



VEHICLE & PROPERTY

Crash Towing and Storage Cost-Control Workbook

Locate a crashed vehicle, audit accumulating charges and coordinate an authorized safe release or transfer while preserving reimbursement evidence.

WHAT THIS WORKBOOK HELPS YOU DO

01

Complete your custody and authority map

02

Complete your itemized fee audit

03

Complete your move-versus-stay comparison

For people handling accident-related paperwork and preparing clear, evidence-backed questions.

Use it on screen or on paper. Save a personal copy before entering information. Blank response areas are fillable; printed copies work just as well. Keep completed copies private.

Scope. Educational organization tools, not legal, medical, tax or financial advice. No claim result, coverage decision or payment is promised. Verify policy language, current local rules and all deadlines with the appropriate professional or official source.



START HERE

Start with a clear working file

Work on one claim, account or issue at a time. Keep originals unchanged and label working copies with a short evidence ID. Complete the guidance in order, then use the worksheets to turn questions into an organized next step.

A practical order

- 01 Read the four guidance pages before filling the worksheets. Mark facts you can support and questions that still need an answer.

GUIDANCE / PAGES 03-06

- 02 Use the fictional examples to check your method. Their facts and dollar amounts do not describe your claim or predict an outcome.

EXAMPLES / PAGE 07

- 03 Complete the four working sheets, then use the readiness check and next-step page. Duplicate a worksheet when you need another record.

WORKSHEETS / PAGES 08-11

Protect your information

Store completed copies somewhere private. Use a claim or account suffix when a full identifier is unnecessary. Share only relevant copies through a verified recipient and appropriate channel. A saved PDF can contain personal information even when it is not open on screen.

Before a deadline. Do not wait to finish this workbook when a notice, release, court paper or policy deadline needs attention. Verify the actual requirement and seek qualified help promptly.



GUIDANCE 1

01

Locate and triage the vehicle

First establish where the vehicle is and who currently controls access. Write down the facility's full name, contact information, arrival time and vehicle identifier. Ask whether a police hold, inspection requirement or other restriction affects release. Do not enter a restricted yard or attempt to move a vehicle that professionals have not assessed as safe to transport. If the vehicle is electric or hybrid and battery damage is suspected, contact the appropriate emergency services or qualified vehicle professionals. This workbook organizes decisions and evidence; it is not a towing or electrical-safety manual. Record urgent issues prominently so that a routine billing call does not distract from an unresolved safety problem.

Classify the tow

Identify the tow before applying a rule. A driver-authorized tow, police-directed crash tow and nonconsensual private-property tow may follow different procedures. Record who requested the tow, where it began and what document authorized it. Locate the relevant state or local authority and save the actual notice you received. Keep two separate questions in view: what the operator may charge and what an insurer has agreed or is required to reimburse. Those answers are not necessarily identical. Use the source-verification fields rather than copying a deadline or fee cap from another state. If the tow's category is uncertain, ask the regulator or a qualified local professional.

RELATED WORKING SHEETS

- Custody and authority map
- Itemized fee audit

Sources for this page: [1], [2], [3]. See the linked source guide.



GUIDANCE 2

02

Map release authority

List every party whose approval or documents may be needed before release: the owner, storage facility, police agency, insurer, lienholder, repair facility or transporter. Do not assume that calling one party settles all of the others' requirements. Ask the custodian what proof of ownership, identification, payment and release paperwork it requires, and record the answer. Request information about lawful access to loose personal property separately from vehicle release. Do not remove attached parts. Confirm who has the keys and who will accept the vehicle at the destination. The completed custody map should show the next missing permission clearly, without suggesting that a disputed bill can simply be ignored.

Audit the invoice

Ask for an itemized invoice and the written rates or explanation supporting each charge. Enter the category, unit, rate, quantity and time period exactly as billed. Daily storage, after-hours charges, mileage, cleanup and administrative items should not be merged into an unexplained total. Check the arithmetic and note when billing began, but do not label a charge unlawful merely because it is unexpected. For each disputed line, write the specific question and attach the relevant notice or authorization. Preserve the original invoice before marking it up. Payment, dispute rights and release obligations can interact differently under local law, so obtain advice if the immediate decision has significant consequences.

RELATED WORKING SHEETS

- Custody and authority map
- Itemized fee audit

Sources for this page: [1], [2], [3]. See the linked source guide.



GUIDANCE 3

03

Coordinate inspection and payment

Contact the insurer promptly with the vehicle's location and accumulating rate. Ask for a written inspection plan, instructions about movement, the storage costs it will address and any stated cutoff. Record whether an answer is a confirmed authorization or only a request under review. Contact the receiving shop or lot to confirm space and an arrival appointment. An insurer's willingness to inspect does not necessarily resolve the operator's release conditions or every charge. California's repair-dealer storage guide provides useful state-specific examples of these relationships. Apply the coordination method broadly, but verify local rules rather than importing California's inspection timing into another jurisdiction.

Compare staying versus moving

Compare staying and moving over the same realistic period. Include the current balance, expected remaining storage, a written transfer quote, the receiving location's rate and any one-time fees. Use low and high day estimates when completion timing is uncertain. Then apply the permission checkpoint: is movement allowed, will inspection be affected, and has the destination accepted? A small apparent saving can disappear if the receiving location cannot take the car or an extra tow becomes necessary. Cost comparison is only one part of the decision. Mark reimbursement as confirmed, disputed or unknown; the cheaper option does not automatically become an insured expense.

RELATED WORKING SHEETS

- Move-versus-stay comparison
- Custody and authority map

Sources for this page: [1], [2], [3]. See the linked source guide.



GUIDANCE 4

04

Document release and handoff

Before pickup, confirm the release instruction, transporter, destination and person accepting delivery. Keep written confirmations and document the vehicle's visible condition from a safe, permitted location. Inventory loose belongings that you are allowed to collect, and record keys or documents transferred. At arrival, save the transport receipt and confirmation of the receiving facility's custody. Read forms before signing: permission to move a vehicle is different from transferring title or releasing an insurance claim. Ask for clarification if the form combines them. Request a final statement from the original facility showing the time storage billing ended, then verify that no new unexplained days appear later.

Resolve disputed charges and close

Organize any remaining dispute by charge and responsible party. Keep invoices, rate notices, authorizations, communications, photographs and receipts together. Record the regulator, court or professional you contacted and the exact source of any deadline. Texas's consumer towing page describes hearing procedures for covered situations, but a reader should verify the operative rule and counting method with the appropriate court. Do not apply a generic national fourteen-day deadline. Reconcile payments separately: what you paid, what an insurer paid directly, what was reimbursed and what remains contested. Closure means custody and billing are resolved or clearly escalated, not merely that the car has moved.

Keep the custody trail and billing end tied to separate confirmations.



Sources for this page: [1], [2], [3]. See the linked source guide.



FICTIONAL EXAMPLES

Work through the examples

These invented cases demonstrate the method. They are not case results, estimates of what you will receive or statements of universal rights.

01 Example 1

Compare all costs using the same time horizon, then check permissions and coverage.

Illustrative eight-day period: \$200 initial tow + $8 \times \$50$ storage = \$600. Moving after two days costs \$200 + \$100 initial storage + \$120 transfer + $6 \times \$20$ destination storage = \$540, a \$60 difference before additional fees. None is assumed reimbursable.

02 Example 2

Keep the storage operator's bill separate from the insurer's coverage decision.

The yard bills eight days, but the insurer says it will pay five. Record the written positions and seek prompt instructions; do not assume the yard must release the vehicle without payment.

03 Example 3

Use a jurisdiction-verified deadline rather than a generic hearing clock.

Enter the court notice's triggering event, counting rule and verified due date. Leave unresolved deadlines flagged for immediate local advice.



WORKSHEET 1

01

Custody and authority map

Complete this sheet from the underlying documents. Put the document name and date beside each important fact; write "unverified" rather than guess. Use an additional copy for another record.

Vehicle location

Operator/contact/license if applicable

Arrival timestamp

Tow-requesting party

Hold issuer/status

Release authority

Ownership documents required

Keys and personal-property access

Receiving location

Related guidance: [Locate and triage the vehicle](#)



WORKSHEET 2

02

Itemized fee audit

Complete this sheet from the underlying documents. Put the document name and date beside each important fact; write "unverified" rather than guess. Use an additional copy for another record.

Charge category

Rate/unit

Start/end timestamps

Quantity

Invoice amount

Written rate source

Authorization/notice evidence

Disputed reason

Response

Related guidance: [Map release authority](#)



WORKSHEET 3

03

Move-versus-stay comparison

Complete this sheet from the underlying documents. Put the document name and date beside each important fact; write "unverified" rather than guess. Use an additional copy for another record.

Present daily rate

Expected days remaining

Current balance

Transport quote

Receiving daily rate

Receiving one-time fees

Required permissions

Inspection constraints

Total scenarios

Uncertainty

Related guidance: [Coordinate inspection and payment](#)



WORKSHEET 4

04

Handoff completion checklist

Complete this sheet from the underlying documents. Put the document name and date beside each important fact; write "unverified" rather than guess. Use an additional copy for another record.

Release permission

Transporter

Receiving acceptance

Pickup/arrival timestamps

Condition-photo IDs

Property inventory

Receipts

Confirmed billing stop

Reimbursement request/status

Related guidance: [Document release and handoff](#)



READINESS REVIEW

Check the file before using it

REVIEW EACH ITEM BEFORE MOVING ON

- ☐ Release authority verified?
- ☐ Police holds and inspection requirements resolved?
- ☐ Destination accepted?
- ☐ Costs and coverage documented?
- ☐ Original billing stopped?

What still needs attention

Open fact or decision, who can resolve it, and the source needed

Completion standard. The working file is complete when the important facts are supported, the next action is assigned and any unresolved issues remain clearly visible. A completed checklist does not establish coverage, entitlement or legal compliance.



ACTION PLAN

Write down the next step

Choose the smallest useful next step. Make the request specific enough that the recipient can locate the record and explain or address the exact issue. Keep proof of what you sent and what came back.

The exact issue or request

Evidence IDs and document versions that support the request

Verified recipient and channel

Date sent and follow-up date

What response will resolve the issue, and what still needs professional review

Separate decisions. A courtesy follow-up date is not a legal deadline. A document request does not automatically pause another requirement. Do not sign, settle, move property or disclose sensitive records merely because a box on this page is complete.



REFERENCE GUIDE

Sources and scope

The linked official sources support the educational background. The forms and examples are original organization tools. Sources were checked on October 1, 2026; policies, procedures and law may change. Recheck the current source before relying on a rule.

[1] California Bureau of Automotive Repair

Explains repair-dealer storage, authorizations and insurer-inspection issues in California. Scope: California repair-dealer rules, not a nationwide tow-yard code. Applicable facts and current statutes must be checked.

<https://www.bar.ca.gov/storage>

[2] Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

Explains Texas vehicle-storage access, release, consumer notices and tow-hearing routes. Scope: Tow category matters. Page gives abbreviated and detailed descriptions of the hearing clock; verify operative statute and court notice instead of assuming a generic 14-day rule.

<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/towing/consumerinfo.htm>

[3] NHTSA

Damaged high-voltage vehicles require specialized handling and may present shock/fire hazards. Scope: Federal safety guidance is not insurance coverage or DIY towing authorization.

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/electric-and-hybrid-vehicles>

Keep the scope clear

No self-help repossession, unsafe retrieval, dismantling or blanket withholding-payment strategy.

No nationwide fee cap, hearing deadline or guaranteed reimbursement.

Lien, hold and disputed-release problems go to qualified local assistance.