

2.353 AUTO THEFT

2.353.02 Auto Theft - Generally

- A. Steps to be taken in auto theft investigations include, but are not limited to:
1. Determining if vehicles are actually stolen instead of being repossessed, misplaced, or operated by family or friends;
 2. Completing crime reports;
 3. Providing sufficient information to Communications for lookouts to be broadcast and entries made into METERS/NCIC;
 4. Ensuring checks are made to determine if victims have a history of reporting stolen vehicles and the details of any related history.
- B. Auto theft reports will contain all applicable and available information that includes, but is not limited to:
1. Case numbers;
 2. Dates and times of thefts;
 3. Locations of thefts;
 4. Vehicle information, e.g., year, make, model, color, VIN, etc.;
 5. Tag information, e.g., state, year, expiration date, number of tags stolen;
 6. How vehicles were stolen;
 7. Description and disposition of evidence;
 8. Listing of areas canvassed;
 9. Description of steps taken to ensure vehicles in question were not impounded or repossessed;
 10. Where vehicles were recovered;
 11. Suspect information;
 12. Any pertinent miscellaneous information; and
 13. Dates of MILES / METERS activities, such as, entry, modification, clearance, etc.
- C. Vehicles with missing, altered, or obliterated VINs will be impounded consistent with **2.434.12 Vehicles Impounded for Evidence Purposes.**
- D. Vehicles recovered in theft or unauthorized use cases may be impounded consistent with **2.434.14 Stolen Vehicles.**

2.353.04 Vehicle Processing

- A. Stolen vehicles recovered within the agency's jurisdiction will normally be processed by officers making the recoveries. Investigators may be contacted to conduct processing depending on the seriousness of crimes involving the stolen vehicles.
- B. Items that cannot be processed at recovery locations, such as paper, bottles, cans, and other removable items, should be packaged and brought to Headquarters for processing by either recovering officers, investigators, or other qualified personnel.
- C. Investigators should be contacted when stolen vehicles are recovered outside the agency's jurisdiction and "Hold for Processing" NCIC requests have been made. Investigations personnel will determine if agency personnel will respond to process vehicles, request recovering agencies process vehicles, or cancel the "Hold" request.

2.353.06 Vehicle Owner Notification

- A. Investigating officers will ensure owners are notified of vehicle recoveries. Owners will be informed of the circumstances of the recoveries, locations of the vehicles, and procedures for obtaining vehicle releases. Notification information, such as, date, time, who, etc., will be included in the reports and Record of Impoundments filed.
- B. Officers receiving information on recoveries of vehicles stolen from the agency's primary jurisdiction, but recovered elsewhere, are responsible for notifying vehicle owners of vehicle locations and any other pertinent information available. Notification information, e.g., date, time, who, etc., will be included in reports filed.
- C. If notifications to owners are not made in person or via telephone by the end of reporting officers' normal tours of duty, officers will notify on-duty patrol supervisory personnel to coordinate owner notifications with the next shift.
- D. If notifications to owners are not made within 24 hours, Records Unit personnel will be requested to send written notifications to the last registered owners via certified, return receipt, mail.

2.353.08 WYCAR Program

- A. The WYCAR (Watch Your Car) program is a free national vehicle theft prevention program funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance Office of Justice Programs and managed in Maryland by the Maryland Vehicle Theft Prevention Council.
- B. Vehicle owners sign an agreement stating their vehicles are not normally used between 0100 and 0500 hours.
- C. Officers observing WYCAR marked vehicles being operated between 0100 and 0500 may stop the vehicles to verify either owners or other designated persons are operating the vehicles.
- D. This reflective decal is applied on the front windshield directly above the inside rearview mirror.



- E. This reflective decal is placed on the outside lower-left corner of the rear window.



- F. Traffic stops of WYCAR registered vehicles will be conducted as unknown risk vehicle stops unless other articulable, reasonable suspicion or probable cause exists to justify conducting high risk vehicle stops.