

CHAPTER 3
FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL OPERATIONS
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CHAPTER 3

FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL OPERATIONS

1. FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL OFFICER DUTIES.

a. California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers assigned to either a field Division or a CHP communications center for the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Supervision of FSP tow truck drivers.
- (2) Training and certification of FSP tow truck drivers/employers. (Refer to Chapter 4, Training Program, of this manual.)
- (3) Freeway Service Patrol tow truck and employer facility inspections. (Refer to the regional/local FSP contract/standard operating procedures [SOP] for facility requirements.)
- (4) Freeway Service Patrol tow truck driver and employer certification, including, driver history/criminal history checks, and issuance of the temporary DL 64, California Tow Truck Driver Certificate. (Refer to Chapter 2, Program Administration, of this manual.)
- (5) Freeway Service Patrol tow truck driver and employer complaint investigations.
- (6) Review and coordination FSP drop locations.

2. SUPERVISION. Officers shall be responsible for supervising FSP field operations including, but not limited to the following:

- a. Annual and cursory tow truck inspections.
- b. Monitoring field FSP operations, including ensuring tow truck drivers:
 - (1) Have a valid driver's license.
 - (2) Have a valid medical certificate.
 - (3) Retain a current drivers' record of duty status (log book).
 - (4) Are in compliance with the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Employer Pull Notice program.

(5) Maintain proficiency in tow operations.

c. Investigations and documentation of FSP SOP violations, including allegations of criminal misconduct.

3. FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL OFFICER TRAINING. California Highway Patrol officers newly assigned to the FSP program shall be provided the following training:

a. Orientation and instruction on local/regional FSP program SOP.

b. Ride-along with an FSP officer.

c. Attend training conducted during the tow operation proficiency testing and FSP training.

d. In addition, FSP officers shall attend a tow truck orientation course provided at no charge by the California Tow Truck Association. This instruction familiarizes officers with tow truck equipment capabilities and limitations, allowing them to judge operational proficiency and recovery techniques.

4. TRUCK INSPECTIONS.

a. Initial and Annual Vehicle Inspections. Freeway Service Patrol officers shall inspect all vehicles designated for FSP, including backup trucks, to ensure FSP vehicles meet the vehicle specifications, equipment, and safety requirements.

(1) The initial inspection shall be completed no later than ten working days prior to the start of service and annually thereafter.

(2) A CHP 234B, Tow Truck Inspection Guide, should be used to document the inspection. Instructions for completing the CHP 234B are located in Highway Patrol Manual (HPM) 81.2, Vehicle Procedures Manual.

b. CHP 234D, Freeway Service Patrol - Daily Inspection Report. All FSP tow truck drivers are required to complete a CHP 234D prior to the start of each shift. A copy of the CHP 234D shall be retained by the contractor and the original sent to the FSP coordinator. Any item missing must be replaced prior to the start of the shift.

c. CHP 234E, Freeway Service Patrol - Cursory Inspection Report. Cursory inspections are truck inspections that take place in the field during the shift. These inspections are performed by FSP officers and should be documented on a

CHP 234E or a local form similar to the CHP 234F, Tow Operator/Driver Information. (Refer to the regional/local SOP.)

(1) Locations of truck inspections will be designated by the CHP. Unsafe or poorly maintained vehicles, or improperly equipped vehicles, shall be removed from service or repaired as directed.

(2) Since cursory inspections are performed in the field during the shift, the air bottle pressure requirement is reduced from 100 pounds per square inch (PSI) to 80 PSI. This reduction in air pressure takes into consideration the possibility that, prior to the inspection, a motorist assist occurred requiring air.

5. TRUCK EQUIPMENT.

a. Trucks shall be exclusively dedicated to the FSP program during hours of operation. The FSP will use conventional wrecker Class A trucks, flatbed trucks, or service pickup trucks (full size—minimum half-ton rated).

b. All trucks proposed for use in the FSP program should be less than one year old with a maximum of 50,000 miles on the chassis and working parts of the truck at the onset of the contract. Extenuating circumstances dictating departure from this specification should be at the consensus of the local FSP partners. The CHP, in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or the regional/local transportation agency, should verify the original purchase dates to ensure compliance.

c. Light Bar System. All FSP vehicles shall also be equipped with a light bar system containing amber warning lights with front and rear directional flashing capability and an in-cab on-off switch. If equipped with a directional light bar, it should be capable of displaying at least four different patterns, including right, left, split (center to outwards), and warning/flash.

d. All FSP vehicles shall have suitable cab lighting and rear work lights.

e. Trucks shall meet the following criteria to determine the safe towing limits:

(1) The total weight of the truck, including the lifted load, must fall within the manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and not exceed either the front or rear axle weight ratings.

(2) The truck must meet all applicable standards.

(3) For proper steering and braking, the front axle must carry at least 50 percent of its normal or unladen weight after the load is lifted.

f. All FSP vehicles shall be equipped to meet local/regional program requirements, manufacturer requirements, and statutory requirements. As a minimum, all FSP vehicle shall be equipped with the following:

(1) Conventional Trucks Only.

- (a) A minimum GVWR of 14,000 pounds, dual wheel chassis.
- (b) Four-ton recovery equipment rating.
- (c) Wheel lift towing equipment with a minimum lift rating of 3,000 pounds. All tow equipment shall include proper safety straps.
- (d) Boom with a minimum static rating of 8,000 pounds.
- (e) Winch with a minimum rating of 8,000 pounds.
- (f) Wire rope: 100 feet, 3/8-inch diameter, (6 x 19 construction) cable, or original equipment manufacturer (OEM) specification, with a working limit of 3,500 pounds.
- (g) Tow chains: 5/16-inch alloy or OEM specification, J/T hook assembly.
- (h) Portable tow dolly for removing otherwise untowable vehicles, one set with wheel tie-down straps.
- (i) Safety chain D-ring or eyelet mounted on rear of truck.
- (j) Refurbished tow truck beds may be used in order to reduce costs.

1 Due to continual upgrades in tow truck equipment technology, it is recommended that a tow truck bed (not more than three years old) only be refurbished one time for the FSP program.

2 The refurbished bed must be certified by a qualified tow truck builder. The accompanying certificate shall state the tow truck bed's boom, wheel lift, moving parts, hoses, mounting bolts, wiring, safety chains, winch cable, sling straps, paint, and control labels have either been replaced or are in good working order prior to using the bed for the new contract period.

(2) Flatbed Trucks Only.

- (a) Minimum GVWR of 21,000 pounds.
- (b) Rear axle minimum rating of 15,000 pounds.
 - 1 Flatbed shall be made of either steel or aluminum.
 - 2 Minimum length of flatbed shall be 21 feet.
- (c) Winch with a minimum rating of 8,000 pounds.
- (d) Wire rope: 50 feet, 3/8-inch diameter, (6 x 19 construction) cable, or OEM specification, with a working limit of 3,500 pounds.
 - 1 Wheel lift rated at a minimum of 3,000 pounds. All tow equipment shall include proper safety straps.
 - 2 Set of four axle straps.
 - 3 Set of four tie-down chains.
 - 4 Motorcycle transporting capabilities (Class A straps).
 - 5 Tow chains: 5/16-inch alloy or OEM specification, J/T hook assembly.
 - 6 One four-ton snatch block with hook.

(3) Required Tools and Supplies. All FSP trucks, including pickups, shall be equipped with the tools/supplies listed in Annex A. The contractor may require additional equipment if approved by the regional/local transportation agency and the CHP. Any equipment not stored in storage compartments shall be secured to the trucks. (An "X" in the Tow, Pickup and/or Flatbed box indicates the item is required.) (Refer to the regional/local FSP contract/SOP for any additional requirements.)

6. FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL VEHICLE COLOR, LETTERING, AND MARKINGS. Per Section 2562.5 of the Streets and Highways Code, each tow truck participating in an FSP program shall bear a logo comprised of at a minimum, a circle, a triangle, and a tow truck silhouette, with the words, "Freeway Service Patrol," which identifies the CHP, Caltrans, and the participating regional/local transportation agency (optional). (Refer to the regional/local FSP contract/SOP for additional specifications.)

7. FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS. Freeway Service Patrol officers shall investigate all FSP related complaints or verbal expressions of dissatisfaction.

a. All complaints against FSP tow truck drivers/employers shall be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. A complaint investigation form, similar to those found in HPM 10.4, Citizens' Complaint Investigations Manual, should be used to document an alleged violation of law, contract, or misconduct. The complaint investigation report should contain the following:

- (1) Identification of the tow truck driver/employer the complaint is against, including name, company name, FSP log number, and date incident reported.
- (2) Incident details, including date of incident, time, and location of incident as appropriate.
- (3) Complaint summary, including how the complaint was received and a brief summary of the complainant's allegations.
- (4) Investigative summary, including the following:
 - (a) The name of the FSP officer assigned to investigate the complaint.
 - (b) Narrative comments and observations of the FSP officer investigating the complaint.
- (5) Exhibits, including relevant documents gathered during the investigation (e.g., statements, photographs, maps, and/or diagrams).
- (6) Complaint findings should include recommended finding for each allegation along with a summary explanation supporting the conclusion.
 - (a) The officer's recommendation for corrective action to be taken (e.g., verbal or written warning, suspension, or termination from the FSP program).
 - (b) In the instance where the investigation's findings sustain the allegations against the FSP tow truck driver and/or employer, determination of the penalties should be made by the collective local entities (Caltrans, CHP, and the local/regional transportation agency). (Refer to the regional/local FSP contract/SOP for additional information regarding penalties.)

(c) Should the findings of criminal charges be a possibility, FSP officers shall conduct the investigation to conclusion or assist the lead investigating agency, and request prosecution if warranted.

8. DROP LOCATIONS. A drop location is a specific on-street public parking area designated by the CHP and/or Caltrans as an appropriate place to leave a disabled vehicle that has been removed from the freeway.

a. Drop locations are usually adjacent to the freeway and are no farther than approximately one and one-half miles from the beat.

b. Drop locations should be in close proximity to services which are beneficial to the motoring public (e.g., service stations and restaurants).

c. The FSP coordinator should reevaluate FSP drop locations quarterly or as needed, to ensure the surrounding environment has not deteriorated, posing a safety hazard to the motoring public.

d. The FSP coordinator shall ensure procedures and a list of drop locations are included in their respective FSP SOP.

9. COLLISION-INVOLVED INCIDENTS. When FSP tow truck drivers encounter freeway incidents involving a collision, the following procedures apply:

a. The CHP officer(s) shall coordinate with FSP tow truck drivers for the expeditious removal of vehicles involved in property-damage-only collisions from the freeway lanes and/or shoulders to a location immediately off the freeway (e.g., adjacent surface street).

b. Prior to leaving the collision scene, CHP officers shall coordinate the call out of either CHP rotation or auto club tow services to respond to the off-freeway location. If these services were dispatched prior to CHP arrival, officers shall inform the CHP communications center of the new off-freeway location. (Established FSP drop locations shall not be used as the off-freeway parking location for vehicles involved in collision-related incidents.)

c. Motorists and passengers of nonoperative vehicles should be transported to the off-freeway location by FSP and/or CHP. The CHP officer(s) shall coordinate with FSP tow truck drivers or should accompany vehicles to an off-freeway location.

d. If collision-involved vehicles are drivable, only CHP officers shall determine the sobriety and/or injuries of involved motorists prior to requesting they drive their vehicles to the off-freeway location.

e. At the conclusion of their contact with the involved motorists, CHP officers shall determine if there are any safety concerns for the motorist(s) at the off-freeway location. Such concerns may require transporting motorists to a secondary location.

f. If a collision-involved motorist desires to leave their vehicle at the off-freeway location, CHP officers shall advise motorists of the potential for theft or vandalism to their vehicles and any local or state law parking restrictions.

10. COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.

a. Each FSP vehicle, including back-up trucks, shall be equipped with radios to enable the drivers to communicate with the CHP communications center. If equipment other than radios is utilized, the equipment must be approved by the regional/local transportation agency, Caltrans, and the CHP. The communications equipment shall be supplied by the regional transportation agency or Caltrans. The CHP shall dispatch all FSP trucks.

b. Programmable scanners capable of scanning frequencies used by Caltrans and CHP shall be installed in all vehicles. Each FSP tow vehicle shall be equipped with a radio to enable the FSP driver to communicate with their base office. If equipment other than radios is utilized, the equipment must be approved by the regional/local transportation agency, Caltrans, and the CHP. Scanners and radios shall be supplied by the contractors.

c. The FSP vehicles shall be equipped with an external speaker and public address system. The speaker and address system shall have the capability for the driver of the disabled vehicle to hear instructions transmitted from the cab of the FSP vehicle when the service vehicle is behind or near the disabled vehicle.

ANNEX A

REQUIRED TOW TRUCK TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Item	Requirements	Quantity	Tow	Pickup	Flatbed
1	Mounted or portable spotlight capable of directing a beam to both front and rear of the vehicle.	1	X	X	X
2	12-volt portable jump-starter (2,000 peak amps minimum rating) or 25-feet-long booster cables, 3 gauge copper wire with heavy-duty clamps and one end adapted to power outlets (hot boxes), front and rear mounted, with outlets compatible to 12-volt booster cables.	1	X	X	X
3	2-ton hydraulic floor jack.	1	X	X	X
4	Trailer hitch with 1-7/8 inch and 2-inch hitch balls.	1	X	X	X
5	Twin rubber face vertical push bumpers (similar to CHP patrol vehicles).	1	X	X	X
6	Tow lights.	1	X		X
7	Safety chains (with positive locking device), 5/16-inch alloy or OEM specification.	2	X		X
8	Unleaded gasoline (5 gallons).	1	X	X	X
9	Diesel fuel (optional).				
10	Water (5 gallons).	1	X	X	X
11	5-gallon trash can with lid.	1	X	X	X

ANNEX A

REQUIRED TOW TRUCK TOOLS AND SUPPLIES *(continued)*

Item	Requirements	Quantity	Tow	Pickup	Flatbed
12	Fire extinguisher, aggregate rating of at least 4-B, C units.	1	X	X	X
13	Pry bar, 36 inches or longer.	1	X	X	X
14	Wood blocks, 4 x 6 x 12 inches.	2	X		X
15	Wooden cross beams, 4 x 4 x 48 inches.	1	X		X
16	Wooden cross beams, 4 x 4 x 60 inches.	1	X		X
17	24-inch wide coarse-bristle broom.	1	X	X	X
18	Square-point shovel.	1	X	X	X
19	Fuses (highway flares), 15-minute duration.	36	X	X	X
20	Cones (minimum 18-inch height).	6	X	X	X
21	Four-way lug wrench (standard).	1	X	X	X
22	Four-way lug wrench (metric).	1	X	X	X
23	Flashlight and spare batteries.	1	X	X	X
24	Portable air tank or compressor.	1	X	X	X
25	Multipurpose funnel with flexible spout.	1	X	X	X
26	5-gallon can with lid and absorbent materials.	1	X	X	X
27	Lockout set.	1	X	X	X
28	First aid kit (small, 5 x 9 inches).	1	X	X	X

ANNEX A

REQUIRED TOW TRUCK TOOLS AND SUPPLIES *(continued)*

Item	Requirements	Quantity	Tow	Pickup	Flatbed
29	Bolt cutters.	1	X	X	X
30	Standard screwdrivers, 1/8-inch, 3/16-inch, 1/4-inch, and 5/16-inch (minimum one each).	1	X	X	X
31	Phillips head screwdrivers, number 1 and number 2.	1	X	X	X
32	Needle-nose pliers.	1	X	X	X
33	Adjustable-joint pliers (2-inch minimum capacity).	1	X	X	X
34	8-inch crescent wrench.	1	X	X	X
35	12-inch crescent wrench.	1	X	X	X
36	5-pound sledgehammer.	1	X	X	X
37	Electrical tape.	1	X	X	X
38	Duct tape.	1	X	X	X
39	Mechanic's wire.	1	X	X	X
40	Suitable cab lighting.	1	X	X	X

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