

Motor Vehicle Inventories

1136.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines for determining when and how a motor vehicle inventory shall be conducted.

1136.2 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department (UMBPD) that all members will adhere to the guidelines for motor vehicle inventories as established in this policy.

1136.3 MOTOR VEHICLE INVENTORY

1136.3.1 MOTOR VEHICLES IN POLICY CUSTODY

A motor vehicle inventory is an administrative requirement designed to protect the contents within a motor vehicle while the vehicle is in police custody. It is designed to protect the UMBPD against claims of lost, stolen or damaged property and to protect police personnel against injury and the University against damage due to hazardous materials or other substances that may be in the vehicle. As a result, the UMBPD will safeguard the above property and the interests of the University by conducting vehicle inventories in accordance with this policy.

1136.3.2 LEGAL AUTHORITY TO INVENTORY

A police officer 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 owner/operator, the vehicle is to be towed for traffic violations and/or the vehicle is to be towed for related enforcement or safety reasons as defined by state law. Officers shall conduct this inventory within the scope of this policy as an administrative procedure. The examination of the contents of a motor vehicle for the purposes of discovering evidence or aiding in a criminal investigation is not authorized as an administrative procedure.

1136.3.3 SCOPE OF INVENTORY

- (a) The contents of all motor vehicles that are lawfully seized and/or impounded for evidentiary purposes by the UMBPD shall be subject to inventory.
- (b) An inventory of the vehicle shall be conducted at the location where the vehicle is seized unless limited by reasons of safety or practicality. If the vehicle cannot be inventoried at the location, the inventory will be conducted in the parking lot adjacent to the Pine Street Station and performed in the presence of another officer.
- (c) When possible, the owner or operator of the vehicle shall be asked to remove all valuables from the vehicle prior to its impoundment. If such items cannot be removed, they shall be inventoried before the vehicle is towed.
- (d) 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

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on the Incident Report. If a key or lock combination is available, the locked containers can be opened and inventoried.

1136.3.4 PROPERTY CONTROL

- (a) All items of value shall be itemized on an Incident Report/Supplement Report and on a Property Record Form (UMAB 86-1). Valuable items which are removed from the vehicle shall be given to the owner/driver before removing the vehicle to an impound lot if possible. In an arrest situation or when the owner/driver refuses to take possession of the property, it shall be listed on the report forms listed above and turned over to the Shift Supervisor for safekeeping.
- (b) The Incident/Supplement Report form shall include:
 1. Date and time of the inventory;
 2. Location of vehicle when inventoried;
 3. Property and its location in the vehicle;
 4. Year and make of the vehicle;
 5. Where the vehicle was towed from if different from the site of the inventory;
 6. Who towed the vehicle;
 7. Name of the tow truck driver;
 8. Location towed to;
 9. Reason for towing;
 10. Name and address of the owner;
 11. Name and addresses of passengers including telephone numbers;
 12. Condition of the vehicle at the time of impounding; and
 13. Name of officer or Shift Supervisor witnessing the vehicle inventory.
- (c) When property is released by the Shift Supervisor or officer, the owner/driver shall be required to sign the Property Record form. If the property is released after normal business hours or after the property has already been submitted to the Property Section, the Property Custodian or designee shall have the owner sign the Property Record form before the property is released.
- (d) Control and safekeeping of hazardous materials shall be the responsibility of the Property Custodian, in coordination with the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.
- (e) Any evidence of a crime discovered during the course of a motor vehicle inventory shall be forwarded to the Property Custodian in accordance with procedures for control of criminal evidence. Contraband or CDS discovered during the vehicle inventory shall be photographed and transported to the Baltimore Police Department for analysis and/or disposal.