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Feature Article

## Guide on Towing – Part III

### Information Display and Disclosure where Vehicles are Subject to Towing

Life today is a never-ending juggle of work– everyone is in a rush to make it on time to work, to lecture, to the bank or to see a doctor or simply to buy their groceries.

While on this fast trail, many of us tend to overlook or disregard where we can park our vehicles and where we can't. Some drivers despite 'no parking zone' end up parking in this area.

Now as a driver, how often do you make a point of looking around for information or displays which indicate restricted parking zone?

Well, it is crucial for all drivers to look around in all directions for any parking signs before the vehicle is parked. It is unfortunate that some drivers are reckless that despite signs of 'no parking' they will still park their vehicle in that restricted area.

In some cases there is sign with limited information or in other cases the Municipal Councils and other authorities failed to display or disclose information where vehicles are subject to towing.

No Parking Tow-Away signs are the optimal solution to deter and to deal with parking violations.

The Fiji Commerce Commission's Self Regulating Guideline for Towing Services in Fiji has set the rules for the Municipal Councils to display all necessary information/details conspicuously at all public places from where vehicles can be towed away.

According to the Guideline, together with '**no parking**' signs, there is other information that must be displayed in a prominent position in legible print where vehicles can be towed away. Such as:

- The purpose or purposes for which parking is authorized and the times during which such parking is permitted
- That unauthorized parking is prohibited and any unauthorized motor vehicles found will be towed away at the owner's expense
- List of contact details which is available at all times to redeem the vehicle
- Schedule of fees and charges

- Address of the impounded vehicles facilities
- The maximum rate charged per 24 hour period or part thereof, for the storage of the towed vehicle.

According to the guideline, the towing company cannot tow the vehicle unless authorised by the Municipal Councils or other relevant authorities where a towing authorization will be issued provided:

- All necessary criteria for the display of information/details are met(as stated above)
- The authorisation officer has visited the site and confirmed the parking offence.

Also, the authorisation officer must fill and sign the towing authorisation form by accurately entering in all the required particulars with documentary evidence of the offence. This can include photographs of the parking offence which must be taken by the towing company and the authorizing officer to show the location and text of any sign posted at the facility restricting parking of vehicles.

Three copies of the towing authorisation form must be made to be given to the towing officer, towing operator and one kept at the impound facility for the parking offender prior to the release of the vehicle.

The authorisation officer shall not authorise for towing of a motor vehicle for which the parking fee has expired. Instead a parking fine shall be issued to the parking offender.

So, all busy-drivers – be alert to check out for ‘no parking’ signs to avoid towing away of your vehicles!

*Next week’s article will be on the **conduct** of the towing operators*