PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT MANUAL OF GENERAL ORDERS			
General Order: 30.31	**Effective: 03/15/2023**	**Supersedes: 07/29/2021**	**Number of Pages: 1**
CALLS FOR SERVICE: CIVIL TOWS			

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for responding to a request for assistance at the scene of a civil tow. It is important the Police Department does not give the appearance of aiding either party in the completion or prevention of a civil tow. For the purpose of this policy, a "civil tow" refers to any towing activity of a civil nature, such as vehicle repossessions or tows on private property by firms under HOA contract for violations of a property owner's regulations.

II. Policy

A. Requests to Respond Prior to a Civil Tow:

Officers will not respond to requests for assistance by a towing firm **prior** to an attempted civil tow to "stand by" or provide a presence while the repossession is attempted. Any member receiving such a request will explain this as the policy of the Police Department. Should the tow firm request further information, they will be referred to a police supervisor who will explain the Department's policy.

B. Requests to Respond During a Civil Tow:

1. If called to the scene of a civil tow, officers will respond to ensure no crime was committed. If a crime is alleged, it will be investigated and if the facts reveal probable cause that a crime was committed, an arrest will be made in accordance with policy and applicable laws. If no crime was committed, members will attempt to explain the Department's policy to the involved parties. Officers may remain on scene if deemed necessary to maintain public safety; however, no action will be taken unless a crime is observed.

2. If a crime is committed in an officer's presence, necessary action will be taken to stop the crime and place the appropriate charges. In either case, it must be clear to the investigating officer that any arrest while on scene of a civil tow must be done because of violation of criminal law. Interference with the tow alone will not be treated as a violation of law.

3. Members will not arrest, or threaten to arrest someone, to gain compliance with a civil tow.