



Tow Truck Regulation Workgroup

DOL Report to the Joint Transportation Committee

January 7, 2015

Workgroup Overview

- 2014 Supp. Transportation Budget directed DOL to convene a workgroup to consider the issue of regulating unlicensed tow truck operators
- Members included DOL, WSP, AAA, Towing & Recovery Association and individual operators
- Workgroup examined issues surrounding regulation and came to consensus on legislation
- Licensed businesses, safe drivers and safe trucks

Presentation Overview

- Current state of unregulated and regulated towing in Washington
- Overview of the current regulatory framework for registered tow truck operators (RTTOs)
- Draft legislation discussion
 - Licensing process
 - Background checks
 - Equipment standards and truck inspections
 - Implementation requirements

Current Towing Framework

- Registered Tow Truck Operators
 - Any operator that conducts impounds
 - About 450 licensed in WA
- Motor Vehicle Transporters
 - Any person that delivers vehicles
 - About 1500 licensed in WA
- Unregulated Tow Truck Operators
 - DOL estimates 800-1000 operators
 - No specific licensing requirements

Registered Tow Truck Operators (RTTOs)

- Registered under Chapter 46.55 RCW
- Required to conduct official impounds
- WSP conducts annual inspections of RTTO equipment, business records and facilities
- \$100 annual registration fee
- \$50 annual fee per truck
- WSP impounds require “letter of appointment”
 - WSP background checks these drivers
 - Requires 2 years of experience
 - Approx. 430 of the 450 RTTOs in WA have LOAs

Draft Legislation Highlights

- Creates a new chapter in Title 46 RCW for “non-impound tow truck operators”
 - Towing disabled vehicles for monetary compensation and not registered under chapter 46.55 RCW
- Establishes annual operator licensing
 - Fingerprint-based background checks for owners
 - Requires owners to background check drivers
 - Imposes minimum insurance requirements
- Requires annual truck registration and inspections by qualified mechanics

Licensing Requirements

- Annual operator licensing fee
- Per-truck registration fee
- Operator background checks
- Minimum insurance requirements
 - \$100,000 bodily injury; \$50,000 vehicle damage
- Licensees subject to “Unprofessional Conduct” standards in chapter 18.235 RCW

Background Checks

- Requires operator owners to undergo national fingerprint-based background checks
 - DOL and WSP will process
- Draft legislation includes language for WSP “RAP Back” for easier ongoing checks
- Disqualifying convictions include sex offenses, felonies, drug and alcohol-related traffic offenses
- Operators must conduct pre-employment driver background checks through a private service

Truck Registration and Inspections

- Operators must register and pay an annual fee for each tow truck in their fleet
- WSP will establish equipment standards
- Tow trucks must be inspected by a qualified mechanic on an annual basis
 - DOL will establish “qualified mechanic” criteria
- Ensures equipment standards are met without imposing workload on WSP inspectors
- DOL may inspect records

Implementation Requirements

- July 1, 2016 effective date in draft legislation
- WSP to establish equipment standards
- DOL outreach to licensees
- DOL IS costs to modernize licensing database
- DOL ongoing workload increases to accommodate roughly 1000 new licensees



Questions?