



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-88

Effective: 11/22/19 Review: 11/22/20 Replaces: 01/19/16

## 2-88 BAIT CAR PROGRAM

### Related SOP(s):

- [1-16 Auto Theft Unit \(Formerly 5-11\)](#)
- [2-45 Pursuit by Motor Vehicle](#)
- [2-86 Investigation of Property Crimes](#)

### 2-88-1 Purpose

The purpose of the Bait Car Program is designed for a specially equipped vehicle (bait car) to be placed in an area with a statistically heightened risk of auto theft.

### 2-88-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Department to take a proactive approach to 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. Therefore, all personnel responding to bait car activations shall exercise appropriate caution and shall comply with the provisions of this SOP.

### 2-88-3 Definitions

#### A. Bait Car

An electronically equipped vehicle with a silent alarm, a global positioning system, 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.

#### B. Bait Car Coordinator

The coordinator will be the Auto Theft Sergeant or designee. The coordinator will be assigned to supervise the program, including record keeping, vehicle deployment, and filings.

#### C. Activity and Location Logs

The coordinator shall maintain a permanent record of the bait vehicle history. This log shall include the dates, times, locations, conditions, and duration of all vehicle deployments.

#### D. Global Positioning System (GPS)

An electronic tracking system that continually monitors the bait vehicle location,



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direction of travel, speed, and operating condition.

E. Short Term Bait Vehicle Deployment

A bait car deployment where officers keep visual surveillance on the vehicle. This deployment will not exceed a 24-hour period.

F. Long Term Bait Vehicle Deployment

A bait car deployment where it will be left unattended and without surveillance for a period of 24 hours or more.

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

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

**2-88-4 Procedures**

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A. Deployment

1. The authority to deploy the bait vehicle rests with the bait car coordinator and the decision is based on an objectively heightened risk of theft in an area. Personnel shall not operate or deploy the bait car without specific authorization from the coordinator. Sworn personnel who desire deployment of the vehicle in a specific area may direct requests to the coordinator.

B. Department Emergency Communications

1. During a long term deployment or at the request of the bait car coordinator, the Emergency Communication Center (ECC) shall be responsible for monitoring the bait car. ECC personnel will be trained to interpret any alarms or activation of the bait vehicle system. When the ECC concludes that the activation is valid, they shall identify the vehicle's physical location, vehicle description, license plate, and where applicable, the speed and direction of travel.

2. ECC Personnel shall:

- a. Broadcast an Emergency Alarm-BAIT Activation (27-7E). Should the bait vehicle appear to be moving from one area command to another, the dispatcher may make an all-area command broadcast. If the bait vehicle is leaving the Albuquerque area, the dispatcher shall contact Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) or New Mexico State Police (NMSP) Communications to arrange for a coordinated response.
- b. Dispatch a minimum of two units to the vehicle location and if mobile, provide location updates to the responding units.
- c. Notify the on-duty supervisor and the bait car coordinator.



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- a. When responding units have visual contact with the vehicle, they shall advise dispatch. Responding officers will advise when it is safe to perform a high-risk stop on the vehicle. The operator will then remotely disable the vehicle and lock the doors.
- b. Upon request from officers, the operator will remotely unlock the doors to allow officers to conduct a high-risk stop.

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C. Responding Officer

1. Upon bait car activation the first responding officer to make visual contact with the bait vehicle shall inform the dispatcher of the location and state if the vehicle is occupied.
2. If the vehicle is occupied, the officer shall assess if disabling the vehicle is appropriate at the time.
3. If an officer concludes that the immediate disabling of the vehicle would be unsafe, the officer shall follow the vehicle at a safe distance until such time that safe disabling of the vehicle could occur.
4. When ready to disable the vehicle, the officer shall notify the operator to disable the vehicle and lock the doors and windows.
5. After it becomes apparent that the vehicle has lost power, the officer shall activate their emergency equipment and affect a high-risk stop. The officer shall advise the operator to unlock the doors and complete the stop.
6. Responding units will then wait for the on-call Auto Theft Detective to arrive on scene. The Auto Theft Unit will assume case responsibility for all bait vehicle investigations
7. If the vehicle was tampered with but not moved, the officer shall notify the bait car coordinator.

D. Pursuits and Location of Bait Cars

1. Should an officer be directed to follow a mobile bait car and the suspect is driving in an erratic or reckless manner that places the public in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death, the officer shall immediately notify the operator to disable the vehicle and lock the doors. At no time will an officer engage in a vehicle pursuit with a bait vehicle. See SOP - Pursuit by Motor Vehicle.
2. In the event the bait car is not located by GPS and cannot be physically located, a stolen vehicle report will be immediately completed, and the vehicle entered into NCIC as stolen. The bait car coordinator will then be notified.

E. Bait Car and Evidence Recovery



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1. Following each verified Emergency Alarm-BAIT Activation (27-7 Edward) incident, the bait car will be removed to a location determined by the bait car coordinator. To maintain the confidentiality of the program and vehicle, only plain-clothes officers shall drive the vehicle.
2. The bait car coordinator or designee will be responsible for collecting and tagging evidence obtained from the vehicle.

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F. Confidentiality of Bait Vehicles

1. The bait car program is considered an undercover operation. Accordingly, all personnel shall exercise caution to protect the confidentiality of the program. Personnel shall never reveal the bait vehicle description, location of deployment, or information that may compromise the vehicle's undercover status.

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G. Short Term Bait Car Deployment

1. All short term bait car deployments will be monitored by the bait car coordinator or designee.