

Vehicle Use

703.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a system of accountability to ensure department vehicles are used appropriately. This policy provides guidelines for on- and off-duty use of department vehicles and shall not be construed to create or imply any contractual obligation by the City of Norman to provide assigned take-home vehicles.

703.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Fleet Vehicle - any motor vehicle, whether marked or unmarked, that may be operated with a Class D driver's license and used for routine, day-to-day business purposes.

Special Purpose Vehicle - any motor vehicle that requires special licensing/certification or has been designated for a distinct mission or team. Including all terrain vehicles (ATV), trailers, or implements of husbandry.

703.2 POLICY

The Norman Police Department provides vehicles for department-related business and may assign patrol and unmarked vehicles based on a determination of operational efficiency, economic impact to the Department, requirements for tactical deployments and other considerations.

703.3 USE OF VEHICLES

703.3.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

The Watch Commander shall ensure a copy of the shift assignment roster, indicating member assignments and vehicle numbers, is completed for each shift and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. If a member exchanges vehicles during his/her shift, the new vehicle number shall be documented on the roster.

703.3.2 OTHER USE OF VEHICLES

Members utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties or normal vehicle assignment (e.g., transportation to training, community event) shall first notify the Watch Commander or their Division Commander. When applicable notation will be made on the shift assignment roster indicating the member's name and vehicle number.

703.3.3 INSPECTIONS

Members shall be responsible for inspecting the interior and exterior of any assigned vehicle before taking the vehicle into service and at the conclusion of their shifts. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents or other problems with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented as appropriate.

The interior of any vehicle that has been used to transport any person other than a member of this department should be inspected prior to placing another person in the vehicle and again after

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the person is removed. This is to ensure that unauthorized or personal items have not been left in the vehicle.

When transporting any suspect, prisoner or arrestee, the transporting member shall search all areas of the vehicle that are accessible by the person before and after that person is transported.

All department vehicles are subject to inspection and/or search at any time by a supervisor without notice and without cause. No member assigned to or operating such vehicle shall be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to the vehicle or its contents.

703.3.4 SECURITY AND UNATTENDED VEHICLES

Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging). Officers who exit a vehicle rapidly in an emergency situation or to engage in a foot pursuit must carefully balance the need to exit the vehicle quickly with the need to secure the vehicle.

Members shall ensure all weapons are secured while the vehicle is unattended.

703.3.5 VEHICLE LOCATION SYSTEM

Patrol and other vehicles, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, may be equipped with a system designed to track the vehicle's location. While the system may provide vehicle location and other information, members are not relieved of their responsibility to use required communication practices to report their location and status.

Members shall not make any unauthorized modifications to the system. At the start of each shift, members shall verify that the system is on and report any malfunctions to their supervisor. If the member finds that the system is not functioning properly at any time during the shift, he/she should exchange the vehicle for one with a working system, if available.

System data may be accessed by supervisors at any time. However, access to historical data by other than supervisors will require Bureau Commander approval.

All data captured by the system shall be retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

703.3.6 KEYS

Members approved to operate marked patrol vehicles should be issued a copy of the key as part of their initial equipment distribution. Members who are assigned a specific vehicle should be issued keys for that vehicle.

Members shall not duplicate keys without supervisor approval. The loss of a key shall be promptly reported in writing through the member's chain of command using the Professional Standards Reporting System. (see Department-Owned and Personal Property policy)

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703.3.7 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

Members operating department vehicles shall not permit persons other than City personnel or persons required to be conveyed in the performance of duty, or as otherwise authorized, to ride as passengers in the vehicle, except as stated in the Ride-Alongs Policy.

703.3.8 ALCOHOL

Members who have consumed alcohol are prohibited from operating any department vehicle unless it is required by the duty assignment (e.g., task force, undercover work). Regardless of assignment, members may not violate state law regarding vehicle operation while intoxicated.

703.3.9 PARKING

Except when responding to an emergency or when urgent department-related business requires otherwise, members driving department vehicles should obey all parking regulations at all times.

Department vehicles should be parked in assigned stalls. Unless authorized by a supervisor, members shall not park privately owned vehicles in stalls not assigned to them or in those assigned to department vehicles.

703.3.10 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

There shall be no modifications, additions or removal of any equipment or accessories without written permission from the assigned vehicle program manager.

703.3.11 CIVILIAN MEMBER USE

Civilian members should not use marked emergency vehicles. Civilian members shall not operate the emergency lights or siren of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a supervisor.

703.4 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER ASSIGNMENT TO VEHICLES

Department vehicles may be assigned to individual members at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Vehicles may be assigned for on-duty and/or take-home use. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time. Permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

The assignment of vehicles may be suspended when the member is unable to perform his/her regular assignment.

703.4.1 ON-DUTY USE

Vehicle assignments shall be based on the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions, and employment or appointment status. Vehicles may be reassigned or utilized by other department members at the discretion of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

703.4.2 UNSCHEDULED TAKE-HOME USE

Circumstances may arise where department vehicles must be used by members to commute to and from a work assignment (e.g., training assignments). Members may take home department vehicles only with prior approval of a supervisor and shall meet the following criteria:

- (a) The circumstances are unplanned and were created by the needs of the Department.

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- (b) Other reasonable transportation options are not available.
- (c) The member lives within a reasonable distance of the Norman City limits.
- (d) Off-street parking should be available at the member's residence.
- (e) The vehicle will be locked when not attended.
- (f) All firearms, weapons and control devices will be removed from the interior of the vehicle and properly secured in the residence when the vehicle is not attended, unless the vehicle is parked in a locked garage.

703.4.3 ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Assignment of take-home vehicles shall be based on the location of the member's residence; the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions; the member's employment or appointment status; and the member's department seniority. Residence in the City of Norman is a prime consideration for assignment of a take-home vehicle. Members who reside outside the City of Norman may be required to secure the vehicle at a designated location or the Department at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

Members are cautioned that under federal and local tax rules, personal use of a City vehicle may create an income tax liability for the member. Questions regarding tax rules should be directed to the member's tax adviser.

Criteria for use of take-home vehicles include the following:

- (a) Vehicles should be used for work-related purposes. Personal errands or transports should be limited.
- (b) Vehicles may be used to transport the member to and from the member's residence for work-related purposes.
- (c) Vehicles will not be used when off-duty except:
 1. In circumstances when a member has been placed on call by the Chief of Police or Bureau Commanders and there is a high probability that the member will be called back to duty.
 2. When the member is performing a work-related function during what normally would be an off-duty period, including vehicle maintenance or traveling to or from a work-related activity or function.
 3. When the member has received permission from the Chief of Police or Bureau Commanders.
 4. When the vehicle is being used by the Chief of Police, Bureau Commanders or members who are in on-call administrative positions.
 5. When the vehicle is being used by on-call investigators.

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- (d) While operating the vehicle, authorized members will carry and have accessible their duty firearms and identification card/Commission Card and be prepared to perform any function they would be expected to perform while on-duty.
- (e) The two-way communications radio, MDC and global positioning satellite device, if equipped, must be on and set to an audible volume when the vehicle is in operation.
- (f) Unattended vehicles are to be locked and secured at all times.
 - 1. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging).
 - 2. All weapons shall be secured while the vehicle is unattended.
 - 3. All department identification, portable radios and equipment should be secured.
- (g) As a general practice, vehicles are to be parked off-street at the member's residence unless prior arrangements have been made with the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. If the vehicle is not secured inside a locked garage, all firearms and kinetic impact weapons shall be removed and properly secured in the residence (see the Firearms Policy regarding safe storage of firearms at home).
- (h) Vehicles are to be secured at the member's residence or the appropriate department facility, at the discretion of the Department, when a member will be away (e.g., on vacation) for periods exceeding one week.
 - 1. If the vehicle remains at the residence of the member, the Department shall have access to the vehicle.
 - 2. If the member is unable to provide access to the vehicle, it shall be parked at the Department.
- (i) The member is responsible for the care and maintenance of the vehicle.

703.4.4 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

When driving a take-home vehicle to and from work outside of the jurisdiction of the Norman Police Department or while off-duty, an officer shall not initiate enforcement actions except in those circumstances where a potential threat to life or serious property damage exists (see the Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions and Law Enforcement Authority policies).

Officers may render public assistance when it is deemed prudent (e.g., to a stranded motorist). Officers are required to respond to any life-threatening police call in their immediate vicinity.

Officers driving take-home vehicles shall be armed and appropriately attired and shall carry their department-issued identification card/Commission Card. Officers should also ensure that department radio communication capabilities are maintained to the extent feasible.

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703.4.5 MAINTENANCE

Members are responsible for the cleanliness (exterior and interior) and overall maintenance of their assigned vehicles. Cleaning and maintenance supplies may be provided by the Department. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in discipline and loss of vehicle assignment. The following should be performed as outlined below:

- (a) Members shall make daily inspections of their assigned vehicles for service/maintenance requirements and damage.
- (b) It is the member's responsibility to ensure that his/her assigned vehicle is maintained according to the established service and maintenance schedule.
- (c) All scheduled vehicle maintenance shall be performed as necessary at a facility approved by the department supervisor in charge of vehicle maintenance.
- (d) The Department shall be notified of problems with the vehicle and approve any major repairs before they are performed.
- (e) When leaving the vehicle at the maintenance facility, the member will complete the appropriate vehicle repair form explaining the service or repair.
- (f) All weapons shall be removed from any vehicle left for maintenance.
- (g) Supervisors shall make, at a minimum, monthly inspections of vehicles assigned to members under their command to ensure the vehicles are being maintained in accordance with this policy.

703.5 UNMARKED VEHICLES

Unmarked vehicles are assigned to various bureaus and their use is restricted to the respective bureau and the assigned member, unless otherwise approved by a supervisor. Any use of unmarked vehicles by those who are not assigned to the bureau to which the vehicle is assigned shall also be recorded with the Watch Commander on the shift assignment roster.

703.6 SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES

Only members that are properly licensed or certified, and who have supervisory authorization, may operate special purpose vehicles. Special purpose vehicles may not be used for routine, day-to-day business without the specific permission of the division, team, or unit commander to whom it is assigned. The division, team, or unit commander to whom a special purpose vehicle is assigned is responsible for the overall supervision, maintenance and accountability of the vehicle.

The following special purpose vehicles, while assigned to the specific division, team, or unit indicated for overall supervision, maintenance and accountability, require specific authorization by the Chief of Police, or their designee, for use:

- (a) Command Post - Assigned to the Community & Staff Services Bureau Bureau Commander.
- (b) Sky Watch - Assigned to the Patrol Bureau Bureau Commander.

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- (c) Armored Response/Rescue Vehicle - Assigned to the SWAT Commander.

703.6.1 CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT OF ARMORED RESPONSE/RESCUE VEHICLE

Deployment of the Armored Response/Rescue Vehicle is not, by itself, considered a use of force.

When considering the deployment of the Armored Response/Rescue Vehicle, the Chief of Police shall balance the possible public perception of the vehicle's use against any threat of harm to citizens, officers, and the suspect. Additionally, the Chief of Police shall consider potential reporting and safety benefits that peripheral equipment may provide (cameras, spotlights, alternative imaging sources, etc.).

Common deployments for the vehicle may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Barricaded subjects,
- (b) Field searches,
- (c) High-risk search warrants (See Warrant Service and Operations Planning and Deconfliction policies),
- (d) Hostage rescues,
- (e) Natural disasters,
- (f) Search and rescue operations,
- (g) Wounded citizen/officer rescues,

Any authorized agency assist requests for the Armored Response/Rescue Vehicle shall require the deployment of no less than one qualified operator who will ensure the proper usage of the vehicle and all of its associated equipment.

703.7 DAMAGE, ABUSE AND MISUSE

When any department vehicle is involved in a traffic collision or otherwise incurs damage, the involved member shall promptly notify a supervisor. Any traffic collision report shall be filed with the agency having jurisdiction (see the Traffic Collisions Policy).

Damage to any department vehicle that was not caused by a traffic collision shall be immediately reported during the shift in which the damage was discovered using the Professional Standards Reporting System. An administrative investigation should be initiated to determine if there has been any vehicle abuse or misuse.

703.8 TOLL ROAD USAGE

Law enforcement vehicles are not routinely exempt from incurring toll road charges.

To avoid unnecessary toll road charges, all members operating department vehicles on a toll road shall adhere to the following:

- (a) Members operating department vehicles for any reason other than in response to an emergency shall pay the appropriate toll charge or utilize the appropriate toll way

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transponder. Members may submit for reimbursement from the City for any toll fees incurred in the course of official business.

- (b) Members passing through a toll plaza or booth during a response to an emergency shall notify, in writing, the appropriate Bureau Commander within five working days explaining the circumstances.

703.9 ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE

When operating any department vehicle while off-duty, members may dress in a manner appropriate for their intended activity. Whenever in view of or in contact with the public, attire and appearance, regardless of the activity, should be suitable to reflect positively upon the Department.