



GENERAL POLICE ORDER CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE



EFFECTIVE DATE: MAY 9, 2003	REVISED DATE: APRIL 1, 2003	NO. PAGES: 1 of 9	NUMBER: 4.1.01
SUBJECT: VEHICLE PROCESSING			
ASSOCIATED MANUAL: DISTRICT, DETECTIVE, AUTO THEFT, VIU, CS&RU		RELATED ORDERS: 8.2.01	
CHIEF OF POLICE: <i>Edward F. Lohn, Chief</i>			

Revisions are in Italic.

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for Cleveland Division of Police officers requesting process tows.

POLICY: *Officers shall process tow vehicles they have probable cause to believe are connected with a crime and contain evidence, were used as a criminal tool, require special examination to find the Confidential Vehicle Identification Number (CVIN), or were involved in a police use of deadly force incident.*

PROCEDURES:

- I.** *A vehicle towed for evidence cannot be held longer than 72 hours, unless a detective files a petition with the court and the court issues an order granting an extension by the court's next business day.*
- II.** *If a towed vehicle is subject to forfeiture, it may be held for 30 days. If charges are not filed within 30 days the vehicle must be released.*
- III.** Officers shall have commercial vehicles towed for processing to a lot contracted for commercial vehicles and all other vehicles towed for processing to Lot Two.
- IV.** The investigating officer shall complete a Record Management System (RMS) report when a vehicle is involved in a crime and requires scientific processing or used as a criminal tool. The processing request information shall be included in the original or supplemental RMS report.
- V.** Officers requesting process tows shall:
 - A.** Obtain a computer check on the license plate and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) for other wants.

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- B. Obtain the approval of a sector supervisor.
- C. Order the tow through the Communication Control Section (CCS) via Channel Seven, and obtain the Vehicle Impound Unit (VIU) number.
- D. *If a vehicle is towed in connection with a use of deadly force (UDF) incident, advise Channel Seven dispatcher accordingly. The Channel Seven dispatcher will record the UDF information on the Vehicle Impound Unit Tow Record at the "Reason For Tow" section in the "Other" field.*
- E. Complete the RMS Vehicle/Tow Supplement, C of C 71-175 rev 5/00.
- F. Complete the Vehicle Processing Request Form (Appendix), C of C 71-1081 rev 10-87, in quadruplicate.
- G. All Vehicle Processing Request Form copies are given to the tow truck driver, with a copy of the RMS Vehicle/Tow Supplement.
- H. If a vehicle will be processed for evidence, an officer shall follow the towed vehicle to Lot Two to maintain the chain of evidence.

VI. The sector supervisor shall:

- A. After determining the necessity for processing, approve the request.
- B. Determine that the Vehicle/Tow Supplement Form, the Vehicle Processing Request Form, and the RMS report are properly completed.
- C. *Ensure that the Form-1 section of the Vehicle Processing Request Form is completed by the requesting officer(s). The Form-1 section shall provide a brief synopsis of why the vehicle is being towed.*

VII. A vehicle may be held as a criminal tool when the vehicle was used to facilitate the commission of a crime (i.e. transporting stolen property) or the vehicle was used to sell or distribute contraband (i.e. narcotics). *A vehicle towed as a criminal tool may be held for 30 days, pending a forfeiture request by the investigating detective in accordance with established Division procedures.*

VIII. If a vehicle is located within the city limits and involved in a Cleveland crime **and** a foreign crime, the investigating officer shall:

- A. Tow the vehicle for processing.

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- B. Have CCS notify the foreign police department of the impound lot where the vehicle may be processed by their department.
- IX.** If the vehicle is located within the city limits and involved **only** in a foreign crime, the investigating officer shall have CCS request the foreign department send an officer to tow the vehicle. The officer locating the vehicle shall remain with the vehicle until the foreign department arrives and has custody of the vehicle, unless an emergency tow (defined in General Police Order 8.2.01 “Vehicle Tow or Release”) is necessary.
- X.** *The tow truck operator shall:*
- A. *Tow, **not drive**, the vehicle to the proper impound lot.*
 - B. *Turn over all copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Form to the impound lot officer.*
 - C. *Sign their name in the designated area on the Vehicle Processing Request Form.*
- XI.** *The impound lot officer shall:*
- A. *Review the Tow Authorization Form and the Vehicle Processing Request Form for accuracy and completeness with particular attention given to the Form-1 section of the Vehicle Processing Request Form for completeness.*
 - B. *Inventory contents of the vehicle and compare it with both forms for discrepancies, also check the physical condition of the vehicle.*
 - C. *Complete on all copies of the Vehicle Process Request Form the entries “Towed to Lot #”, “Received by”, “Time”, and “Date”.*
 - D. *Notify the proper unit to process the vehicle. The officer completing the notification shall indicate what unit(s) were notified, print the date and time, and sign their name and badge number.*
 - E. *Upon completion of the processing, notify the detective section or unit responsible for the completion of the investigation.*
 - F. *If the vehicle was towed as a criminal tool with no processing required, notify the detective section or unit that will investigate the criminal tool charge.*

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- G. *Maintain files for copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Forms.*
- H. *Be responsible for the proper safeguarding of the vehicle and its contents. Admit the evidence technician(s) or detective(s) upon arrival.*
- I. *After processing, continue to maintain safe custody of the vehicle pending release by the Impound Unit.*
- J. *After processing, if the OIC of the Tow Unit, Lot Two, determines that the vehicle belongs to a **victim**, they shall cause the vehicle to be released and the victim notified, unless the investigating detective notifies the OIC of the Tow Unit that they have petitioned the court for an extension.*

XII. *The police evidence technician shall:*

- A. *Complete necessary scientific evidence processing within 72 hours of the seizure, unless the investigating detective secures a court order granting an extension.*
- B. *Remove evidence requiring further examination or detailed laboratory study.*
- C. *Complete the "Evidence Technician" section on all copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Form.*
- D. *If a VIN examination is also necessary, all copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Form shall be left at the impound lot for the VIN processing technician.*
- E. *If the vehicle is held as evidence, or there is property in the vehicle that needs to be removed, indicate so on all copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Form.*
- F. *Leave all but the Crime Scene & Record Unit technician copy (canary) of the Vehicle Processing Request Form with the impound lot officer, who shall distribute copies to the section or unit that has investigative responsibility.*
- G. *When applicable, complete the supplemental offense/incident section of the original RMS report.*
- H. *Remove property from the vehicle which must be held in evidence and enter it in the property book. The information shall also be entered on the Vehicle Processing Request Form.*

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XIII. *The VIN processing technician shall complete the following within 72 hours of the seizure (unless a court ordered extension is secured by the investigating detective):*

- A. *Ascertain that other evidence processing is either completed or unnecessary.*
- B. *Conduct their special investigation to locate the VIN number.*
- C. *Record the results of the examination on both copies of the Vehicle Processing Request Form and leave a copy with the impound lot officer.*
- D. *Cause computer checks to be made for stolen vehicle information. Complete necessary GTMV recovery reports, and if a determination can be made that the vehicle can be released, complete the "Authority to Release" section on the original copy of the Vehicle Processing Request Form and deliver it immediately to the Impound Unit.*
- E. *If the vehicle was involved in a crime being investigated or there is property in the vehicle that needs removing, or a determination cannot be made to release the vehicle, indicate such information along with the information of photos taken and evidence removed on the original Vehicle Processing Request Form and immediately forward it to the section or unit that has investigative responsibility.*

XIV. *The OIC of the investigating detective section or unit shall:*

- A. *Be responsible for processing vehicles for crimes that occur in their district within 72 hours (unless a court ordered extension is granted).*
- B. *When notified of a vehicle towed as a criminal tool, assign such cases for investigation and cause the Vehicle Processing Request Form to be picked up from the impound lot for the investigating detective.*
- C. *Accept the Vehicle Processing Request Form after the processing technicians have completed the processing and ascertain that all necessary processing has been completed.*
- D. *If there is property in the vehicle which must be removed, assign detectives to take custody.*
- E. *Assign such incident or crime for any necessary investigation and if appropriate the investigator shall complete the "Authority to Release" section of the Vehicle Processing Request Form. They shall also notify the*

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owner that the vehicle is approved for release, record such information on the Vehicle Processing Request Form, forward it immediately to the Tow Unit, Lot Two, and telephone the Tow Unit, Lot Two, to notify them.

- F. *If an extension is granted by the court, notify the Tow Unit, Lot Two, to place a HOLD on the vehicle. Complete the “Authority to Hold” section of the Vehicle Processing Request Form indicating name, badge number, telephone number, and district or unit assigned, and forward it to the Tow Unit, Lot Two with a copy of the court order.*
- G. *Once a “HOLD” has been placed on the vehicle in the above manner and a release of the vehicle becomes authorized, notify the owner that the vehicle can be released to them, and notify the Impound Unit to remove the hold from the Tow Release Form indicating their name, badge number, and district or unit of the authorizing officer. Complete the “Authority to Release” section of the Vehicle Processing Request Form and forward it to the Tow Unit, Lot Two.*

XV. *The Impound Unit shall:*

- A. *When receiving the Vehicle Processing Request Form:*
 - 1. *If the “Authority to Release” section is completed:*
 - a. *Determine whether or not the owner has been notified. If the owner has **not** been notified, contact the investigating unit.*
 - b. *File the Vehicle Processing Request Form in the proper file.*
 - 2. *If the “Authority to Hold” section is completed:*
 - a. *Ascertain that the “HOLD” has been placed on the Tow Release Form in red ink.*
 - b. *File the Vehicle Processing Request Form in the proper file.*
 - 3. *When receiving telephone calls from investigators relative to “HOLDS” on a vehicle:*
 - a. *Place a “HOLD” on the Tow Release Form in red ink indicating the investigator’s name, badge number, district or unit, and telephone number.*

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- b. Review the "HOLD" within 72 hours to determine if the investigating detective has obtained a court order.
- c. Remove the "HOLD" from the Tow Release Form, indicating the investigator's name, badge number, district or unit, and telephone number authorizing the release **only** after a return telephone call to the investigating unit to verify the release and owner notification.
- d. Upon receiving an authorization to release, be responsible for issuance of the Release Slip, but only after:
 1. Presentation of documentary proof of ownership.
 2. Determining that any outstanding tickets, towing and storage fees have been paid.
4. Direct the claimant to the impound lot to obtain the vehicle.

XVI. Completion of the Vehicle Processing Request Form.

- A. The officer requesting the tow shall complete numbers 1-26.
 1. VIU#: enter the VIU number, obtained from Channel 7.
 2. Circle Processing Requested: if "other" is circled, explain in the space provided.
 3. Evidence Most Likely Found At: enter what area evidence is most likely to be found (i.e. back seat, steering column, glove box.)
 4. Towed From: enter location from where the vehicle was towed.
 5. Date: enter the date the vehicle was towed.
 6. Time: enter the time the vehicle was towed.
 7. Lic Plate: enter the license plate number.
 8. State: enter the name of the state issuing the license plate.
 9. VIN#: enter public Vehicle Identification Number, if none enter "none".
 10. Year: enter year of vehicle.
 11. Make: enter make of vehicle (i.e. Ford, Chevy, etc)
 12. Model: enter the model of the vehicle (i.e. Mustang, Cutlass, etc.)
 13. Color: enter color of the vehicle.
 14. Crime Involved: enter the crime involved if known (i.e. Kidnapping, GTMV, Agg. Robbery) or if the vehicle is being towed in connection with a police use of deadly force incident write "Police Use of Deadly

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Force Incident”

15. *Crime Location: enter location of crime.*
 16. *Service#: enter the RMS number if a report has been previously made.*
 17. *District: enter district where the crime occurred.*
 18. *Victim: enter full name of victim.*
 19. *Arrested: enter full name of person(s) arrested for this crime.*
 20. *Information Form 1: **MUST BE COMPLETED.** Give a brief synopsis of why vehicle was towed (i.e. used in Agg. Burg. – suspects bailed out and fled on foot, property in back seat)*
 21. *Officer Requesting Tow: name and badge number of officer requesting tow.*
 22. *Officer/Badge: enter partner’s name and badge number.*
 23. *Car#: enter car assigned.*
 24. *Supervisor Authorizing Tow: enter name of supervisor authorizing tow.*
 25. *Towed By: enter towing agency name.*
 26. *Driver: Obtain signature of tow truck driver.*
- B. *The impound lot officer shall complete numbers 27-34.*
27. *Lot#: enter Impound Lot to which the vehicle is towed.*
 28. *Received By: enter name and badge number of the officer who accepted vehicle at the impound lot.*
 29. *Date: enter date vehicle received at impound lot.*
 30. *Time: enter time vehicle received at impound lot.*
 31. *Circle Unit Notified: circle unit notified that the vehicle is at the impound lot.*
 32. *Notified By: enter impound lot officer’s name and badge number that made the notification.*
 33. *Date: enter date of notification.*
 34. *Time: enter time of notification.*
- C. *Evidence technicians shall complete numbers 35-47*
35. *Evidence Found: enter evidence found (i.e. weapons, drugs, fruits of crimes).*
 36. *Evidence Removed: enter evidence removed from the vehicle.*
 37. *Remarks: use this space to enter if any photos and/or prints were taken and any other pertinent information (i.e. 8 photographs, no LP’s) or list property that needs to be removed.*
 38. *Processed By: enter name and badge number of officer doing the processing.*

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- 39. *Unit: enter the unit to which the processing officer is assigned.*
 - 40. *Date: enter date of processing.*
 - 41. *CVIN Found: CVIN will be entered in this space by Auto Theft Unit evidence technicians **ONLY**.*
 - 42. *CVIN Not Available: circle reason CVIN cannot be found.*
 - 43. *Recovery Report Service #: Auto Theft Unit technician will enter the service number.*
 - 44. *Remarks: use this space to enter any information c/w processing (i.e. Public VIN pulled and entered as evidence, plates removed for evidence, photos and/or prints taken, parts missing VIN, or parts with different VIN etc).*
 - 45. *Processed By: enter officer's name from the Auto Theft Unit doing the processing.*
 - 46. *Unit: enter unit to which the detective is assigned.*
 - 47. *Date: enter date of processing.*
- D. *Evidence technicians or investigating detectives shall complete numbers 48-56.*
- 48. *Authority To Release: enter detective's name and badge number.*
 - 49. *Unit: enter unit to which the detective is assigned.*
 - 50. *Date: enter date of authorization to release.*
 - 51. *Authority to Hold: enter detective's name and badge number requesting a hold to be placed on a vehicle. Only a detective can place a hold on a vehicle. If the investigation determines a hold is necessary, the investigating detective shall secure a court order within 72 hours, and will notify the Tow Unit, Lot #2, the vehicle is to be held. The investigating detective will be responsible for removing the hold and for the final disposition.*
 - 52. *Unit: enter unit to which the detective is assigned.*
 - 53. *Date: enter date the hold is placed on vehicle.*
 - 54. *Owner Notified By: enter the name and badge number of the officer making notification to the owner that the vehicle is authorized to be released.*
 - 55. *Unit: enter the unit to which the officer making the notification is assigned.*
 - 56. *Date: enter date of notification.*