

MOTOR VEHICLE INVENTORIES

<i>Effective Date:</i> April 15, 2013	<i>Directive Number:</i> 10-2-8	
<i>Special Instructions:</i>		
<i>Distribution:</i> All Sworn & Civilian Personnel	<i>Last Re-Evaluation Date:</i>	<i>Total Pages:</i> 2

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines for determining when and how a motor vehicle inventory should be conducted.

II. POLICY

A motor vehicle inventory is an administrative measure designed to protect motor vehicles and their contents while in police custody; to protect the agency against claims of lost, stolen or damaged property; and to protect departmental personnel and the public against injury or damaged property due to hazardous materials or substances that may be in the vehicle. It is the policy of this law enforcement agency to safeguard the above property and interests and to conduct motor vehicle inventories only in accordance with the following procedures.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Legal Authority to Inventory

1. An authorized officer may conduct a motor vehicle inventory without a warrant or probable cause when:
 - a. the vehicle has been lawfully seized or impounded pursuant to the arrest of the driver; after towing the vehicle for violations, or for related enforcement or safety reasons as defined by state law, and
 - b. when officers conduct the inventory within the scope of this policy as an administrative procedure.
2. Examination of the contents of a motor vehicle pursuant to a criminal investigation or with the intent of discovering evidence of a crime is a search, not an administrative inventory. Officers shall be guided by this agency's policy on motor vehicle searches when engaged in these actions.

B. Scope of Inventory

1. The contents of all motor vehicles that are lawfully seized and/or impounded by this agency shall be subject to inventory in accordance with the provisions of Section III-A of this policy.
2. An inventory should be conducted in the location at which the vehicle is seized unless limited by reasons of safety or practicality. If so, the vehicle may be inventoried at a later time following impoundment.
3. The owner or operator of the vehicle shall be asked to remove, if possible, all valuables from the vehicle prior to impoundment. If such items cannot be removed, they shall be inventoried before the vehicle is removed, and all items entered on the vehicles tow sheet under inventory.
4. A motor vehicle inventory may extend to all areas of the vehicle in which personal property or hazardous materials may reasonably be found, including but not limited to the passenger compartment, trunk and glove compartment.
5. All closed containers found within the vehicle shall be opened for purposes of the inventory. Closed and locked containers shall not be forced open but shall be logged on the impound report as such. If a key or lock combination is available, locked containers may be opened and inventoried.

C. Property Control

1. All items of value shall be itemized on this agency's property inventory form and such materials be placed into evidence for safekeeping, or released to the rightful owner.
2. Control and safekeeping of hazardous materials shall be the responsibility of this agency's designated authority.
3. Contraband and evidence discovered during the course of a motor vehicle inventory shall be placed into evidence in accordance with procedures for control of criminal evidence. Notification of this fact shall be provided to the agency's designated authority.

ORDER EXECUTED and ISSUED this 15th day of APRIL, 2013

Christopher Workman
Chief of Police