



SPECIAL ORDER

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03/25/2024

EFFECTIVE DATE

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SUBJECT

STOLEN AND WANTED MOTOR VEHICLES

REVISIONS

Revisions are italicized

RESCINDS

**SPECIAL ORDER 22-37,
STOLEN AND WANTED
MOTOR VEHICLES (201.6)**

EXPIRATION DATE

03/25/2025

DISTRIBUTION

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines and procedures for identifying, reporting and recovering stolen and wanted vehicles.

IDENTIFYING

Officers will normally receive information with regard to stolen vehicles from teletypes, broadcasts from police radios, police reports, Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN), and from his/her own observations. Officers shall be observant for the following characteristics, which may be used to establish probable cause to believe a vehicle is stolen:

1. Damaged ignition or steering column;
2. Punched or damaged doors or trunk locks;
3. Broken vent windows;
4. An open car window in inclement weather;
5. The inability of the driver to answer questions about the car he/she is driving, such as mileage, and trouble finding dashboard instrument controls;
6. Several juveniles driving during hours in violation of curfew;
7. Evidence of forcible entry;
8. Any attempt to disguise the appearance of the car;
9. License plates that appear altered, bent or improperly displayed in such a manner as to make reading them difficult;
10. Vehicles parked in the same place for an unusual period of time; or
11. Vehicles parked with the engine running or with the key in the ignition.

The vehicle identification number (VIN) is the only reliable identifier for a vehicle and is usually located on the left front door pillar post, or on the driver's side of the dashboard close to the windshield. Officers shall investigate any vehicle with a VIN that appears to have been altered. VIN plates that have been reattached by screws or devices other than factory welds or rivets shall be investigated.

REPORTING

Members receiving information on a possible stolen motor vehicle shall first ascertain from the person reporting the theft whether the vehicle has been repossessed, seized on judgment, loaned to another person, being used by any member in his/her family or persons having lawful custody without consent, or has been removed in violation of an existing contract. If the member is satisfied that the vehicle has been unlawfully taken, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Officers are required to have the owner complete an Auto Theft Report and sign the affidavit. The officer shall then contact Telephone Crime Reporting (TCR) for the Incident Report and LEIN entry;
2. If the registered owner of the stolen vehicle is unavailable, the member(s) shall make an information report; however, the vehicle information will not be entered into LEIN until the registered owner becomes available;
3. TCR operators will make an Unlawfully Driving Away of an Automobile (UDAA) report from someone other than the registered owner, as long as the owner can be contacted prior to the report being generated. This shall include rental vehicles, company vehicles, or registered owners who are out of town;
4. In cases where other offenses (i.e., Sex Crime, Homicide, etc.) occur in conjunction with a UDAA, the reporting officer shall make notification to the appropriate investigative command. The reporting officer shall then obtain an Incident Report number from the dispatcher.
5. The officer shall contact TCR, provide the incident report number, and the vehicle shall be entered into LEIN by TCR. A supplement report shall be completed by the operator. The officer shall be provided the LEIN reference number for the completion of their report;
6. If the theft was recent, the officer shall relay pertinent information to the zone dispatcher for general broadcast;
7. When submitting a stolen vehicle report, the following information shall be included:
 - a. Complainant's name, address, telephone number (business and residence), age, sex, and race;
 - b. Owners name, address, telephone number (business and residence);
 - c. Place of occurrence, date and time the vehicle was last seen, and date and time when the vehicle was discovered missing;
 - d. Location of the vehicle when stolen (street, driveway, parking lot)
 - e. A complete description of the vehicle (color, year, make, model, body style, license plate, and VIN)
 - f. If the key was in the vehicle and if the vehicle was locked; and
 - g. Name of the insurance carrier.
8. Members shall advise all complainants reporting stolen motor vehicles that if the vehicle is recovered, the department will attempt to contact the owner; and
9. The recovering officer will have the vehicle towed to a police authorized tower's storage lot or the authorized evidence lot, whichever is applicable.

Partial Report

1. A report of the stolen motor vehicle shall be taken even if the person reporting the offense does not have a title or certificate of registration in his/her possession. In this event, members should question the complainant as to whether any documents such as a certificate of insurance or a bill of sale is available. These documents may contain the license plate number or VIN of the stolen vehicle. In the event, these documents are used in the absence of the title or vehicle registration, members shall advise TCR.
2. Members receiving stolen vehicle reports in instances where the registered owner has government issued photo identification and unable to produce the appropriate documents, the member shall contact Auto Recovery at (313) 267.4639. Auto Recovery is available 24 hours a day seven (7) days a week. A sworn certified LEIN operator may verify ownership of the vehicle.

3. If ownership of the vehicle is verified, the member shall contact TCR to make the report.

RECOVERY OF STOLEN MOTOR VEHICLES

1. When a stolen motor vehicle is recovered, the recovering officer shall notify TCR personnel without delay at 313 596-1550, who shall make the necessary computer entries to facilitate LEIN and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) requirements.
2. If notification cannot be made to TCR for any reason, an attempt shall be made to contact TCR supervisor's desk at 313-267-4635 or 313-267-4636. If contact is still unsuccessful, the desk supervisor must be notified and members must document the reason and the supervisor's name on his/her Activity Log Sheet (DPD 250).
3. Recovering members shall place the vehicle information, complaint number, LEIN Ref# and operator's name on his/her DPD 250.
4. If valuable items are found in the vehicle, the recovering officer shall process them in accordance with department property procedures.
5. If the recovering officer makes an arrest, confiscates evidence, or impounds the vehicle, an Incident Report shall be prepared.
6. The officer shall contact TCR, provide the incident report number, and the vehicle shall be entered into LEIN by TCR. A supplement report shall be completed by the operator. The officer shall be provided the LEIN reference number for the completion of their report.

Disposition

1. Members recovering a stolen vehicle shall determine if LEIN information indicates the vehicle is to be impounded, held for prints, impounded for another jurisdiction, etc.
2. Prior to towing, the recovering member shall confirm the need to impound the vehicle by contacting the wanting command or jurisdiction. If the officer-in-charge of the wanting command or jurisdiction orders the vehicle impounded, it shall be impounded from the scene to a police authorized tower's storage lot in accordance with vehicle impounding procedures. The member shall also prepare an Incident Report detailing the circumstances of the recovery and reason for impounding.
3. A member recovering a vehicle not to be impounded as evidence shall order a tow from the recovery scene, via radio, and have the vehicle towed to a police authorized tower's storage lot. In addition, "recovered stolen" shall be entered in the "reason for impounding" section on the Impounded Vehicle card (DPD 406).
4. If the owner of the vehicle is at the scene of the recovery and expresses a desire to take possession of the vehicle, the recovering member may release the vehicle to the owner if the owner produces sufficient proof of ownership. Vehicles impounded in conjunction with an arrest for possession of a stolen vehicle or UDAA shall not be released to the owner without the approval of Commercial Auto Theft (CAT) or the officer-in-charge of the district/precinct station.
5. Impounded vehicles shall be placed on an Evidence Property Tag (DPD 53) and transported to the Mt. Elliot lot. The CIU investigator assigned the case shall contact CAT and request the vehicle be inspected and its identity determined.
6. If arrests are made, the officer-in-charge of the case shall be responsible for notifying the complainant to verify that the vehicle is stolen and initiate prosecution.

Partial Recoveries

1. A Partial Recovery is a vehicle that has not been reported stolen, but has signs of being stolen e.g. damaged ignition or steering column, missing wheels and tires, broken windows. The vehicle shall be towed to a police authorized storage lot.
2. If a motor vehicle is impounded before it is reported stolen, TCR shall be notified immediately upon the registered owner reporting the vehicle stolen.
3. Any vehicle recovered that has been reported stolen out of another jurisdiction shall be called into TCR without delay. TCR will contact via LEIN the outside jurisdiction with the recovery information, and complete the incident report. The officers shall be provided a report number, LEIN reference number, and operators name for the DPD250.
4. If officers have an arrest for a vehicle stolen out of another jurisdiction they shall request an incident report number from Dispatch, and call TCR to process the vehicle.

REMOVED OR ALTERED VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

1. Each automobile manufactured in the United States after 1980 is equipped with a 17 digit VIN. It is the only positive means of vehicle identification. If a vehicle is discovered with the VIN plate removed or altered, an Incident Report shall be prepared.
2. Officers shall adhere to applicable vehicle impounding procedures, and CAT shall be notified so that a member of CAT can inspect the vehicle and make the proper identification.

WANTED VEHICLES

1. Members receiving information on vehicles used in conjunction with a crime, (i.e., armed robbery, escape vehicle, vehicles taken by a known perpetrator or missing under other circumstances where the elements of a crime can be established) shall prepare an Incident Report. Members shall query the Secretary of State's vehicle file to insure that the vehicle information is accurate. A complete vehicle description as well as the registered owner's name and address shall be recorded on the report.
2. TCR will only accept reports of this type after review and authorization by the officer-in-charge of CIU or the officer-in-charge of the precinct station desk. Whenever a specialized command is responsible for the investigation or if the crime occurred at a location outside the reporting member's district/precinct area, a supervisor from CIU must authorize entry of the wanted vehicle. The authorizing supervisor's name shall be supplied to TCR and recorded on the Incident Report. TCR will enter these vehicles into the LEIN and NCIC systems as "wanted" vehicles and complete a supplement report for the LEIN entry.
3. Whenever a vehicle reported as wanted (via the LEIN system or department teletype) is recovered or located, the recovering member shall prepare an Incident Report. The vehicle shall be placed on evidence and impounded. The recovering member shall contact TCR and obtain the name and command of the supervisor that authorized the initial entry of the vehicle, and include the information in the Incident Report.

4. The officer-in-charge of the case is responsible for notifying the vehicle owner of the recovery. Further, the officer-in-charge of the case shall insure that all LEIN, NCIC, and department teletypes concerning the wanted vehicle have been canceled.

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