

A. **PURPOSE.** To outline the responsibilities and methods regarding vehicles impounded or removed by the Grand Rapids Police Department

B. **GOALS**

1. Remove vehicles that may constitute a hazard to the public or are needed for evidentiary purposes.
2. Protect the City of Grand Rapids and its employees from claims or disputes over lost, stolen, or damaged property.
3. Protect an owner's property while their vehicle remains in police custody.

C. **VEHICLE IMPOUNDMENT/SAFE KEEPING CRITERIA**

1. Officers shall impound or remove a vehicle when:
  - a. It is evidence in a crime or needs to be held for investigative purposes.
  - b. It is parked illegally and could potentially present a traffic hazard.
  - c. It is parked on private property and an emergency exists, i.e. blocking drive or loading dock with persons waiting to get in or out and the owner/lessee wishes the vehicle removed. In such cases, the officer shall have the complainant sign the parking citation and complete the Private Property Removal Authorization form. Include the report number on the form and submit at the end of the shift. This form shall be forwarded to the Traffic Unit.
  - d. It has been marked abandoned and is parked or left standing in the same location in excess of 48 hours.
  - e. The driver was arrested and is not the owner.
  - f. It has been reported stolen and the owner cannot be notified or is unable to come to the scene and take possession of the recovered vehicle within a reasonable amount of time.
  - g. The court has ordered a vehicle impounded due to overdue parking citations.



## D. VEHICLE INVENTORIES

1. All vehicles removed by the Grand Rapids Police Department for impound, evidence, or safekeeping shall be internally and externally inventoried. The vehicle inventory report form shall be accurately and thoroughly completed on all copies.
2. The reporting/arresting officer is responsible for completing the vehicle inventory. If another employee voluntarily or by assignment conducts the inventory, the responsibility shall be passed to that employee.
3. When it is not possible to conduct a full inventory without potentially destroying evidence, the reporting officer shall complete as much of the form as possible prior to the vehicle's removal. For example:
  - a. The type of removal
  - b. The incident and requisition numbers associated with the inventory
  - c. The location, time and date
  - d. Vehicle and owner information
  - e. Exterior condition of the vehicle
  - f. Any other information available from a visual survey of the interior.
  - g. All valuables over \$100 as well as any electronic devices shall be entered into PMU for safekeeping.
4. In those cases when the reporting officer cannot complete the inventory, the employee assigned to process the vehicle shall complete a "follow-up" inventory report form and identify it as such in the "note" section. This inventory should be complete in and of itself, i.e. type of removal, the numbers associated with the inventory, the vehicle information, exterior condition and interior inventory.
5. Locked compartments or containers shall be so noted on the inventory report form.
  - a. Officers shall not force open any locked compartment or container within a motor vehicle without supervisory approval.

- b. When a lock is forced, officers shall document that action in a separate “damage to private property” incident report.
6. Discovery of contraband during a vehicle inventory that may result in the filing of additional charges should be documented under a separate incident number.
7. The reporting officer shall document the removal of any property from the vehicle in accordance with Departmental procedures in the related incident report.
8. The wrecker driver shall signify receipt of the vehicle in its stated condition by signing the inventory form. The reporting officer shall retain the Police Department copy and give the wrecker driver the remaining two copies.
9. The impound lot attendant will inspect the vehicle upon its arrival at the impound lot and signify agreement with the vehicle condition and contents or note discrepancies on both remaining copies, then sign the copies. The wrecker driver retains one copy and the last copy is retained by the impound lot facility.
10. The Police Department copy will be submitted at the end of the employee’s tour of duty. The retention schedule shall be the current year and the two previous years.

#### E. RELEASE OF IMPOUNDED VEHICLES

1. When an owner is seeking release of his or her vehicle and is not contesting the reasonableness of the fees or violation issued, departmental personnel assigned to the information desk shall:
  - a. Verify the ownership of the vehicle by:
    - (1) Reviewing the impound management database in the records management system, ensuring the vehicle is recorded.
    - (2) Reviewing the appropriate Grand Rapids Police Department impounded vehicle record and comparing it to either:
      - (a) The owner’s driver’s license or photo identification and the vehicle’s registration certificate; or

- (b) The owner's driver's license or photo identification and a LEIN check of the vehicle's license plate or VIN.
  - b. Check the impound management database for any holds on the vehicle. If a hold exists, the vehicle shall not be released.
  - c. Determine the correct amount of fees and storage charges to be paid from a current rates and explanation list.
  - d. Complete the impounded vehicle record and have the owner sign on the appropriate line.
  - e. Take the total charges, the impounded vehicle record, and the owner's driver's license to the Watch Commander who will verify the impounded vehicle record, authorizing release of the vehicle.
  - f. Enter in the "payment collected by" box of the impounded vehicle record their badge number.
  - g. Write the requisition number, their badge number, total funds received, date and time on the outside of a designated envelope. Place the total funds received and the City Treasurer's copy of the impounded vehicle record inside the envelope and seal it.
  - h. Secure the deposit envelope by placing it in the deposit box marked "Impounds".
  - i. Give two signed copies and an unsigned copy of the impounded vehicle release Record to the owner. Give directions to the Impound Lot.
2. If the ownership is verified and the owner wishes to contest the violation and fee's the release must be bonded. The employee shall:
- a. Check the impound management database for holds.
  - b. Determine the correct amount of fees and storage charges to be paid from a current rates and explanation list, not to exceed \$500 for a bonded release.
  - c. Complete the impounded vehicle report and have the owner sign on the appropriate line.

- d. Take the total charges (US currency **ONLY**), not to exceed \$500, impounded vehicle record, and the owner's driver's license to the Watch Commander who will verify the impounded vehicle record, authorizing release of the vehicle.
  - e. Enter in the "payment collected by" box of the impounded vehicle record their badge number.
  - f. Write the req. number, badge number, total funds received, date and the time on the outside of a manila envelope. Place the total funds received, City Treasurer's copy of the impounded vehicle record inside the deposit envelope and seal it.
  - g. Place the envelope it in the deposit box marked "For Interim Bonds and Cash Bails."
  - h. Give the owner two signed and an unsigned copy of the impounded vehicle record.
  - i. Advise the owner that he or she must appear at the 61<sup>st</sup> District Court Traffic Bureau and file the petition for a hearing date within twenty (20) days of the current date or the bond is forfeited for fees. Give directions to the Impound Lot.
3. The following are the types of funds that the City Treasurer will and will not accept for payment of total charges on non-contested vehicle releases. Grand Rapids Police Department employees shall only receipt acceptable funds.
- a. Funds acceptable:
    - (1) U.S. currency
    - (2) Personal checks drawn on Michigan banks payable to the City of Grand Rapids
    - (3) Certified or cashier's checks drawn on any bank payable to the City of Grand Rapids
    - (4) Traveler's checks payable to the City of Grand Rapids; or
    - (5) Money orders
    - (6) Credit cards

- b. Funds not acceptable:
  - (1) Out-of-state checks
  - (2) Third Party checks
- 4. Deposit Procedures
  - a. On a daily basis in the morning hours, Monday through Friday, except holidays, an employee from Support Services Division will collect the sealed deposit envelopes from the deposit box marked “impounds”.
  - b. “Bonded Vehicle” entries shall be collected on regular business days.
  - c. Discrepancies, if not resolved, shall be forwarded to the attention of the Support Services Division Commander.