
LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP# P-250

PAGE # 1

SUBJECT: VEHICLE IMPOUND

INDEX AS: IMPOUND: TOWING: TOW ORDER:

EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/30/2005 REVISED DATE:

I. PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines concerning the towing or impoundment of vehicles by Deputies .

II. SCOPE:

This policy shall apply to the removal, transport, storage and release of vehicles that are towed or impounded.

III. DEFINITIONS:

A. Highway: The entire width between boundary lines of every way publicly maintained when any part thereof is open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel.

B. Roadway: That portion of the highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel exclusive of the berm or shoulder.

IV. POLICY:

Deputies will not drive vehicles to be held, stored or impounded. Wreckers will be used in the storage of all vehicles.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 2

V. AUTHORITY TO REMOVE VEHICLES FROM ROADWAYS:

Deputies are authorized to remove vehicles or require the driver to remove vehicle for the following reason:

1. Vehicle is located upon the roadway outside a business or residential district, stopped, parked or left standing, and it is not practical to stop, park or leave vehicle off the roadway.
2. Vehicle is unattended and left illegally standing upon any highway, bridge or causeway or in any tunnel.

VI. REMOVAL OF VEHICLE FROM HIGHWAY:

- A. A report has been made that such vehicle has been stolen or taken without the consent of its owner.
- B. The person or persons in charge of such vehicles are unable to provide for its custody or removal.
- C. The person driving or in control of such vehicle is arrested for an alleged offense for which the Deputy is required by law to take the person arrested before a proper Magistrate without unnecessary delay.
- D. Such vehicle is stopped, except when traffic congestion makes movement impossible, on a controlled access highway for more than eight hours, unless such vehicle constitutes a traffic hazard, in which case it may be removed immediately.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 3

VII. REMOVAL OF VEHICLE FROM PUBLIC PROPERTY:

Deputies shall be authorized to remove vehicles from public property for the following reasons:

1. Vehicle is left unattended on a public street, road or highway or other public property for a period of at least five (5) days and the Deputy reasonably believes that the person who left such motor vehicle unattended does not intend to remove such motor vehicle.
2. Vehicle is left unattended on a public street, road or highway or other public property and such vehicle poses a threat to public health or safety.

VIII. PROCEDURES FOR REMOVAL OF TRAFFIC HAZARDS OR OBSTRUCTIONS:

- A. Vehicles which are unattended and left upon a highway or public roadway in a manner that obstructs traffic or creates a hazard may be towed and impounded after reasonable effort has been made to contact the owner to have the vehicle removed.
 1. When the vehicle owner or the person responsible for the vehicle cannot be located in the immediate vicinity or otherwise be contacted for disposition or if the person responsible for the vehicle cannot immediately remove the vehicle, the vehicle may be towed to an impound lot by the tow service on call from the Communication Center.
 2. An inventory form will be filled out at the scene by the impounding Deputy. The inventory form will be turned in to the Supervising Officer.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 4

- B. Attended Vehicles which are inoperable and which are obstructing a highway or public roadway or otherwise creating a traffic hazard shall be removed by the owner or the person responsible for the vehicle. If the owner or the person responsible for the vehicle is unable or unwilling to remove the hazard within a reasonable time, the vehicle may be impounded. Occupants should be assisted when necessary.
1. The vehicle owner or person responsible for the vehicle may remove the vehicle from the roadway and temporarily park the vehicle upon the roadside. Vehicle owner shall retain full responsibility for the timely removal and for the security of the parked vehicle.
 2. The vehicle owner may request a tow service to be called and such request will be complied with when the response can be made within a reasonable time. If no specific tow service is desired, the service on call will be notified.
 3. When vehicles are towed at owner's request, an inventory form will not be filled out.

IX. PROCEDURES FOR REMOVAL OF ABANDONED VEHICLES:

- A. Vehicles abandoned upon private property:
1. Vehicles abandoned upon private property will not be impounded by Deputies, but removal shall be the responsibility of the property owner unless the vehicle is listed as stolen.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 5

2. When so requested, the Laurens County Law Enforcement Center will provide the property owners with the name and address of the vehicle owner if such information is available.
 3. All vehicles abandoned upon private property shall be checked by registration to determine if the vehicle is stolen.
- B. Vehicles which are abandoned or parked upon public property or public highway will be handled as follows:
1. A registration check will be made to determine the identity of the owner or whether vehicle is stolen.
 2. If vehicle is not stolen, reasonable effort will be made to locate the owner.
 3. If unable to contact the owner, the Deputy will place a unattended vehicle check notice on the windshield or drivers' window of the vehicle.
 4. If owner is not located, vehicle will be removed if it has been abandoned for five (5) days.
 5. If it appears vehicle is being stripped or vandalized after tow away notice is attached, then the vehicle may be impounded immediately.
 6. A inventory form will be filled out by impounding officer.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 6

X. PROCEDURES FOR STOLEN VEHICLE RECOVERY:

- A. If possible and practicable, recovered vehicles should be processed at the recovery site and released to the owner without towing.
- B. When the Deputy is unable to contact the owner to take custody of the vehicle within a reasonable time, or when the vehicle cannot be processed on-site, the vehicle may be impounded.
 - 1. When a stolen vehicle has been recovered , an Investigator will be notified.
 - 2. An incident report will be completed by the recovering Deputy.
 - 3. A inventory form will also be completed.

XI. PROCEDURES FOR TOWING AND IMPOUND OF VEHICLES FOLLOWING:

- A. When the operator of a vehicle is arrested for a violation of State or Local Law, the vehicle may be impounded for safekeeping.
- B. In cases where the driver is taken into custody and another person is authorized and capable of taking control of the vehicle, it is unnecessary for the Deputy to impound it. A release form should be authorized and filled out by a Deputy on the scene if both parties are in agreement. If they are not, then the vehicle should be impounded.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 7

- C. If the driver is arrested and requests a particular towing service, the Deputy will comply with the request and will complete an inventory form.

XII. TOW SERVICES:

A list of towing services will be maintained by the 911 Communications center.

XIII. INVENTORY FORM:

- A. An inventory form will be completed at the scene by the impounding Deputy and turned in to the Supervising Officer.
- B. A impound form will be completed by the impounding Deputy.

XIV. HOLD ORDERS:

- A. Deputies placing a hold on a vehicle must obtain approval of their Supervising Officer.
- B. The reason for the hold may only be released upon the approval of the Sheriff or Major.
- C. Vehicles placed on hold may only be released upon the approval of the Sheriff, Major, Patrol Captain or the Investigations Captain.

LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

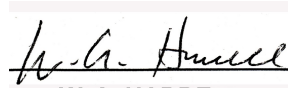
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # P-250

PAGE # 8

XV. RELEASE OF VEHICLE TO OWNER:

- A. All impounded vehicles shall be released to the owner upon proof of ownership.
- B. Proof of ownership may be the title, registration, insurance or tag receipt.
- C. Whenever a hold is placed on a vehicle, the Sheriff, Major or other Captain is authorized to release a vehicle.


W. A. HARRELL
SHERIFF

09/30/2005

EFFECTIVE DATE: