

## TOWING - RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLES

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) that when officers recover stolen vehicles the vehicles will either be released to the registered owner or towed to the OPD Vehicle Impound Unit Lot. Recovered stolen vehicles that were taken during a robbery will be processed for evidence by the OPD Forensic Investigations Unit prior to release of the vehicle.

### PROCEDURE:

#### I. Recovery

- A. Officers have no legal authority to tow vehicles from private property unless the vehicle is confirmed to have been stolen, is seized in connection with an arrest for evidentiary purposes, and/or is towed in connection with a violation as outlined in the OPD Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM).
- B. When officers recover stolen vehicles on public or private property, officers shall:
  - 1. Contact the OPD Information Channel to obtain the RB number from the original Stolen Vehicle Report and will then order an Impound Tow if the vehicle is going to be towed to the OPD Vehicle Impound Unit.
    - a. If pertinent, officers will communicate to the Information Channel the general condition of the vehicle (i.e. were the wheels removed, etc.).
  - 2. If the vehicle was recovered on the property of a private tow company, officers will contact the Auto Theft Squad or appropriate CIB investigative unit (i.e., Homicide etc.) to determine the appropriate steps to be taken (i.e., whether the vehicle will be left on the private tow lot or taken to the OPD Vehicle Impound Lot).

**NOTE:** Field Investigations Detectives will not make this determination. Officers will wait until they contact an Auto Theft Squad or other appropriate CIB investigative unit Detective/Supervisor before having the vehicle towed.

- 3. Complete a Recovered/Impounded Stolen Vehicle Report (OPD FORM 202), utilizing PortalONE on ALL recovered stolen vehicles, using the RB numbers (See "Vehicles Reported Stolen" policy for more details).
- 4. Recovered stolen vehicles which are towed to the OPD Vehicle Impound Unit Lot shall be towed by the contracted towing vendor.
- 5. Prior to towing a recovered stolen vehicle to the OPD Vehicle Impound Unit Lot, officers shall:
  - a. Make certain the vehicle's VIN number matches the registration of the license plates if the license plates are on the vehicles.
  - b. conduct a search for evidence.
    - (1) Officers shall inventory and book any evidence located in/on the vehicle.
    - (2) If officers believe a vehicle needs to be processed for latent prints, they shall make a notation of this in the report. This will alert the Auto Theft Squad to check the vehicle at the OPD Vehicle Impound Lot.

- (a) If the Auto Theft Squad determines the vehicle must be processed they shall request the processing prior to releasing the vehicle.
- 6. The Vehicle Impound Unit shall contact the owner of a recovered stolen vehicle as soon as the vehicle is released by the Auto Theft Squad.
  - a. Citizens can pick up their vehicle during the normal business hours of the OPD Vehicle Impound Lot. Officers will NOT quote any fees charged by the Impound Lot to vehicle owners and will direct the owner to contact the OPD Vehicle Impound Lot for further information.

## **II. Vehicle Owner at Scene of Vehicle Recovery**

- A. When the owner of the recovered stolen vehicle appears on the scene prior to the vehicle being towed, the officers shall:
    - 1. Verify ownership of the recovered vehicle, making sure that the legal owner is claiming the vehicle and that the driver has a valid operator's license prior to releasing the vehicle.
    - 2. Advise the Information Channel of the owner's presence at the scene and request permission from the Auto Theft Squad to release the vehicle to the owner.
      - a. If officers cannot contact the Auto Theft Squad they shall contact the Criminal Investigations Unit for authorization to release vehicle. If officers cannot contact the Auto Theft Squad or the Criminal Investigations Unit, officers shall obtain authorization to release the vehicle to the owner from their supervisor.
    - 3. Conduct a search for evidence prior to releasing the recovered vehicle to the owner at the scene. The officers shall inventory and book any evidence located.
      - a. If officers determine the vehicle needs to be processed for latent prints, they shall submit the request to OPD Forensic Investigations and will standby for Forensic Investigations employees' arrival to the scene.
- NOTE:** Not all vehicles need to be processed.
- b. If officers determine a vehicle does not need to be processed but the owner insists officers shall advise the owner to contact OPD Forensic Investigations for an appointment to bring the vehicle to OPD Central Headquarters for processing.
  - 4. Complete an OPD Recovered/Impounded Vehicle Report (OPD Form 202) and an OPD Continuation/Supplementary Report (OPD Form 200A) if they are authorized to release the vehicle to the owner on the scene.
    - a. The reports must detail the recovery of the vehicle, the search for evidence, the Forensic Investigations Technician (if at the scene), the name of the OPD supervisor who authorized the release of the vehicle, and the name, address and telephone number of the person to whom the vehicle was released.
  - 5. Advise the OPD Information Channel to immediately contact NCIC to remove the vehicle from the Active Stolen Status in NCIC.

**NOTE:** If the Recovered Stolen Vehicle Report is completed in PortalONE an automatic notification shall be sent to NCIC to remove the vehicle from the Active Stolen Status in NCIC.

6. Notify the Traffic Unit or other relevant unit prior to releasing the vehicle when it is apparent that the vehicle has been involved in a crash or possible criminal activity.

#### **REFERENCES:**

##### **I. Previous OPD Orders**

- A. Previous General Orders: #39-94, 39-94 Supplement #1, 51-15, and 33-17.

##### **II. Other**

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #05-2017, 06-2018, 10-2019, 04-2021, and 03-2024.