

# Memorandum

Date: August 19, 2004

To: California Police Chiefs Association List Serve

From: Chief Peterson, Clayton Police Department

RE: Response to Request for Information – V-6 Patrol Vehicles

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While the response was limited, there are police agencies using V-6 vehicles in their fleets; most use the V-6 cars for detective or other duties instead of using them as the primary patrol unit. According to the responses, two manufacturers provide a V-6 police package – Chevrolet (Impala) and Dodge (Intrepid). The following is a synopsis of the responses received, including comments if provided.

Martinez PD: 3 marked and 1 unmarked units. They are decent cars, but smaller than the Ford Crown Victoria. They have more maintenance problems than the Ford. Other than being smaller, they handle well and have good power; the gas mileage is also better. Overall, we decided to stay with the Ford Crown Vic, as they have more room for equipment and our corporation yard indicated there are fewer maintenance issues.

Hercules PD: Purchased two police package Chevrolet Impalas in 2000 for their detectives and they are still going strong. Lots of power and plenty of space for driver and front passenger. Not sure if they would recommend them for marked service.

Fremont PD: Purchased several Dodge Intrepids and use them in Patrol and for their CSO's.

Piedmont PD: Used them primarily for administration cars and have used them for patrol. Piedmont ranges from 50' – 800' above sea level in a half-mile distance, with several narrow and winding streets – this creates issues with sufficient power and decreases the V-6 gas mileage advantage. There was a minimal increase in miles per gallon with the V-6. Any advantage gained by gas mileage was overwhelmed by increased maintenance – the V-6's are front wheel drives and the maintenance costs increased significantly primarily for brakes, tires, alignments.

Madera PD: Our Department uses them in unmarked and detective units; we do not use them as marked units.

San Francisco PD: Do not know any manufacturers that produce a V-6 rear wheel drive vehicle that meets our needs. Many issues regarding front wheel handling vs. the rear wheel drive. They use all Ford Crown Victorias certified by the Michigan State Police in their patrol fleet.

St. Helena PD: Chevrolet Lumina V-6 cars too small, problem with hills; they are going to the Ford.

Richmond PD: Do not use V-6's anymore.

Additionally, the following comments were received from Chief's who have some knowledge of V-6 police vehicles, but do not have any in their fleet.

Seaside PD: The Chevrolet Impala police package is a V-6 front wheel drive. Chrysler makes the Intrepid in a V-6 as a police package, but are discontinuing it this year. CHP has been testing the Impala and may have information on the fuel economy. Also, NYPD uses the Impala almost exclusively.

Moraga PD: Chevrolet has a V-6 police package Impala. The US Park Police have some in the San Francisco area. Understands they are a little cheaper and get 1-2 miles per gallon better than the Ford Crown Vic. If you go to Chevrolet Police Vehicles on the Internet, they have a site that provides complete details. Issues with mixing the fleet – there are driving differences between front wheel and rear wheel drive vehicles that officers need to understand.

Pete Hurley: Retired Tiburon Police Chief and past CPCA President was very helpful and had knowledge of previous research in this area. Paraphrasing Chief Hurley's comments, he identified the following issues: no rear seating room, even less if a cage is installed; potential injury to passenger/prisoner from sudden stops; hard to get in and out of; increased maintenance costs – electrical, modified suspensions, transmission, heavy duty brakes.

San Francisco PD provided the following information as a resource for further research: Lt. David Halliday, Michigan State Police Precision Driving Unit (517) 322-1787, e-mail: hallidd@michigan.gov