

## RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

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Chief of Police: Michael Poehlman		
Approving Deputy Chief:		
General Order No: S-270-09	Issued: September 30, 2009	Supersedes: N/A
General Order Title: <b>BAIT Vehicle Operations</b>		

### I. POLICY

The Reno Police Department has established safe and effective procedures for a Bait Vehicle Program designed to proactively and effectively stop stolen vehicles and apprehend auto thieves in a manner that minimizes risks to responding officers as well as the general public.

### II. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Bait Vehicle Program is designed to reduce auto theft through the deployment of Bait vehicles targeted at high crime areas. The vehicles are equipped with silent alarms, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), covert audio/video recording of the interior of the vehicle and remote control of the horn and engine. The vehicles' engine can also be remotely disabled. This program will enable suspects to be apprehended in a safe and controlled manner, reducing or eliminating the need to pursue the vehicle. Bait vehicles will be under the control and supervision of the Auto Theft Unit.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Bait Vehicle** – An electronically equipped vehicle with a silent alarm, Global Positioning System, global mapping software, and live audio/video equipment. This vehicle is also equipped with disablement features that permit its engine to be turned off from a remote location and its doors locked so that occupant suspects cannot escape.

**Bait Vehicle Status** – The current status of the Bait Vehicle's location, movement, direction of travel, speed, and occupant/suspect information.

**Bait Vehicle Deployment Log** – A permanent record of the Bait vehicle's history maintained by the Bait Vehicle Coordinator. This log is stored with the Auto Theft Unit and records the dates, times, locations, conditions, and durations of all Bait Vehicle deployments.

**Code 90 V-Victor** – RPD radio code used to identify a Bait vehicle incident. In order to protect the operational efficiency and confidentiality of the program, this code shall be used in place of the term “Bait vehicle” in all radio transmissions, as well as in any other communications that may be overheard by the public.

#### **IV. UTILIZATION**

The Bait Vehicle can be utilized in several ways.

1. The Bait Vehicle can be used for special operations, where officers, uniformed or undercover, can use direct surveillance on the Bait Vehicle.
2. The BAIT Vehicle can also be used autonomously, where the BAIT Vehicle is left unattended in a location of the officer’s choosing.
3. As the BAIT Vehicle is an instrument to apprehend criminals and lower crime rates, the Bait Vehicle can and will be used as needed by the department.

#### **V. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Activation**

The Bait Vehicle activations occur when the following circumstances occur:

1. A door is opened
2. The ignition is turned on
3. The trunk or the tool box in the bed is opened
4. The vehicle is moving over 10 mph (i.e. the vehicle is being towed)
5. If the Bait Vehicle exits a specified GPS perimeter, or geo-fence, it will also cause an activation.

Personnel from outside the Auto Theft Unit shall not operate or activate the Bait Vehicle without specific authorization from the Auto Theft Unit. Personnel who desire Bait Vehicle activation may direct requests to the Auto Theft Unit or the Property Crimes Supervisor.

Prior to each deployment, the Auto Theft Unit or designee shall notify Reno Emergency Communications of the vehicle’s location and description. Upon conclusion of the activation and/or removal of the vehicle, the Auto Theft Unit shall again notify Reno Emergency Communications.

##### **B. Reno Emergency Communications Responsibilities**

The Bait Vehicle's GPS and alarm system status is routinely monitored by Reno Emergency Communications using computer software designed for that purpose. When an alarm is sounded, Reno Emergency Communications shall:

1. Activate Alert Tones, broadcast "Code 90 V-Victor", close the appropriate channel and advise responding units to switch to that channel.
2. Do not state over the air that this is a Bait Vehicle.
3. Give responding units the location of the Bait Vehicle.
4. Do not broadcast the Bait Vehicle's license plate or vehicle description unless necessary. This information should generally be placed in the call or given using other means.
5. Continually update Bait Vehicle Status to responding units.
6. Disable the Bait Vehicle at Officer's request. Reno Emergency Communications will also activate the Bait Vehicles other functions (i.e. Honk Horn) upon request.

If patrol units are not available to respond to a "Code 90 V-victor", the Reno Emergency Communications shall then notify a patrol supervisor. The patrol supervisor will then determine whether to disable the Bait Vehicle or continue the incident.

Should speeds and driving manner indicate the Bait Vehicle is being driven in an apparent manner that places the public or other personnel in danger, Reno Emergency Communications will broadcast this over the radio and a sworn supervisor or officer will immediately advise Reno Emergency Communications to disable the Bait Vehicle. Reno Emergency Communications will then immediately attempt to disable the Bait Vehicle.

### **C. Patrol Division Responsibilities**

Responding patrol should:

1. Coordinate with Communications to locate the Bait Vehicle.
2. Do not state over the air that this is a Bait Vehicle or "Bait Car".
3. Once the Bait Vehicle is located by a responding unit, if appropriate, that unit should keep the Bait Vehicle in sight until enough units are on scene to conduct a high risk traffic stop.
4. Conduct a high risk traffic stop unless circumstances dictate more

appropriate actions.

5. Officers should not tell suspects that they were in a Bait Vehicle and should not advise them there are video/audio recordings.
6. Contact the Auto Theft Unit and advise them of the case number and which vehicle was taken. If Auto Theft Detectives are on duty, they should respond to the scene and assist as needed.
7. Arrest the occupants for the appropriate crimes and complete your reports.
8. Do not retrieve the videotape from the Bait Vehicle. Video Evidence will be retrieved and booked by the Auto Theft Unit.

**Factors to be considered when disabling the Bait Vehicle:**

If the vehicle is occupied, the officer shall assess whether activation of the vehicle's disabling devices is appropriate. Factors to be considered during this assessment include:

1. Vehicle speed;
2. Traffic conditions;
3. Weather conditions;
4. Site visibility
5. Any other factors that may affect officer and civilian safety when the Bait Vehicle suddenly loses power (i.e., ignition, power steering and power brakes).
6. Officers shall give due regard to public safety and determine the safest time and place to advise dispatch to shut down the Bait Vehicle and then do so.

If the vehicle leaves the City of Reno, the officer will continue to follow the vehicle until such time that a safe disablement can occur. Officers should consider cell phone coverage when doing so.

Should speeds and driving manner indicate the Bait Vehicle is being driven in an apparent manner that places the public or other personnel in danger, a sworn supervisor or officer will immediately advise Reno Emergency Communications to disable the Bait Vehicle.

Bait Vehicle Unoccupied or Accidental Activation

If officers arrive on scene and neither the officer nor Reno Emergency Communications observe any signs that the vehicle has been tampered with, the officer should continue driving past the Bait Vehicle to avoid drawing attention to the vehicle. Should the officer still not observe any signs of tampering with the vehicle, he will advise Reno Emergency Communications that the vehicle "checks ok". Reno Emergency Communications will then re-arm the Bait Vehicle.

Should Reno Emergency Communications and/or an officer observe signs of tampering with the vehicle (i.e. broken windows) but no suspect has been identified, located or detained and the vehicle appears to still be operational for its intended use, the Bait Vehicle should be re-armed and left as is, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

#### **D. Functional Supervisor Responsibilities**

During a "Code 90 V-Victor", the patrol supervisor should:

1. Monitor responding units and take necessary action to ensure all applicable General Orders, policies and procedures are followed.
2. Assume functional supervision of all members involved in the high risk traffic stop.

#### **E. Pursuit**

Pursuit of the Bait vehicle is prohibited when the only known charge against the vehicle occupants is stealing a motor vehicle. Do not initiate a pursuit with a Bait Vehicle unless circumstances meet the criteria set forth in Reno Police General Order P-372-05 Vehicle Pursuits.

#### **F. Vehicle Recovery**

Following each verified "Code 90 V-Victor" incident, the Bait Vehicle shall be removed by officers on scene or, if on duty the Auto Theft Unit. The Bait Vehicle shall be taken to the RPD main station parking lot where it will be prepared for redeployment.

#### **G. Confidentiality**

The Bait Vehicle program is considered an undercover operation. Accordingly, all personnel shall exercise caution in order to protect its confidentiality. Personnel may discuss the Bait Vehicle's basic capabilities with the public and may advertise the program as an example of the Departments proactive approach to auto theft enforcement.

#### **H. Training**

No employee may set or adjust the vehicle's sensor control and/or disabling

mechanisms unless specifically trained to do so.

Briefing Training will be presented to cover the components of this directive or as needed by the department.

## **I. Other Considerations**

### Code Three Responses

A Code 3 response is not necessary unless the dispatcher or officer has additional knowledge of circumstances that would predicate a Code 3 response.

### Unable to Locate Bait Vehicle

The Bait Vehicle works off wireless communications similar to a cell phone. Therefore, the equipment can receive failed signals, disconnects, and poor cell sites. If Communications momentarily loses the GPS locations, officers will be updated as soon as another connection is received.

Once officers arrive at the location, officers can advise Communications to activate the "Honk Horn" feature. The horn will continue honking until Communications is advised to deactivate the "Honk Horn" feature.

If the Bait Vehicle is located inside a building determine if a search warrant will be needed and recover the vehicle appropriately.

If the Bait Vehicle can't be located after a reasonable amount of time has been spent looking for the vehicle, the primary officer will complete a stolen vehicle report, detailing the circumstances of the theft. The Bait Vehicle will be entered into NCIC as a stolen vehicle, with a notation to notify the Reno Police Department Auto Theft Unit immediately upon the recovery.

The on duty supervisor will complete the appropriate Risk Management forms.

Advise Communications to send an Attempt to Locate to surrounding agencies.

### Administrative Guidelines

The Property Crimes Sergeant or Auto Theft Unit grants authorization for use of the Bait Vehicle(s).

Specialty units (CST, ROP, etc) will not utilize the BAIT car until trained in its operation.

The Auto Theft Unit will be responsible for maintaining the condition of the Bait Vehicle(s) and routine maintenance.

