

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

NO.690



Motor Vehicle Inventory

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1. A detailed inventory shall be made whenever a vehicle is ordered towed, removed, or impounded as a result of any police action (except as excluded below) in order to protect:
 - a. The vehicle and its contents;
 - b. The Department, the police officer, and the tow company against claims of lost, stolen or vandalized property;
 - c. The police officer and the public from dangerous items that might be in the vehicle.

This inventory is a non-investigative procedure in which the contents of a vehicle are itemized and the condition of the vehicle is noted. This inventory process should be conducted at the scene prior to towing the vehicle. If it is unsafe or impractical at the scene, the process may be performed at another location, provided that it is performed within a reasonably short period of time, not to exceed two hours.

2. A **complete** motor vehicle inventory need not be performed if the motor vehicle is:
 - a. Abandoned and locked;
 - b. Interfering with the movement of traffic or creating a hazard and requiring prompt removal for public safety reasons;
 - c. Removed pursuant to a snow emergency and/or any other emergency;
 - i. However, in such circumstances, the police officer shall note on the motor vehicle inventory form that a complete inventory could not be performed and indicate the reason(s) why.
3. **No** vehicle inventory form need be submitted if the vehicle is:
 - a. Disabled with the owner and/or operator and towed at their request;
 - b. Removed by a third party.
4. The standard motor vehicle inventory procedure shall consist of a detailed inspection of the interior and exterior of the vehicle for damaged and/or missing parts, as well as to locate and record the contents of the vehicle. The inventory of the contents and the condition of the vehicle shall be recorded on the Worcester Police Department Motor Vehicle Inventory Form #AT-6.

The following areas of the vehicle shall be inventoried:

- a. The interior passenger compartment of the vehicle;
- b. The glove compartment (unless locked and there is no key available);
- c. The trunk (unless locked and there is no key available);
- d. The exterior of the vehicle for damaged and/or missing parts.

The inventory for all personal items and valuables shall extend to all storage areas and compartments that are accessible to the operator and/or occupants, and shall encompass:

- a. All open areas, including the floor areas, the surfaces of the instrument panel and rear deck above the rear passenger seat, under the seats, the glove compartment, the trunk, and all other places where property is likely to be kept;
 - b. All closed containers, either locked when a key or combination is available, or unlocked, shall be opened, with all property contained therein individually inventoried.
 - i. Under no circumstances shall a police officer open any locked containers when no key or combination is available.
5. The police officer performing a motor vehicle inventory shall:
- a. Seize all contraband, fruits, or instrumentalities of crime;
 - b. Locate and secure any monies or articles of value that cannot be secured by the tow company;
 - c. Ensure that all articles taken for safekeeping are stored in an appropriate container and secured at the Department supply room;
 - d. If necessary, file a completed WPD Vehicle Inventory Form #AT-6;
 - e. At the owner's request, and upon the owner's signature, place any article of value in the trunk;
 - f. At the owner's request, and upon the owner's signature, allow the owner/operator to entrust their possessions to a third party, unless the police officer has probable cause to seize the item(s);
 - g. Notify the owner and/or his/her representative, as soon as practicable, of the location of the vehicle and any contents that were removed;
 - h. Notify the dispatcher of the vehicle's description, the vehicle identification number, and the tow company that towed the vehicle.
6. The Vehicle inventory Form #AT-6 shall, to the extent possible:
- a. Be completed in its entirety by the police officer, preferably prior to the removal by the tow company;
 - b. In those cases where it is not practicable, the location and timing of the inventory shall be noted on the vehicle inventory form;
 - c. The vehicle inventory form shall be filed with the incident report;
 - d. The police officer shall obtain the signature of the tow operator;
 - e. Vehicle inventory forms shall be maintained in the Bureau of Records for a period of one (1) year and shall be filed by date.

Per:

James M. Gallagher
Chief of Police

(Policy #690 Motor Vehicle Inventory July 26, 1993 was revised April 24, 2001)

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