

CHAPTER 1
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP SECURITY PROGRAM POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>GENERAL</u>	1-3
Policy.....	1-3
Objective	1-3
Safety	1-3
<u>HEADQUARTERS MANAGEMENT</u>	1-3
Assistant Commissioner, Staff	1-3
Enforcement and Planning Division	1-3
Field Support Section	1-4
<u>FIELD DIVISION MANAGEMENT</u>	1-4
Division Chiefs	1-4
Special Services Commanders	1-4
Division Investigative Services Unit Coordinators	1-4
Vehicle Theft Sergeants	1-5
Vehicle Theft Investigators	1-5
Area Accountability.....	1-5
<u>VEHICLE OWNERSHIP SECURITY PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS</u>	1-5
Element A – Vehicle Theft Control	1-5
Element B – Replacement Vehicle Identification Number System	1-8

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CHAPTER 1

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP SECURITY PROGRAM POLICY

1. GENERAL.

- a. Policy. The contents of this manual constitute policy which governs the overall administration and operation of the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) Vehicle Ownership Security Program (VOSP).
- b. Objective. This manual outlines policies and procedures which are designed to establish and maintain standardization throughout the vehicle theft program. It is intended that these policies and procedures also allow sufficient latitude to meet the operational needs of the various vehicle theft units throughout the state.
- c. Safety. It is the strict policy of this Department that safety shall be the overriding and paramount consideration when administering and conducting all vehicle theft training and investigations. Additionally, it shall be the direct responsibility of all vehicle theft unit managers, supervisors, investigators, and officers to ensure that this policy is adhered to at all times.

2. HEADQUARTERS MANAGEMENT.

- a. Assistant Commissioner, Staff. Under the direction of the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Staff (ACS) exercises overall operational control of the VOSP. All policy changes regarding the VOSP shall be approved by the appropriate Commissioner prior to implementation. Additionally, Enforcement and Planning Division (EPD), Information Management Division, and Administrative Services Division shall assist ACS in ensuring the VOSP is properly funded and equipped.
- b. Enforcement and Planning Division. Under the direction of ACS, and with the assistance of Field Support Section (FSS), EPD provides recommendations and advice to members of Executive Management regarding the management and administration of the VOSP. Enforcement and Planning Division coordinates with members of Top Management and assists ACS with management oversight of the program. Enforcement and Planning Division participates in the decision-making process regarding technical and operational issues, personnel assignments, and equipment procurement. Enforcement and Planning Division develops policies, procedures, and program goals and objectives with regard to the VOSP responsibilities. Additionally, EPD shall define program goals and objectives through participation in the Department's Strategic Planning process. Enforcement and Planning Division ensures inspections of field Division Investigative Services

Units (ISU) are conducted every two years. These inspections assist field Division commanders and ACS in ensuring compliance with the directive of this manual.

c. Field Support Section. Under the direction of EPD, FSS is the facilitator and liaison to ACS for all field Division ISUs. Field Support Section advises EPD on all matters related to the VOSP. Field Support Section provides advice and assistance to Division ISU coordinators regarding the management and administration of the VOSP. Field Support Section personnel provide input regarding selection of vehicle theft personnel, provide training for all program personnel, and may procure all related major equipment items through the budget process. Any inquiries concerning policies, procedures, or programs relating to vehicle theft should be directed to FSS. Additionally, FSS shall coordinate, facilitate, and establish topic agendas for an annual ISU Coordinator Session. Investigative Services Unit coordinators, their assigned ISU sergeants, and FSS personnel are required to attend.

3. FIELD DIVISION MANAGEMENT.

a. Division Chiefs. Investigative Services Units are under the command of their respective field Division Chief under the direction of the Assistant Commissioner, Field (ACF). Field Division Chiefs exercise overall control of the ISU personnel assigned to that Division. It is the responsibility of the Division Chief to ensure that the Division ISU is managed in compliance with the policies contained in this manual. Each Division Chief should consult and coordinate with EPD in the decision-making process regarding operational issues, personnel assignments, and equipment procurement. Issues requiring policy changes or matters which cannot be resolved by direct coordination between field Divisions and EPD shall be referred to ACF for direction.

b. Special Services Commanders. Special Services Commanders (SSC) are directly accountable to the Division Chiefs and oversee all programs coordinated through ISUs. The SSC provides direct supervision to the Division ISU.

c. Division Investigative Services Unit Coordinators. Investigative Services Unit coordinators, under the direction of their SSC, ensure the effective management of their respective Division ISUs. The Division ISU coordinator provides direct supervision to subordinate vehicle theft supervisors and is responsible for the operation and administration of all CHP vehicle theft-related activities including the related equipment budget within their Division. The ISU coordinator shall be responsible for providing investigative assistance to allied agencies as necessary or when requested.

d. Vehicle Theft Sergeants. Vehicle theft sergeants are directly accountable to the Division ISU coordinator for the first line supervision of the investigators within the ISU.

e. Vehicle Theft Investigators. Vehicle theft investigators are accountable for the investigation of vehicle thefts, including organized theft ring cases transcending geographical jurisdictions and other felony investigations pertaining to departmental responsibilities where assistance is needed. One of the primary roles of investigators shall be to coordinate and/or conduct multijurisdictional vehicle theft investigations. Additionally, investigators shall be responsible for providing vehicle theft-related training to both departmental and allied agency personnel. Investigators shall also be responsible for classroom instruction for the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, 40-Hour Vehicle Theft Investigators Course, on an as-needed basis.

f. Area Accountability. Area commanders' vehicle theft responsibility is supportive of the Division Chief and is common to other programs operated by Division commands. Area commanders are encouraged to promote the vehicle theft programs within their respective Areas for optimum awareness of operations, educational tools (for employees and the public), and departmental goals.

4. VEHICLE OWNERSHIP SECURITY PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS.

a. Element A - Vehicle Theft Control. The purpose of this element is to protect the public from economic loss as a result of vehicle theft. The success of this element will require close interdepartmental coordination with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) as well as other law enforcement agencies and the private sector. There are several activities designed to address different facets of the vehicle theft problem.

(1) Statewide Coordination. The purpose of this activity is to coordinate statewide vehicle theft prevention and to provide investigative and technical assistance to allied agencies. The objectives of the activity are to:

(a) Maintain responsibility for statewide coordination of vehicle theft control with the Department.

(b) Centralize the function of vehicle theft information collection and dissemination.

(c) Achieve a greater degree of coordination and cooperation among the many public and private agencies involved in vehicle theft control operations.

- (d) Encourage the prosecution of the vehicle thieves arrested outside the county where the theft occurs when evidence warrants such prosecution.
- (2) Investigation and Prosecution of the Professional Thief. The purpose of this activity is to impact the state's vehicle theft problem to the greatest extent possible through the investigation and prosecution of organized theft rings and the individual professional thief.
- (3) Inspection of Business Establishments. Objectives of this activity are to:
- (a) Deter vehicle theft and the subsequent stripping of stolen vehicles as well as increase recovery rates.
 - (b) Identify and randomly inspect businesses most often used to dispose of stolen vehicles and major vehicle component parts.
 - (c) Facilitate identification of potential business license violators for the DMV and the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- (4) Vehicle Theft Information System. The purpose of this activity is to develop vehicle theft information and disseminate it to the CHP and other law enforcement agencies. The objectives of this activity are to:
- (a) Provide information to aid management in planning, control, and allocation of resources.
 - (b) Provide meaningful information to vehicle theft investigators on crime trends and to aid state and local investigations by providing specific operational data.
 - (c) Provide the capability for research and evaluation.
 - (d) Evaluate statewide vehicle theft prevention activities.
- (5) Titling and Licensing. The purpose of this activity is to improve the requirements for titling and licensing vehicles through coordination with the DMV, law enforcement agencies, and other public and private organizations. The objectives of these activities are to:
- (a) Deter professional theft activity by identifying particular vehicles when reregistration and/or retitling is requested.
 - (b) Eliminate the use of counterfeit title documents.
 - (c) Develop legislation affecting titling and licensing of vehicles.

(6) Training and Education Programs. This activity involves the development and dissemination of vehicle theft-related law enforcement training material and public education programs. The objectives of this activity are to:

- (a) Provide vehicle theft investigators with the necessary training and equipment to improve their efforts in the area of commercial/professional theft activities.
- (b) Provide law enforcement patrol officers with fundamental information on vehicle theft matters to increase their proficiency in field investigations.
- (c) Provide DMV personnel with basic vehicle theft information related to their role as registration and licensing experts.
- (d) Train DMV and CHP personnel to assist in identifying stolen vehicles and to accurately verify vehicle identification numbers.
- (e) Motivate the public to protect their vehicles from theft.

(7) Commercial and Specialized Vehicle Investigations. The purpose of this activity is the prevention of theft and to increase the recovery rate of stolen commercial, farm, and heavy construction vehicles, and the coordination of multijurisdictional investigations involving the CHP and local law enforcement agencies. The objectives of this activity are to:

- (a) Conduct investigations of theft involving commercial vehicles and their cargoes as well as selected farm vehicles and heavy construction vehicles.
- (b) Assist allied agencies and coordinate multijurisdictional theft investigations involving commercial vehicles and their cargoes as well as selected farm and heavy construction vehicles.
- (c) Develop the expertise of officers in the identification of commercial vehicles, selected farm vehicles, heavy construction vehicles, and their component parts.
- (d) Ensure that all identifying numbers of stolen commercial, farm, and heavy construction vehicles, and their component parts, are entered into the Stolen Vehicle System.
- (e) Encourage allied agencies to report stolen cargo information to the Cargo Theft Interdiction Program.

(8) Investigation of Motorcycle-Related Businesses and Activities. The purpose of this activity is to reduce the motorcycle theft problem. Objectives of this activity are to:

- (a) Deter theft and subsequent stripping of motorcycles.
- (b) Identify and randomly inspect businesses suspected of disposing of stolen motorcycles and their component parts.
- (c) Perform onsite inspections to recover stolen motorcycles at motorcycle swap meets and other motorcycle events.
- (d) Coordinate multiagency investigations directed at organized motorcycle theft rings.

(9) Mexico Liaison Program. The purpose of this activity is to provide an open line of communication between government and law enforcement officials of Mexico and the United States of America and to provide the location and identification of stolen vehicles in Mexico.

(10) Information and Technology. The purpose of this activity is to ensure that the Department strives to research, test, evaluate, and acquire new technology which will assist departmental personnel in the recovery of stolen vehicles and the increased apprehension of vehicle thieves.

b. Element B - Replacement Vehicle Identification Number System. The purpose of this element is to provide a policy for the assignment or reassignment of vehicle identification numbers to vehicles subject to registration in this state from which the original identification numbers have been altered, mutilated, or removed, either through accident or design, and to all specially constructed vehicles.