

SANTA ANA POLICE DEPARTMENT

DAVID VALENTIN · CHIEF OF POLICE

TRAINING BULLETIN

"Education promotes professional and responsive law enforcement"

Notification of Victims of Stolen Vehicles

Purpose

The purpose of this training bulletin is to familiarize officers with changes in California Vehicle Code Section 10500-Victim Notification Law and to remind them of their responsibilities under the law.

Introduction

In the past, there has been some confusion as to who was to notify the victim at the time of the recovery of a stolen vehicle or license plate. CVC 10500, among other things, specifies exactly who and how to notify victims of the recovery of their stolen license plate or vehicle.

I. Vehicles or Plates Stolen In Santa Ana and Recovered In Santa Ana

According to CVC 10500: *"The original reporting police agency shall immediately attempt to notify the reporting party by telephone....of the location and condition of the recovered vehicle. If the reporting party's telephone number is not known, or notification attempts were unsuccessful, the original reporting police agency shall notify the reporting party (by) mail....This written notice shall be mailed within 24 hours..."*

It is the responsibility of the recovering officer to insure that the *reporting party* is notified of the recovery of their vehicle and or license plate. The Traffic Section will send notification of the recovery to the *registered and or legal owner* of the vehicle.

II. Vehicles or Plates Stolen Outside of Santa Ana and Recovered In Santa Ana

It is the responsibility of the recovering Santa Ana Police Officer to immediately notify the original reporting police agency of the recovery of their stolen vehicle/plate in our jurisdiction. The original reporting police agency will in turn notify their *reporting party/victim* as required by the vehicle code.

The recovering officer shall complete the appropriate CLETS vehicle recovery form and submit it to the Records Section for notification to the originating agency. The Traffic Section will also mail notification of recovery to the *registered and/or legal owners*.

Although it is not the responsibility of the recovering officer to notify an outside agency victim of the recovery personally, it may be done as a courtesy.

III. Vehicles or Plates Stolen In Santa Ana and Recovered By Outside Agencies

Whenever the Records Section receives a locate teletype from an outside agency notifying us that they have recovered one of our stolen vehicles or plates, Records will immediately forward the information to the Telephone Reporting Unit for *reporting party/victim* notification. The TRU will complete an Auto Theft Supplemental Report form and immediately attempt to notify the *reporting party/victim* of the recovery by telephone. If telephone contact cannot be made, a notification card will be mailed to the *reporting party* notifying them of the recovery of their vehicle/plate.

Summary

It is the responsibility of the originating agency of a stolen vehicle report, to notify their victim/reporting party of the recovery of their vehicle immediately. This should be done by telephone if possible, and by mail within 24 hours if the telephone attempt is unsuccessful, once the originating agency has knowledge of the recovery of the vehicle.

In an effort to minimize the acceptance of civil claims arising from the impoundments of stolen automobiles, officers in the field should take into account, the victim's response time to the site of the recovery before ordering a tow truck. If time permits, officers should consider several options, such as allowing victims residing out of the area, an opportunity to arrive at the location within thirty (30) minutes.

Field officers should determine whether the victim has a means of transportation to the recovery site; have directions; and verify they have a valid driver's license. Victims unable to meet the aforementioned criteria should be informed that their automobiles will be impounded.

Officers in the field should secure the assistance of a Police Service Dispatcher, so as to make a concerted attempt to contact the victim. If feasible, two telephonic attempts should be made and documented.

Personnel assigned the responsibility as Station Supervisors, should ensure that the recovery reports are complete. Additionally, to further minimize city liability, field officers should clearly document on the recovery form, who was contacted; his or her telephone number; and whether a message was left on an answering machine.

Acknowledgment: This was researched and prepared by Vehicle Crimes Investigator Gary Labb, 12/99.

Revised by: Cpl. B. Rodriguez

Date: June 2005