

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police in s.60, Victoria Police Act 2013. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Victoria Police Manual may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Motor vehicle theft investigations

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Scope and application

This policy applies to members attending reports of stolen vehicles and conducting subsequent investigations.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Motor vehicle theft reports

- Crime reports must be submitted as required by **VPM Crime and event reporting and recording**.
- Notify the Vehicle Crime Squad (VCS) of thefts in accordance with the ARM criteria (see the ARM intranet site).
- For intelligence gathering purposes, the VCS should also be advised/notified directly of any crime that has the potential to significantly impact on professional motor vehicle theft, such as:
 - illegal conversion and trade in stolen motor vehicles or stolen parts
 - theft of a vehicle (includes motor cars, motorcycles, trucks, earth moving and plant equipment, and farming machinery) that was valued at over \$100,000 or was brand new and stolen from a wholesale or retail outlet, or appears to be one of a series of thefts of a similar nature
 - receivers of stolen motor vehicles or stolen parts
 - indication of export of stolen motor vehicles or stolen parts.

2. Locating and recovering a stolen vehicle

At the time of location the attending member is responsible for:

- notifying PCC
- contacting the owner to advise of the location of the vehicle
- providing direction to the owner regarding the security of the vehicle (where the vehicle is not required for analysis and examination)
- if the vehicle is to be towed, seeking authority from a Sub-officer and comply with **VPM Road policing - general**.
- Before the end of the shift
 - completing and endorse the Form L23
 - submitting the Form L23 with a patrol duty return to the relevant supervisor to file in a folder dedicated to outstanding recovered vehicles
 - faxing a copy of the Form L23 it to CDEB
 - entering the vehicle in the Property Book, where it is towed to a police station for analysis or examination.

3. Seizing motor vehicles as exhibits

3.1 *Taking possession of a vehicle*

- Only take possession of a motor vehicle where necessary and justified in the circumstances.
- The responsible member should:
 - search the vehicle for non-associated property and return any property to the owner if not required as evidence
 - arrange for the vehicle to be photographed
 - record any visible damage and/or missing parts. File with the relevant Property Book entry.

3.2 *Long term storage at Vehicle Impoundment Support Unit*

- If a seized stolen vehicle is to be held by police in excess of three months, members should use Victoria Police long-term storage facilities at Vehicle Impoundment Support Unit (VISU), Logistics & Operations Support Division, Operational Infrastructure Department.
- Storage will be provided where space permits or storage will need to be organised under local arrangement whilst the vehicle is placed on a waiting list.
- A vehicle will only be accepted at the VISU if the following criteria are met:
 - if the vehicle is to be held pending a Vehicle Examination Unit (VEU) examination
 - the vehicle is to be kept for long term storage
 - the relevant Local Area Commander authorises the storage
 - non-associated property has been removed from the vehicle
 - the informant is responsible for continuity.

4. Suspect vehicle identification

4.1 Vehicle Crime Squad

VCS assists in the identification of suspect stolen vehicles but does not assume responsibility for the investigation. Consult the Suspicious Vehicle Inspection Practice Guide when dealing with motor vehicle requiring an applicable inspection.

4.2 Vehicle Identity Validation Inspection Centre

Vehicle Identity Validation (VIV) Inspection Centres are authorised by VicRoads to:

- inspect vehicles recorded as “repairable write-offs” prior to registration
- verify the identity of the vehicle and complete a police referral report
- verify vehicles have been repaired properly.

4.3 Investigating member responsibilities

Where police take possession of a stolen vehicle and the identification of that vehicle is in question, use the Suspicious Vehicle Inspection Practice Guide to determine whether the VEU is required to examine the vehicle. Contact VCS for advice.

5. Disposal of vehicles in police possession

Vehicles in police possession should be disposed of in accordance with the following table:

Disposal of vehicles in police possession	
Type of vehicle	Responsibilities/Requirements
Recovered stolen vehicles	• If not required for police purposes, return recovered stolen vehicles to the owner as soon as possible.
Seized stolen vehicles	• After VEU examination, return the vehicle to the owner and use secondary evidence where appropriate. Contact VCS or Prosecutions Division (where the matter is going to trial) for advice in relation to whether the vehicle should be returned to the owner before the case is finalised. • Where vehicle is seized under a warrant, comply with any conditions of the warrant. • Where the ownership of the vehicle is in dispute, seek direction under s.58, <i>Victoria Police Act 2013</i>. • Ensure the disposal complies with the <i>Confiscation Act 1997</i>. Refer to VPM Confiscation Act. • Committal hearings - consider making application under s.443A, <i>Crimes Act 1958</i>.
Uncollected vehicles	• Dispose of uncollected vehicles in accordance with s.57, <i>Victoria Police Act</i>, except for vehicles seized under the vehicle impoundment provisions of the <i>Road Safety Act</i>. Seek approval to dispose from: - Work Unit Manager – for destruction of vehicles or sale by public auction - Inspector level – where the vehicle is to be retained or donated for training purposes
Other vehicles	• Comply with any warrant and retain vehicles as long as they are required as evidence or part of an investigation. • Contact VCS for advice before realising a suspect identity vehicle for sale at public auction.

6. Reporting vehicle repossession by commercial agents

When a commercial agent attends a station for the purpose of providing information about a vehicle that they have repossessed in accordance with the *Private Agents Act*, members should:

- ensure that all relevant information about the vehicle is provided by the commercial in an appropriate written report. This includes:
 - registered number of vehicle
 - make, type and colour of vehicle
 - engine number
 - chassis number or Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
 - registered owner name/address
 - name of private agent
 - private agent reference number for vehicle
 - location/time of repossession
- record the information provided by the agent on LEAP
- fax the commercial agent's report to CDEB as soon as possible.
- submit a second report to CDEB where additional information is obtained after the initial report has been submitted. The second report should clearly indicate that it is a supplement to previous information so a new record is not created.

Related documents

- VPM Crime and event reporting and recording
- Suspicious Vehicle Inspection Practice Guide

Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this policy, contact your supervisor or local training officer.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
12/02/18	Replaces <i>VPMG Motor vehicle theft investigations</i> following validation of the content and update to Vehicle Crime Squad.	FF-099353
13/10/22	Cross reference updated to new VPM Road policing - general	FF-190724 2
16/06/2025	Minor amendments to reflect updated division/work units in line with the OID organisational restructure.	N/A