



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-88 (Formerly 2-58)

Effective: 08/24/2023 Review: 08/24/2024 Replaces: 05/16/2022

## 2-88 BAIT CAR PROGRAM

### Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[2-45 Pursuit by Motor Vehicle \(Formerly 2-55\)](#)

B. Form(s)

None

C. Other Resource(s)

None

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

None

### 2-88-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the operating requirements for the use of the Bait Car Program, which makes use of a specially-equipped car, or bait car, that can be placed in an area with a statistically heightened risk of auto theft.

### 2-88-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) to proactively identify and apprehend in-progress auto theft offenders. In doing so, the Department seeks to increase the number of arrests and prosecutions for this offense, thereby deterring future offenders and reducing the number of stolen vehicles. It is also the policy to perform this proactive and tactical mission in a safe and professional manner.

### N/A 2-88-3 Definitions

A. 27-7 Edward (Emergency Alarm-BAIT Activation)

Ten Code used to describe a bait car activation or theft.

B. Activity and Location Logs

A log that includes the dates, times, locations, conditions, and duration of all bait car deployments. Activity and location logs are retained for three (3) years.



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PROCEDURAL ORDERS

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C. Bait Car

An electronically equipped vehicle with a silent alarm, a global positioning system (GPS), global mapping software, and audio/video recording equipment. The vehicle is also equipped with a disabling feature that permits the engine to be turned off from a remote location and the doors and windows locked.

D. Bait Car Coordinator

The Auto Theft Unit supervisor or their designee who supervises the Bait Car Program, including record keeping, bait car deployment, and filings.

E. Global Positioning System (GPS)

An electronic tracking system that continually monitors the bait car's location, direction of travel, speed, and operating condition.

E. Long-Term Bait Car Deployment

A bait car deployment where the car is unattended and without surveillance for a period of twenty-four (24) hours or more.

F. Short-Term Bait Car Deployment

A bait car deployment where sworn personnel keep visual surveillance on the car for a period less than twenty-four (24) hours.

**7** **2-88-4** **Procedures**

A. Deployment

1. The Bait Car Coordinator has the authority to deploy the bait car. Deployment is based on an objectively heightened risk of theft in an area.
  - a. The Bait Car Coordinator shall be the designated professional staff or the Auto Theft sergeant when professional staff is absent.
  - b. The Bait Car Coordinator shall maintain a permanent record containing three (3) years of the bait car history in the activity and location logs.
2. Department personnel shall not operate or deploy the bait car without specific authorization from the Bait Car Coordinator.
3. Department personnel who desire deployment of the bait car in a specific area may direct requests to the Bait Car Coordinator.

B. Emergency Communications Center (ECC)



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1. The ECC supervisor shall:

- a. Contact the on-call Auto Theft Unit supervisor, notify them of the activation, and create a call for service (27-7E) within the area command;
  - i. ECC and responding personnel shall switch their radio channel to "bait car" under the APD-Spec 1 Talk Group. The entire duration of the call shall be monitored on this Talk Group, regardless of which area command the activation originated.

2. ECC personnel shall:

- a. Be responsible for monitoring the bait car during a long-term bait car deployment or at the request of the Bait Car Coordinator;
- b. Be trained to interpret any alarms or activation of the bait car system;
- c. Identify the bait car's physical location, car description, license plate, and where applicable, the speed and direction of travel when the activation is valid;
- d. Dispatch a minimum of two (2) officers to the vehicle location and, if the bait car is mobile, provide location updates to the responding personnel;
- e. Have responding sworn personnel notify the ECC Dispatcher when they have visual contact of the vehicle;
- f. Have responding sworn personnel advise when it is safe to perform a high-risk stop on the vehicle; and
- g. Remotely disable the vehicle ignition at the request of sworn personnel or the Auto Theft Unit supervisor.

C. Responding sworn personnel shall:

1. Exercise appropriate caution and comply with the provisions of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP);
  - a. Responding personnel shall switch their radio channel to "bait car" under the APD-Spec 1 Talk Group. The entire duration of the call shall be monitored on this Talk Group, regardless of which area command the activation originated.
2. Inform the ECC Dispatcher that they have made first visual contact with the bait car, state the location, and whether the vehicle is occupied;
3. Assess whether disabling the vehicle is appropriate if the bait car is occupied;
4. Advise whether the immediate disabling of the bait car would be unsafe;
  - a. Sworn personnel shall follow the vehicle at a safe distance until it is safe to disable the bait car.
5. Notify the ECC Dispatcher if a request is made to disable the bait car ignition;



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PROCEDURAL ORDERS

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6. Visually confirm that the vehicle disabling command has been received by noting that the auxiliary brake light is flashing;
7. Once verified, initiate a high-risk traffic stop by using their emergency equipment and notifying the ECC Dispatcher of their stopping location; and
8. Complete a Supplemental Report to document their involvement.

D. The Responding Auto Theft Unit Detective shall:

1. Respond to the original bait car activation;
2. Assume case responsibility for all bait car investigations;
  - a. The responding Auto Theft Unit Detective shall switch their radio channel to "bait car" under the APD-Spec 1 Talk Group. The entire duration of the call shall be monitored on this Talk Group, regardless of which area command the activation originated.
3. Attempt to get a visual of the vehicle and involved individuals prior to the high-risk stop. This information is relayed to the ECC supervisor;
4. Coordinate with Field Service Bureau (FSB) personnel and the Auto Theft Unit supervisor to create an apprehension plan;
5. Assume case responsibility and complete a Uniform Incident Report, criminal complaint, and any other necessary arresting documentation; and
6. Coordinate with the Bait Car Technician to recover the bait car from the scene.

E. The Auto Theft Unit Sergeant shall monitor and assume the command of the bait car activation.

6

F. Pursuits and Location of Bait Cars

1. If sworn personnel are directed to follow a mobile bait car and the individual is driving in an erratic or reckless manner that places the public in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death, sworn personnel shall immediately notify the on-call Auto Theft Unit supervisor and shall request to disable the vehicle.

N/A

2. At no time shall sworn personnel engage in a vehicle pursuit with a bait car (refer to SOP Pursuit by Motor Vehicle for sanction classifications and additional duties).
3. In the event the bait car is not located by GPS and cannot be physically located, the on-call Auto Theft Unit Detective shall immediately complete a stolen vehicle report and enter the vehicle into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) as stolen. The on-call Auto Theft Unit supervisor shall then be notified.



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

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G. Bait Car and Evidence Recovery

1. Following each verified Emergency Alarm-BAIT Activation (27-7 Edward) incident, sworn personnel shall move the bait car to a location determined by the Bait Car Coordinator. To maintain the confidentiality of the bait car program and vehicle, only plain-clothes sworn personnel shall drive the vehicle.
2. The on-call Auto Theft Unit Detective or their designee shall be responsible for collecting and tagging evidence obtained from the vehicle.

H. Confidentiality of Bait Cars

1. The bait car program is considered an undercover operation. Accordingly, all Department personnel shall exercise caution to protect the confidentiality of the program.
2. Department personnel shall never reveal the bait car description, location of deployment, or information that may compromise the vehicle's undercover status. (refer to SOP Personnel Code of Conduct for sanction classifications and additional duties).

N/A

I. Short-Term Bait Car Deployment

1. All short-term bait car deployments shall be monitored by the Auto Theft Unit Sergeant or their designee.
2. The Auto Theft Unit Sergeant or their designee shall notify the ECC of the short-term deployment.