



Department Vehicles

.01 Policy

Authorized employees may operate Departmental vehicles. All employees operating Departmental vehicles shall possess a valid driver's license issued by the jurisdiction of their permanent residence. The license shall be appropriate for the class of vehicle being operated. Unless prohibited by law, officers operating Departmental vehicles shall be armed with an authorized firearm.

.02 Terms

Pool Vehicle: A Departmental vehicle not assigned to an individual employee under the provisions of the Vehicle Deployment Program.

Surveillance Vehicle: A vehicle used for covert activity that is not recognizable as a police vehicle.

.03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation: N/A

Reference:

General Order 210, Mobile Data Computers.

General Order 105, Limited Extra-Jurisdictional Authority.

General Order 310, Vehicle Pursuits.

Forms:

Vehicle Inspection Sheet (Form 643).

.04 Procedure

Employees shall operate Departmental vehicles responsibly and courteously. All applicable provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law and Departmental directives shall be obeyed. Any supervisor who sees a vehicle being operated in a manner reflecting unfavorably on the Department or creating an unnecessary hazard may stop the vehicle and take steps to ensure compliance with the traffic law and Departmental directives.

If the operator cannot comply as directed, another employee shall drive the vehicle to the police station. The supervisor shall complete an Observation Form and notify the operator's Director prior to the end of his or her tour of duty.

A. Equipment

Required

Employees shall ensure that Departmental vehicles contain a sufficient supply of forms and all necessary equipment needed to perform their duties. Patrol vehicles shall be equipped with the following issued items maintained in working order:

- Camera;
- Charged fire extinguisher;
- Complaint Information Brochures;
- Crime scene barrier tape;
- Evidence collection Kit;
- Fingerprint Kit;
- First-aid Kit;
- Flares;
- Flashlight;
- Hard Hat;
- Hazardous Materials Guidebook;
- Police radio;
- Raincoat;
- Reflective vest; and,
- Work Gloves.

Optional

The following items may be kept in Departmental vehicles:

- Battery booster cables;
- Coverall uniform;
- Personal protective equipment;
- Traffic accident diagram template; and,
- Traffic cones.

Prohibited

- Earphones, earpieces, or headsets not issued by the Department.
- Televisions or portable video players.

B. Vehicle Use Provisions

Department vehicles shall be used for official duties, to and from work, part-time employment in Town, and other official trips.

Duty Status

Employees may operate Departmental vehicles while in full-duty status or while on administrative leave. Employees whose police

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powers have been suspended shall not operate Departmental vehicles. Supervisors shall determine whether or not employees who are not in full-duty status but are not suspended may operate any Departmental vehicles.

Prohibited Uses

- Carrying of excessive loads or objects that protrude from the vehicle, unless transporting property or evidence;
- Using a drive-through lane at any business that uses them to dispense alcoholic beverages;
- Operation by employees who have consumed alcoholic beverages;
- Political campaigning, fund-raising, or electioneering;
- Storage of weapons, firearms, or ammunition;
- Compensated for unattended use at secondary employment; and,
- Operation by any off-duty Departmental employee outside of Prince George's County unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

On-duty Use Out of Town

Employees may remove Departmental vehicles from the Town for official business. This includes traveling in areas adjacent to the Town border while on-duty, performing follow-up investigations, or attending assigned functions. Notification to Communications shall not be made unless deemed necessary for employee safety purposes.

Authorization must be obtained from the appropriate Supervisor for other on-duty use outside of Prince George's County.

If more than one employee is assigned to attend the same out-of-county function, they shall notify their supervisor in advance. The supervisor shall then arrange the use of the minimum number of vehicles for the function.

Off-duty Use

When operating Departmental vehicles off-duty, employees shall monitor the Bladensburg police radio.

Off-duty employees responding to calls or handling incidents shall notify the dispatcher so that their activities can be coordinated with on-duty units.

Employees may respond to emergencies. If immediate action is necessary, the off-duty employee shall take the appropriate action. For routine incidents, the off-duty employee may request that an on-duty employee respond. The off-duty employee shall await the on-duty employee's arrival. The supervisor shall have the off-duty employee relieved as soon as operations permit.

Off-duty employees shall not take Departmental vehicles out of Prince George's County unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

Leave

When an employee will be away from the Town for more than seven days, his or her supervisor shall ensure that the employee's assigned vehicle is stored at the police station and make it available for use by other employees.

When an employee is on sick leave, disability leave, or light duty for more than seven working days, the Employee's assigned vehicle may be used by other employees. The vehicle should only be used after all available pool vehicles have been placed in service. If the employee has not returned to full duty at the end of 30 calendar days, the Chief of Police may reassign the vehicle.

Employees on disability leave shall not operate Departmental vehicles. Employees on light duty shall not operate marked vehicles.

C. Operation

Use of Emergency Equipment

Employees are permitted to use emergency equipment:

- To signal police presence;
- To direct movement of persons, animals, or vehicles;
- To provide supplemental lighting;
- To warn persons of danger; or,
- While operating priority in response to an emergency or in pursuit of a violator or suspected violator.

In these circumstances, employees are permitted to activate emergency lights, spotlights, hazard flashers, sirens, the public address system, or a combination of the above in accordance with the provisions established in the General Order Manual and the Maryland

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Traffic Law.

When handling incident scenes, employees may use hazard flashers alone or emergency lights flashing only to the rear if the safety of the employee or the public would not be jeopardized. This may be done to prevent rubbernecking by motorists or the drawing of a crowd.

Restraint Systems

Employees operating Departmental vehicles shall use the seatbelt/shoulder harness to comply with the vehicle law. Child safety seats shall not be kept in the passenger compartment of Departmental vehicles being used on-duty unless the employee is transporting a child that requires the use of the seat. Rear-facing child safety seats shall not be placed in the front passenger seat of any Departmental vehicle having a passenger-side air bag.

Parking

During routine operations, employees shall obey all parking regulations.

During emergencies, Departmental vehicles shall not be parked in a manner that unnecessarily interferes with traffic or impedes the response of other emergency vehicles. If a Departmental vehicle is double-parked or parked in a restricted area, the vehicle's hazard flashers shall be activated.

Securing Vehicle & Equipment

Employees shall ensure that Departmental vehicles are locked and their contents secured whenever they are left unattended.

Red Light/Speed Camera Violations

Certain traffic laws may be disregarded pursuant to the provisions of Section 21-106 of the Maryland Vehicle Law when employees are responding priority to an emergency or in pursuit of a violator/suspected violator.

When the Department receives a camera citation, it shall be forwarded to the employee's supervisor for investigation.

If the investigation determines that the violation was a result of a failure to obey a traffic control device, the employee shall have the option of paying the fine or contesting the matter in court. The supervisor shall impose appropriate disciplinary action.

If the investigation determines that the violation occurred during the proper use of police authority, he or she shall forward a memorandum containing facts that support his or her conclusion, along with a copy of the citation, through the chain of command to the Office of the Chief. The issuing jurisdiction shall be notified that the citation should be voided.

D. Vehicle Deployment Program

Officers are eligible to participate in the Vehicle Deployment Program upon completion of their probationary period. Participants primary residence must be within a 30 mile radius of the Town and within the State of Maryland. Program participation is a revokable privilege.

Residence Outside of Bladensburg

Officers residing outside of the Town may participate in the Vehicle Deployment Program. Officers who reside outside of the Town of Bladensburg are authorized to drive their assigned vehicles for work purposes (including overtime, court appearances, and secondary employment). Officers who reside outside of Bladensburg shall not drive their issued vehicles for non-work purposes while off-duty without the approval of the Chief of Police.

Exceptions to this directive shall only be granted by the Chief of Police.

Overtime

Participants in the Vehicle Deployment Program involved in incidents while off-duty do not receive overtime compensation for the first two hours. They may be compensated for work performed beyond two hours. Before the initial two hours have passed, participants shall contact an on-duty supervisor who shall, if operations permit, have the off-duty participant relieved. If operations require the participant to remain beyond two hours, the on-duty supervisor shall sign the participant's compensation request form.

Officers who are not participants in the Vehicle Deployment Program may be compensated for all hours during which they are involved in off-duty incidents.

Officers working extra duty employment, whether participants in the Vehicle Deployment Program or not, are not eligible to earn overtime pay for incidents related to that employment.

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Employee Responsibility

Participating employees whose primary residence is outside of the Town of Bladensburg shall reimburse the Town for the mileage between the Town and their primary residence.

Fuel Reimbursement Chart

Residence	Reimbursement
Within Town Limits	—
Within 15 miles	\$25.00
Greater than 15 miles	\$50.00

There is no credit for mileage not traveled due to annual, sick or other leave, or when the vehicle is out-of-service, except when the period of non-use exceeds 30 days.

Fuel reimbursement is deducted from monthly clothing allowance.

Removal from the Program

Administrative removal from the Vehicle Deployment Program may occur when use of the vehicle could jeopardize the safety of the public or the vehicle, or in a manner that would bring discredit to the citizens or officials of the Town of Bladensburg. The decision to remove a participant from the program shall be made by a command officer the rank of lieutenant or above.

E. Maintenance

Employees shall verify proper engine fluid levels at least once a week, and more often for vehicles used for patrol.

Employees shall ensure that their assigned vehicles are scheduled to receive preventive maintenance as required. By this section. Preventative maintenance shall occur every three months or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first.

The operator shall clear the interior and trunk of all items that would interfere with the service. The portable police radio, loose equipment, firearms, and personal valuables shall be removed from the vehicle. All scheduled maintenance shall be performed while the employee is off-duty. On-duty repairs require supervisory notification and approval.

Employees shall not make any mechanical or electrical adjustments, or add equipment to the vehicle unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

Fuel System

Employees shall use their assigned fuel card and personal identification number (PIN) to access the automated fuel system. The system prompts a series of codes which employees must provide, in addition to the vehicles current mileage. The system tracks fuel use and miles traveled, so it is important that this information provided is accurate. Employees shall not divulge their PIN number to others.

Lost or stolen Fuel System Cards shall be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor.

Car Washes

If car wash machinery damages a Departmental vehicle, sworn employees shall document the circumstances and the extent of the damage on a Case Report. Civilian employee operators shall request that an officer respond to the scene to complete a Case Report.

F. Civilian Operation

Use of Departmental vehicles by civilian employees is subject to the following restrictions:

- employees assigned a take home vehicle shall only use it for commuting to and from work, or for official business;
- Operation of marked vehicles is prohibited, except for official use by employees transporting for maintenance;
- Civilian employees shall not operate vehicles with activated emergency equipment;
- Vehicles shall not be taken out of Prince George's County without prior approval from the employee's supervisor;
- Employees operating vehicles with police radios shall familiarize themselves with proper radio procedures, and may use the police radio to report emergencies; and,

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- The employee shall comply with all applicable provisions regarding Departmental vehicle operation.

G. Pool Vehicles

Pool vehicles are intended for use by:

- Participants in the Vehicle Deployment Program whose issued vehicles are not available or are inappropriate for use in a TDY assignment; or,
- Employees who are not participants in the Vehicle Deployment Program.

Commander's Duties

Commanders shall ensure that:

- Monthly inspections are performed on pool vehicles;
- Vehicles are washed as needed; and
- Preventative maintenance is done.

Recovered property or evidence shall be handled in accordance with established Property and Evidence procedures.

When returning the vehicle after a tour of duty, the employee shall:

Pool Vehicle Use

Prior to a tour of duty, employees operating pool vehicles shall:

- Check engine fluid levels;
- Inspect the exterior for body damage and tire condition;
- Inspect the interior for recovered property, items of evidence, or personal property left by others; and,
- Notify his or her supervisor of unreported damage;

A Vehicle Inspection Sheet shall be used to document the inspection.

Identifiable personal property shall be returned to its owner. Unidentifiable personal property shall be submitted to the on-duty supervisor.

- Ensure the vehicle is fueled and inspect the interior for items left by others;
- Remove their issued and personal items; and,
- Secure the vehicle.

Pool vehicles are not included in the Vehicle Deployment Program.

HISTORY: Adopted September 17, 2012, Amended July 23, 2015

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:



Charles L. Owens
Chief of Police