§ 223. Motor vehicle theft prevention program. 1. The commissioner is hereby authorized and directed to establish a motor vehicle theft prevention program within the department which shall have trained motor vehicle investigators and police officers participating in it.

2. It shall be the duty of such investigators to conduct detailed investigations, in cooperation with law enforcement officials, of those entities which may be possible sources for the disposal of stolen vehicles or major component parts; to determine the reliability of applicants required to be registered under provisions of the vehicle and traffic law; to provide assistance to law enforcement personnel in determining sources of outlets for stolen motor vehicles and stolen motor vehicle parts; to cooperate with law enforcement personnel relative to the investigation of organized motor vehicle theft rings; to examine motor vehicles prior to the issuance of a New York state motor vehicle title at the discretion of the commissioner; and to inspect motor vehicles for which a notice of acquisition is required to be filed pursuant to section four hundred twenty-nine of this chapter whenever such a vehicle is to be registered for use upon the public highway.

3. The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of the division of criminal justice services, shall establish a motor vehicle theft prevention program to be known as the "Watch Your Car Program," which shall include the issuance of official decals to identify motor vehicles that are not normally operated between the hours of 1:00 A.M. and 5:00 A.M. Participation in the program shall be voluntary in nature and shall involve the following:

(a) In the presence of a duly authorized police officer in any law enforcement agency participating in such program, the registered owner of a motor vehicle shall sign an informed consent statement indicating that the motor vehicle registered to such owner is not normally operated between the hours of 1:00 A.M. and 5:00 A.M. The form of such informed consent statement shall be promulgated by the commissioner after consultation with the commissioner of the division of criminal justice services.

(b) (i) Upon signing such informed consent statement, the registered owner shall be issued decals approved by the commissioner and such

decals shall be affixed to the owner's vehicle in a conspicuous place as prescribed by the commissioner. The decals shall be issued by the law enforcement agency participating in the program.

(ii) The law enforcement agency issuing the decals shall make a record of the decals issued to each registered owner. Such records shall be maintained by the law enforcement agencies participating in the program and shall be available to the commissioner, to the superintendent of state police, to the commissioner of the division of criminal justice services and to law enforcement agencies.

(c) Informed consent statement forms shall be available at all participating law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The commissioner may accept the format used for the decal and application used by local police officials in municipalities that implemented such programs prior to the effective date of this subdivision.

4. The commissioner shall, no later than January first, nineteen hundred eighty-two, submit to the governor and the legislature a report on the results and operation of the motor vehicle theft prevention program.

5. The expenses incurred by the commissioner in implementing the motor vehicle theft prevention program created by this section shall be funded from revenues collected pursuant to sections four hundred fifteen-a, four hundred twenty-one, subdivision five of section four hundred twenty-three-a and four hundred thirty of this chapter.