



CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2021	CHAPTER: 4 - Field Operations	PAGE: 1 of 2	NUMBER: 4.08.01
SUBJECT: LOCKOUT GUIDELINES			
CHIEF: <i>Calvin D. Williams, Chief</i>			

Substantive changes are italicized

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the forcible unlocking of vehicles, buildings, or other structures.

POLICY: *It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police* that members shall not directly force entry or assist with the opening of locked vehicles, windows, doors, or any other points of entrance or exit of a building or any other structure except in exigent circumstances.

PROCEDURES:

I. General Guidelines

A. Members shall attempt to gain entry to a vehicle, building, or structure **only** under the following circumstances:

1. In cases of a medical emergency (e.g., a child, elderly, or incapacitated person locked inside a structure or vehicle, etc.).
2. Hazards to life or property if entry is delayed (e.g., unattended heat source, imminent danger of biological or chemical contamination, an animal locked inside a hot car, etc.).
3. Vehicles blocking traffic, creating a hazard, and/or a dangerous condition precludes waiting for a tow truck to remove the vehicle.
4. When necessary to execute a legal process such as a search warrant.
5. Conditions that exist that would reasonably lead an officer to believe that taking no action would lead to the above-listed conditions.

B. *Members attempting to gain entry to a vehicle, shall follow the below guidelines specific to vehicle entry.*

1. Due to the possibility of damage, persons requesting assistance with circumstances other than those authorized should be advised to seek the assistance of a towing agency or locksmith.
2. Members who attempt to enter a vehicle under unauthorized circumstances shall be held responsible for any damage incurred.

II. Communications Control Section Responsibilities

A. CCS personnel shall screen all calls for lockout assistance.

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1. No unit shall be dispatched unless *one of the circumstances listed in section I.A exists.*
2. If the caller's request does not meet the criteria, the caller shall be advised to seek the assistance of a towing agency or locksmith.

B. If an emergency response is warranted:

1. A supervisor shall be dispatched to respond to the scene of the lockout request to confirm that exigent circumstances exist for immediate police action.
2. Forced entry may be made before a supervisor's arrival if on-scene personnel believe that conditions exist that persons or property are in immediate peril (*e.g., medical emergency, animal locked inside a hot car, imminent danger of biological or chemical contamination*).

III. Documentation

- A. Responses to lockout requests that result in property damage shall be properly documented, with an *incident report, indicating the property damage was sustained while performing a police function.*
- B. Responses to lockout requests that do not result in property damage.
 1. Supervisors shall make a notation in their *daily report* of "no damage" and the person's name on scene, preferably the owner of the property.
 2. On-scene officers shall make a notation on their *duty report and/or Mobile Computer-Aided Dispatch (MCAD) entry* of "no damage" and the person's name on scene, preferably the owner of the property.

THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.