



CITY OF FAIRFAX POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

Subject POLICE VEHICLES		Number 4-22
Effective Date September 28, 2015	Rescinds General Order 4-22, dated 10-31-14	
Accreditation Standards Fifth Edition 41.1.3, 41.1.4, 41.2.1	Authority Colonel Carl R. Pardiny Chief of Police	

PURPOSE:

To establish procedures for the care, maintenance and operation of police vehicles.

POLICY:

The safety of the public and officers is of paramount importance in the operation of police vehicles. Accordingly, all police vehicles are maintained and driven within the limits of this directive, state law, and City ordinance. Members should provide an example of safe driving for all to see. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring subordinates provide proper care and maintenance to assigned vehicles. This directive is applicable to emergency and non-emergency police vehicles as well as any other vehicle loaned, leased or rented by the City of Fairfax.

DISCUSSION:

For the purpose of this directive, the following definitions apply:

CONTROLLED INTERSECTION: Any location of intersecting streets or highways where vehicular traffic is controlled by signals, lights or signs.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE: A marked or unmarked police vehicle or motorcycle equipped with blue lights and siren operated for pursuit driving or in response to an emergency call.

NON-EMERGENCY VEHICLE: Any vehicle owned, loaned, leased or rented by the City of Fairfax that is not equipped with blue lights and siren.

NORMAL DRIVING: That driving which relates to the maintenance of vehicle speed concurrent with the normal flow of traffic, the obedience to motor vehicle laws and requirements of posted vehicular control signs, the adherence to the "Rules of the Road," and the practice of courtesy as a responsible driver.

PACING: The act of following a motor vehicle at a coordinated speed to determine if the followed vehicle's actual speed is in violation of the posted speed limit.

PURSUIT DRIVING: That driving which concerns itself with the pursuit and apprehension of a violator(s) of the law or persons suspected of any such violation in a motor vehicle, in a manner consistent with Section 46.2-920 of the Code of Virginia.

RESPONSE DRIVING: That driving of an expeditious nature which relates to the effort made in a police vehicle to proceed to the location of an emergency with the vehicle's emergency equipment activated consistent with the provisions of Section 46.2-920 of the Code of Virginia. Response driving shall also include an active attempt by one or more officers operating an emergency vehicle to overtake and capture a suspect or violator of the law who is operating a motor vehicle, while that person is making no willful effort to disregard the officer's signal to stop. If the suspect/violator vehicle yields to the signal to stop, then the encounter ends as a response driving situation. If

the suspect/violator fails to yield to the police vehicle, and willfully disregards the signal to stop, the encounter escalates to a pursuit.

PROCEDURE:

I. DRIVING MEASURES

A. Driving Response Modes

1. When a call for service is dispatched from Communications, the dispatcher shall obtain as much information as possible regarding the nature of the situation and clearly articulate this information to responding officers. Once assigned to a call for service, officers shall exercise sound judgment when deciding whether or not to engage in response driving depending upon all available information they receive from the dispatcher or from other sources. Calls for service will generally fall into one of the following three categories:
 - a. **Emergency:** The situation reported is urgent or an emergency. This may involve a serious crime in progress and/or any situation where there is a probability of death or serious bodily injury to a person that calls for action that is immediate and swift.
 - b. **Non-Emergency:** The situation reported is not an emergency but requires a prompt response. Officers should proceed forthwith; or
 - c. **Low Priority:** The situation reported requires a prompt response, but other brief business may be conducted while enroute.
2. The officer may or may not be justified in his/her decision to engage in response driving while responding to the location of the call, depending on:
 - a. The nature of the call, assignment or occurrence
 - b. The seriousness of the situation; and
 - c. Other variables associated with weather conditions, traffic and pedestrian congestion, the surface condition of the roadway, and/or other factors present at the time.
3. Officers must be prepared to justify their decisions with clear and articulate facts that are known to the officer at the time.
4. The Duty Supervisor shall have the authority to upgrade or downgrade an officer's response to an incident scene.
5. Among the factors which may be considered in the decision to downgrade from a response driving mode are:
 - a. A close proximity to the call upon receipt
 - b. Use of emergency equipment may hamper the safety of persons
 - c. Suspects may be alerted to the approach of police
 - d. Because of traffic or road conditions, the speed of response is not significantly enhanced by the use of emergency equipment.

B. Response Driving

1. The use of response driving is, of necessity, governed by the nature of the incident, the amount of information a caller or complainant provides and the accuracy of the information. Response driving is authorized only for emergency vehicles.
2. Response driving is authorized for emergency calls.
3. Only those officers assigned to an emergency call for service are authorized to engage in response driving unless authorized by a supervisor. However, by their very nature, certain emergency calls require the response of many officers, i.e. officer(s) in need of immediate assistance, active shooter

events, and/or other large-scale violent in-progress calls. When responding to these large-scale emergencies, it is not necessary for each responding officer to request permission from a supervisor prior to engaging in the response driving mode.

4. Officers responding to incidents other than those dispatched through Communications are guided in their level of response by the best information available to them at any given time. Pursuit driving is governed by General Order #4-21.
5. Since an officer's judgment and decision to use response driving depends upon what determination he/she can make from all the available information conveyed to him/her, it is critically important for such information to be complete and accurate.
6. Once a decision has been made to employ response driving, the following applies:
 - a. The officer should acknowledge receipt of the call assignment and must announce their intention to operate their emergency vehicle in the response driving mode. For ease of communication, officers should state over the radio that they are responding "Code."
 - b. The responding officer(s) must bear in mind that his/her response objective is to get to the location of the occurrence as soon as possible, safely. Officers are only protected from criminal prosecution if their emergency vehicle is operated in accordance with state code and with due regard for the safety of persons and property.
 - c. Upon approaching a controlled intersection or other location where there is great possibility of a collision, the operator of a police vehicle being operated in the response driving mode must make every attempt to reduce the speed of his/her vehicle in such a manner so as to avoid a collision with another vehicle, pedestrian, or object, including stopping completely if necessary, before entering and traversing the intersection. When faced with a red traffic signal, the officer must stop his/her vehicle and assure by careful observation that the way is clear before proceeding through the intersection.
 - d. The operator of an unmarked emergency vehicle in the response or pursuit driving mode during daylight hours should, in addition to the use of emergency equipment, have the headlights illuminated or flashing, when so equipped.
 - e. During response or pursuit driving, four-way flashers should not be used when the emergency vehicle is in motion because they may interfere with brake lights and turn signals.
 - f. The nature of certain crimes in progress (such as a robbery that could turn into a hostage situation) may call for the siren to be discontinued upon close approach to the location of the occurrence. Operating police vehicles under these conditions requires extreme caution. Elimination of the siren during response driving requires a coincidental reduction of speed with due regard for posted speed limit(s) and traffic/road conditions.
7. Except for the very limited period of time it takes to establish a proper pace of a violator, response or pursuit driving shall require the use of emergency equipment (lights and siren).

C. Normal Driving

1. The majority of routine patrol driving and response to calls for service is conducted in the normal driving mode (for non-emergency and low priority calls for service). Officers are not required to announce over the radio when they intend to respond to a call in the normal driving mode.
2. Normal driving is performed as follows:
 - a. In addition to the provisions of this General Order, the operation of police vehicles is also governed by the motor vehicle laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Fairfax.
 - b. Regardless of the seriousness of the situation to which the officer is responding, and except for circumstances that are clearly beyond his/her control, the operator of a police vehicle is held accountable for the manner in which the vehicle is operated.
 - c. At the scene of a crime, a motor vehicle crash, or other police incident, a police vehicle must be parked in such a manner so as not to create an obstacle or hazard to other traffic except to protect the scene. At fire scenes, entrance and egress of additional fire and rescue equipment should be

considered. Emergency lights and flashers should always be used to their full advantage to warn other drivers approaching the location.

- d. Since many accidents are caused by improper backing or turning, members must exercise extra caution while doing so.
- e. When an officer who is responding on a non-emergency or low priority call for service decides to upgrade his/her response from normal to response driving, the officer shall announce their intention over the police radio.

II. VEHICLE ASSIGNMENTS AND USE

- A. Division Commanders are responsible for assigning vehicles to members of their division, commensurate with functional responsibilities. Supervisors ensure that assigned vehicles are driven and cared for accordingly. When an assigned vehicle is unavailable, a replacement vehicle is assigned by a Supervisor. During a patrol shift, some circumstances may arise when a patrol officer must change from one cruiser to another. Prior to changing vehicle assignments, officers are required to notify their supervisor of the necessary change and request a new vehicle assignment. Supervisors shall document the cruiser change on the Lineup Sheet and notify Communications. Damaged or extremely dirty vehicles are reported to a supervisor immediately.
- B. All police vehicles including those owned, loaned, leased or rented by the City of Fairfax are for official use only.
- C. Regular take home use of a police vehicle is only authorized by the Chief of Police in accordance with existing Administrative Regulations.
- D. Temporary take home use of a police vehicle may be authorized upon approval of a supervisor under the following conditions:
 1. When the member is required to return to work that same evening for a meeting or other event.
 2. When the supervisor determines that it is logical for the member to travel directly from home to a designated meeting or official business event that next day.
 3. In circumstances where the supervisor determines that it is in the best interest of the City that a member have the temporary take home use of a vehicle; or
 4. While assigned as the "on-call" detective.
 5. When the temporary take home use of a police vehicle is authorized, its use is limited to transporting the member from their duty assignment to their residence and back to their duty assignment location.
- E. Vehicles are taken out of regular service to schools or conferences only upon supervisory approval.
- F. The Criminal Investigations Division Commander provides procedures for the use of surveillance vehicles through confidential memorandum to users.

III. SPECIALIZED VEHICLES

- A. EST Truck
 1. The EST Vehicle is to provide transportation for EST personnel and equipment and serve as a utility vehicle as needed.
 2. During non-EST activity periods the EST Vehicle may be used upon the approval of a supervisor.
 3. Specialized training is required to operate this vehicle.
 4. Use of the vehicle in a pursuit is prohibited.

5. The EST Commander is designated as the person responsible for inspecting the EST Vehicle to ensure the vehicle is in proper condition, any maintenance needs are being met, and specialized equipment as required is kept as listed on the inventory list.

B. Command Post Vehicle

1. The Command Post Vehicle is used to provide a platform for command post operations during critical incidents and special events.
2. The Command Post Vehicle is jointly operated by the Police and Fire Departments and use by members of the department is under the direct control of the Chief, Deputy Chief or their authorized representative.
 - a. The Technical Services Officer is designated as the person responsible for periodically inspecting the Command Post Vehicle to ensure the vehicle is in proper condition, any maintenance needs are being met, and specialized equipment as required is kept as listed on the inventory lists.
3. Specialized training is required to operate this vehicle.
4. Use of the vehicle in a pursuit is prohibited.

C. Unmarked Vehicles

1. Unmarked Emergency Vehicles are assigned to command staff, detectives, and patrol and traffic officers to meet specific operational objectives.
2. Non-Emergency Vehicles are not authorized for patrol or traffic duties without specific approval of the Patrol Division Commander.

D. Motorcycles

1. The assignment of Police Motorcycles is governed by General Order 6-3.

E. Animal Control Vehicle

1. The Animal Control vehicle is a vehicle that is used for animal control and the transport of animals.
2. During periods when Animal Control Officers are not on duty, all department members are authorized to operate this vehicle, with no special conditions or restrictions, upon the approval of a supervisor.
3. No additional training is required to operate this vehicle.
4. This vehicle is not to be used in pursuits.
5. The vehicle is to be equipped with animal control poles, cages, leashes and heavy protective gloves. Animal Control Officers are responsible for the cleanliness and care of the vehicle. The Community Services Sergeant conducts periodic inspections of this equipment and is responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is in proper condition and that any maintenance needs are being met.

F. Mobile Crime Scene Vehicle

1. The Mobile Crime Scene Vehicle is to provide storage of crime scene equipment and serve as an operations platform for investigation activities.
2. The primary operator of this vehicle is assigned by the Criminal Investigations Division Commander. Other members may be assigned to transport the vehicle/operate the vehicle as directed by an appropriate supervisor.

3. The use of this vehicle in a pursuit is prohibited.
4. No additional training is required to operate this vehicle. However, use of the assigned equipment is limited to Crime Scene Technicians or those members instructed to assist in evidence collection by a supervisor.
5. The Criminal Investigations Lieutenant is designated as the person responsible for inspecting the Mobile Crime Scene Vehicle to ensure the vehicle is in proper condition and that any maintenance needs are being met.
6. The Mobile Crime Scene Vehicle is equipped with crime scene equipment and supplies as outlined in General Order 4-5.

G. Surveillance Van

1. The Surveillance Van is a non-descript platform used to conduct investigation and surveillance.
2. Control, assignment and use of the vehicle is under the direction of the Criminal Investigations Division Commander. The Criminal Investigations Lieutenant is responsible for periodic vehicle and equipment inspections. The Criminal Investigations Division maintains an up-to-date list of all equipment assigned to the vehicle. Vehicle maintenance is completed in conjunction with the Administrative Services Division vehicle preventive maintenance schedule. Other members may be assigned to transport/operate the vehicle as directed by an appropriate supervisor.
3. The use of this vehicle in a pursuit is prohibited.
4. No additional training is required to operate the motor vehicle itself; however, certain equipment assigned to the vehicle may require additional training to operate.

H. Pick-up/Utility Vehicle

1. The Pick-up/Utility Vehicle is used primarily as a utility vehicle. Vehicle maintenance is completed in conjunction with the vehicle maintenance schedule.
2. Control, assignment and use of the vehicle is under the primary direction of the Administrative Services Division Commander. Other members may be assigned to transport/operate the vehicle as directed by an appropriate supervisor.
3. No additional training is required to operate this vehicle.
4. Use of the vehicle in a pursuit is governed by General Order 4-21. Prisoner transport using the vehicle is governed by General Order 4-9.

I. Police K-9 Vehicles

1. The assignment of and specialized equipment contained in Police K-9 Vehicles is governed by General Order 4-29.

IV. VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

- A. At a minimum, all emergency vehicles and marked non-emergency vehicles are to be supplied with the following equipment:
 1. First Aid Kit
 2. Minimum 12 Flares

3. Fire Extinguisher
 4. Two blankets in protective container
 5. Blood/Airborne Exposure Kit
 6. Traffic cones (number to be specified by the Administrative Services Division)
 7. Emergency Response Guidebook
- B. Only sworn officers are authorized to operate a vehicle containing a shotgun and/or a police rifle. If so assigned to either the individual vehicle or officer, the shotgun and police rifle should be carried in emergency vehicles while sworn officers are working their normal duty assignment.
- C. Police motorcycles should be supplied with a basic first aid kit, two blankets in protective container and a blood/airborne exposure kit.
- D. Before taking a vehicle out of headquarters, all members are to check the vehicle to ensure that it has the minimum required equipment.
- E. If a member uses equipment during the shift they are to ensure that the equipment is replaced.
- F. Supervisors are to conduct spot inspections to ensure that the minimum equipment is in place using the form PD-143 (Attachment A).

V. GENERAL CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The Vehicle Status Board is used to provide ready reference on the availability of the patrol fleet. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring vehicle status is duly noted on this board at all times. Officers should check with the Duty Supervisor before taking a vehicle.
- B. Members operating department vehicles are responsible for doing so in accordance with the rules governing use in General Order #2-1, E4. The operator also has the responsibility to check safety features of the vehicle prior to commencing operations. The check should include all lights, brakes, tires, siren, horn, steering and equipment assigned with the vehicle. The gasoline, oil, water and other engine fluids are replaced prior to the end of tour of duty. During periods of inclement weather when vehicles cannot be washed regularly, the operator must ensure that headlight, taillight and emergency light lenses are kept clean.
- C. Members are not authorized to modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts, emission control devices, or any part of the vehicle or its assigned equipment.
- D. Members shall not leave their vehicles running while unattended. **EXCEPTION:** A police vehicle which must be left unattended in order to block a roadway or to secure a crime or accident scene may have the engine in operation in order to supply sufficient power for emergency equipment. K-9 Officers may leave their engines running to ensure adequate cooling, heating or ventilation for the dog, if it is left in the unattended vehicle. In these cases, the vehicle shall be locked by the operator by removing one half of the double-keyed ring to ensure security and safety of the vehicle.
- E. Preventative Maintenance
1. All vehicles assigned to patrol are scheduled for preventative maintenance once a month, by the City Shop.
 2. The Administrative Services Division Commander or his/her designee is the liaison with the City Shop.
 3. Vehicles should be taken to the car wash as needed by assigned officers. The Technical Services Officer regularly schedules vehicles for waxing.

4. Supervisors monitor cleanliness and care of vehicles and ensure appropriate corrective measures are taken where necessary.

F. Breakdowns

1. When a police vehicle breaks down during hours the City Shop is open, the shop should be contacted first. A police vehicle with serious mechanical defects is towed, not driven, to the City Shop. Supervisory approval is required for each tow. The operator or supervisor must sign the tow bill. The City's copy of the tow bill is given to shop personnel or placed in the after hours drop box.
2. During daylight hours when the City Shop is open, the shop will respond to repair a flat tire; otherwise the changing of the tire becomes the operator's responsibility. A work order is forwarded to the shop by computer using the City's Shop Fleet Repair Program software requesting replacement of the spare.
3. Drive Thru Repairs
 - a. Drive thru repairs are designed to reduce the down time of the vehicle with minimum interference to shop operations. Between the hours of 0630 and 1530, officers may obtain drive thru service from the shop for minor repairs, requiring less than an hour labor.
 - b. Minor adjustments or replacement of wiper blades and lights are examples of repairs that are best suited for drive thru repair.
4. Down Time Repairs
 - a. Whenever possible, a vehicle requiring down time for service is left at the shop with the necessary work order being sent through the City Shop's Fleet Repair Program. The shotgun and Less Lethal shotgun, if equipped, is unloaded and secured in the shotgun locker at Headquarters. The keys are left on the Vehicle Status Board and the status duly noted.
 - b. A vehicle disabled on the parking lot of Headquarters may be left as is until the shop is able to respond. When this is done, the work order is forwarded to the City Shop via the City Shop's Fleet Repair Program.
5. The shop calls Communications to notify when a vehicle is ready for pickup. Communications notifies the patrol supervisor, who ensures the pickup of the vehicle during the tour of duty.
6. Complaints, suggestions, or compliments concerning service provided by shop personnel should be brought to the attention of the Administrative Services Division Commander.

VI. FLEET MANAGEMENT

A. Purchase/Installation of Equipment

1. The purchase of new vehicles and the installation of radios and other equipment is a function of the Administrative Services Division.
2. Members having suggestions concerning the purchase or placement of equipment in police vehicles should forward the same through their chain of command to the Administrative Services Division Commander.

B. Reporting Damage

1. Any damaged or unclean vehicle must be reported to a supervisor as soon as possible. In incidents where damage is possible but not clearly determined, the incident shall be reported immediately to a supervisor so that possible damage can be determined and corrected. The supervisor determines the written report requirements.

2. When a vehicle is found damaged or unclean, it is assumed that the last person using the vehicle was responsible for the damage or condition of the vehicle, unless investigation reveals otherwise.
3. A current damage history file is maintained in the Patrol Division supervisor's offices. The file contains a copy of police vehicle accident reports and photos of damage.
4. Supervisors will notify the Technical Services Officer of all reported damage to fleet vehicles as soon as possible.

C. Fleet Inspection:

1. Lieutenants or Section Supervisors should make periodic spot inspections of vehicles operated by their subordinates, completing a PD-143 Spot Inspection Check Sheet (Attachment "A"). Lieutenants or Section Supervisors shall maintain a file of completed PD-143 forms.
2. The Technical Services Officer may conduct spot inspections of all fleet vehicles. Problems or discrepancies are brought to the attention of the supervisor of the primary drivers of the vehicle in question.

Colonel Carl R. Pardiny/ Chief of Police

Attachment A: [Spot Inspection Check Sheet](#)

Attachment B: [Special Order Take Home Vehicles](#)

Attachment C: [Take Home Vehicle Memo](#)

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