



San Diego Depends on AutoReturn to Deliver Accountability and Fairness in Police Towing

San Diego's unique logistical challenges and cultural focus on transparency created these key imperatives for a police tow management dispatching and impound tracking system:



Impound vehicles spread across six subcontracted tow yard lots at any given time



Maintaining total transparency, accurate reporting and fairness with nine approved towing vendors



Integration with the city's unique CAD system to expedite dispatch response times

BACKGROUND

AutoReturn Solution in Action

The city of San Diego performs on average 26,000 tows a year related to crashes, impounded vehicles and abandoned vehicles. In 2009, the city implemented the AutoReturn Integrated Enterprise System (ARIES) solution to address challenges with its police towing management.

In 2019, a thorough review of the system was conducted to make sure it was still creating citywide efficiencies. Based on the strength of AutoReturn's past performance handling integration challenges and being responsive to user needs, it was clear the city would continue using the system.

CHALLENGE

Effectively Using City Budget and ARIES Capability to Maintain High Expectations

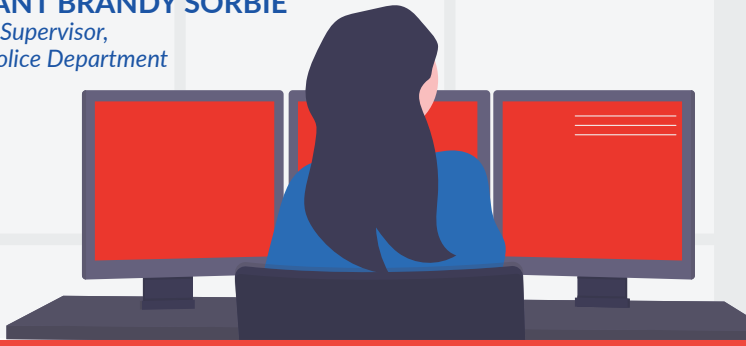
Sergeant Brandy Sorbie, an 18-year-veteran of the San Diego Police Department, moved from patrol to take over the city's tow administration role. Her team's charge was to monitor all department tows spanning nine commands, the detective division, the neighborhood policing unit and parking enforcement.

The unit verifies the legality of tows, track and release of vehicles and—most important to the city—use ARIES as a communications tool and “data referee” to ensure harmony and efficiency, both between tow companies and the city.

“AutoReturn made my job easy. I couldn’t be happier. They have been pivotal in ensuring accountability between tow companies and the police department.”

—SERGEANT BRANDY SORBIE

*Fleet Safety Supervisor,
San Diego Police Department*



SOLUTION

Powerful Reporting and Seamless Handoff Means No Lapse in Quality

Sorbie and her team worked closely with AutoReturn making sure ARIES data could be used to respond to a wide variety of reporting requests and answer disputes/queries from tow operators with credible, neutral data.

“It’s very important that there is no appearance of favoritism in how we dispatch tow trucks,” emphasized Sorbie. “In addition, I need to be able to show superiors and city officials that we’re towing within the law, so there were many instances where I had to reach out to AutoReturn to provide a clear, data-backed rationale for our department’s performance. They were extremely responsive and never let me down.”

RESULTS

Reducing Process Friction and Demonstrating Cost Effectiveness

The effective use of AutoReturn meant the city was able to continue to:

- Maintain the city’s excellent tow response times from when an officer calls for a tow
- Keep revenue-neutral and show officials and voters that impounding was being done fairly and legally
- Manage and communicate with tow companies to maintain efficiency, transparency and goodwill

ARIES helped the City reduce a 200-vehicle backlog of evidentiary impounds. With AutoReturn’s help, they were able to identify and release vehicles from closed cases that had been taking up space for years.

Join dozens of other cities, counties and states that improve public safety, commerce and citizen services by partnering with AutoReturn.

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

~26,000 tows annually

CHALLENGES

- 30-minute tow response times leading to decreased officer safety
- Maintain high city standards in reporting, accountability and tow response times
- Track and manage vehicles from as many as six subcontracted lots
- Make sure data can justify tows and tow company management

SOLUTION

- Maintain seamless integration with AutoReturn’s solution
- Work closely with AutoReturn to deliver credible custom reporting

RESULTS

- Tow response times have reduced from 30 to 12 minutes
- 90% decrease in 911 dispatcher involvement on managing tow requests
- 85% reduction in manual processing
- Fewer disputes with towing vendors
- Reduced backlog of cars in evidentiary impound

ABOUT



When AutoReturn began 17 years ago, police towing too often left tow operators, law enforcement and vehicle owners underserved and unhappy. We saw a better way.

We saw an opportunity to fix common towing operation problems nationwide—long wait times, vehicle damage, property loss, low accountability and conflicts of interest—and we knew we had to take it. So we built the first system combining top-notch technology with deep industry expertise and hands-on help.

AutoReturn now operates in more than 30 cities, counties and states, as well as Rome, Italy. But while we’re proud of our growth in numbers, what brings us the most satisfaction is knowing that we’ve helped transform police towing in every community where we operate.

