

Impounded Vehicle Release Procedures

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General Order: 03-2019
Subject: Impounded Vehicle Release Procedures
Issued By: Annette M. Mecklenburg, Chief of Police

PURPOSE:

To establish procedures for the release of a vehicle that has been impounded by the Cleveland Heights Police Department.

PROCEDURES:

- I. Impounded vehicles are only to be released between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm. Exceptions to this rule can be made in emergencies with the approval of the Officer-In-Charge.
- II. Prior to a vehicle being released, the owner must produce proof of ownership of the vehicle (registration or title preferred) and valid identification. Impounded vehicles can only be released to the officially title owner and any deviations must abide by the following criteria: A copy of the title or registration and identification are to be made and submitted with release paperwork.
 - A. If a Finance Company wants to take possession of a vehicle that has been impounded, then the Finance Company must possess a title listing the Finance Company as the titled owner.
 - A lien holder is not the titled owner.
 - Transfers of ownership written on the back of a Title do not qualify as officially titled ownership. A repossession company may get a Repo Title.
 - B. If the titled and registered owner wants to release their vehicle to a third party, and they are unable to appear in person at the Police Department to complete Form 1008 (Vehicle Impound Authorization to Release), then they must:
 - Provide a copy or fax or email a copy of the title showing official ownership and provide a “Hold Harmless” letter giving the Police Department permission to release their vehicle to the third party. The “Hold Harmless” agreement must be notarized, specifically naming the third party (or its agents) and specifically identify the vehicle to be released (Make/Model/Year/License Plate/VIN).
 - A notarized document can be accepted via fax only if the stamp is clearly legible.
 - The identification of the third party to whom the vehicle is being released shall also present valid identification prior to the vehicle being released.

- C. Form 1008 “Vehicle Impound Authorization to Release” is available and can be completed by the registered owner of the vehicle in the following limited circumstances:
- The registered owner must appear in person at the Police Department, produce valid identification and proof of ownership of the vehicle and complete Form 1008 at the in the presence of a Police Officer.
 - Form 1008 must be completed in its entirety and signed by both the registered owner and the accepting Officer.
 - Once Form 1008 is completed by the owner, the Officer accepting it will attach it to the Tow Order Form on file
 - At no time is Form 1008 to be accepted after being completed from anyone except the registered owner of the vehicle, including but not limited to, the designated third party to whom the vehicle is being released.
- III. Once ownership is confirmed, the Officer will retrieve the “Tow Order Form” and complete the “Tow/Storage Charges Worksheet” to compute the tow and storage costs for the impounded vehicle.
- A. Payment for the tow and storage costs can be made with cash, check, or money order.
 - B. Payment must be made in full prior to release of the vehicle.
 - C. No tow or storage fees shall be waived without approval of the Chief of Police.
- IV. Once payment is made, the Officer will complete the three-part receipt “Vehicle Release Form.” This form shall be completed in its entirety, including the signature to whom the vehicle is being released. The three copies are to be dispersed as followed:
- White Copy – to be given to the owner of the vehicle
 - Yellow Copy – to be turned in with the payment
 - Pink Copy – to remain in the receipt book
- V. Upon completion of the Vehicle Release Form, all paperwork and payment accepted is to be given to the OIC. It is the OIC’s responsibility to make sure that all paperwork is completed properly, that the vehicle is being released to the properly designated person, and that proper payment has been tendered. The OIC will then sign the “Vehicle Release Form” indicating that all information and payment are correct.
- VI. Once the paperwork and payment have been verified, the OIC is responsible for taking the payment and placing it in a sealed envelope along with the Tow Order Form, Tow/Storage Charges Worksheet, yellow copy of the Vehicle Release Form and any other applicable paperwork (i.e. copy of title, registration, identification, third party release). The sealed envelope is then placed in the wooden locked box located in the hallway outside the Roll Call Room. The OIC will return the white copy of the Vehicle Release Form to the Officer, who will in turn give it to the person to whom the vehicle is released so he/she can present it at the Impound Lot to retrieve the vehicle.

VII. Every weekday morning, the Chief's assistant will retrieve the tow payments from the lock box. He/She is responsible for counting the money retrieved from the box and generating a report of all money collected. The money is then turned over to the Finance Department.

If any errors are discovered with regards to the money collected, it is to be reported to the Chief of Police immediately.

VIII. Each Vehicle Release Book contains 25 receipts, all of which are numbered. When a receipt book is complete, it is to be forwarded to the Chief's Office. The Chief's assistant, with the assistance of a member in Data Entry, will review each book to ensure that all numerical receipts are accounted for and match the payments that were received for the release of impounded vehicles.

IX. Parking ticket payments are to be made in a separate transaction from the vehicle release. A separate receipt is to be issued for payment of all parking ticket payments. A payment made for parking tickets can be in the form of cash, check, or money order. A three-part receipt is used for parking tickets payments and they are distributed as follows:

- A. White Copy – given to person making the payment
- B. Yellow Copy – stapled to the payment
- C. Pink copy – remains in the receipt book

Parking ticket payments are also dropped in a separate box from the vehicle release payments and collected weekdays by a member of Data Entry. Data Entry is also responsible for ensuring that proper payment was made, that it matches what is on the receipt, and turning the money over to the Finance Department. Receipt books for parking tickets are also to be forwarded to Date Entry when completed so they can be kept on file.

Any discrepancies found regarding the amounts collected for parking tickets is to be reported to the Captain in charge of Auxiliary Bureau immediately.

Approved by the order of

Annette M. Mecklenburg, Chief of Police
(GENERAL ORDER #03-2019)

Date