**UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE**

**OR THEFT BY APPROPRIATION**

**SHERIFF’S COMBINED AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE 512-549-5100**

When a person has had permission to operate a vehicle for any reason, but will not return the vehicle, or other civil matters

The Bastrop County District Attorney’s Office advises that the following steps MUST be taken in order to prove that the subject has been notified to return the vehicle and refuses to do so. The vehicle will NOT be listed as a stolen vehicle until these steps are followed:

1. Write a letter to the subject’s last known address, telling him to return the vehicle or theft charges will be filed against him. In the letter, you must describe the vehicle in detail, including the license number and/or the vehicle identification number, and tell the subject that he has ten (10) days to return the vehicle before theft charges are filed.
2. Make a copy of the letter and keep it. Take the letter to the Post Office and send it CERTIFIED MAIL with RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED. Also mark the letter RETURN AFTER 5 DAYS.
3. After the receipt or the unclaimed letter is returned to you, the subject must be given 10 days to return the vehicle from the date you get the receipt back.
4. After 10 days, contact the Bastrop County Sheriff’s Office to file a report. Provide the unopened letter or the receipt and the title to your vehicle to the Sheriff’s Office to file a report. If you get the entire letter back unclaimed, leave the receipt attached to the letter and do not open it.
5. You will be required to give a sworn written statement as to the circumstances of the theft.
6. When all the above steps have been taken, the investigator will follow up with the case.
7. If the vehicle is recovered, you will make arrangements to recover the vehicle and pay all costs associated with the recovery of the vehicle.

**None of the above steps may be left out.**