



# Department of State Police General Order

Effective Date: <b>February 5, 2026</b>	Number: <b>TRF-10</b>
Subject: <b>Vehicle Inventory</b>	

## **1. Policy.**

Any vehicle towed, or in Department custody, shall be inventoried and properly documented to protect:

- a. The vehicle and its contents;
- b. The Department and tow service providers against false claims of lost, stolen, or vandalized property; and
- c. The member(s), tow service providers, and the public from dangerous items that might be in the vehicle.

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## **2. When to Inventory a Vehicle.**

An inventory is a non-investigative procedure in which the contents of a vehicle are itemized and the condition of the vehicle is noted.

The Department shall inventory any vehicle towed, removed, or impounded:

- a. As outlined within TRF-09 Towing;
- b. When involved in a crash, and the owner is unable to care for it;
- c. Pursuant to a lawful arrest when the vehicle could not be removed in some other lawful manner; or
- d. As a seizure when the vehicle is subject to statutory forfeiture or lawful seizure pursuant to a governmental interest, such as:
  1. A seizure pending forfeiture;
  2. Company or corporation distress warrant; or
  3. The vehicle was used in the commission of a crime, as an instrument of a crime, or is stolen.

The inventory process should be conducted at the scene before towing the vehicle. If the scene is not safe or practical, the process may be done at another location, however the inventory shall be done within a reasonable period of time.

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## **3. Inventory Not Necessary.**

A motor vehicle inventory need not be taken if the vehicle is:

- a. Legally parked and locked;



- b. Abandoned and locked;
  - c. Removed by a third party as outlined in TRF-09 “Towing”; or
  - d. Disabled with the operator and/or occupants present.
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## **4. Inventory Procedure.**

The standard inventory procedure shall consist of a detailed inspection of the interior and exterior of the vehicle for damaged and missing parts, as well as to locate and record the contents of the vehicle.

The inventory listing of personal items and valuables shall extend to all storage areas and compartments. This encompasses all open areas, including but not limited to floor areas, the area in and around the instrument panel and the rear deck above the rear passenger seat, the open area under the seats, the glove compartment and trunk, and other places where property may be kept.

All closed but unlocked containers shall be opened and each article inventoried individually.

Locked containers shall be opened if a key is lawfully available. If a key is not lawfully available, the container shall be inventoried as a single unit.

If an owner and / or operator requests to remove or entrust their possessions to another person, without it impeding the towing or impoundment process, such request may be granted, unless the items pose a safety hazard or the member has probable cause to seize the items.

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## **5. Search Warrants.**

A search warrant shall be obtained before the search of a locked container or forcing open a locked glove compartment or trunk, unless:

- a. Consent to open the container is obtained from its owner;
  - b. The member has probable cause to believe that such locked container shall put the member or others at immediate risk of injury or loss of life; or
  - c. A key is lawfully available.
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## 6. Responsibilities.

Positions	Duties
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Make, or cause to be made, any necessary DAJ entries;</li><li>b. Ensure that all articles taken for safekeeping are stored in an appropriate container and secured in the barracks of jurisdiction or with the owner;</li><li>c. An article of value may be left with the vehicle, if the owner so requests, by storing it in a secure location inside or attached to the vehicle; and</li><li>d. Accurately record a complete listing of the general condition of the vehicle and its contents in the motor vehicle inventory section in ACISS.</li></ul>
Station Commanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Ensure inventories are properly documented in ACISS, and periodically review the documentation for compliance with this policy; and</li><li>b. Ensure that property secured during the inventory procedure is returned to the rightful owners, as appropriate, and not kept longer than necessary.</li></ul>
Troop Commanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Strictly enforce the motor vehicle inventory procedure to avoid arbitrary application of the policy.</li></ul>

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## 7. References.

- a. *Commonwealth v. Daley* 423 Mass. 747 (1996);
- b. *Commonwealth v. Matchett* 386 Mass. 492 (1982);
- c. TRF-09 Towing;
- d. MPAC: 1.2.4.

**Promulgated by:**

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Colonel / Superintendent**

