

Policy Directive with respect to seized vehicles

It is the policy of Aston Township to make every effort to return seized vehicles to a registered owner or lienholder as expeditiously as possible. To that end, any notices sent pursuant to this policy, and any publication displaying this policy, shall contain the following information:

When Aston Township comes into possession of any vehicle, you may obtain information about reclaiming the vehicle by contacting the Department at 610-497-2633.

The policy shall be as follows.

Within 24 hours of the seizure of a vehicle, the Township Police Department shall use all available resources to identify the owner(s) and lienholder(s) for the seized vehicle. The Township Police Department shall use reasonable efforts, which shall include a search of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania records. If a given vehicle bears an obvious relationship to another state (such as out-of-state plates or possession by a person with an out-of-state license), the Township Police Department's efforts shall also include a search of that state's records, to the extent available, by way of notice to the other states' Department of Motor Vehicles and/or a search of any database publicly available by that state to search out information on owners or lienholders.

The Department shall send written notice, certified and regular mail, to the last known address of the registered owner of the vehicle and any lienholder whose information is available through the aforementioned search. The notice shall alert the recipients to the whereabouts of the vehicle within 48 hours, the location of the vehicle, and the process for reclaiming it. If the vehicle is titled out of state and owner or lienholder information is not available, the Department will notify the Department of Motor Vehicles of that state for assistance as well as search.

After 72 hours if the vehicle has not been reclaimed by the owner, or a lienholder entitled to immediate possession, the Township will notify the owner and any lienholder to attend a hearing arranged by the Township before a civilian Officer or appointee of the municipality to ensure that the seizure was warranted, and to consider whether continued detention of the vehicle is necessary for evidentiary reasons, for potential forfeiture in consultation with the prosecuting authority, or for any other appropriate reason. If the owner or any lienholder does not attend the hearing, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will be notified that the vehicle is being considered abandoned by the Township and the Commonwealth will then initiate its process with respect to abandoned vehicles under the Pennsylvania Motor vehicle Code.

Prior to releasing a seized vehicle to a lienholder or lessor, the Township may appropriately request satisfactory proof that a lien or lease is in default, entitling the lienholder or lessor to possession of the vehicle. Said proof may include a request for a copy of any relevant document of title, lease contract or retail installment contract, and statement by appropriate records custodian that the account is in default.