

Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 4.40 Bait Vehicle Policy



**“Our Community...
Our Commitment”**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the bait vehicle program is to reduce auto theft within the City of Peoria by targeting areas with high incident rates and deploying bait vehicles in those areas. This, in conjunction with public awareness through advertising and promotion of the program, will reduce auto theft rates.

Although public awareness of the use of Bait vehicles is an integral part of this program; many aspects, such as vehicle types, number of vehicles, locations of deployment, equipment type and setup and operational response procedures and tactics, are considered confidential as part of an ongoing covert operation. Except as required by law, employees are not to discuss these details with the general public. Any public information requests shall be handled according to established procedures through the City Attorney's Office.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Bait Vehicle - An unmarked vehicle equipped with sensors, a tracking system, and recording equipment that will detect and record unlawful entry, starting, and movement of the vehicle by any unauthorized persons.

B. Bait Server - A stand alone computer that monitors the bait vehicle status, alerts police of any tampering, and controls elected functions of the vehicle and its installed monitoring hardware.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Deployment:

1. The General Investigations Unit Sergeant or their designee will manage the bait vehicle program. A deployment log will be maintained for each bait vehicle, recording the date, time and location of each deployment.

2. The bait vehicle will be deployed in areas with high rates of auto theft. These areas will be identified by statistical information provided by the Crime Statistics Analyst.

3. The PCU Sergeant or their designee will position the vehicle at these identified locations insuring the following:

a. The vehicle is activated and communication is established between the bait vehicle and the server.

b. The recording equipment is functioning properly and is equipped with a VHS tape.

c. That the date, time, and location of deployment are recorded in the bait vehicle log.

d. A status and systems check will be conducted daily through the server to insure the bait vehicle is functioning correctly while it is deployed.

e. The vehicle will be searched to ensure there was no contraband in the vehicle when it was deployed. Any props or other items left within a bait vehicle will be documented.

4. In cases when the Bait Vehicle is stolen and a suspect is apprehended, the person who deployed the vehicle will complete a supplemental report outlining the deployment of the vehicle. (i.e. date, time, location, search and reason for deployment in the area).

B. Monitoring:

1. The bait server will be placed in the communications section of the Peoria Police Department at the Main Station.

2. Communications personnel will monitor the bait vehicle via the bait server. The server will alert communications personnel when the bait vehicle is tampered with.

3. The Communications Supervisor or their designee will do daily systems checks to insure proper functioning of the bait vehicle equipment via the bait server.

4. The Communications Supervisor will ensure that a dispatcher is assigned to the work station where the bait server is located continuous throughout each shift.

C. Response to Bait Vehicle Activations:

1. Communications

a. Upon receiving an activation, the bait server will alert Communications Personnel who will then "Accept" the call.

b. Communications Personnel will then immediately advise Patrol Officers of the activation and the vehicle location. An activation shall be handled as a priority two in progress incident. The appropriate radio code for a bait activation shall be used. The term "bait vehicle" or "bait car" will not be stated over any channel.

c. Once units (two units at minimum) are dispatched, they may be directed to go to another channel for details.

d. Once dispatched units are on another channel, Communications Personnel will advise of the detail of the activation, the vehicle description, license plate number, current location, and a direction of travel.

e. Communications Personnel will continue to update responding units with any further information on sensor activations and vehicle locations.

f. Once units are in position, Communications Personnel will disable the bait vehicle at the request of patrol units. Disabling the vehicle at an officer's request shall include locking the vehicle doors in addition to disabling the vehicles engine.

g. When the call is ended, Communications Personnel will reset the bait vehicle by pushing the "end call" button on the monitor. This will not be done until directed to do so by the patrol sergeant, PCU sergeant or detective.

h. Should the incident arise where the tracking system fails and patrol units do not have the bait vehicle in site, communications personnel will advise the responding units and the patrol supervisor immediately of the situation and the last known location of the vehicle.

i. If patrol units can not respond to a bait vehicle activation and the vehicle is mobile, Communications Personnel shall disable the vehicles engine as soon as practical and in every effort to avoid the vehicle being a traffic hazard (I.e. stopping the vehicle in an intersection). The call will not be ended on the bait server until a patrol unit is able to respond and secure the vehicle. The vehicle doors SHALL NOT be locked.

j. Should the Bait system appear to be malfunctioning i.e. repeated activations with no activity reported by responding patrol officers, any unusual activity by the server, vehicle status window indicates unusual conditions, the system server is not functioning properly or anything that causes any concern: Communications shall dispatch a patrol officer to observe the vehicle, notify an on-duty Patrol supervisor and contact the PCU sergeant for further direction. In the event Communications is unable to contact the PCU sergeant, Communications shall have a Patrol officer tow the Bait vehicle to Police Headquarters. The Bait server may be shut down once all Bait vehicles are removed from the field and secured. At no time shall a Bait vehicle be left in the field unsecured when it appears the vehicle and server are not functioning and communicating properly.

2. Patrol

Officers dispatched will respond according to policy guidelines as a Stolen Vehicle in progress.

a. Responding Officers will coordinate with communications personnel to locate the bait vehicle. The term "bait vehicle" or "bait car" will not be stated over any channel.

b. Once the vehicle is located, officers will maintain visual contact with the vehicle while directing additional units into position.

c. Once enough units are in position to conduct a high-risk stop, the primary officer will instruct communications to turn off the engine and lock the doors.

(1) The primary officer should consider the vehicle and pedestrian traffic conditions before having communications personnel turn off the engine.

(2) In the event that the suspect(s) attempt to evade or flee from police in the bait vehicle, the primary officer will instruct dispatch to turn off the engine and lock the doors. This will prevent a pursuit from ensuing and ensure recovery of the Bait vehicle. With the engine turned off, officers shall proceed to follow and then conduct a high risk stop.

(3) Pursuits will only be initiated within the confines of departmental policy.

d. Once the bait vehicle is stopped, the officers will then conduct a high-risk stop taking all persons inside the bait vehicle into custody. Officer need to remember to request dispatch to un-lock the vehicle doors before directing occupants to exit the vehicle.

e. Once a vehicle is cleared and no occupants remain in the vehicle, Dispatch should be requested to "End the Call" on the Bait server, disarm the vehicle and re-enable the ignition , as soon as reasonable

f. Officers will complete a vehicle theft report, to include interviews will all suspects, and forward a copy of the report to the General Investigations Unit.

g. Officers will not advise the suspects that the vehicle is a "bait vehicle".

h. The Patrol Supervisor will contact the General Investigations Supervisor as soon as possible who will arrange for disposition of the bait vehicle.

i. Activation/Vehicle Not Mobile: In the event a Bait vehicle activation occurs and the vehicle is not taken, responding officers shall check to see if the vehicle is being burglarized. If no persons are present or nearby upon arrival and the vehicle appears un-tampered with, officers shall make appropriate CAD entries annotating their observations and actions and direct dispatch to "End Call" on the Bait server and rearm the vehicle.

j. Lost Vehicle

(1) Should the tracking system for the bait vehicle fail and responding units do not have visual contact with the bait vehicle, units will respond to the bait vehicle's

last known location and search the area. The patrol supervisor will be notified and will instruct communications personnel to turn off the vehicle engine and sound the horn. This will allow officers who are checking the last known location of the Bait vehicle the opportunity to locate it by sound.

(2) If the vehicle is not located, the Property Crimes Unit Supervisor will be notified, a vehicle theft report will be completed and the vehicle entered into ACJIS. Communications Personnel will not push "end call". Once communications between the vehicle and the server are reestablished, the server will advise of the vehicle location.

3. Property Crimes Unit

a. When there is a Bait vehicle incident, the Patrol Supervisor will contact the PCU supervisor.

b. The PCU Supervisor will contact the on-call detective who will respond to the scene to take disposition of the Bait Vehicle and take appropriate action to assist with the investigation.

c. The detective that responds to the scene will take the following actions:

(1) Take disposition of the bait vehicle.

(2) Ensure the Bait vehicle is properly searched for contraband or other evidence left by the suspect.

(3) Assist with the investigation as needed.

(4) Obtain and impound the tape from the recording equipment inside the Bait Vehicle.

(5) Obtain a print out of the activation report of the bait vehicle theft from the Bait Server to include with the supplement.

(6) Complete a supplemental report documenting their actions.

(7) Re-deploy the bait vehicle:

d. The following steps must be followed to re-deploy the bait vehicle:

(1) Place a new tape in the recording equipment.

(2) Insure the server and vehicle is reset by having communications push "end call" on the bait server.

(3) Insure the bait vehicle and bait server are functioning properly.

(4) If the Bait vehicle was damaged to a point where it can not be re-deployed, the detective will transport the vehicle to the secured garage of the main police station.

(5) The detective will take photographs of the damage and arrange to obtain an estimate for costs to repair the Bait Vehicle. The estimate will be included with their supplemental report and will request restitution. (DO NOT take overall photographs of a Bait vehicle).

(6) The suspect responsible for the damage to the bait vehicle will be charged with criminal damage along with all other charges.

D. Maintenance

1. The General Investigations Unit Sergeant or their designee will be responsible for routine maintenance of the bait vehicles.

2. Routine maintenance consists of the following:

- a. Charging of the vehicle batteries.
- b. Fuel
- c. Preventive maintenance
- d. Vehicle cleaning when necessar

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