

GENERAL ORDER 83.2.3

Vehicles as Evidence

GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 61.7.3

SUMMARY

Establishes a procedure for handling vehicles as evidence.

DISCUSSION

None.

POLICY

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Towing services used by the Springfield Police Department shall be limited to those with approved police towing agreements unless another is requested by the owner/agency.

A tow bill shall be obtained by the officer only on those vehicles being towed to a City facility.

Recovered stolen vehicles are not automatically evidence. If neither the jurisdiction holding the stolen report nor the officer making the recovery has an interest in having the vehicle processed, the vehicle shall be towed to a private company's lot.

All vehicles impounded as a result of abandoned vehicle enforcement with a value of \$2,000 or more, or any vehicle that is of evidentiary value, shall be stored at the City impound lot.

If an evidentiary vehicle must be stored inside a facility, the vehicle bays located in the ancillary building shall be utilized.

The on-duty communications officer shall send a teletype advising any involved agencies of a recovered vehicle's status. The message shall relate the condition of the vehicle, location where it is stored, what charges exist and towing/storage fees. When the registered owner/victim was not notified of recovery at the time, follow-up certified letters are sent by Records on the next workday as a general rule. (Exceptions: ownership not established, waiting processing by lab or NICB personnel).

Prior to releasing a vehicle from a City owned facility, proof of ownership shall be shown, fees if any shall be paid, and a signature shall be obtained on the impound report. A time

shall be established for the party to claim and an officer shall be present at the lot for the release at the scheduled time.

Periodically, storage fees are charged for vehicles stored at a City owned facility. The owner/agency shall be notified when the storage fee takes effect and it shall be at a rate established by the City fee schedule. If storage has been paid on long standing tows, a receipt shall be written for the fee by records personnel.

If the vehicle is stored on a private company lot, all fees shall be settled by the owner (or designee) with the tow company. Tow bills for evidence vehicles shall be forwarded either to the Patrol Division Commander or his designee for payment.

All motor vehicles seized as evidence, impounded, or recovered stolen shall be inventoried and all articles not of evidentiary value but of appreciable value shall be taken into custody for safekeeping prior to securing the vehicle in the impound lot (private or City). The list of items shall be included on the impound report. Items of evidence taken from an impounded vehicle shall be listed on an evidence report separate from the impound report. (Exception: if the vehicle itself is evidence, impound report including keys, if any, will suffice).

For vehicles impounded under the abandoned vehicle program, Records shall send a certified letter to the registered and legal owner (if any) on the first work duty day after the impound report is completed and turned into Records. After the statutory required waiting period has elapsed, if the vehicle is stored at a private company lot the tow company may place a lien on the vehicle or the vehicle shall be sold at the next scheduled auction if stored at the City Impound.

An inventory of the impound lot and vehicle storage areas shall be conducted by property personnel once per month. The impound board and computer entries shall be updated to coincide with that inventory.

The City impound lot alarm is monitored by the on-duty communications officer.

Richard L. Lewis
Chief of Police