



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL



Subject			Policy Number
IMPOUNDING AND INVENTORY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY			1201
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Reference Standards		Rescinds or Amends Policy Number	
TPCA 12.01.1 CALEA: 84.1.1, 84.1.5, 84.1.7 IACLEA: 15.1.1, 15.1.6, 15.1.8		C-5	

I. PURPOSE

To establish a uniform procedure to be used when personal property is impounded and to define circumstances in which vehicles may be impounded.

These instances include, but are not limited to:

- A. Protecting the officer and the agency from false claims of lost and/or stolen property from the vehicle that was towed;
- B. Protecting the person who owns the vehicle from having their property lost or stolen; and
- C. Protecting the officer from danger from items in the vehicle.

II. POLICY

The Chief of Police of each institution is responsible for the safekeeping of all impounded property and for the proper disposition of those items, including any such items used as evidence. All actions taken during the course of this policy application should be in accordance and compliance with the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and Texas Penal Code.

It is the policy of The University of Texas System Police that motor vehicles which are lawfully towed, removed, impounded or stored at the direction of police officers or placed into the custody of the police shall be inspected and inventoried according to the procedures of this policy.

Officers are to be reminded that inventories are not searches and are conducted for the purpose of protecting property and police personnel from harm or loss.

The process of impounding and inventorying a vehicle cannot be used in lieu of obtaining a search warrant in a situation where probable cause exists and there is time to obtain a search warrant.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Impounding—taking into police custody for safekeeping.
- B. Inventory—itemized list of personal property; in general, the inventory extends to all areas of the vehicle in which personal property or hazardous materials may be found.

IV. VEHICLES:

- A. Vehicles may be impounded in the following circumstances:
1. When the person with responsibility for the care, custody and control of the vehicle is arrested and impounding is reasonable and necessary to safeguard the vehicle and its contents.
 2. When the vehicle is recovered as stolen or wanted.
 3. When the vehicle has been abandoned on U.T. property.
 4. When the vehicle is illegally parked, blocking traffic, or represents a traffic hazard.
 5. If the officer has reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe that the vehicle contains contraband or evidence of a crime and it is necessary to secure the vehicle contingent to a search warrant.
 6. Under order of forfeiture.
 7. As otherwise directed by the Chief of Police of the component institution and/or the Director of Police.
- B. All vehicles impounded in conjunction with a custodial arrest will be inventoried and the following rules shall apply:
1. The inventory will be conducted as soon as practical following the impoundment.
 2. During the inventory, a list will be made of all valuable items found in the vehicle, along with a description of any and all visible damage to the vehicle.

V. SCOPE

- A. Areas to be inventoried include, but are not limited to:
1. Front and rear passenger areas
 2. Console
 3. Visors
 4. Dashboard
 5. Glove box/map box
 6. Under seats and mats
 7. All storage areas
 8. Trunk—the trunk compartment may be inventoried if there are keys available or entry may be gained by less than destructive force.

B. Locked containers

Officers shall open all containers, to include locked containers, during a vehicle inventory if necessary to:

1. Protect the owner's property
2. Protect the officers from dangerous objects
3. Protect the police from false allegations of theft

In the event the property is in a locked container and there are no keys available, the officer should consult with a supervisor before using force to open the container.

C. Hazardous materials


In those circumstances when an officer has probable cause to believe that a locked trunk or other locked container holds explosives, weapons or other substances that present an immediate danger to the public or officer, a search warrant will be obtained unless exigent circumstances make the delay impractical.

VI. PERSONAL ITEMS

All personal items which come into police custody will be inventoried for the purpose of locating the owner, protecting the property and protecting the officer and/or the police department from claims of theft, damage, or injury as a result of impounding the property.

A. Examples:

1. Abandoned property
2. Found property



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