5-01/030.00 - Stolen Vehicles

Stolen vehicles include aircraft, snowmobiles, housecars, trailers, motorcycles, off-road vehicles, motorized golf carts, minibikes, campers, construction vehicles, farm vehicles, trucks, motorized bicycles, and mopeds.

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) requires that mopeds be registered as vehicles and treated as such. A motorized bicycle must be equipped as required by the vehicle code and may only be operated by a licensed driver or permittee.

Reports of stolen vehicles (CHP-180) shall not be accepted unless made and personally signed by either the registered or legal owner of the vehicle, by their personal authorized representative or by any person having permission of the owner to use the vehicle.

Reports of stolen vehicles should include the license and vehicle identification numbers. If not available, the report shall still be accepted and the following shall apply:

- If only one number is obtained, the report shall be fully processed and the missing number added later; or
- If both numbers are missing, an administrative message shall be sent via CLETS to the state's Motor Vehicle office of the state where which the vehicle is registered, requesting vehicle identification information. This message shall contain the name and address of the registered owner, a description of the vehicle and notification that the vehicle was stolen in California. A telephone call may be placed in lieu of the administrative message, if authorized by the watch commander.

  NOTE 1: If it is a vehicle registered in California and the license number and the identification number are unknown, or if adequate verification has not been made, verify through DMV.

  NOTE 2: If the license number is obtained from the Certificate of Title (“Pink Slip”), ask whether different plates have been issued after the title document was received, as the title document may no longer be correct, e.g., personalized plates.

  NOTE 3: In those cases where an auto dealer reports the theft, his name shall be entered on the stolen report as the legal owner. In the space provided under method of operation on CHP-180, the result of the DMV check shall be noted as to registered and legal owner. Auto dealers are exempt from making an application for transfer (5906 CVC). Entries in SVS must be made immediately upon receipt of the stolen vehicle information and must include at least one of the two numbers (license plate or VIN). Be sure these numbers are accurate.

To expedite transmission, deputies taking stolen reports in the field shall, upon obtaining the proper signature on the report, immediately relay the information needed for the stolen vehicle report to the station/unit for transmission to SVS, and update the “Station Daily Log of Stolen, Stored, Repossessed and Impounded Vehicles.”

If the vehicle is equipped with “LoJack,” the deputy is required to immediately notify the watch deputy at Aero Bureau and provide them with the vehicle’s information.

NOTE: All CHP-180 reports shall be approved and signed by the watch sergeant.