



## NEWS RELEASE

### HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **H-GAC Announces the Gulf Coast Regional Tow and Go™ Program**

**HOUSTON** – The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) announced today the launch of the Gulf Coast Regional Tow and Go™ Program, which provides no-cost towing for vehicles that break down from mechanical failure while traveling within the City of Houston on freeways with camera coverage.

The regional quick clearance program will expand next into Harris County and eventually to freeways in neighboring counties where camera coverage is available and as funding is allocated. Tow and Go will replace existing clearance programs like SafeClear.

Vehicles that break down due to mechanical failure (e.g., out of gas, overheating, flat tire) while traveling in the program's service area will be cleared, at no cost, to a safe location within one mile. Motorcycles are included in the program, and trailers can be towed when possible.

Each tow is authorized by law enforcement, including the Harris County Sheriff's Office and the Houston Police Department. Law enforcement officers authorize every Tow and Go clearance either from their location in the Houston TranStar traffic center where freeway-monitoring cameras allow them to view incidents in real time or while officers are on the freeway. Each tow operator contracted to perform the quick clearance service has not only met strict selection standards, they have also completed roadway safety and traffic incident management training.

If a motorist calls for their own towing service, such as AAA, it must arrive before law enforcement monitoring the freeway has authorized Tow and Go or meet them at the safe location where they have been cleared from the freeway.

If a breakdown is the result of a flat tire and the motorist has the necessary equipment along with a working spare, the Tow and Go operator will change the tire, at no cost, once the vehicle has been moved to a safe location off the freeway. Vehicles that are abandoned, involved in a crash, or in a law-enforcement incident are not eligible for the no-cost service, and the vehicle's owner must pay established local jurisdiction towing rates.

"The Tow and Go program is an essential component of effective Traffic Incident Management, and will address the dangers, frustration and costs associated with congestion on Houston's

freeways,” said H-GAC Regional Incident Management Program Manager David Fink. “Traffic is one of the biggest concerns for Houston-area residents. Hours spent in heavy congestion caused by stalled vehicles not only impact productivity and the environment but can put lives at risk.”

The Houston-Galveston Area Council manages The Gulf Coast Regional Tow and Go Program through funding provided by the Federal Highway Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation. Initial participants in the program include the City of Houston, Harris County, and representatives from the towing industry that operate out of Houston TranStar.

For more information about Tow and Go and to download the Houston TranStar app, visit [TowAndGo.com](http://TowAndGo.com). Motorists who experience mechanical failure on the freeway coverage area can call **713-881-3333** for immediate assistance or to speak with law enforcement.

*\*Editor’s Note: H-GAC Regional Incident Management Program Manager David Fink will be available for interviews via phone or on-site at Houston TranStar on Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Kim Padgett (above) for scheduling.*

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## Regional Collaboration • Transportation Planning • Multimodal Mobility

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*H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region—an area of 12,500 square miles and seven million people. H-GAC is designated by the State of Texas as the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning in Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties.*