



CRYSTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Department Policy Manual

TITLE: Locked Vehicle Entry
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PURPOSE

To establish policy for the use of lockout tools and window breaking devices for gaining access to a motor vehicle. Examples necessitating vehicle entry include life threatening emergencies involving persons or animals, courtesy unlocks, execution of search or arrest warrants, to safely remove someone who is using a vehicle as a barrier between themselves and law enforcement, vehicle impoundment, or other circumstances requiring vehicle entry by police personnel. Access to vehicles is limited to the constraints of consent, search warrants, and search warrant exceptions.

APPROVED DEVICES FOR COURTESY OR EMERGENCY VEHICLE UNLOCKS

- Inflatable Air Wedges
- Hard Wedges
- “Wonder Tool,” “Big Easy” or other tools used to reach an unlock button or door latch
- “Slim Jim” or other inside-the-door mechanism manipulation tools
- Lock picking sets – for use by officers trained in lock picking
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APPROVED DEVICES FOR FORCIBLE VEHICLE ENTRY

- “Shatterball” or other hand thrown devices designed to break glass
- Mechanical or kinetic window punches or safety devices designed to break glass, often containing a glass breaking point
- 40mm kinetic impact rounds
- Pepperball launcher equipped with glass breaking projectiles
- Improvised tools or impact weapons for window breaking (including but not limited to batons, flashlights, Halligan tool)
- Vehicle extrication tools commonly used by fire personnel
- Specific breaching tools designed for use by tactical teams
- Breaching tools or rams attached to emergency, tactical, or armored rescue vehicles

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING KINETIC IMPACT MUNITIONS OR PEPPERBALL PROJECTILES

- Firing of a less-lethal or non-lethal projectile at an occupied vehicle has a potential to cause injury to the occupants inside. Careful consideration of the circumstances involved is required prior to utilizing the Pepperball or 40mm platform projectiles to break a window.

Depending on the circumstances of a given situation, use of force criteria may need to be evaluated prior to deployment of these projectiles at an occupied vehicle.

- When targeting a vehicle with a window breaking projectile, care should be taken to ensure that a window is targeted where no occupants are seated, as the projectile may continue through the glass and strike a person inside or cause broken glass to impact the individual.
- Less-lethal and non-lethal projectiles have the potential to ricochet inside and outside of the vehicle and may unintentionally impact bystanders, occupants, or officers.

PROHIBITED ITEMS FOR FORCIBLE ENTRY

- Firearms shall not be used as an impact device or to breach a window unless the circumstances justifying deadly force have been met, as there is a potential for unintended discharge.

CIRCUMSTANCES JUSTIFYING FORCIBLE ENTRY

- There is a need to gain access to the motor vehicle because of a perceived or known medical emergency involving a person or animal and delayed entry may result in further peril or harm to the person/animal inside.
- It is reasonably perceived that extreme temperatures in the motor vehicle (hot or cold) will adversely affect the person or animal, should they remain locked inside.
- The apprehension and arrest of a person who has locked themselves inside a vehicle and is using the vehicle as a barrier to police. Prior to breaching a vehicle, vehicle blocking maneuvers should be considered to reduce the likelihood of injury to officers or the public if the individual attempts to flee in a vehicle.
- Any other emergency or situation where the need to gain access to the motor vehicle outweighs the damage caused and/or risk involved when gaining access to the vehicle.
- During the apprehension of a known wanted criminal or dangerous fugitive where specialized training and tactics are utilized to safely take the suspect into custody.
- When timely vehicle entry to accomplish a public safety goal is necessary and the needs of the situation outweigh the damage caused to the vehicle. Examples are emergency firefighting or to quickly move a vehicle from a dangerous position where the potential for injury or crash is high.

In circumstances that justify forcible entry, Officers or CSOs may attempt the use courtesy unlock devices in emergency situations if time and training permit, but attempting to use these devices is not compulsory. The use of courtesy unlocking devices during these circumstances is not required, as their use can create an unsafe condition for officers or civilians in certain circumstances.

If time and circumstances permit, officers should don personal protective equipment, including hand and eye protection prior to breaking glass.

COURTESY VEHICLE UNLOCKS

- Trained Crystal Police Department Employees may provide courtesy vehicle unlocks to a requesting citizen when they have been locked out of a vehicle they own.
- Employees must take reasonable steps to identify the person requesting the vehicle unlock as the owner of the vehicle, including retrieving and verifying identification, and running the vehicle registration to ensure the owner's identity. Persons who are

not the owner of a vehicle cannot grant consent for vehicle entry and cannot sign the waiver form.

- In certain circumstances such as company owned vehicles operated by agents of the company, a CPD employee should take additional steps to confirm that the agent has rightful possession of the vehicle prior to presenting the waiver and unlocking the vehicle. This may include talking to a company supervisor or viewing a company ID.
- Employees should not unlock rental vehicles for renters due to the potential for damage and the inability to gain permission and signature from the owner.
- The employee performing the courtesy unlock must present the vehicle entry waiver to the owner and have the waiver signed in all non-emergency situations.
- Utilizing unlocking tools has the potential to damage a vehicle. An employee has the right to refuse a courtesy unlock if they believe an unlock attempt will damage the vehicle, or the employee is unfamiliar or inexperienced in unlocking a vehicle type, make, or design.
- Many modern vehicles have side curtain and door airbags that may deploy and cause serious injury. If an employee suspects the vehicle has side curtain or door airbags, a "Slim-Jim" style unlocking tool shall not be used.
- Courtesy vehicle unlocks may be refused or deferred during times of high call volume, low staffing, or due to improper tools, vehicle defects, or inclement weather.
- In situations where a courtesy unlock is refused, employees may attempt to connect the citizen with roadside assistance or locksmith services, or offer courtesy transport when feasible and able.
- Nothing in this policy obligates a Crystal Police Employee to perform a courtesy vehicle unlock.

REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION

- Courtesy vehicle unlocks shall not be initiated without a signed waiver from the vehicle owner.
- Courtesy vehicle unlocks shall be documented via the CAD call for service. Employees shall pull a case number and submit the signed waiver form to the records division for retention. Employees shall add the vehicle registration and owner identification information to the CAD file.
- Any damage that occurs during a courtesy unlock shall be documented in the form of a police report. Photographs of damage shall be taken and attached to the police report or entered into evidence.
- Due to the potential for vehicle damage and agency liability, employees may elect to activate their body worn camera when responding to a courtesy vehicle unlock.
- Any employee conducting forceable entry on a vehicle shall document the incident via a police report. Photos of the damage shall be included in the report. Employees intending to cause property damage via forceable entry shall comply with Policy 3.7 (Body Worn Camera).