

## **DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 07-18**

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE  
REPLACES: General Orders 03-30/03-30A/03-30B  
SOP 501.95.00

DATE: January 19, 2007

---

### **VEHICLE OPERATIONS**

#### **I. PURPOSE.**

To establish guidelines for the use of department-owned vehicles. This shall include response procedures in regard to emergency and non-emergency calls for service, safety concerns, and such restrictions on vehicle usage as may apply.

#### **II. DEFINITIONS.**

Department or City-Owned Vehicle - A motor vehicle owned or leased by the City or Police Department for official use.

Emergency Vehicle Operation - Operation of a police vehicle in reaction to a call for service characterized by a need for an immediate response to alleviate a current or impending threat to life or property.

Routine Vehicle Operation - Operation of a police vehicle in regard to a non-life threatening or other serious call for service wherein the vehicle operator will utilize the most expeditious route to the scene while adhering to posted speed limits and traffic controls.

### III. GENERAL.

Marked police vehicles shall be assigned to uniformed officers by a supervisor or commander during roll call. The vehicle number shall be recorded on the Daily Assignment Log and subsequently forwarded to the Communications Unit. Officers will inspect the vehicle that has been assigned to them prior to placing the vehicle into operation. Officers will then use the vehicle assigned to them for their entire shift of duty unless a maintenance or other type of problem requires them to shift to another vehicle. Should a maintenance problem occur, the officer will, if possible, return the vehicle to the department, complete a maintenance request form, and resume patrol in a different marked vehicle. Also, the supervisor should be notified of the change.

Unmarked and special purpose vehicles will also be assigned to employees by their immediate supervisor. Inspections and vehicle maintenance will be handled in the same manner as indicated above.

Uniformed and certain other department employees will engage in routine motor vehicle operations during the course of their shift of duty. In addition, sworn uniformed employees may be required to engage in emergency vehicle operations and/or pursuit operations. However, irrespective of the type of driving situation required or encountered, department employees shall operate their assigned vehicle in a manner and at a speed consistent with maintaining proper control of the vehicle and the promotion of public safety. Similarly, sworn personnel, and any passengers they may be conveying in their vehicles, shall wear a seat belt in accordance with department policy.

### IV. ROUTINE VEHICLE OPERATIONS.

The following guidelines shall govern routine vehicle operations:

- A. Only authorized personnel shall be permitted to operate Police Department vehicles.
- B. Police Department employees shall operate department-owned vehicles only when properly licensed to do so by the State of Missouri.
- C. Operators of department-owned vehicles shall be responsible for the proper care and use of the vehicle and any equipment contained therein. Officers will ensure their vehicles are regularly washed and cleaned.
- D. Employees shall drive in a safe and prudent manner and will observe all state and municipal traffic laws when responding to a routine call for service.

Non-emergency calls for service will include but not be limited to: Crime reports not in progress, minor auto accidents, complaint calls, traffic/parking enforcement, etc.

- E. Employees shall, whenever possible, park their departmental vehicles in accordance with existing parking regulations and signage.
- F. Uniformed officers assigned to Day Watch shall be responsible for ensuring that their vehicles are fully fueled prior to the end of their tour of duty.
- G. Uniformed officers assigned to utilize an unmarked vehicle during Night watch shall be responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is fully fueled and returned to the Criminal Investigations Division in clean condition.
- H. All departmental vehicles shall have the keys removed and the doors locked when not in use or occupied.
- I. At the conclusion of each shift, the police vehicle radio shall be turned off, the shotgun locked in its rack, and the flashlight removed from its charger. The latter will then be placed on the front seat until such time as a new operator assumes command of the vehicle. The flashlight shall then be replaced in the charger.
- J. Officers shall not hang and/or drape the vehicle's radio microphone from the rear view mirror.
- K. While department vehicles are not to be routinely used to transport members of the general public, should circumstances require such usage, the officer will advise communications of the conveyance, the subject's name, and destination. Officers will convey civilians outside of the City of Clayton only with the prior approval of their supervisor or commander.

Should the passenger of a conveyance be a member of the opposite sex, in addition to the above information, the officer will provide communications with the beginning location and the beginning and ending mileage on the police vehicle.

- L. In those instances when an officer stops a traffic violator, assists a motorist in need, or is otherwise required to stop his/her vehicle on a highway, street, or road (other than at a regulation parking space), the operator of the police vehicle shall activate the vehicle's visibar, emergency flashers, or both, according to existing circumstances and safety considerations.
- M. Employees shall not push another vehicle with a police vehicle unless same is

equipped with a push bumper.

#### V. EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS.

Emergency vehicle operations shall be conducted in accordance with statutory requirements when responding to actual or potential serious or life-threatening situations. Officers shall utilize both audible (siren) and visual (visibar) emergency equipment when engaged in a response to an emergency situation. Examples of emergency calls requiring the use of the above equipment include, but are not limited to:

1. Officer(s) in need of aid.
2. Fires and fire alarms.
3. Fatal or serious auto accidents.
4. Life-threatening sick cases.
5. Serious accidental injury calls.
6. Felony offenses in progress.
7. Unknown calls for police.
8. Other miscellaneous situations where human life may be in peril.

As the communications unit does not assign a response code in regard to emergency or non-emergency calls for services, their primary purpose shall be to transmit and accept all call-related information to and from responding officers, make such notifications as may be necessary, and to satisfy requests for additional assistance from field units.

Responding officer(s) will be responsible to adhere to established emergency and non-emergency response guidelines. However, such officers will have a certain amount of discretion in regard to the continuous use of the siren, such as when approaching a robbery or burglary in progress incident scene. In such instances, the officer may elect to discontinue the use of the siren to avoid alerting the suspect(s) of his approach. Should this be the case, the police vehicle will no longer meet state requirements to qualify as an emergency vehicle (lights and siren operated in tandem with one another), and the officer operating the patrol unit shall obey all existing traffic laws.

Officers shall not conduct an emergency response in which the siren is activated only to traverse street intersections and then de-activated once the intersection has been cleared.

Subject to the provisions stated above, the operator of a police vehicle may, in an emergency situation:

- A. Proceed through a red light or stop sign, but only after slowing sufficiently enough to ensure safe passage through the intersection.
- B. Exceed the posted speed limit, provided that the vehicle is maintained under adequate control at all times, and that life and property are not endangered by

excessive speed.

C. Disregard traffic laws governing direction of movement or turning, provided that same can be accomplished in a safe and prudent manner.

D. Park contrary to traffic regulations and posted signs.

Upon arrival at the scene of an emergency, the responding officer will turn off his/her vehicle's light bar and siren unless safety or other consideration compels the officer to leave the visibar activated. It should be noted that in the event of a declared "State of Emergency" officers shall operate their vehicles with the light bars activated at all times to provide a highly visible police presence and thereby calm public fears.

In addition to the preceding, department vehicles will not be used to transport sick or injured individuals except:

1. Following a disaster such as a tornado or earthquake, when life may be endangered by delay and no ambulance is readily available.
2. When a department employee may require immediate medical attention for an injury or illness and delay may endanger the employee's life.

Officers of this department, when responding to emergency calls for service, will strictly adhere to the provisions contained herein and those set forth via RSMo 304.022. The safety of all persons and the exemption of the City and its employees from civil and criminal liability are considerations that demand responsible and controlled emergency responses at all times.

Uniformed supervisors shall be responsible to ensure their subordinates comply with the provisions of this order. As such, should they observe an officer operate a vehicle in a reckless or imprudent manner, they shall have full authority to order the officer to terminate the driving tactics or techniques employed, and to proceed in an acceptable fashion. In the event such violations are repetitious or flagrant, the supervisor may initiate disciplinary action in accordance with department policy and procedures.

## VI. VEHICLE PURSUIT OPERATIONS.

Refer to the appropriate General Order.

## VII. ADVERSE WEATHER.

During periods of inclement weather, employees should exercise prudence and caution in the operation of City-owned vehicles.

In the event of a severe rain or thunderstorm, employees should activate their vehicle's headlights so as to make the vehicle more visible to other traffic. Should large hail accompany the storm, employees should temporarily maneuver their vehicles under some type of overhead cover to avoid damage to the police vehicle.

In those instances where a tornado's approach directly threatens the City, employees operating department vehicles shall seek cover in below ground parking facilities. Should they not have enough time to gain shelter, employees should not attempt to outrun a tornado in their vehicles, but cut away from the tornado at a right angle. Where the rapid approach of a tornado precludes either of the above, the employee shall abandon his/her vehicle and take shelter in the first available low-lying area.

During the onset of a major snowstorm, the on-duty supervisor or commander will direct subordinate personnel to move as many unused fleet units under shelter as possible. They shall also contact Public Works and coordinate arrangements to have chains placed on all department vehicles. Marked police vehicles shall have first priority. Should the accumulation of snow be so heavy (e.g. 12-15 inches) as to overwhelm the efforts of snow removal crews, the on-duty supervisor or commander may, in their judgement, suspend routine patrol in the interests of safety. In such a situation officers will respond to calls for service directly from Police Headquarters. At the time the roads become passable, normal patrol shall be resumed.

## VIII. RIDE-ALONG PASSENGERS.

Requests that are received from individuals, organizations, or special interest groups seeking permission to accompany an officer on patrol duty are, in general, contrary to established policy and procedure. However, on certain occasions and in accordance with the following guidelines, it may be permissible for an individual to accompany a patrol officer.

- A. An officer must submit a written request through the chain of command that a specific individual be allowed to accompany him/her on patrol.
- B. The request must be approved by the Chief of Police or a command rank officer prior to the event taking place. In granting approval for a ride-along participant, consideration shall be given to the relationship of the person to the officer, the stated purpose of the ride-along, and the frequency with which a specific individual may have already ridden with an officer.

- C. The person being conveyed in a patrol car shall be sixteen years of age or older.
- D. A release and indemnification form must be completed and signed by all persons. For those individuals sixteen through twenty-one years of age, who have not been emancipated, written parental consent on the release and indemnification form shall be required. This form will be forwarded to the Commander of the Field Operations Bureau who shall file same for future reference.
- E. A record check shall be conducted on all potential ride-along participants, and those who are currently wanted or have a prior arrest and/or conviction for a felony offense shall be barred from participation.
- F. Both the time, date, and duration of a ride-along session will be determined by the Chief of Police or command rank officer.

#### IX. RESTRICTIONS ON VEHICLE USAGE.

City-owned vehicles shall not be driven outside of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area (an area encompassing the independent City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Jefferson County and Franklin County in Missouri, and St. Clair County, Monroe County, and Jersey County in Illinois) on trips, nor shall they be taken to an employee's residence overnight, or otherwise diverted for personal use, without the express approval of the Chief of Police.

##### A. Meal Travel Limitation

On-duty department personnel may utilize City-owned vehicles to leave the City to pick-up food or to dine in conjunction with an approved meal period. However, certain distance constraints shall be applied to employee travel (both in City-owned and personal vehicles) for such purposes.

Travel permitted outside Clayton in order to secure food is restricted to the following geographical area:

1. North, from the Clayton city limits to Olive Boulevard.
2. South, from the Clayton city limits to Manchester Road.
3. East, from the Clayton city limits to Hampton/DeBaliviere.
4. West, from the Clayton city limits to McKnight Road.

Employees who wish to dine at their residence may do so as long as their residence falls within the prescribed boundaries.

Should an employee utilize a department vehicle for such purpose, the employee shall operate the vehicle in a prudent manner consistent with maintaining a positive public image.

#### X. EQUIPMENT IN MARKED PATROL VEHICLES.

Patrol vehicles assigned to this agency shall be marked and equipped so as to be conspicuous to the general public both day and night. In addition to the items physically attached to each motorized unit, patrol vehicles shall be outfitted with the below listed equipment:

- |                                 |                         |               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Flashlight w/Cone.           | 12. Infectious Diseases | 13. Emr. Tool |
| 2. Binoculars.                  | Safety Kit Containing:  | 14. CPR Mask  |
| 3. Fire Extinguisher.           |                         | 15. Metal     |
| 4. First Aid Kit.               | a. Eye/mouth shield     | Detector      |
| 5. Traffic Cones.               | b. Microshield Clear    |               |
| 6. Shotgun.                     | Mouth Barrier           |               |
| 7. Patrol Rifle and Ammunition. | c. Waterless Hand       |               |
| 8. Flares                       | Sanitizer.              |               |
| 9. Laptop Computer.             | d. Latex Gloves         |               |
| 10. Rescue Tool                 | e. Plastic Water        |               |
| 11. Cell Phone                  | Bottle                  |               |

Further, the patrol supervisor's vehicle shall not only contain the above items but be additionally equipped with:

1. Large First Aid Kit.
2. Extra flares.
3. Extra Flashlight Batteries.
4. Police Line and Crime Scene Tape.
5. Crime Scene Access Logs.
6. Latex Gloves, Work Gloves, and Dust Masks.
7. Extra Safety Vests.
8. Batons.
9. Beretta Magazines and Ammunition.
10. Bullhorn.
11. Crescent Wrenches.
12. Night Vision Binoculars.
13. Portable Spotlight.



The above equipment will be routinely inspected by the supervisor responsible to conduct line inspections of vehicles assigned to the marked patrol fleet. Should discrepancies be noted, same shall be recorded on the inspection forms and forwarded up through the chain of command to the appropriate city employee. Repairs and/or replacement items will then be obtained.

BY ORDER OF:

THOMAS J. BYRNE  
Chief of Police

TJB:dld

CALEA Reference: 41.2.1/41.3.2