



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Letter to the Editor

21 March 2019

Watch out for overpriced towing after midnight

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) would like to warn drivers that if they are in a road accident after midnight there is a possibility that they could be overcharged by workshops that tow their vehicles.

CAP had previously received a complaint from a driver that had gotten into a road accident after midnight. His car was towed a distance of less than 3km but he was charged a whopping RM800.00 for the service.

It is a known fact that any service after midnight will cost more than it would during regular hours but all things considered the costs for after hours' services are still fairly reasonable.

A basic survey showed that towing the complainant's type of car for a distance of less than 3km would cost approximately RM150.00 if towed during normal hours. As such, the after hours charges for towing should be about double.

Since the workshop had charged the complainant an unfair fee, we reached out to KPDNHEP, PIAM, SPAD and JPJ but we were informed that the issue of towing fees does not come under their jurisdiction.

We also reached out to the workshop however they only responded to us after our second letter, giving us a breakdown of the RM800.00 that was charged to the complainant. Below are the details of the breakdown, word for word, from their letter to us:-

- “ > Towing charge RM220.00 (flatbed carrier tow truck and midnight case)
> Tow truck driver RM80.00
> Talkie runner RM60.00 x 6 persons (to instruct the traffic at the scene of accident)
> Informer RM50.00 (the person who inform us the accident case and they will ask for commission if the car is tow by us)
> Arrange the owner to police station lodge the report RM90.00”

The workshop attempted to justify the breakdown of the RM800.00 charge presented to us by stating that they were “following their association's guideline”.

CAP requested a copy of the mentioned guidelines from the workshop but when they failed to give us a copy we forwarded our request to the Penang Motor Vehicles Workshop Owners Association (PMVWOA).

In the end, neither party could give us the “guidelines” that the workshop in question claimed to be following.

Instead the workshop refunded the complainant half of the RM800.00 they collected from him; making the towing fee only RM400.00, which is much more reasonable in comparison to the original fee.

The inability of the workshop to provide a copy of the “guidelines” as well as their decision to refund RM400.00 to the complainant is an indication to us that the RM800.00 towing imposed on the complainant was unfair, arbitrary and unjustifiable.

We hope that the public can learn from this incident and if they ever need to have their vehicles towed after hours, they will be aware if the workshop tries to overcharged them for the service.

We also call on the relevant authority, in this case KPDNHEP, to regulate towing charges and other ambiguous workshop charges. This problem would not have happened if towing charges were regulated.

S M Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association of Penang