

Vehicle Tow Procedures

210.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide UMBPD members guidance and direction when towing vehicles, ensuring compliance with policy and current law. These procedures are consistent with the department's vehicle towing policy (Policy 502).

210.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the UMBPD to ensure the free flow of traffic and take steps to safeguard vehicles from damage and theft.

210.3 DEFINITIONS

Abandoned Vehicle: Any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer that is inoperable and left unattended on public property for more than 48 hours; that has remained illegally parked on public property for more than 48 hours; that has been left unattended on any portion of a controlled access highway as defined in § 8-101 (f) for more than 24 hours; that is not displaying currently valid registration plates or displaying registration plates of another vehicle (please refer to Maryland Transportation Article §25-201).

Disabled Vehicle: A vehicle not functioning properly which is impeding the free flow of traffic or the movement of pedestrians.

Contracted Towing Vendor: The Auto Barn Inc., located at 2125 West Lafayette Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21217, is the only authorized contracted towing vendor.

210.4 GENERAL RULES FOR THE CONTRACTED TOWING VENDOR

- A. Only the contracted towing vendor, requested through the Communications Section, shall be utilized for UMBPD towing services of civilian vehicles.
- B. The owner or operator, unless under arrest, retains full discretion to determine the destination to which the vehicle is to be towed.
- C. Once the contracted towing vendor has been summoned, it is to be given priority over any other towing vehicle that might arrive at the scene (i.e., if the contracted towing vendor and another tow truck arrive on the scene, the contracted towing vendor conducts the tow, even if the other tow truck was summoned by the vehicle owner).
- D. Multiple vehicles may be towed by the contracted towing vendor if the vehicles are being towed from the same location and going to the same location. However, vehicles being towed as evidence must be towed separately.

210.5 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. When an officer needs a tow truck to remove a vehicle, they will contact the Communications Section and request a tow truck to respond to the scene.

Vehicle Tow Procedures

- B. The officer requesting the tow shall provide the Communications Section with the location, make, model, vehicle identification number, and tag number of the vehicle(s) to be towed, and advise if there is a need for special equipment (e.g., dollies, rollback, or heavy towing vehicle for a tractor trailer).
- C. The officer requesting the tow will be responsible for completing an Incident Report to capture the incident.
- D. The officer requesting the tow will ensure the contracted towing company operator signs the Vehicle Custody Transfer Form (Form 21-001) prior to towing the vehicle. The officer will provide the tow truck operator with a copy of the Vehicle Custody Transfer Form (Form 21-001).
- E. The officer requesting the tow will ensure the completed Vehicle Custody Transfer Form (Form 21-001) and incident report are submitted to the Shift Supervisor prior to the end of their tour of duty.
- F. The officer will scan a copy of the Vehicle Custody Transfer Form (Form 21-001) and attached it to the incident report in RMS.
- G. Property taken from the vehicle for safekeeping or evidence will be captured and submitted on a property record.
- H. Non-valuable items remaining secured in the vehicle shall be listed on the incident report and captured in the property section in RMS.

210.6 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Shift Supervisor shall ensure that the officer requesting the tow completes and submits an incident report and a copy of the Vehicle Custody Transfer Form (Form 21-001) prior to the officer concluding their tour of duty.
- B. The Shift Supervisor shall ensure the Vehicle Custody Tow Form (Form 21-001) and copy of the incident report are submitted to the Records Section for further processing prior to the conclusion of the officer's tour of duty.

210.7 COMMUNICATION SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. When requested by the on-scene officer, the Communications Section will notify the contracted towing vendor and inform the requesting officer accordingly. The Communication Section will enter all information pertaining to the tow request into CAD.
- B. If the contracted towing vendor does not arrive within one hour from the time of notification by the Communications Section, the Communications Section shall recontact the dispatcher of the contracted towing vendor to determine an estimated time of arrival. Consideration shall be given to abnormal traffic conditions resulting from adverse weather conditions and emergencies.
- C. Ascertain from the contracted towing vendor an estimated time of arrival.

Vehicle Tow Procedures

210.8 RECORDS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Records Section will be responsible for managing all applicable records related to towed vehicles (i.e., Vehicle Custody Transfer Form - Form 21-001, incident report, etc.). All records will be retained in accordance with the department's retention schedule.
- B. As soon as reasonably possible but within seventy-two (72) hours of a vehicle being towed, it will be the responsibility of the Records Section to send a certified letter (e.g., notice of tow) to all registered owners and others having a recorded interest in the vehicle. The Records Section shall comply with Policy 502 (Vehicle Towing – 502.6.2) when making notification and, if applicable, posting the notice of abandoned vehicle.
- C. The Records Section will maintain an electronic log/ledger of all vehicles towed by the UMBPD. The log/ledger will be maintained on the X-Drive with limited access. An inspection of the log/ledger will be conducted annually by the Professional Standards Bureau.