21-07 - Taskforce for Regional Auto Theft Prevention (TRAP)

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

TASKFORCE FOR REGIONAL AUTO THEFT PREVENTION (TRAP)

The Taskforce for Regional Auto Theft Prevention (TRAP) is a state-funded, multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency auto theft task force created to promote a coordinated effort and encourage maximum cooperation between law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies in Los Angeles County regarding auto theft.

Because TRAP is state-funded and staffed by multiple agencies, it is considered an outside agency and requires a specific protocol which is necessary to enable the proper routing and case handling for specific TRAP investigations.

The following is a brief guide on the taskforce, including their roles, responsibilities and case handling protocol.

TRAP INVESTIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Investigate cases exceeding law enforcement agencies' operational limits and jurisdictional boundaries. Investigations are directed towards complex multi-vehicle cases, frequently associated with advanced and sophisticated auto theft rings, as well as multi-jurisdictional and multi-faceted crimes such as forgery and fraud, which result in substantial financial losses, numerous victims, and potential sentencing enhancements under 186.11 PC for aggravated white-collar crimes exceeding $100,000;

- Identify locations used in connection with vehicle theft offenses, including legitimate “front” business locations (i.e., body shops and auto dismantlers) which operate as illegal “chop shops,” and take appropriate action;

- Perform vehicle identifications and VIN verifications;

- Identify and acquire data from vehicle systems to gather, preserve, process, and analyze seized digital devices, equipment, and data and to uncover evidence;

- Provide training and expertise for participating agencies throughout Los Angeles County; and

- Seek input and solicit cooperation from the private sector to coordinate a public deterrence program;

- Provide training to law enforcement partners on evolving auto theft trends and devices; and

- Educate the public on auto theft trends and prevention.

TRAP INQUIRIES AND RESPONSE

Law enforcement agencies can contact TRAP 24/7 for consultation regarding the following investigations:

- Vehicle infotainment (BERLA) and Connected Vehicle examinations;
- Any vehicle with an altered or missing Vehicle Identification Number (VIN);
- Any location suspected of, or confirmed by law enforcement as a “chop shop;”
- Any GPS tracking (i.e. LoJack activation) or recovery where guidance is needed;
- Any investigation leading to a large, sophisticated auto theft ring;
- Any suspect in custody willing to provide information leading to the recovery of multiple stolen vehicles;
- Any business or residence where multiple suspected or confirmed stolen vehicles are found; and/or
- Assist with surveillance on auto theft related cases and operations.

Note: Call outs will be initiated on a case-by-case basis.

CASE ASSIGNMENT

Supervisors approving and assigning incident reports involving stolen motor vehicles, including heavy duty commercial vehicles, heavy duty construction equipment (backhoes, skip loaders, etc.,) and motorhomes, are reminded that the incident reports are not to be assigned directly to TRAP, regardless of how TRAP assisted. The reports shall be assigned to the respective station’s detective bureau.

Special Request Distributions (SRD)

Any vehicle theft-related report, including those in which TRAP detectives were notified or assisted with, shall be assigned to the respective stations detective bureau and include TRAP in the SRD section of the incident report. TRAP will make the determination if they will or will not assume control of an investigation after receiving the SRD report, and/or conferring with the respective station’s detective bureau.

LARCIS Disposition codes

If TRAP assumes control of the investigation, the station detective shall clear the case in the Los Angeles Regional Crime Information System (LARCIS), utilizing the disposition code 112, (inactive/reassigned to another agency) and 50, (suspect/subject turned over to another agency).

Under no circumstances should LARCIS case status disposition code 110 be used when clearing a case in which TRAP has assumed investigative control.

The detective will include the TRAP detective’s name assuming control of the investigation and refer to TRAP’s file number in their supplemental report.

If you require further information, contact Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411 or fossunit@lasd.org.