



**News from
Office of the City Administrator**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 12, 2009**

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Self-Release “Boot” Allows Motorists to Pay and Be on Their Way in Minutes
City of Oakland Upgrades Old Enforcement Program with New Technology

Oakland, CA — The City of Oakland announced today that it is making things easier for motorists whose vehicles are subject to being towed, by upgrading its vehicle immobilization and scofflaw enforcement program. The City’s scofflaw program enforces the State of California’s motor vehicle code, which targets the most serious parking violators who have accumulated five or more unpaid parking tickets.

Currently there are 68,000 vehicles with five or more delinquent parking tickets on file, accounting for millions of dollars in outstanding debt owed to the City. These motorists have ignored all tickets as well as several mailed letters notifying them of their delinquency. Although a large number of these vehicles may no longer be on the road, the City projects that this program will generate about \$800,000 per year.

The enforcement program is being upgraded in two phases. As a first phase, on November 16, the City will launch a new SmartBoot vehicle immobilization system that allows motorists to pay on the spot to have the boot removed instead of being immediately towed. Oakland is the first city in California to launch this new technology. Similar systems are currently used in a dozen municipalities nationwide, including Baltimore, MD; New Orleans, LA; and Syracuse, NY.

If a motorist does find their vehicle immobilized, they can immediately pay the fines 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by calling a multi-lingual, live-operator customer Help Center. Once all fines and fees are paid, the motorist is given a six-digit code to release the SmartBoot. In most cases, motorists can be back on the road in about five minutes.

“The City of Oakland is interested in using new and innovative ways to streamline tedious processes for its citizens and employees,” said Deputy Chief David Kozicki of the Oakland Police Department. “This program is one of those ways, and it helps us manage the supply and demand of the City’s limited on-street parking spaces.”

Under the current system, all vehicles identified with five or more parking tickets are immobilized and immediately towed. Motorists then have to find alternate transportation to visit four locations during business hours to reclaim their vehicle, including the City’s Parking Division, the Oakland Police Department, the DMV and the finally the tow yard.

This process can take hours, and sometimes days. Vehicles that are towed and kept over the weekend also accumulate storage fees, since there is currently no way for motorists to provide adequate proof of payment for their outstanding parking fines after hours. This places additional financial burden on these motorists.

Under the new system, motorists will have an opportunity to reconcile all delinquent parking tickets over the phone in about five minutes. When a vehicle is identified for non-payment of delinquent parking tickets, a SmartBoot immobilization device will be attached by Oakland Police Department or Parking Division enforcement personnel, along with instructions in English, Spanish and Chinese. The immobilization device weighs approximately 16 pounds and has an electronic lock that may be unlocked by the motorist after payment is made.

To make payments easy, there is toll-free access to a multi-lingual, live-operator Help Center open 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Help Center operators walk the motorist through payment options, boot removal steps, and directions to the boot-return location. All major credit/debit cards and e-checks are accepted over the phone. Cash payments for booted vehicles will still be accepted at the Parking Citation Assistance Center, located at 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, 6th floor, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Once the SmartBoot has been removed, it must be returned to one of two drop-off locations within 24 hours:

Downtown

Douglas Parking
1721 Webster Street
Monday – Friday, 7 am to 7 pm

East Oakland

B&B Towing
8717 G Street
Monday – Friday, 7:30 am to 6 pm
Saturday and Sunday, 9 am to 5 pm

New policies under the program will allow motorists with booted vehicles 24 hours to reconcile their fines before towing, regardless of when during the week the booting event occurred. Booted vehicles still unpaid after 24 hours will be towed.

As a second phase of the program, the City will begin using a license plate recognition system, similar to the one currently used by the Oakland Police Department, to identify vehicles with five or more delinquent tickets. This system will also be used to find and retrieve stolen vehicles and Amber alert vehicles. Starting in early December 2009, the City will ramp up scofflaw enforcement using the more efficient license plate recognition system.

Anyone who has received a delinquent ticket notice in the mail is encouraged to pay their outstanding parking tickets or risk having their vehicle immobilized and/or towed. Pay by phone by calling (510) 451-0456 or pay on-line at:
<https://step1.caledoncard.com/tickets/oakland.html>.