for the purpose of inspection or audit to determine that the objectives and conditions of the official police tow service agreements with the City are being fulfilled.

...

H. Official police tow services shall submit a daily (except holidays and weekends) electronic tow inventory report to the Contract Administrator using the electronic file and format as provided by the Police Department. These daily reports shall be submitted no later than 9:00 a.m. the day following the reported day and must include all of the following information addressing all City-generated tows and/or calls for service that occurred during the preceding 24-hour period:

1. Date of tow;

...

4. Storage Authority Code listed on the State of California Vehicle Report (currently, form CHP 180);

a. If no Vehicle Report was received, and the vehicle was towed at the vehicle owner's request, such information shall be provided instead;

5. License plate number affixed to the towed vehicle;

...

- 1 14. Address of person and/or company vehicle was released and/or sold to.
- 2 ...
- 3 J. Official police tow services shall comply with the following communications requirements:
- 4 1. Official police tow services shall subscribe to an answering service used in common
- 5 with all other official police tow services.
- 6 2. Official police tow services shall require the answering service to retain data and
- 7 records relating to the City's requests for towing services either on premises or
- 8 electronically. The answering service shall provide said data and records to the Police
- 9 Department in weekly reports, and at cost to the official police tow service.
- 10 ...
- 11 6. Official police tow services shall maintain a 24-hour per day telephone service to
- 12 receive calls from the public.
- 13 K. Official police tow services shall have a secure and environmentally safe vehicle storage
- 14 facility with a minimum of 15,000 usable square feet and a minimum of two feet separation
- 15 between each vehicle.
- 16 1. The vehicle storage facility must be located within one driving mile of the corporate
- 17 City limits of the City of Riverside. The vehicle storage facility to be used for the
- 18 processing and potential destruction of low/no value recreational vehicles, boats,
- 19 watercraft, and trailers must be located within ten driving miles of the corporate city
- 20 limits of the City of Riverside. Official police tow service shall notify the Contract
- 21 Administrator in writing before a low/no value recreation vehicle stored at the
- 22 direction of the Police Department is moved to a different location. The written notice
- 23 shall include the date and time of the scheduled move, and the location to which the
- 24 low/no value recreation vehicle will be moved.
- 25 ...
- 26 O. Applicable Riverside Municipal Code amendments shall require an amendment to the towing
- 27 agreements. Official police tow services that do not sign and return the contract amendment
- 28

1 within 60 days of mailing thereof shall be deemed to forfeit the remainder of the towing  
2 agreement term, and the agreement shall be automatically cancelled.”

3 Section 6: Section 5.15.130 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
4 follows:

5 **“Section 5.15.130 Determination of official police tow service providing service.**

6 A. Official police tow services shall be placed on a "rotation list" to be determined by the Police  
7 Department. The rotation list shall be used whenever a driver or owner of a disabled vehicle  
8 is unable to specify a particular garage or tow service, or whenever a Police Department  
9 employee directs a vehicle to be stored or evidence-stored, and the driver or owner is not  
10 present or is not consulted.

11 B. Official police tow services shall be called, in turn, in response to a Police Department  
12 request, and, when in turn, shall have exclusive right to provide service as follows:

13 1. Official police tow services shall have preference to tow all vehicles from a specific  
14 scene, provided that official police tow service responds with all equipment needed to  
15 accomplish the tows within the response time specified herein.

16 C. Whenever official tow service cannot respond with all equipment needed to accomplish all  
17 tows at a specific scene within the response time specified herein, the next company on the  
18 rotation list shall be called to provide service to the remaining vehicle(s).

19 D. Whenever any official police tow service cannot, for any reason, respond with any equipment  
20 needed to accomplish the requested service within the response time specified herein, the  
21 official police tow service shall be passed over and the next company on the rotation list will  
22 be called. The official police tow service shall become eligible to provide service again only  
23 in its next turn in rotation.

24 E. Exception: whenever the driver or owner of a disabled vehicle specifies a particular club,  
25 association or tow service be called to provide service, such calls shall not constitute a  
26 "rotation" call.

27 F. Exception: whenever a Police Department employee determines that an emergency exists  
28 because official police tow service is unable, for any reason, to provide adequate tow service,



1 the Police Department employee shall have the right to have such duties performed by any  
2 other means available.

3 G. For purpose of determining response, the City shall be divided into geographical service  
4 areas, as determined by the Police Department. The City reserves the right to determine the  
5 number of and the boundaries of the service areas.”

6 Section 7: Section 5.15.140 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
7 follows:

8 **“Section 5.15.140 Grounds for cancellation or suspension.**

9 In addition to cancellation under Section 5.15.110 O., the Official police tow service contractual  
10 agreement shall be subject to cancellation or suspension by the Riverside Police Department either  
11 as a whole or as to any person or vehicle described therein. The procedure for such cancellation or  
12 suspension is set forth herein and in Section 5.15.145. The contract can be cancelled or suspended  
13 for any of the following reasons:

14 A. Nonpayment of any City business license fees or other fees provided in the official  
15 police tow service contract or by the Riverside Municipal code;

16 ...

17 H. Passing on a tow assignment more than two (2) times in a calendar month;

18 I. For any cause which the Riverside Police Department finds makes it contrary to the  
19 public interest, convenience, necessity, or general welfare for the contract to  
20 continue.”

21 Section 8: Section 5.15.145 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
22 follows:

23 **“Section 5.15.145 Procedure for action against official police tow service.**

24 A. Complaints and/or allegations of violations of the Riverside Municipal Code, or the official  
25 police tow service contract, against the official police tow service shall be reviewed by the  
26 Traffic Bureau Administrative Sergeant, or designee. A copy of the complaint and a letter  
27 requesting a response within ten business days of the date of mailing shall be sent to the  
28 affected official police tow service at the address provided in the official police tow service

- 1 written agreement, either through certified mail, hand delivery, or posting to the address's  
2 front door. (No notice shall be sent or delivered if it is determined that notification will  
3 impede or interfere with law enforcement investigations.)
- 4 B. The official police tow service may respond to the complaint, in writing and to the Traffic  
5 Bureau Administrative Sergeant or designee, within ten business days of the date of mailing  
6 of the letter requesting a response. Failure to respond within the ten business days will result  
7 in the Traffic Bureau Administrative Sergeant or designee, making a determination on the  
8 complaint based on the information available.
- 9 ...
- 10 E. If the Traffic Bureau Administrative Sergeant or designee determines a complaint, violation  
11 of this Agreement, or violation of the Riverside Municipal Code to be founded, the official  
12 police tow service may dispute said finding by filing an appeal with the Traffic Bureau  
13 Administrative Sergeant or designee, in writing, within ten business days of the mailing of  
14 the recommended disposition as set forth in section 5.15.145 D. in order to request a Tow  
15 Board hearing. The appeal shall clearly state the applicable basis for the appeal. If an appeal  
16 is timely filed, the official police tow service will be provided with written notice of the Tow  
17 Board hearing date, time, and location at least ten business days before the hearing date.
- 18 F. At the Tow Board hearing, the Traffic Bureau Administrative Sergeant or designee will  
19 present the facts and a recommendation for disposition and action to be taken against the  
20 official police tow service, up to and including suspension and/or termination, taking into  
21 consideration the number of prior violations/complaints and the egregiousness of each within  
22 the current term and all previous terms of the official police tow service written agreement.  
23 The official police tow service will be provided the opportunity to respond to the allegations  
24 and to present information relevant to the official police tow service's defense.
- 25 ...”

26 Section 9: Section 5.15.150 of the Riverside Municipal Code is hereby amended as  
27 follows:

28 **“Section 5.15.150 Penalties for passing on a call for tow service.**

Official police tow services shall have the right to pre-emptively remove their companies from the towing rotation cycles. However, if an official police tow service decides to remove its company from the towing rotation cycle, it must notify the Tow Coordinator at least seven (7) business days in advance. By remaining on the rotation list, each company agrees to be available for Police Department towing needs. For companies that receive a call for service but pass on the request for any reason, the following penalties shall be imposed for passing on a call for tow service:

A. On the third pass within a calendar month, the towing company's contract shall be subject to a 7-day suspension.

B. If the towing company accumulates more than six (6) 7-day suspensions within a calendar year, grounds shall exist for termination of the Official Police Tow Service contract.”

Section 10. The City Council has reviewed the matter and, by based upon the facts and information contained in the staff reports, administrative record, and written and oral testimony, hereby finds that this ordinance is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2), 15060(c)(3) and/or 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, in that it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change.

Section 11. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance and cause publication once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with Section 414 of the Charter of the City of Riverside. This ordinance shall become effective on the 30th day after the date of its adoption.

ADOPTED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON  
Mayor of the City of Riverside

Attest:

DONESIA GAUSE  
City Clerk of the City of Riverside

1 I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, hereby certify that the  
2 foregoing ordinance was duly and regularly introduced at a meeting of the City Council on the  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, and that thereafter the said ordinance was duly and  
4 regularly adopted at a meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025,  
5 by the following vote, to wit:

6 Ayes:

7 Noes:

8 Absent:

9 Abstain:

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the  
11 City of Riverside, California, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.  
12

13 \_\_\_\_\_  
14 DONESIA GAUSE  
15 City Clerk of the City of Riverside

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