



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-16 (Formerly 5-11)

Effective: 10/16/2023 Review: 10/16/2024 Replaces: 03/03/2022

1-16 AUTO THEFT UNIT

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[2-60 Preliminary Follow-Up Criminal Investigations \(Formerly 2-24\)](#)

[2-86 Investigation of Property Crimes \(Formerly 2-26\)](#)

[2-88 Bait Car Program \(Formerly 2-58\)](#)

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

ROA 1994, §§ 7-7-1 to 7-7-99 City of Albuquerque Wrecker Ordinance

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

1-16-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Albuquerque Police Department's (Department) Auto Theft Unit when completing auto theft investigations and investigations related to the Bait Car Program; to outline operations for property crime reduction and wrecker services; and to outline the responsibilities for auto theft prevention training for Department personnel and outside agencies.

1-16-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department for the Auto Theft Unit to decrease auto theft rates by detecting, identifying, investigating, apprehending, and prosecuting individuals involved in auto thefts.

N/A 1-16-3 Definitions

None

6 1-16-4 Rules and Responsibilities

A. Auto Theft Unit personnel shall investigate:

1. Auto theft cases where follow-up investigation is needed;



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2. Cases involving an illegal location or business which disassembles stolen automobiles for the purpose of selling them as parts, commonly known as a “chop shop”;
3. Bait car activations, consistent with SOP Bait Car Program and the Auto Theft Unit Handbook;
4. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) inspections; and
 - a. Auto Theft Unit personnel shall assign New Mexico-issued VINs when applicable.
5. Tow yard inspections and/or investigations.

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B. Towing Services

1. Auto Theft Unit personnel shall:
 - a. Enforce the provisions of the City of Albuquerque Wrecker Ordinance;
 - b. On a quarterly basis or as directed by the Auto Theft Unit Sergeant, conduct yard inspections of wrecker companies on the Department’s rotation list;
 - c. Maintain a file of tow yard inspections documenting findings and actions taken;
 - d. Check the vehicles that are towed by participating wrecker companies through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database; and
 - i. The participating wrecker companies maintain a log of towed vehicles for seventy-two (72) hours.
 - e. Recover and remove vehicles from the NCIC database that are reported as being stolen and towed by wreckers on the rotation list, consistent with SOP Investigation of Property Crimes.

N/A

C. Auto Theft Call-Out Procedures

N/A

1. Field Services Bureau (FSB) personnel shall conduct a preliminary investigation for auto thefts; including interviews with all involved parties (refer to SOP Preliminary and Follow-Up Criminal Investigations for sanction classifications and additional duties).
2. FSB personnel shall determine whether a follow-up investigation is required and/or whether the on-call Auto Theft Detective is required on scene.
 - a. If it is determined that a follow-up investigation is required, FSB personnel shall notify their supervisor.
 - b. The FSB supervisor shall contact the on-call Auto Theft Unit Detective and brief the detective about the incident.
 - c. The Auto Theft Unit Detective shall determine whether the incident meets the call-out criteria based on:



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- i. Whether the complexity of the case requires a response by a specialized unit because it goes beyond the capabilities of FSB personnel; and
- ii. Whether a warrant is required.

3. If there is a disagreement between the FSB supervisor and the Auto Theft Unit Detective, the Auto Theft Unit Sergeant shall make the final determination for a call-out.

D. On-Call Status

1. The Auto Theft Unit shall have a primary and secondary detective on-call at all times.
2. The Auto Theft Unit Sergeant shall prepare the on-call schedule.

E. Training

1. Auto Theft Unit personnel shall:
 - a. Conduct auto theft-related training for Department personnel, as directed by Department unit supervisors, and outside law enforcement agency personnel; and
 - b. Provide auto theft prevention training and events for the community.