



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

610 – TOWING OF VEHICLES

GENERAL ORDER: 2022-XX
ISSUED: January 24, 2022

EFFECTIVE: January 24, 2022

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Assistant Chief Steven Johnson
DATE: December 10, 2021

ACTION: Amends General Order 2015-22 (May 11, 2015)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): 6.2.14

ROLL CALL VERSION

**Contains only changes to current policy.
For complete version of SOP, see SharePoint.**

610.05 VEHICLE SEARCH/PROPERTY INVENTORY (WILEAG 6.2.14)

- A. In order to safeguard citizens' property, protect the city from claims of theft or negligence, protect members from spurious claims, and for the safety of members, towed vehicles shall be thoroughly searched (including boats, trailers, mobile homes, etc.) for items of apparent value.

Note: Members equipped with a body worn camera shall ensure they activate their body worn camera while conducting a vehicle search in accordance with SOP 747 Body Worn Cameras.

- C. The inventory search should be conducted at the scene prior to the tow. ~~but~~ Inventory searches may only be conducted with supervisory approval at the impoundment lot or some other location if circumstances dictate.
1. All property of apparent value shall be removed from the vehicle and recorded on an *Inventory Report* (form PP-32).
 2. Members shall furnish the inventory number to the Department of Public Works (DPW) Parking Enforcement Information Desk for insertion on the tow record. Members shall also document inventory number(s) on a *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27).
- F. In the event a vehicle is locked, members shall not attempt to gain entry, but shall document on the *Tow Authorization Report* any items that are visible in plain view within the vehicle, and any equipment that may be secured or attached to the outer portion of the vehicle, such as a snowplow or ladder. Members equipped with a body worn camera shall ensure they activate their body worn camera to record items in plain view in accordance with SOP 747 Body Worn Cameras. Such notations shall be placed in the area titled "Comments."
- G. The physical condition of the vehicle shall be properly documented under the area entitled "Damages." Members equipped with a body worn camera shall ensure they activate their body worn camera to record the physical condition of the vehicle in accordance with SOP 747 Body Worn Cameras.

610.10 TOWING DATA REQUIREMENTS (WILEAG 6.2.14)**A. TOW REQUEST**

To initiate a tow request, members shall contact the Parking Enforcement Information Desk and furnish the following information in the order given below to conform with the information listed on the *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27).

10. Citation number / ~~incident report~~ case number (~~IR~~) if applicable.
11. Advise Parking Enforcement Information Desk personnel if the vehicle is operable or non-operable.
12. Advise Parking Enforcement Information Desk personnel of the number of tires on the vehicle and/or the number of flat tires on the vehicle.
13. If the vehicle is being towed as evidence, the member completing the *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27) must provide the Parking Enforcement Information Desk with the ~~incident~~ case number and the name of the supervisor assigned to the respective Criminal Investigation Bureau division or district who authorized the evidence tow.
(WILEAG 6.2.14.1, 6.2.14.2)

B. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Members shall advise Parking Enforcement Information Desk personnel of any additional circumstances that might necessitate special towing equipment not normally used for a conventional tow (heavy duty towing, heavy lifting, winching).
2. ~~Oversized vehicles~~: Any oversized vehicle that cannot be towed by the city contractor shall be towed by the Municipal Fleet Services and Operations.
(WILEAG 6.2.14.1)
3. The Parking Enforcement Information Desk shall be advised at the time of the tow request and shall make contact with Fleet Services for a tow as required.

610.15 POLICE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES (WILEAG 6.2.14)**A. GENERAL TOWING PROCEDURES**

4. If personal items are recovered, advise the Parking Enforcement Information Desk of the inventory report number for data entry into the tow record and document on the *Tow Authorization Report*.

B. NO TOW PROCEDURES

2. If a "no tow" situation develops before a member departs the scene of the tow, members shall notify the Parking Enforcement Information Desk to cancel the tow truck.

C. REQUEST FOR DUPLICATE PAPERWORK

Should a towing contractor request duplicate paperwork, e.g., *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27) at a tow scene, the Parking Enforcement Information Desk will contact the member originally requesting the tow and have that unit return to the tow scene to reissue the form. The Parking Enforcement Information Desk may make other arrangements if the original unit is not available. Members issuing a duplicate *Tow Authorization Report* shall write the word "Duplicate" on the top front of the form.

610.20 VEHICLE TOW CATEGORIES AND TOWING PROCEDURES (WILEAG 6.2.14)

B. SAFEKEEPING TOW

This tow category is to be used only when:

5. The member shall provide a written detailed explanation for the specific reason for the safe keeping tow in the comments section of the *Tow Authorization Report*. (WILEAG 6.2.14.1)

C. PRISONER'S PROPERTY TOW

3. Furnish the Parking Enforcement Information Desk with the prisoner's name, address, date of birth, and offense type.
4. Advise the Parking Enforcement Information Desk of the department inventory number if any property has been removed.

D. PRIVATE TOW


2. Requests for private tows using city towing contractors shall be received and dispatched by the Parking Enforcement Information Desk personnel. No records of private tows will be maintained.

E. EVIDENCE TOW

Authorization for a vehicle to be towed as evidence shall be obtained from the shift commander of the member's work location.

2. Furnish the tow data information as indicated in SOP 610.10, and in addition, provide the Parking Enforcement Information Desk with the name and PeopleSoft number of the investigating officer/detective and the name of the supervisor who authorized the evidence tow, the reason for the tow, the type of investigation (in the comment's section), and the incident case number.
3. Complete a *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27) and add the assigned tow number and incident case number.
4. The member shall follow the evidence vehicle to the city tow lot (██████████) and have the vehicle stored in the heated Milwaukee Police Department designated garage (██████████) designated as the ██████████ building. The vehicle

must be stored outside to eliminate storage hazards if any of the following are present:

- a. Leaking gasoline or fuel;
 - b. Vehicle has damage to the battery or extensive front end damage;
 - c. Vehicle contains hazardous fluids or chemicals in the cabin, trunk, etc.; and/or
 - d. Vehicle has been burned with or without accelerants.
(WILEAG 6.2.14.1)
6. Before the end of the members' tour of duty, officers the member(s) who followed the evidence tow shall log onto the Criminal Investigation Bureau SharePoint site and initiate a new evidence vehicle entry. This is located on the left column menu of the Criminal Investigation Bureau SharePoint site. In addition, the chain of custody must be documented by completing a supplemental report to the original incident report.
8. If any property has been removed, provide the Parking Enforcement Information Desk with the inventory report number for data entry into the tow record.
9. Vehicles towed as evidence shall be placed on an evidence "hold" for a maximum of seventy-two (72) hours. After seventy-two (72) hours, the towing officer or investigating member shall, once the vehicle has been processed, request the change of status of the towed vehicle to "prisoner's property" or "safekeeping." This will cause the owner to be notified that the vehicle is available for release. The member's shift commander shall notify tow lot personnel advising them of the change in status.
10. Each respective Criminal Investigation Bureau division or district is responsible for the release of evidence tows they authorize, with the exception of homicides and other police related/critical incidents which will be handled by the Homicide Division. In order to change the status of the evidence towed vehicle to safekeeping, the following steps must be completed.
- b. ~~The member must complete a Department Memorandum (form PM-9E) to his or her supervisor.~~
 - bc. ~~The memorandum shall contain a short summary of the incident including a description of the towed vehicle, and the reason it was towed. The investigating members shall also contact the vehicle's owner advising him/her of the change in status. Contact must be made with the actual owner of the vehicle and documented in the memorandum~~ an email to MPD tow lot personnel at 
 - d. ~~If there are any suspects in custody (or seeking known suspects), members shall document in the memorandum the name of the prosecutor who reviewed the case and approved the release of the evidence tow.~~

- ce. The A captain, or designee, shall render a decision as to the waiver of tow fee(s) waiver and notify North Investigations Division. Only evidence tow fees may be waived as safekeeping tow fees cannot be waived.
(WILEAG 6.2.14.2)
- df. In receiving notification, tow lot personnel shall change the vehicle's tow status and notify the Parking Information Desk of that change. The Parking Information Desk / DPW will be responsible for the release of the vehicle to its owner.
- eg. As the result of an ongoing investigation it may be necessary to change a vehicle tow status from safekeeping to evidence. If this occurs, members shall notify their shift commander. The shift commander shall notify their commanding officer, the North Investigations Division commander and the MPD personnel at the tow lot via email at [REDACTED] advising them of the change of status and also provide a case number.

Note: Changing the tow status from evidence to safekeeping effectively releases that vehicle to the owner and/or authorizes the vehicle to be destroyed.

G. EVIDENCE VEHICLE STORAGE AT THE [REDACTED]

- 2. An evidence vehicle must have a tow number and incident case number.

~~5. District Attorney~~

- ~~a. In those cases where a subject(s) has been charged in court and the district attorney's office wishes to retain a vehicle as evidence, the vehicle must be relocated to a county facility by a Milwaukee County towing contractor within twenty-four (24) hours of that order. It is the responsibility of the officer/detective in charge of the investigation that all the necessary forms are filed with the D.A.'s office.~~
- ~~b. When the district attorney's office orders a vehicle to remain as evidence, a representative of the district attorney's office must sign the *Release of Towed Vehicle* (form PR-16). The representative must take possession of the vehicle and notes of the release must be entered into the tow record.~~

H. ABANDONED VEHICLE TOW

~~1. Definitions~~

- 1a. A vehicle shall be considered "abandoned" when it reasonably appears to be abandoned, it is in a state of disrepair, and lacks valid registration plates. Disrepair here means incapable of being moved without assistance. The officer shall radio the Parking Enforcement Information Desk in this instance to request an immediate tow for "obvious disrepair."
- 2b. Further, a vehicle shall be considered "abandoned" when it has been allowed to

remain on a highway or public property for more than 72 hours after a police officer or parking checker placards the vehicle, and 48 hours after the mailing of a notice to the last known address of the owner.

- 3e. In addition, any vehicle may be considered "abandoned" when there is an accumulation of ice and snow that makes it evident that the vehicle has been parked longer than the restrictions (24/48 hours) for the street. ~~Police personnel shall contact the district console operator to request a vehicle check and then placard the vehicle and enter the tow number in the upper right hand corner of the placard. Police personnel shall enter all required information on the lower portion of the placard and affix it to the driver's side window of the vehicle.~~
- 4d. Vehicles "abandoned" on private property are those that are in ordinary public view without the consent of the property owner or agent, and for longer than 72 hours after a police officer placards the vehicle.
5. Police personnel shall contact the district console operator to request a vehicle check and contact the Parking Information Desk at [REDACTED] to advise them of an abandoned vehicle prior to placarding a vehicle. Police personnel shall enter the tow number in the upper right hand corner of the placard. Police personnel shall enter all required information on the lower portion of the placard and affix it to the driver's side window of the vehicle.
- 6e. Notification or attempted notification of the registered owner of an abandoned vehicle would require notification by the Department of Public Works (DPW). (WILEAG 6.2.14.3)

~~2. Placarded Vehicles~~

- a. ~~Once department members placard a vehicle, the *Placarding Form* (form PP-59) shall be faxed to the DPW Parking Enforcement Desk (fax [REDACTED]) as soon as possible, but no later than the end of each shift. It shall be the responsibility of the DPW parking checkers to follow up on all placarded vehicles.~~
- b. ~~The date, time, and PeopleSoft number of the person faxing the *Placarding Form* to the DPW Parking Enforcement Desk shall be written on the form on the lines indicated. The original *Placarding Form* (form PP-59) shall be retained at the district for 60 days and then destroyed.~~
(WILEAG 6.2.14.2)

~~3. Placarding Forms~~

~~Pre-numbered *Placarding Forms* (form PP-59) shall be obtained through the Printing and Stores Section.~~

I. RECKLESS DRIVING VEHICLE TOW

1. "Unregistered Motor Vehicle" means any motor vehicle that is located upon any alley, street, highway, public place, or thoroughfare and that is not displaying valid

registration plates, a temporary operation plate, or other evidence of registration as provided under [Wis. Stat. § 341.18\(1\)](#) for the vehicle's current registration period or for a registration period for the vehicle that expired within the immediately preceding 31 days.

2. Members shall receive a tow number and complete a *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27) utilizing "Unregistered" for the reason for the tow if he/she conducts a traffic stop of a vehicle or comes into contact with a vehicle involved in a crash investigation and:

a. Determines the vehicle is an unregistered motor vehicle; and

b. Issues a citation for any of the violations listed below:

1. Endangering Safety by Reckless Driving ([Wis. Stat. § 346.62\(2\)](#))

2. Exceeding Zones / Posted Speed for 25 MPH or more ([Wis. Stat. § 346.57\(5\)](#))

3. Fleeing from Officer ([Wis. Stat. § 346.04\(2t\) or \(3\)](#))

4. Racing on Highway ([Wis. Stat. § 346.94\(2\)](#))

Note: The member must issue a citation for the registration violation and the violation indicated in subsection 1 – 4 above before receiving a tow number.

3. An inventory search shall be completed in accordance with 610.05.

4. Members shall obtain a copy of the DOT vehicle registration record that includes a date and time stamp on the print out, attach it to the department copy of the *Tow Authorization Report*, and forward the paperwork to the Parking Information Desk.

Jl. PARKED UNREGISTERED VEHICLE TOW

5. Upon returning to their work locations, members shall obtain a copy of the registration teletype, attach it to the department copy of the *Tow Authorization Report*, and forward the paperwork to the Parking Enforcement Information Desk.

KJ. ILLEGALLY PARKED VEHICLE

1. Criteria

1. Police personnel are authorized to order the towing of an illegally parked vehicle meeting the following criteria:

a. Tow-away Zone and Snow Emergency Route Tow-Away Zone (MCO 101-24-1)

c. Snow Emergency Conditions Parking (MCO 101-26)

ML. SNOW EMERGENCY

4. Members shall issue citations using Code 740, and complete a *Tow Authorization Report* (form PT-27). They shall call in the required tow information to the Parking Enforcement Information Desk and receive a tow number for each vehicle to be towed. Vehicles are not to be towed before receiving the tow number.
5. Members shall use those radio channels designated for snow emergency operations to contact the Parking Enforcement Information Desk. All other non-emergency tows shall be suspended while this operation is in effect.

NM. REPOSSESSED VEHICLES

The department does not authorize the towing of repossessed vehicles. This is a civil matter between financial institutions and their customers. However, the Parking Enforcement Information Desk is advised by financial companies of repossessions and upon notification, each repossession is entered into the tow record file.

610.25 TOW INQUIRIES

- A. Upon receipt of a tow inquiry by phone or in person, members shall check their computer terminal at their assigned work location using the "~~Duncan Solutions Auto Processing System~~" GovTow Towing Management System website to determine if the vehicle was placarded or towed.
- B. Police district personnel shall provide owners of abandoned or illegally parked towed vehicles with a copy of a *Notice to all Owners of Towed Vehicles* (form PT-26), which outlines their options to reclaim their vehicles. Further, district supervisors shall ensure that a copy of this form is prominently displayed at the respective work locations.

1. Towed as Abandoned

If a vehicle has been towed to a storage lot as abandoned, refer the owner/claimant to the city tow lot in accordance with the city tow lot hours, which are available on the city's [website](#). ~~between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays. The city tow lot is closed on Sundays and all legal holidays.~~

610.45 TOW LOT MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

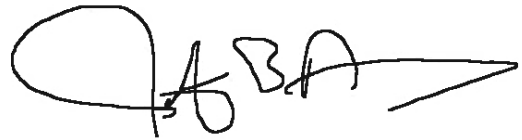
Members assigned to the city tow lot shall be responsible for the following:

- B. Work directly with the Parking Enforcement Information Desk regarding ownership conflicts, vehicle identification number discrepancies, verification by the use of confidential numbers, and illegible, missing, or switched identification numbers.
- F. Furnish the Parking Enforcement Information Desk with ownership information on those vehicles that have questioned ownership - if ownership can be determined.
- G. Update the Parking Enforcement Information Desk computer information for those

vehicles still in storage after 20 days. This information, which is accessed by DPW Parking and Towing shall indicate:

1. That the vehicle has been properly identified,
2. That the vehicle is not wanted or stolen,
3. That the vehicle has been checked for contraband and other items requiring inventory when title passes to the city,
4. That the vehicle's owner or lien holder of record has been identified, whenever possible.

~~K. Conduct salvage vehicle inspections as needed by request of Milwaukee County residents.~~

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B. Norman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk