
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 5 COMMISSIONER SANDY JONES

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NEWS RELEASE

REGULATORY RECAP WITH COMMISSIONER SANDY JONES

Commission Amends Statewide Wrecker Tariff to Include Capped Rates

Statewide Ambulance Tariff Increased

SANTA FE – Since the beginning of the new year, the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) has been busily addressing a range of issues, including setting changes to the Statewide Wrecker and the Statewide Ambulance tariffs.

Vehicles towed in New Mexico fall into one of two categories – consensual and nonconsensual tows. Consensual indicates towing services solicited by the owner of the vehicle for any number of reasons, such as the vehicle being transported to a mechanic. The NMPRC does not regulate consensual tows.

A nonconsensual tow occurs when a third party, such as a law enforcement officer or a business owner, requests a vehicle be towed for being parked illegally, after a collision or a number of other reasons. Nonconsensual tows are regulated by the NMPRC's Wrecker Tariff.

Until now, the Commission had set towing rates at fixed dollar amounts. However, due to the large number of wrecker services operating in diverse markets throughout New Mexico, set rates have historically been difficult to calculate, and did not always meet the needs of the public and the towing companies.

The Commission, therefore, replaced that system of set rates to one that sets a maximum rate cap that allows towing services to charge a lower rate. This approach will provide the public with the opportunity to pay lower rates, as wrecker services compete for business under this capped rate system. Individuals who did not consent to having their vehicles towed may attempt to negotiate the towing charge with the wrecker service that towed their vehicle.

The Statewide Wrecker Tariff went into effect on February 1, 2017, following public hearings and numerous Commission meetings on the proposed changes to the tariff.

The Statewide Ambulance Tariff, which also went into effect on February 1, 2017 after several public hearings and Commission meetings, increased the rates ambulance companies charge for their services for the first time in seven years.

The ambulance tariff increase was deemed reasonable based upon the medical consumer price index and a number of other reasons, including increases in the costs associated with maintaining emergency vehicles, capped reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid, low collection rates from the public, and insurance companies decreasing payments for services rendered.

Individuals who do not request an ambulance and refuse all services offered by the ambulance service's emergency medical personnel will not be billed for the response. Those who refuse transport, but have a related service performed, such as a blood pressure check, will be charged for those associated activities only. Finally, those who are transported to a medical facility will be charged for the services performed.

Persons who feel they were unjustly charged for ambulance or wrecker services may file a complaint with the NMPRC's Consumer Relations Division by calling 1-888-4ASK-PRC (1-888-427-5772) or online at <http://nmprc.state.nm.us/consumer-relations/file-complaint.html>.

REGULATORY RECAP WITH COMMISSIONER SANDY JONES INFO

Once a month, NMPRC Commission Chairman Sandy Jones will provide a recap focusing on the latest and most current cases and efforts undertaken by the Commission, and will provide that information directly to constituents throughout New Mexico. Commissioner Jones may be reached at (505) 827-8020 (Office) or Sandy.Jones@state.nm.us.

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