

Department-Wide Projects

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Towed Vehicle Reporting Management System

State law and city ordinance requires the police department to be notified when a vehicle is towed without the consent of a vehicle's owner. This non-consent tow report is entered into a database on the police department's mainframe computer.

Inquiries to locate towed vehicles can be made from any terminal in the police department's network. Access to this information eliminates false theft reports and assists citizens in locating a vehicle that has been towed.

Storage lot operators also submit a weekly report to the police department of each vehicle received or released at the storage lot. Previously this data was not entered into any system. Consequently, there was no systematized record of the disposition of a stored vehicle. A vehicle in storage may be released, sold at public auction, or simply disappear.

There are sixty-five private storage lots in the city where a non-consent tow could be stored and 135,000 vehicles towed each year. Because of the number of storage lots involved and the number of vehicles towed, a more robust tracking system was needed to effectively monitor vehicle storage and release and to provide greater access to the public to search for a towed vehicle. Outsourcing this function provides the quickest and best method of implementing and maintaining state-of-the-art communication with the general public and storage lot operators. Current department systems have no Internet functionality.



Captain Baimbridge and the Project Management Team

Captain Baimbridge commented:

TVRMS provides citizens with a tool to quickly locate their towed vehicles. It eliminates a long wait with call takers. From a regulatory perspective, TVRMS provided the Vehicular Crimes Division, Auto Dealers Detail a powerful investigative tool that still holds many promises towards efficiency.



Mike Gee, Captain Wendy Baimbridge, Chris Dau, Steve August, Srinivas R. Balajepally and Uendra Sahu

Benefits

The TVRMS system reduces the frustration for drivers when trying to locate their towed vehicle. The website FindMyTowedCar.com allows people who have had cars towed to locate the storage lot holding their vehicle. If citizens don't have access to the internet, a call can still be made to 281-943-6720.

Additional benefits are:

TVRMS provides an estimate of storage cost based on the current regulated fee for storage. The citizen is provided with a screen that displays estimated cost of removing the vehicle from the storage lot. Storage lots can report tows online using TVRMS. Storage lots can also report tows using their existing tow lot software via a two way interface; between the TVRMS software and the Tow lot software.

TVRMS records and generates a report to account for the HPD's fee per vehicle released at private storage lots. The System displays inventory records and generates a report of each storage lot reporting to the city. TVRMS includes reports showing vehicle releases in a given time frame at the storage lot. TVRMS includes the implementation of a "Complete Lifecycle" for cars that are towed, tracking their status from identification, also towing to final return and or disposal. Utilization of the new tow system as the initial point of data entry for the vehicle information will allow for improved City of Houston service to its citizens and reduce the amount of effort required by HPD to manage this effort.