



Wisconsin Towing Association

A Division of the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association

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WMCA/WTA

March 26, 2019

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Division of State Patrol
c/o: Colonel Charles Teasdale
4802 Sheboygan Ave, Room 551
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Colonel Teasdale,

Recently, the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Towing Association met on Saturday, March 23, 2019 for its quarterly board meeting. The Board members discussed the possibility of the Wisconsin State Patrol entering into a contract with a third-party dispatching service for vehicle tows - more specifically - the services of AutoReturn.

A number of concerns were raised by Directors and at your request, I would like to share those concerns with you. First, the Board Directors fully support the Wisconsin State Patrol and the work the officers and troopers perform to manage traffic incidents on Wisconsin's roads and highways. The members of the Wisconsin Towing Association appreciate their work, as well as the collaborative partnership fostered between both organizations for many years.

The Directors also understand and recognize new advances in technology that may assist law enforcement agencies to better perform their duties, manage traffic incidents, respond to requests from the public, and administer dispatch rotation lists for tow operators. The Wisconsin Towing Association wishes to remain a strong working partner with the Wisconsin State Patrol and is willing to assist the State Patrol with such technological advances.

To that end, the Directors have extensively researched the third-party dispatch service, AutoReturn, and voiced deep concerns regarding its general business practices, ability to dispatch tow operators in an equitable manner, requirements for tow operators to enter into a contractual agreement with AutoReturn, financial disclosures and access to financial accounts of tow operators, and the ability of AutoReturn to manage and dispatch tows to a traffic incident in a safe and effective manner. On that last point, the safety of all parties involved at a traffic incident is critical and any uncertainties or confusion on site could lead to, at the least, significant delays in roads being cleared, and at the most, responders' safety being compromised and in jeopardy. The Directors do not take either matter lightly.

Following that discussion, a motion was offered and seconded in the following manner:

"The Wisconsin Towing Association supports AutoReturn as a third-party dispatch service to be utilized by the Wisconsin State Patrol."

On the question, the vote on the motion was unanimously opposed. The motion failed.

Therefore, and to summarize, based on the motion and concerns raised by the Board of Directors on March 23, 2019, the Wisconsin Towing Association does not support AutoReturn as a third-party dispatch service for vehicle tows as directed by the Wisconsin State Patrol.

It should also be noted a subsequent motion was made and seconded for the Wisconsin Towing Association Board of Directors to form an ad-hoc committee to further examine the issue and work with the Wisconsin State Patrol on the matter of new technology as it relates to third-party dispatch services. The committee members would be willing to meet with the Wisconsin State Patrol to discuss the issues further and continue the collaborative work both parties have historically enjoyed. The vote on the motion was unanimously supported and approved.

The Directors and members of the Wisconsin Towing Association appreciate your willingness to listen their concerns and hopefully work towards and amenable solution that benefits the State Patrol, towing and recovery responders, and the general motoring public. Thank you for your time and consideration and if you or your staff are interested in meeting with the members of the ad-hoc committee in the near future, please let me know and I will make such arrangements.

Sincerely,

Dan Johnson

Division Administrator

Wisconsin Towing Association

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CC: Ted Kabus, Chair - Wisconsin Towing Association