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Governor



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Media Release

Information for Motorists When a Vehicle May Become Disabled on a Highway

This advisory is structured to provide an educational and awareness component as it relates to vehicles when they become unexpectedly disabled or broken down on a highway. Motorists who experience a breakdown of any kind should first attempt to steer and park their vehicle on the right shoulder area of the roadway. If assistance is needed, a trooper can be summoned by dialing *NHP (*647) or the Department of Public Safety – Communications Center at (775) 687-0400. One of our dispatchers can assist you with sending a tow truck and or a trooper to your location if needed. For those who experience a mechanical breakdown on one of the highways in the Reno-Sparks area, our center can dispatch one of the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) personnel who are available Monday-Friday between 6:00 am and 7:00pm who can assist with minor vehicle repairs.

By state law a vehicle can be abandoned for as many as 24 hours unless it is causing a traffic hazard by blocking all or a portion of a travel lane, or when the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) officials require it towed for roadway maintenance to include snow removal. Generally, our agency won't tow a vehicle until it has been left unattended for 48 hours. Conversely, we may have the vehicle removed sooner if it has been vandalized. We will also attempt to locate the owner and advise her or him of that information.

If a motorist cannot have a vehicle removed in a timely manner, he or she may call our communications center and advise one of the dispatchers as to when that vehicle removal will be accomplished. Generally, we can make exceptions to the 48-hour time frame and extend that out a little.

Again, if we identify a vehicle blocking any portion of a travel lane, i.e. the vehicle was left unattended because the lone driver walked away or summoned a ride to get fuel; we will have to call for a tow truck to respond. In summary, the best practice is to have your vehicle removed in a timely manner. This will help to eliminate or minimize the chance of it becoming vandalized. Also, by calling our dispatch center about your situation, this will allow us to log the vehicle into our system with any specific details to include your contact information and when you plan on having your vehicle removed. This information will also be shared with any trooper who stops out to check your vehicle.

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