



## Vehicle Inventory

### .01 Policy

A motor vehicle inventory is an administrative measure designed to protect motor vehicles and their contents while in police custody; to protect the agency against claims of lost, stolen or damaged property; and to protect departmental personnel and the public against injury or damaged property due to hazardous materials or substances that may be in the vehicle. It is the policy of the Bladensburg Police Department to safeguard the above property and interests and to conduct motor vehicle inventories only in accordance with the following procedures.

### .02 Terms

### .03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation:

*Carroll v. United States*, 267 U.S. 132 (1925).

*United States v. Robinson*, 414 U.S. 218 (1973).

*South Dakota v. Opperman*, 428 U.S. 364 (1976).

*Illinois v. Lafayette*, 462 U.S. 640 (1983).

*Colorado v. Bertine*, 479 U.S. 367 (1987).

*Florida v. Wells*, 495 U.S. 1 (1990).

Forms:

Property Log (Form 669).

Property Notification Letter (Form 681).

Reference:

General Order 319, Impounds and Vehicles.

### .04 Procedure

#### A. Legal Authority to Inventory

An authorized member of this agency may conduct a motor vehicle inventory without a warrant or probable cause when:

- the vehicle has been lawfully seized or impounded pursuant to the arrest of the driver; after towing the vehicle for violations, or for related enforcement or safety reasons as defined by state law, and,

- when officers conduct the inventory within the scope of this policy as an administrative procedure.

Examination of the contents of a motor vehicle pursuant to a criminal investigation or with the intent of discovering evidence of a crime is a search, not an administrative inventory.

#### B. Scope of Inventory

The contents of all motor vehicles that are lawfully seized or impounded by this Department shall be subject to inventory.

An inventory should be conducted in the location at which the vehicle is seized unless limited by reasons of safety or practicality. If so, it may be inventoried at a later time following impoundment.

The owner or operator of the vehicle shall be asked to remove, if possible, all valuables from the vehicle prior to impoundment. If such items cannot be removed, they shall be inventoried before the vehicle is removed, and the owner/operator shall be requested to verify the completeness of the inventory by signature.

A motor vehicle inventory may extend to all areas of the vehicle in which personal property or hazardous materials may reasonably be found, including but not limited to the passenger compartment, trunk and glove compartment.

All closed containers found within the vehicle shall be opened for purposes of the inventory. Closed and locked containers shall not be forced open but shall be logged on the impound report as such. If a key or lock combination is available, locked containers may be opened and inventoried.

#### C. Property Control

All items of value shall be itemized on a property inventory form and such materials turned over to the control of the property room for safekeeping.

## Vehicle Inventory

Contraband and evidence discovered during the course of a motor vehicle inventory shall be deposited with the evidence custodian in accordance with procedures for control of criminal evidence.

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HISTORY: Adopted July 8, 2013

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles L. Owens". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Charles L. Owens  
Chief of Police