



Chicago Police Department

General Order G07-03**VEHICLE TOWING AND RELOCATION OPERATIONS**

ISSUE DATE:	29 October 2014	EFFECTIVE DATE:	01 November 2014
RESCINDS:	01 January 2012 version		
INDEX CATEGORY:	Processing Property		

I. PURPOSE

A. This directive:

1. outlines Department policy, procedures, and responsibilities relating to vehicle towing operations.
2. classifies types of [vehicle towing](#) operations.
3. continues the Vehicle Tow Report (CPD-11.413), which includes a "Respondent" copy to be given to the person in control of the vehicle being towed.
4. continues procedures for towing at Midway and O'Hare Airports.

B. Department members will refer to the Special Order entitled "[Vehicle Towing and Relocation Operations](#)" for additional procedures for the processing of vehicles.**II. POLICY**

The Department will enforce all ordinances and statutes which authorize towing, relocating, and disposing of vehicles located on the public way, within legal guidelines. Members will cooperate and assist other City departments and authorized private towing agencies during emergency and non-emergency operations while continuing to provide essential police services.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. The Department of Streets and Sanitation (S&S):

1. is charged with the responsibility to remove or authorize the removal of vehicles from any public way to an authorized auto pound, Department garage, or relocation site(s).
2. utilizes private contractors to assist in towing vehicles from City streets. Organizations engaged in towing for the City of Chicago and their tow drivers will comply with all State statutes and City ordinances.
3. has its own departmental "Vehicle Tow Reports" and "Relocation Reports." In addition, S&S personnel are authorized to issue Violation Notices to vehicles found in violation of City ordinances prior to being towed or relocated from the location. S&S is empowered by the City to use its own forms when towing or relocating vehicles.

NOTE: Department members will not duplicate the efforts of S&S by completing Chicago Police Department forms once the

appropriate reports have been completed by S&S.

4. will enter relocated vehicle information into computer terminals as part of their responsibilities, when working independent of the Chicago Police Department.
- B. It is the policy of the Department of Streets and Sanitation that a vehicle subject to tow on City property will be towed once it is moved from the original location where it was parked. In situations where Department members are called to a scene to resolve a difference of opinion between a member of the public and a tow truck driver, Department members are to inform the complainant that once a vehicle is moved from the original location where the vehicle was parked, the tow will be completed.
 - C. Tows are provided by the Department of Streets and Sanitation (S&S) or its authorized towing agents twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Requests for tows will be serviced in accordance with priorities established by the Chicago Police Department.
 - D. City-authorized towing vehicles will display a color coded sign that is clearly marked: CITY OF CHICAGO, DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION, POLICE TOWING.
 - E. City-authorized tow truck drivers will:
 1. carry an authorization card, when towing, that corresponds with the signs displayed on their tow trucks. This card authorizes the presenter to collect the Vehicle Tow and Vehicle Impoundment/Seizure Reports from the "Tow" basket in district stations.

NOTE: The baskets have been provided by S&S, and will be clearly marked: CITY OF CHICAGO, DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION, POLICE TOWING.
 2. only tow vehicles to authorized designated auto pounds, unless prior approval is authorized by S&S (e.g. tow the vehicle to the district station or other designated auto pound).
 3. **not** relocate vehicles unless an emergency has been declared by the City.
 4. **not** tow vehicles:
 - a. that do not have a Vehicle Tow or Vehicle Impoundment/Seizure Report.
 - b. that have not been assigned an S&S towing number by OEMC.
 - c. until the report is approved by the appropriate supervisor and is deposited in the district station "Tow" basket.
 5. **not** be allowed to make private tows, such as assisting stranded motorists, while displaying the City of Chicago tow signs.

IV. TOW PROCEDURES

- A. Department members requesting a vehicle tow will:
 1. first establish if the vehicle is stolen or wanted for investigation in connection with a crime and is needed for further investigation by requesting a vehicle

check via the OEMC dispatcher or, if equipped, with a portable data terminal (PDT). When it is determined that a vehicle is:

- a. wanted for investigation, the assigned member will ensure that the vehicle is not touched or moved until the appropriate investigative unit is notified and instructions are received regarding the processing and towing of the vehicle.
 - b. stolen and the vehicle is not to be held for an investigation, the Department member assigned will follow the procedures outlined in the Department directive entitled "[Vehicle Theft and Wanted Vehicle Procedures](#)."
2. follow the procedures outlined in the Department directive entitled:
- a. "[Impoundment of Vehicles for Municipal Code Violations](#)" when encountering incidents relative to impoundment of vehicles for municipal code violations.
 - b. "[Seizure and Forfeiture of Vehicles, Vessel, and Aircraft](#)" when encountering incidents relative to the seizure of vehicles subject to forfeiture.
 - c. "[Repossessions](#)" when encountering incidents relative to repossessions of vehicles.
3. in addition to other necessary reports, complete a Vehicle Tow Report (CPD-11.413). When completing the report, requesting members will:
- a. select only one vehicle tow classification.
 - b. complete all the information requested by the report. A computer check of the vehicles VIN must be completed and the information recorded in the appropriate spaces.
 - c. document, with specificity, the circumstances that support the request for the vehicle tow in the narrative section.
 - d. attest to the information contained in the report by signing and placing their star number on the Vehicle Tow Report.

NOTE: Department members will not be required to complete a Vehicle Tow Report when a vehicle is subject to impoundment or seizure and a Vehicle Impoundment/Seizure Report has been completed.

4. not operate a vehicle to be towed unless **a situation dictates its relocation prior to towing**. A member of a two-person unit may drive the vehicle to their district of assignment, district of arrest, or other police facility, as appropriate.
- a. A Department member may operate the vehicle to be towed without the owner's consent when a situation dictates its relocation.
 - b. A vehicle will be parked and locked in a police facility parking lot or within close proximity of the facility where it can be legally, safely, and continuously parked.
 - c. Department members will refrain from driving vehicles that present a

safety hazard to themselves or members of the public (e.g., vehicles with a peeled or stripped column, anti-theft alarms that may cut off the engine, inadequate brakes, bald tires, transmission problems).

5. request a tow via OEMC to have the vehicle towed to a holding facility controlled by the City of Chicago or its agents, and:
 - a. provide the OEMC dispatcher with the year, make, model, VIN, and state license plate number.
 - b. indicate whether the vehicle will "roll" (either two front or two rear wheels have inflated tires) or must be towed using a "flatbed" tow truck.
 - c. obtain an S&S towing number from the dispatcher. The S&S towing number will be recorded on the Vehicle Tow Report in the box provided.

NOTE: The S&S towing number will be in addition to any required Records Division (RD) number, if applicable.

6. attach the vehicle keys and fob to the Vehicle Tow Report for all vehicles being towed for **hold for investigation and confidential VIN checks only**.
 - a. Department members will attach the vehicle keys using a sealed, small Evidence Envelope (CPD-33.101), indicating the following information:
 - (1) Records Division (RD) number.
 - (2) Date of the tow.
 - (3) Vehicle information including the year, make, model, color, and license plate or vehicle identification number, as available.
 - b. Department members will only attach the vehicle's keys or alarm/remote key fobs to the report. Other keys not associated with the operation or security of the towed vehicle (e.g., house key, locker keys) will be returned to the person authorized to possess the keys.
 - c. **ALL OTHER VEHICLE TOWS WILL NOT HAVE THE VEHICLE KEY(S) ATTACHED TO THE VEHICLE TOW REPORT.** The requesting member will ensure that keys pertaining to the vehicle are returned to the person authorized to possess the keys, (a registered owner, authorized or designated driver) or are inventoried accordingly.

7. remove and inventory personal property found within the vehicle. If keys are in the vehicle, personal property within a locked glove compartment or trunk will be removed and inventoried. The property inventory number will be indicated on the Vehicle Tow Report. In situations where personal property is discovered in a vehicle that has been towed into an auto pound, OEMC will dispatch a vehicle from the district where the auto pound is located to inventory the property in accordance with the Department directive entitled "[Processing Property Under Department Control](#)."

NOTE: Department members will contact the Evidence and Recovered Property Section for technical advice ([24 hours](#)) prior to towing a vehicle that contains perishable goods, such

8. obtain the approval of the appropriate supervisor on the Vehicle Tow Report and:

a. give the "Respondent" copy to the person in control of the vehicle.

NOTE: When towing a parked vehicle, submit the "Respondent" with the "Requesting Unit" copy.

b. for hold for investigation and confidential VIN checks, submit Vehicle Tow Report and vehicle keys and fob to the district station supervisor who will ensure safe keeping until arrival of tow truck driver.

c. for all other tows, place the "Tow Truck Driver" and "Requesting Unit" copy of the Vehicle Tow Report in the Streets and Sanitation "Tow" Basket.

NOTE: Upon their arrival, tow truck drivers will sign the Vehicle Tow Report and leave the "Requesting Unit" copy of the report in the basket for use by district review personnel.

B. When notified by the district station supervisor that the S&S tow truck driver is at the station and prepared to complete a tow for hold for investigation or confidential VIN check, the assigned member will report to the district station and:

1. receive a Department issued zip tie from the district station supervisor,

2. escort the Streets & Sanitation tow truck driver to the location of the towed vehicle,

3. upon arrival to the location of towed vehicle, zip tie the vehicle keys and fob to the vehicle steering wheel, leaving the vehicle unlocked.

C. OEMC dispatchers will enter immediate tow data into the computer in accordance with existing procedures.

D. District desk personnel will:

1. place the marked "Tow" basket, provided by S&S, in a location accessible to Department members and tow drivers.

2. provide S&S dispatchers, (who will call via PAX) the correct number of original Vehicle Tow Reports in the tow basket at the desk. Tow truck drivers are not authorized to ascertain this same information.

3. verify the identity of the responding tow truck driver by examining their authorization card.

E. District Station Supervisor will ensure that:

1. Vehicle Tow Reports are filled out completely, reviewed for accuracy, and, if appropriate, approved prior to the vehicle being towed.

2. approved Vehicle Tow Reports are deposited in the marked "Tow" basket

located in the district station.

3. desk personnel provide S&S dispatchers the correct number of Vehicle Tow Reports in the basket.
 4. the tow truck driver retrieves the Vehicle Tow Report from the district station, signs the report, and leaves the "Requesting Unit" copy at the desk.
 5. vehicles that are gone on arrival (GOA) are processed accordingly.
 6. Vehicle Tow Reports indicating "Hold - Confidential VIN Check" or "Hold for Investigation-Wanted Vehicle" have the vehicle keys and fob attached and secured until the arrival of the tow truck driver.
 7. upon arrival of the S&S tow truck driver to tow a vehicle for hold for investigation or confidential VIN check, ensure an available unit is assigned to escort the tow truck driver to the location of the towed vehicle and upon arrival to the location of towed vehicle, zip tie the vehicle keys and fob to the vehicle steering wheel, with Department issued zip tie, leaving the vehicle unlocked.
- F. In the event OEMC is notified that a vehicle to be towed is gone on arrival (GOA), OEMC will dispatch the unit which requested the tow to the scene. If that unit is not available, the nearest available unit will be dispatched to the scene.
1. Upon verification of the GOA, the assigned member will prepare a Supplementary Report if the vehicle had been previously reported stolen or was involved in an incident requiring a case report. The assigned member will:
 - a. obtain the RD number and the S&S towing number from the OEMC dispatcher, the original Vehicle Tow Report available from the tow truck driver if they are still on the scene, or the district copy available at the district station.
 - b. record the required information and particulars of the GOA on the Supplementary Report indicating one copy to the Auto Desk.
 - c. indicate GOA *in the narrative section of* the Vehicle Tow Report, and notify the OEMC dispatcher to cancel the tow request.
 2. Upon verification of the GOA, **and no case report applies**, the assigned member will indicate GOA *in the narrative section of* the Vehicle Tow Report, and notify the OEMC dispatcher to cancel the tow request.
 3. The assigned member will submit all GOA reports to their district station supervisor.
- G. Tow of an Arrestee's Vehicle
1. A vehicle related to an arrest will be towed if the vehicle has evidentiary value; the vehicle cannot be safely driven to the detention facility by authorized police personnel; the vehicle cannot be legally, securely, and continuously parked at the scene of the arrest; or the arrestee does not authorize another person to take control of the vehicle. **An intoxicated person will not be permitted to take control of the vehicle at any time.**

NOTE: Department members will indicate the appropriate violation on the Vehicle Tow Report.

2. Vehicles related to an arrest that are subject to impoundment or seizure will be processed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Department directives entitled "[Impoundment of Vehicles for Municipal Code Violations](#)" and "[Seizure and Forfeiture of Vehicles, Vessels, and Aircraft](#)."

NOTE: Department members will indicate the appropriate violation on the Vehicle Impound/Seizure Report.

3. Department members will indicate on the Arrest Report:
 - a. the disposition of the vehicle (e.g., towed, impounded, seized), and
 - b. the vehicle descriptors including the year, make, model, license plate number, and VIN, when available.
4. A request for a tow will be canceled if the arrestee is released on bail unless the vehicle is being held for investigation, being seized, impounded under a Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC), or held pursuant to [625 ILCS 5/4-203](#), which provides for a six-hour impoundment of a vehicle when a driver is arrested for violation of [625 ILCS 11-501](#) (Driving while under the influence of alcohol, other drug, or combination of both).
 1. It is the district station supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the Vehicle Tow Report is still in the "Tow" basket prior to releasing the vehicle. A notation in the narrative section of the Vehicle Tow Report will be made that the vehicle was released to the arrestee and the tow was canceled. **The violation must be listed on the tow report.**
 2. The district station supervisor will notify the OEMC dispatcher to cancel the tow request with S&S or its authorized towing agent. The S & S towing number and R.D. number, if applicable, will be given to the OEMC dispatcher.

H. Abandoned Vehicles

1. When OEMC receives complaints or inquiries from members of the public relating to abandoned autos, OEMC will ask the caller for the license plate number or the VIN number, if available, to establish whether it is stolen. If:
 - a. the abandoned auto is reported stolen, OEMC will assign a district field unit to investigate further.
 - b. it is determined that the vehicle is abandoned or the caller has no vehicle information available, OEMC will transfer the caller to the "311" Non-Emergency City Service Request Telephone Number.
2. When responding to complaints (e.g. on view, beat community meetings, OEMC assignment, etc.) of abandoned autos, Department members will first establish if the abandoned auto is stolen. If the abandoned vehicle is:
 - a. stolen, prepare and submit the appropriate case reports and request a tow, if necessary, in accordance with the procedures established in the Department directive entitled "[Vehicle Theft and Wanted Vehicle Procedures](#)."
 - b. not stolen, members will complete a City Service Request ([CPD-21.208](#)) and submit the completed form to the community policing office.

NOTE:

The Department no longer handles abandoned autos. Members are not to complete a Vehicle Tow Report for abandoned autos. When it becomes necessary to remove an abandoned auto from the public way, a City Service Request will be completed as outlined in the Department directive entitled "[Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy \(CAPS\)](#)." Members will still be responsible for ascertaining if the abandoned auto is stolen and completing the appropriate case reports if it is established that the abandoned auto is indeed stolen.

I. Hazard Tows

Department members will classify an apparently abandoned vehicle as a hazard tow only if there is a clear and present danger to the safety of the community or the vehicle is obstructing traffic flow other than a traffic crash. When towing a vehicle as a hazard, Department members will follow the procedures established in Item IV-A of this directive.

J. Overnight parking prohibitions:

1. The Municipal Code of Chicago, [9-64-060](#), which prohibits overnight parking on designated streets will be strictly enforced. The City overnight parking ban along certain arterial routes becomes effective every year from 01 December through 01 April between the hours of 0300 and 0700 hours.
2. When assigned, Department members will first verify the license plates or VIN numbers to establish if the vehicles are reported stolen. If the vehicles are not reported stolen, the members will issue a Violation Notice citation to those vehicles in violation of the overnight parking ban within their respective districts.
3. District station supervisor on the second watch will telephone the office of the Chief, Bureau of Patrol, between 0700 and 0730 hours daily (except Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) to report the number of Violation Notice citations issued during the previous first watch. The Monday report will include information for Saturday and Sunday activity. Whenever a holiday occurs, the report will be due on the first business day after the holiday.
4. The Chief, Bureau of Patrol, will designate a member of their staff to act as a liaison with S&S regarding towing operations. This member will call S&S prior to 0800 hours daily (except Saturday and Sunday) to receive the total number of tows.
5. The Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC) will notify the district station supervisors in each of the affected districts as to the locations where towing operations will be in effect.

- K. Emergency snow tow procedures for designated snow routes will be enforced after more than two inches of snow has fallen as outlined in the Department directive entitled "[Emergency Snow Plan Operations](#)."

V. TOW PROCEDURES AT O'HARE AND MIDWAY AIRPORTS

- A. For vehicles that have a Vehicle Tow Report completed and the owner arrives on the scene prior to the lifting of the vehicle by the tow truck, the vehicle must be released to the owner, who must immediately move the vehicle.
- B. If a tow report is completed by an S & S employee and the owner returns to the scene

before the vehicle has been moved from the original location where it was parked, the driver must request an S & S supervisor to determine to release or tow the vehicle.

- C. If a Vehicle Tow Report is completed by a Department member, and the owner returns to the scene **before** the vehicle has been moved from the original location where it was parked, the original requestor or their supervisor will make a determination to release or tow the vehicle.

(Items indicated by *italics/double underline* were revised.)

Garry F. McCarthy
Superintendent of Police

14-088 RWN

GLOSSARY TERMS:

1. Vehicle Towing - The towing of vehicles involved in certain Chicago Municipal Code violations, such as, violation of tow signs, overnight parking ban and designated snow routes.

ADDENDA:

1. G07-03-01 - Vehicle Relocation Procedures