

## Steps for Towing Vehicles Without Keys

1. Verify that the vehicle does not have keys.
2. Verify the vehicle's drive type. Front-wheel drive vehicles without keys usually present fewer problems for the tower than rear- or all-wheel drive vehicles without keys. Front-wheel drive vehicles have the drive and steering axles on the same end of the vehicle so as long as the tow truck can access the front wheels and the parking brake can be released, the vehicle can be towed.
3. Determine what type of service vehicle is needed to complete the call. A vehicle without keys can present a problem when trying to load the vehicle onto a flatbed. A wheel-lift truck equipped with a tow dolly is probably the best truck to send to a call for a vehicle without keys.
4. Unlock the vehicle, if necessary, to inspect the parking brake for operation and position.
5. Secure vehicle from rolling.
6. Attempt to move the transmission selector into neutral position.
  - If the vehicle is equipped with a floor/console mounted shifter, check for the release mechanism on the gear shifter housing. Some vehicles have a release button assembly built into the shifter housing that can be released using a flat screwdriver or another key. Others use a button that is either depressed or pulled to release the shifter.



- If the vehicle is equipped with a column-mounted shifter, there may not be a release mechanism. Very few vehicles with column mounted shifters have a release mechanism to move the transmission from the park position without the ignition key being turned in the ignition. To shift these vehicles out of park without the key, first ensure the vehicle will not roll once the transmission is shifted out of the park position. Then disconnect the shifter linkage at the transmission end and move the shift lever on the transmission out of the park position.
7. Attempt to straighten the steering wheel to reduce problems loading the vehicle.
8. Determine if any extra equipment is needed to complete the call without damage to the vehicle.
- If the vehicle is being moved with a flatbed, determine if “skates” or “Go-Jacks” are required to load the vehicle if the transmission will not come out of park or if the steering wheel is not in a straight-ahead position.
  - If the vehicle is to be moved with a wheel-lift truck, will a tow dolly be required to lift the trailing end of the vehicle if the drive wheels can not be lifted or if it is a rear-wheel-drive vehicle and the steering wheel is not in a straight-ahead position?
  - Are tools (screwdrivers, adjustable wrench, pliers, clip tools) necessary to disconnect the shifter linkage at the transmission or remove a trim panel from the center console, if that is a necessary step to safely load the vehicle for transportation?

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