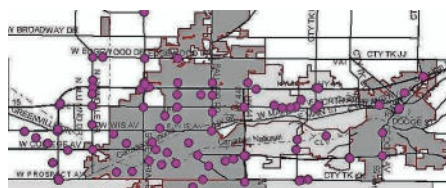


WATCHDOG Q&A

What does it mean when Outagamie County enacts a tow ban?



Watchdog Q&A
Duke Behnke
USA TODAY NETWORK - WIS.



Dots mark the crashes that occurred Feb. 16 in the Appleton-Kaukauna area, leading the Outagamie County Sheriff's Office to issue a tow ban for Interstate 41 and State 441. PROVIDED BY OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

Reader question: When the Outagamie County sheriff orders a tow ban, what exactly does that mean?

Answer: A tow ban means that all tow services are suspended unless requested by emergency personnel. In other words, if your car slides into a ditch and isn't an immediate hazard to other motorists, it will have to remain in the ditch until conditions improve and the tow ban is lifted.

Tow bans are declared when conditions deteriorate to the point that any effort to recover vehicles becomes too dangerous for emergency responders, tow services and other motorists on the road.

"We understand the likely inconvenience in not having a car removed promptly," Outagamie County Lt. Nathan Borman said. "However, far too many times we have experienced crashes which have ended in injury and death due to not waiting for safer conditions."

A tow ban typically applies to specific highways. When Outagamie County issued a tow ban Wednesday due to a two-punch snowstorm, it pertained to Interstate 41 and State 441.

That was also the case for the tow ban ordered during the Feb. 16 snowstorm. At the time, the sheriff's office had responded to nearly 100 crashes and had at least 25 additional crashes pending.

Most tow bans stem from adverse winter weather, but they also can be issued due to high traffic volumes.

"This could include rush-hour traffic in the morning or afternoon or heavy event traffic such as a Packer game day," Borman said. "In those cases, if vehicles were to have a crash or otherwise go into the ditch, we may not allow them to be removed until after the traffic flow has reduced substantially."

The length of any ban depends on the conditions. The Feb. 16 tow ban was lifted after 7½ hours, allowing normal operations to resume.

Outagamie County also implemented tow bans for I-41 and State 441 on Dec. 22, Jan. 19 and Jan. 27.

The Dec. 22 ban lasted three days, the Jan. 19 ban lasted eight hours, and the Jan. 27 ban lasted 23 hours.

Post-Crescent reporter Duke Behnke answers your questions about local government. Send questions to dbehnke@gannett.com or call him at 920-993-7176.

POLITIFACT



US President Joe Biden (L) walks next to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (R) as he arrives for a visit in Kyiv on February 20. US President Joe Biden made a surprise trip to Kyiv on February 20, ahead of the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, AFP journalists saw. Biden met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Ukrainian capital on his first visit to the country since the start of the conflict. GETTY IMAGES

A look at US aid to Ukraine and US involvement in war

Louis Jacobson
Politifact

One year into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, polls show that a rising number of Americans — though well short of a majority — are tiring of U.S. support for Ukraine.

In polls conducted in March, May, September and January, the Pew Research Center found the share of respondents who said the U.S. is providing too much support to Ukraine grew steadily, from 7% to 12% to 20% to 26%.

Other polling also shows an increasing number of Americans don't want the U.S. to keep sending weapons or government funds directly to Ukraine.

Surveys show the weakening of support is most clearly visible among Republicans, as some congressional Republicans and GOP presidential candidates express skepticism about backing Ukraine. Among the respondents to the Pew polls who identified as Republicans or said they lean toward the GOP, the share that said the

U.S. was providing too much support to Ukraine quadrupled in just 10 months, from 9% in March to 40% in January.

Overall, Americans continue to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself, even if it means a prolonged conflict, polling shows. Still, as the U.S. spends more money on Ukraine, a growing number of Americans are having second thoughts.

So far, President Joe Biden and his allies have been steadfast in not sending troops to fight in Ukraine, to avoid a direct face-off with nuclear-armed Russia. The U.S. has also stopped short of sending certain types of weapons, including long-range missiles and fighter jets. But the administration and European nations have become more open to sending Ukraine a wider variety of arms for their fighters to use, such as battle tanks.

On the anniversary of Russia's invasion, we'll look at the specific ways the U.S. has aided Ukraine, and why analysts believe U.S. involvement is crucial.

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