

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

ORDER NO. 6

June 30, 1997

TO: All Concerned Personnel, Office of Operations

FROM: Director, Office of Operations

SUBJECT: STOLEN VEHICLE RECOVERY NETWORK GUIDELINES
REVISED

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

JUL 07 1997

PURPOSEPLANNING AND RESEARCH
DIVISION

This Order revises the guidelines governing the Department's Stolen Vehicle Recovery Network (SVRN) program.

NOTE: This Order supersedes Office of Operations Order No. 24, dated August 23, 1995.

BACKGROUND

The SVRN is a computer-linked radio signal tracking system designed to provide field officers with a tool to detect, locate and recover stolen vehicles. Vehicle owners participating in the program have their vehicles equipped with hidden "transponders," or radio signal homing devices. Transponder equipped vehicles are reported stolen in the same manner as other vehicles. When an SVRN transponder equipped vehicle's information is entered into the California Stolen Vehicle System (SVS) by a law enforcement agency, a radio signal is broadcast which activates only that specific vehicle's transponder unit. When activated, the transponder transmits a radio signal which can be tracked by patrol units and helicopters equipped with SVRN Police Tracking Computers (PTCs). The PTCs detect the transponder signal from the stolen vehicle and are able to track it to its location.

Reference: Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Training Bulletin, Stolen Vehicle Recovery Network, Volume XXVIII, Issue 18, October, 1996.

The SVRN was developed by the LAPD in the late 1980s using tracking equipment provided by the LoJack Corporation. The LAPD and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, as well as most municipal law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles County, participate in the SVRN. In addition, law enforcement agencies in Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties are PTC-equipped and currently use the system. Riverside County anticipates being PTC-equipped and operational by the summer of 1997.

INFORMATION

The SVRN provides officers with an enhanced awareness of the presence of stolen vehicles. Officers should consider an SVRN activation signal as an extension of their own line-of-sight observations. The same investigative methods and tactical considerations apply to SVRN activations as any other stolen vehicle investigation (i.e., number of officers involved, response to incidents of higher priority, pursuits, entering another jurisdiction, officer safety issues, etc.).

The effective use of the SVRN technology is dependent upon the timely input of stolen/recovered vehicle information by officers. Supervisors also play an important role in the successful use of the system by monitoring the involvement of PTC-equipped patrol units during the tracking and investigation of transponder signal activated stolen vehicles. Officers are reminded to be aware of the differences between the "tracking," "following," and "pursuing" of suspected stolen vehicles. Tracking is generally a coordinated search for a stolen vehicle using PTCs to track the electronic signal to its source. During tracking situations, officers are attempting to locate a stolen vehicle and suspects. This differs from a following or pursuing where officers have identified a vehicle and suspects and are actively following the vehicle or are in pursuit.

NOTE: The procedures described in this Order apply only to tracking situations. When officers are actively following or pursuing a suspected or verified reported stolen vehicle, existing policies, procedures, tactics, jurisdictional concerns, and follow-up responsibilities take precedence over the guidelines in this Order.

PROCEDURES

Officers' Responsibilities

Stolen Vehicle Report - The Department's reporting requirements have not been changed by the SVRN. Stolen/recovered vehicle information for all stolen vehicles shall be entered into SVS as soon as possible. It is not necessary for officers to know or report to SVS that a vehicle is transponder equipped in order for it to be activated by the SVRN. Officers may include that the stolen vehicle is LoJack-equipped.

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Equipment - When assigned to a vehicle equipped with a PTC, officers shall ensure that the PTC is turned on throughout their tour of duty. In cases of damaged or inoperative PTCs, officers shall:

- * Complete a Motor Vehicle Trouble Ticket (B/O slip), Form 11.03.0, describing the problem; and
- * Ensure the B/O slip is forwarded to the concerned Area garage supervisor.

It is not necessary to remove a vehicle from service when only the PTC equipment is inoperative.

NOTE: Inoperative PTCs installed in Department aircraft shall be immediately logged and reported to the concerned Air Support Division (ASD) maintenance supervisor. The ASD personnel may contact the LoJack Corporation directly at (310) 286-2610 to arrange for repairs.

Activation Signal - An SVRN activation will appear on the PTC as a five-digit reply code. The reply codes for stolen vehicles may be any combination of letters and numbers.

Tracking - Upon detecting an activation signal from a transponder equipped stolen vehicle, officers shall:

- * Query the transponder's reply code via the Mobile Digital Terminal (N _____ @GLJ and press the VC button) or request the concerned Communications Division (CD), Police Service Representative (PSR), to complete the query;
- * Notify CD and request the PSR to broadcast descriptive information about the stolen vehicle and possible suspects. This will ensure that non-PTC equipped units are informed of the tracking activity as well as pertinent information about the stolen vehicle; and,
- * Request an air unit.

When a stolen vehicle being tracked enters an adjoining jurisdiction, officers shall:

- * Request CD to contact the concerned law enforcement agency whose jurisdiction the stolen vehicle has entered;
- * Request a supervisor;
- * Request an air unit; and,

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- * Continue tracking the stolen vehicle unless directed by a supervisor to terminate the tracking or the responsibility for the tracking is assumed by officers from the adjoining law enforcement agency.

NOTE: When another law enforcement agency assumes the tracking of a stolen vehicle from an LAPD unit outside the City limits, the LAPD unit's duties are to assist the outside agency. The tracking agency will be in command of the tactical and follow-up responsibilities (i.e., arrest, impound, booking, and reports, etc.). The assigned LAPD supervisor shall ensure it has been clearly communicated that involved LAPD units are either in command of the tracking or merely assisting the outside agency. Exceptions may occur when an outside agency has follow-up investigative responsibility for the original stolen vehicle report and/or other related crimes. Officers shall refer all jurisdictional concerns to a Department supervisor.

When officers become aware of a stolen vehicle being tracked within City limits by an outside law enforcement agency, officers shall:

- * Notify CD of the tracking and request the PSR to broadcast the description of the stolen vehicle and suspects, if available;
- * Notify a supervisor;
- * Request an air unit; and,
- * Assist the outside law enforcement agency unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

Officers should contact a supervisor and consider contacting their Area auto-theft detectives when a tracked signal from a stolen vehicle appears to be transmitting from within a building or other enclosed structure. As a general rule, a search warrant should be obtained prior to entering an enclosed structure. An officer's probable cause for a search warrant is the transponder activation, which gives the reply code and subsequent verification of the stolen vehicle information.

Vehicle Recovery - Upon recovery of a transponder equipped stolen vehicle, officers shall notify CD without delay. Communications Division will broadcast the recovered vehicle information to units in the Area of occurrence, adjacent Areas, and outside jurisdictions when necessary.

NOTE: After an impound or prior to the field release of a transponder equipped recovered vehicle, officers shall contact the Vehicle Impound Processing Unit (VIPU) Records and Identification Division to ensure that the vehicle is reported recovered. This notification will cause the electronic signal to be deactivated. Officers shall not release a transponder equipped stolen vehicle until notification to VIPU has been made and officers have verified the stolen vehicle's electronic signal has been deactivated.

Supervisors' Responsibilities

Supervisors shall ensure that officers assigned to PTC-equipped vehicles keep the equipment turned on throughout the officers' tour of duty. When notified of an SVRN activation, a supervisor should, if practical, respond to the location of the tracking incident. A supervisor shall respond to all tracking incidents involving or potentially involving outside law enforcement agencies. During each SVRN tracking, supervisors shall consider Area workload, traffic conditions, and other pertinent factors in their decision to allow officers to continue the stolen vehicle investigation. In addition, supervisors shall ensure that:

- * Proper tactics are employed;
- * A prudent number of units are used to track the stolen vehicle;
- * Descriptive information about the stolen vehicle and possible suspects is broadcast to non-PTC equipped units;
- * An air unit is requested if a moving vehicle has not been located within a reasonable time after the signal has been detected or as otherwise needed;
- * Affected outside law enforcement agencies are notified in cases where a transponder equipped stolen vehicle enters their jurisdiction during a tracking investigation;
- * Any outside law enforcement agency that assumes the responsibility for tracking the stolen vehicle (and follow-up responsibilities) is clearly identified;
- * All stolen/recovered information on transponder equipped stolen vehicles are entered into SVS without delay;

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- * Recovery information on transponder equipped stolen vehicles is broadcast to other units in the Area of occurrence, adjacent Areas, and outside jurisdictions as necessary; and,
- * Ensure that transponder equipped vehicles being impounded or released to the owner/agent have been reported recovered to VIPU to ensure the deactivation of the transponder signal.

Watch Commanders' Responsibilities

Watch Commanders shall ensure that:

- * All operational PTC-equipped vehicles are deployed on their watch;
- * A supervisor responds to an SVRN activation signal when practical;
- * A supervisor responds to all trackings involving outside law enforcement agencies;
- * All officers on their watch have received SVRN training; and,

NOTE: LoJack Corporation will provide training on the use and operation of LoJack PTC equipment. Training on LAPD policy and tactics shall be conducted by Department personnel.

- * Ensure the operational status of PTC-equipped vehicles is monitored and B/O slips requesting PTC-related repairs are forwarded to the Area garage supervisor in a timely manner.

Garage Supervisors' Responsibilities

Area garage supervisors will notify LoJack Corporation of the B/O status of non-operational LoJack PTC equipment and assist repair vendors with gaining access to vehicles with equipment in need of repair. LoJack Corporation can be contacted during normal business hours at (310) 286-2610.

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Stolen Vehicle Recovery Network Program Manager's
Responsibilities

The SVRN Program Manager, Operations-Headquarters Bureau, will be available to answer questions related to vehicle tracking, search warrants, and other SVRN-related issues. During regular business hours the SVRN Program Manager can be contacted at (213) 485-3277. During off-hours, Detective Headquarters Division can be contacted for advice at (213) 485-2504.



BERNARD C. PARKS, Deputy Chief
Director
Office of Operations

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