



OPERATION & CARE OF DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

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I. ROUTINE OPERATION

This directive applies to the routine operation of department vehicles. Emergency response procedures appear in Index Codes 1649 and 1650.

II. DRIVING POLICIES

The following regulations apply to all operators of department vehicles.

- A. Drivers must have a valid Maryland driver's license in their possession.
- B. Drivers must operate department vehicles in a legal, safe, and courteous manner. When not engaged in emergency response, drivers of department vehicles will observe all traffic and parking laws. No one will drive, use, or park department vehicles on or off-duty so as to reflect unfavorably on the department.
- C. Only authorized persons are allowed to ride in department vehicles unless in the performance of duty or otherwise directed by the Chief of Police. Drivers are responsible for the behavior of any passengers.
- D. Department vehicles may not be used to push or tow any other vehicle, except in an emergency situation or a departmentally owned trailer (speed sign boards, boats, etc.)
- E. Operators of radio equipped vehicles will not transmit within 50 feet of electronic blasting areas or electronic dynamite caps. Explosives will not be transported in department vehicles.
- F. All employees are prohibited from operating a County vehicle while, or after, consuming alcoholic beverages.
- G. All employees are prohibited from transporting alcoholic beverages in a County vehicle, except in the case of recovered evidence or property.
- H. Sworn personnel with the equipment, skill, knowledge, and ability may assist motorists with "hot shots" as necessary.
- I. Drivers of department vehicles and all passengers will use seat belts and other available occupant safety restraining devices while the vehicle is in motion. Supervisors may grant exceptions to this policy for specific situations in which they deem efficiency of operations outweighs the safety benefit.

J. Off-duty officers operating police vehicles will ensure that their dress and appearance, and that of their passengers, does not reflect unfavorably on the department or the police profession. When operating a PPV off-duty, with the exception of female officers' hairstyles, officers must adhere to the same grooming standards as required for their on-duty assignments. Officers are also reminded that although off-duty, when operating the PPV they may be required to exit the vehicle and take enforcement or other action at any time. Their attire must present a respectable appearance, as well as provide the functionality needed to take action (i.e., the ability to quickly adorn and secure an authorized holster, handcuffs or other needed equipment).

III. FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

When an officer is required to ride in an ambulance that is transporting a prisoner, a paid Fire Department employee can, if necessary, drive the officer's police vehicle to the destination of the ambulance. The vehicle may not be operated in an "Emergency Response" mode.

IV. RIDE-ALONG PROGRAM

The department permits civilians to accompany officers on patrol for valid educational and public relations purposes. Any individual desiring to accompany an officer on patrol will be required to submit a written request to the officer's district commander, stating the officer's name (if there is a preference), date and time desired, and reason for the ride-along. The district commander, or designee, will approve or disapprove the request as soon as possible. The requesting party will receive written notification of approval or denial, along with any necessary explanation or details. A "Waiver of Claim and Liability" form will be executed and submitted to the district commander before the person is allowed to begin the ride-along.

V. CARE AND SERVICING OF VEHICLES

A. Servicing Pool Vehicles

Personnel designated by the District/Section commander will coordinate the servicing, care, and repair of department vehicles under the district or section command. Pool vehicles will undergo preventive maintenance once every four (4) weeks. Operators are held responsible for the cleanliness of both the interior and exterior of vehicles assigned to or signed out by them. If a vehicle is used by more than one employee the responsibility is shared by each.

B. Servicing PPVs

See Index Code 1502.

C. Speedometer Calibration

Operators of vehicles that are used for patrol activities are responsible to have the speedometers calibrated every 90 days by a certified radar operator. The proof of calibration must remain in the vehicle when not being used in court.

D. Pressurized Tire Repair Sealants Prohibited

The use of pressurized tire repair sealants on department vehicles is prohibited. These products are potentially dangerous, particularly when a mechanic attempts to remove a tire from a wheel. Use of the product does not change the fact that the tire and/or wheel is damaged. The vehicle should not be driven until the spare tire has been installed or proper repairs can be made on the tire in question.

E. Availability & Use of Tire Chains

Tire chains are available from the Millersville Central Garage for use on department vehicles when the Department of Public Works enacts a winter storm code of 5 or greater, on the following scale:

DPW STORM CODES

- Code 1: Alert
- Code 2: Standby
- Code 3: Snow accumulation up to 2 inches
- Code 4: Snow accumulation 2 to 6 inches
- Code 5: Snow accumulation over 6 inches
- Code 6: Blizzard conditions

Upon notification of a Code 5 storm code, Communications will notify the commander of the *Patrol Services* Bureau and all on-duty patrol supervisors. Communications will also inform the Central Garage that department members may begin requesting chains.

Once a Code 5 is declared, the decision to obtain tire chains is up to supervisors, who will coordinate the chain installation. The installation of chains on new model patrol vehicles will be determined by field supervisors. Field supervisors will have chains installed on the older model patrol vehicles first, evaluating the need to have chains installed on the new model cars based on deployment or response concerns. If the Central Garage is open, supervisors may begin scheduling installation of chains immediately. If the Central Garage is closed, Communications will notify the emergency contact person once at least 16 personnel have requested that tire chains be installed. When making this notification, Communications will request an ETA.

Personnel who have chains installed on police vehicles must cooperate with the installing mechanic to ensure the chains are safely installed; officers may be requested to test-drive the vehicle for approximately 2 miles, and then return to the garage for a final adjustment.

Employees are responsible for returning tire chains to the Central Garage as soon as the winter storm emergency is over.

F. Firearms Safety Procedures During Shotgun/Carbine Rack Installation

As part of the installation process of mounting shotgun/carbine storage racks in police vehicles, it is necessary for officers to leave shotguns or carbines with shop personnel until the installation is complete. Repairs may take as long as seven hours and during that time firearms are turned over to county maintenance personnel.

Due to concern for the personal safety of central garage personnel and safe storage of departmental/ personnel carbines and shotguns, it was requested that the garage be issued an inoperable shotgun to be used in the installation process for all vehicles. It was later learned that even though officers carry the same model shotgun, a slight difference in stock dimension could affect the systems locking device or facilitate an improper fit into the rack. Either of which would threaten the locking integrity of the system.

In order to provide a more secure and safe environment for central garage personnel, the following procedure will be implemented: Officers who are leaving their vehicles at the county shop will unload the weapon and install a trigger locking device before leaving the vehicle. The locking device will be provided by garage personnel. Shop personnel who are installing the mounting device will then take custody of the firearm and will lock the firearm in the trunk of the patrol vehicle if they must leave the vehicle for any reason. If the vehicle must be kept overnight, the shotgun or carbine will be locked in the patrol vehicle's trunk.

The use of the trigger lock will provide for a much safer environment for shop personnel and proper storage of weapons in a secure environment will aid in the prevention of accidents and damage to department or personally owned firearms.

VI. VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

A. Operator Responsibility

1. Mechanical Condition

Before the beginning of each tour of duty, vehicle operators will carefully inspect assigned vehicles to ensure that they are in operable condition and are properly equipped. Prior to being used on duty, a pool vehicle must be inspected and documented on PD 181 (Pool Vehicle Inspection Form). If the vehicle is shared by more than one employee, each employee is held jointly responsible for the inspection, servicing and equipping of the vehicle. The inspection must include a check of the following:

- * Gasoline, oil, coolant, battery, and tires
- * Brakes, lights, windshield wipers, and warning devices
- * Required equipment (its presence and condition)
- * Damage

District Commanders or their designee will ensure that the Pool Vehicle Inspection Forms (PD181) are retained for a minimum of three (3) years.

2. Report of Damage or Defect

If any defect, damage, or loss of equipment is discovered, the operator will report same, verbally, to his or her immediate supervisor. If the defects are such that further operation of the vehicle might cause greater damage, the vehicle will not be moved and the supervisor will direct that a report be filed documenting the situation. In cases not requiring immediate repairs, the vehicle will be taken for repairs when directed by the supervisor. Any unreported defect, damage or loss after the vehicle has been inspected and placed in service will be considered to have occurred during the tour of duty of the reporting employee. It is important that all employees assigned to operate department vehicles conduct careful, daily inspections for any damage, defect, or absence of equipment before placing the vehicle in service.

3. Recovery of Contraband or Weapons

Officers will thoroughly search their vehicles at the beginning and end of their shifts and prior to and after transporting prisoners. All contraband, weapons or property seized from a police vehicle will be processed in accordance with the procedures outlined in Index Codes 1200 & 1201. An incident report will be written detailing the location and type of property recovered.

4. Recovered Property

Any property found in the vehicle during inspection, not identified as property of a Department employee, will be placed in the appropriate property room pursuant to the procedures in Index Codes 1200 & 1201 and a recovered property form and report will be submitted.

5. Damage/Breakdown While in Operation

If a mechanical defect occurs while a vehicle is being operated, the driver will immediately notify his/her immediate supervisor. If the defect is such that further operation is unsafe, or might cause greater damage, the vehicle will not be moved. Vehicles that cannot be moved will be towed to the County Shop following the established procedures. The operator of the vehicle will record the incident and will submit the proper documentation. A tow report will be necessary unless the car is towed by the County garage tow truck. If a tow report is completed, the County vehicle number will be written on the top of the form. Vehicle damage that does not affect the efficient and safe operation of the vehicle will be reported, however, the vehicle will be kept in service until scheduled for repairs.

B. Supervisor's Responsibility

Supervisors in all levels of command are held responsible for the periodic inspection of department vehicles to ensure compliance with all provisions on vehicles and equipment. Supervisors will conduct both scheduled and unscheduled inspections of all vehicles and equipment assigned to personnel under their command. At least one formal, documented inspection will be performed each month using PD Form #439.

VII. PROPONENT UNIT: Patrol Services Bureau.

VIII. CANCELLATION: This directive cancels Index Code 1501, dated 09-18-06.