

## Vehicle Towing and Release

### 502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides the procedures for towing a vehicle by or at the direction of the San Diego Community College District PD. Nothing in this policy shall require the Department to tow a vehicle.

### 502.2 STORAGE AND IMPOUNDS

When circumstances permit, for example when towing a vehicle for parking or registration violations, the handling employee may, prior to having the vehicle towed, make a good faith effort to notify the owner of the vehicle that it is subject to removal. This may be accomplished by personal contact, telephone or by leaving a notice attached to the vehicle. If a vehicle presents a hazard, such as being abandoned on the roadway, it may be towed immediately.

The responsibilities of those employees towing, storing or impounding a vehicle are listed below.

Prior to towing a vehicle, approval must be obtained from a patrol supervisor.

#### 502.2.1 VEHICLE STORAGE REPORT

Department members requesting towing, storage, or impound of a vehicle shall complete the ARJIS 11 form and accurately record the mileage and a description of property within the vehicle (Vehicle Code § 22850). A copy of the storage report should be given to the tow truck operator, and the original shall be submitted to the Records Unit as soon as practicable after the vehicle is stored.

#### 502.2.2 REMOVAL FROM TRAFFIC COLLISION SCENES

When a vehicle has been involved in a traffic collision and must be removed from the scene, the officer shall have the driver select a towing company, if possible, and shall relay the request for the specified towing company to the dispatcher. When there is no preferred company requested, a company will be selected from the rotational list of towing companies in Dispatch.

If the owner is incapacitated, or for any reason it is necessary for the Department to assume responsibility for a vehicle involved in a collision, the officer shall request the dispatcher to call the official towing garage for the Educational Institution of San Diego Community College District. The officer will then store the vehicle using a ARJIS 11 form.

#### 502.2.3 STORAGE AT ARREST SCENES

Whenever a person in charge or in control of a vehicle is arrested, it is the policy of this department to provide reasonable safekeeping by storing the arrestee's vehicle subject to the exceptions described below. The vehicle, however, shall be stored whenever it is needed for the furtherance of the investigation or prosecution of the case, or when the community caretaker doctrine would reasonably suggest that the vehicle should be stored (e.g., traffic hazard, high-crime area).

The following are examples of situations where consideration should be given to leaving a vehicle at the scene in lieu of storing, provided the vehicle can be lawfully parked and left in a reasonably secured and safe condition:

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- Traffic-related warrant arrest.
- Situations where the vehicle was not used to further the offense for which the driver was arrested.
- Whenever the licensed owner of the vehicle is present, willing, and able to take control of any vehicle not involved in criminal activity.
- Whenever the vehicle otherwise does not need to be stored and the owner requests that it be left at the scene. In such cases, the owner shall be informed that the Department will not be responsible for theft or damages.

### **502.2.4 DRIVING A NON-DISTRICT VEHICLE**

Vehicles which have been towed by or at the direction of the Department should not be driven by police personnel unless it is necessary to move a vehicle a short distance to eliminate a hazard, prevent the obstruction of a fire hydrant or to comply with posted signs.

### **502.2.5 DISPATCHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon receiving a request for towing, the dispatcher shall promptly telephone the specified authorized towing service. The officer shall be advised when the request has been made and the towing service has been dispatched.

When there is no preferred company requested, the dispatcher shall call the next firm in rotation from the list of approved towing companies and shall make appropriate entries on that form to ensure the following firm is called on the next request.

### **502.3 VEHICLE INVENTORY**

All property in a stored or impounded vehicle shall be inventoried and listed on the ARJIS 11 form. This includes the trunk and any compartments or containers, even if closed and/or locked. Members conducting inventory searches should be as thorough and accurate as practical in preparing an itemized inventory. These inventory procedures are for the purpose of protecting an owner's property while in police custody, to provide for the safety of officers, and to protect the Department against fraudulent claims of lost, stolen, or damaged property.

### **502.4 SECURITY OF VEHICLES AND PROPERTY**

Unless it would cause an unreasonable delay in the completion of a vehicle impound/storage or create an issue of officer safety, officers should make reasonable accommodations to permit a driver/owner to retrieve small items of value or personal need (e.g., cash, jewelry, cell phone, prescriptions) that are not considered evidence or contraband.

If a search of a vehicle leaves the vehicle or any property contained therein vulnerable to unauthorized entry, theft, or damage, personnel conducting the search shall take such steps as are reasonably necessary to secure and/or preserve the vehicle or property from such hazards.

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### **502.5 TOWING FOR EXPIRED REGISTRATION**

Prior to a member removing a vehicle that is found to have expired registration for more than six months, the member shall verify that no current registration exists with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If current registration exists with the DMV, the vehicle shall not be removed (Vehicle Code § 22651(o)(1)(A)).