



# CONSUMER ADVISORY

## PREDATORY TOWING

*The Maryland Insurance Administration advises Marylanders to use caution after a vehicle accident or mechanical failure that requires towing assistance. Some dishonest towing operators take advantage of Maryland drivers in vulnerable situations.*

### Warning signs of a potential scam:

- **Uninvited arrival:** "Bandit" tow trucks monitor police radios and rush to accident scenes, offering unsolicited towing services.
- **Excessive fees:** Operators may demand outrageously high towing and storage fees.
- **Won't release your vehicle:** Operators may take your vehicle to an undisclosed location and refuse to release it until inflated fees are paid.
- **Access denied:** Scammers may refuse to let you retrieve personal belongings from your vehicle.

### How to Protect Yourself:

- **Use caution with unsolicited towing operators:** If you didn't call for a tow, it could be a scam; you have the right to say no and choose your own towing service.
- **Use a trusted service:** Consider requesting a tow through your insurance company, roadside assistance program, or a provider you know.
- **Verify the driver:** Ask for the driver's name, the company name, and their license information before agreeing to the service.
- **Ask for a written estimate:** Before allowing the tow, get a written estimate of the towing and storage costs.

Taking these precautions can help you avoid scams, save you money, and protect your vehicle -- plus your personal belongings.

Report suspicious activity: Report suspected insurance fraud or suspicious activity to your insurance company and the Maryland Insurance Administration via the fraud hotline at 1-800-846-4069 or visit: [qrco.de/miafraud](https://qrco.de/miafraud)

