

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	Search of Vehicle	DPM 2.2.30 Effective 01/04/2013 Revised 08/26/2013 Reviewed 12/16/2024
Approved by: Chief of Police	Chapter: Search & Seizure	Page: 1 of 3

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for searching vehicles.

2. GENERAL VEHICLE SEARCH PROCEDURES

A. Locked Areas or Containers.

1. Use key to open rather than force.
2. If key is unavailable, do not force locked containers.

TYPE	ELEMENTS	SCOPE	PROCEDURE
Consent [ALEAP 1.11D]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary. • If not registered owner consent, must have joint access or control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited by consent given. • Subject can stop or limit at any time. • If not registered owner consent, establish ownership and authority prior to searching containers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have verbal consent recorded on Axon, if equipped. Otherwise signed written consent is preferred. • Use DPM 2.2.10F1 Consent for Search Form. • Have at least one officer witness search if practicable.
Abandoned Vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be abandoned (not on private property as possible junk or dismantled). • Must have clear evidence that vehicle is abandoned. • Officer must have legal access to where the vehicle is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole vehicle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If vehicle is truly abandoned, there is no reasonable expectation of privacy in the vehicle; therefore, it may be searched. • If any person has or claims an interest in the vehicle, it is not abandoned.
Aircraft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as motor vehicle. 		

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Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle must be impounded for a violation of ARS 28-3511 or for safekeeping. Inventory must follow policy. Not intended as evidence gathering theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include entire vehicle and all containers, whether closed or otherwise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See DPM 2.7.45 Vehicle Inventory.
Mobile Conveyance or Automobile PC Exception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC that evidence or contraband is in vehicle. Vehicle apparently mobile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited by object search. Once object found, cease search. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupants may only be searched on consent or under arrest.
Motor/Mobile Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If apparently mobile, treat as motor vehicle for warrantless search. If affixed to location, treat as structure. 		
Protective Sweep of Vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawful investigatory stop of vehicle. Facts support officer reasonably believing subject is armed and dangerous and has access to weapons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to areas in passenger compartment within lunging area where weapons could be. 	
VIN (Vehicle Identification Number)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reasonable expectation of privacy while on public roadway or in public view for the VIN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever public VIN is placed on particular vehicle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove anything that blocks view of VIN from outside of vehicle. Check VIN on registration with VIN on vehicle.
Warrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Search Warrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited by warrant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Search Warrants.

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REFERENCES

- [DPM 2.2.10F1 Consent for Search Form](#)
- [DPM 2.7.45 Vehicle Inventory](#)