

New laws to clean up towing industry

The Gauteng Provincial Road Traffic Act (No.10 of 1997) will be amended in an effort to better govern the towing industry and promote professional business practices.



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According to Gauteng MEC for Roads and Transport Ismail Vadi, the tow truck industry operates in an entirely unregulated environment and has come under increasing criticism from the public as operators constantly rush to accident scenes, disregarding road traffic laws and regulations.

There are cases of intimidation of accident victims by operators and allegations of clients being over charged or charged unfairly for services rendered.

Introducing the Bill in the provincial legislature on Thursday, 2 August 2018, Vadi said that the new policy will regulate the tow truck industry, promote road traffic safety and support economic growth and development of this transport sub-sector.

Gauteng has a population of over 13 million people who own over 4.6 million cars. With this, the risk of accidents and mechanical breakdowns on the roads has increased considerably.

“In the absence of an effective regulatory system, allegations of misconduct against tow truck operators have increased.

“These allegations include the bribing of police officers to get first notification on an accident occurrence, recommending panel beaters who pay commission to towing personnel, reckless driving and charging excessive towing charges,” the Gauteng Department for Roads and Transport said.

Vadi said the need for quick removal of vehicles damaged in accidents and mechanical breakdowns has given rise to a highly competitive tow truck industry that must be regulated in the public interest.

“The proposed Bill provides for the MEC to prescribe requirements to be followed by an operator of a tow truck on a public road.

“It also provides an enabling mechanism for the appointment of an inspectorate of breakdown vehicle operators, which function ordinarily is carried out by the Gauteng Traffic Police,” the department said.

The department said tow truck operators will have to comply with the minimum requirements that are provided for in the National Road Traffic Act (No.93 of 1996) and those set by the South African National Standards (SANS), which apply to modified vehicles such as tow trucks before being permitted to operate as tow trucks.

“Tow truck operators will have to carry a card issued by Registering Authorities that shall have information on the trade name, type of business, postal and street address, contact details and an original Tax Clearance Certificate,” the department said.

Particulars of the tow truck operator and the driver must be printed on the Tow Truck Operator Card. These include full name, identity number, photograph of the person and contact details.

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