

## VEHICLE OPERATIONS

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### USE AND CARE OF VEHICLES

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish departmental policy regarding the non-emergency operation and care of department vehicles.

**Policy Statement:** It is the police department's policy for members to operate motor vehicles in a safe and defensive manner while observing all laws concerning motor vehicle operation. At all times, departmental vehicles are to be operated with due regard for the safety of lives and property. Vehicles are an expensive investment. Members are expected to operate and care for department vehicles in a manner to protect this investment.

#### Summary of Changes:

#### Procedures

##### 1 Operation of Vehicles Generally

- 1.1 Members will comply with all city ordinances and state laws when operating vehicles owned, rented, leased, or seized by the city.
- 1.2 Members are responsible for operating vehicles with care and preventing unnecessary wear and tear.
- 1.3 Vehicles in need of repair will not be operated if such operation would cause further damage to the vehicle or present a hazard to officers or the public.
- 1.4 Members will comply with all traffic laws and regulations when operating vehicles in non-emergency status.

##### 2 Seatbelts

- 2.1 All members will wear a properly adjusted seat belt when operating or riding in a city owned or operated vehicle while that vehicle is in motion. (Does not apply to vehicles not equipped with seatbelts by the manufacturer.)
- 2.2 Members operating city owned or operated vehicles are responsible for insuring that all passengers in the vehicle wear seatbelts while the vehicle is in motion.
  - 2.2.1 Officers will seat belt all prisoners, except when the prisoner is so combative that it makes the procedure hazardous.
- 2.3 Exceptions:
  - 2.3.1 Officers working in undercover assignments are not required to wear seatbelts while in the immediate presence of an informant or suspect.
  - 2.3.2 Officers responding to a call or making a stop may release the seatbelt within 100 yards of their destination to facilitate a quick exit if the situation dictates.
  - 2.3.3 Seatbelt usage is not required by the primary unit during the pursuit of a suspect who is on foot.
- 2.4 Members will not alter or tamper with seatbelts. Vehicles with inoperative seatbelts will be removed from service until the seatbelts are repaired.

##### 3 Vehicle Inspections

- 3.1 Prior to going on shift, members will inspect their vehicle for the following:
  - 3.1.1 Unreported damage;
  - 3.1.2 Missing or inoperable equipment;
  - 3.1.3 Sufficient fuel, oil, and other fluids;
  - 3.1.4 Properly inflated tires;
  - 3.1.5 Adequate tire tread depth;
  - 3.1.6 Contraband in the rear seat area;
  - 3.1.7 Properly secured and usable spare tire; and
  - 3.1.8 Cleanliness.
- 3.2 Members will report any missing equipment or damage in writing to their supervisor prior to placing the vehicle into service. Failure to report damage or missing equipment prior to placing the vehicle into operation may result in the member being held responsible for the damage or missing equipment.
- 3.3 The supervisor will initiate an investigation to determine the cause and document his/her findings. The supervisor will forward a copy of the member's communication to the fleet manager.
- 3.4 Reports concerning vehicle damage will be forwarded through the chain of command to the division commander for resolution.

3.5 Supervisors are responsible for insuring that members under their command properly maintain and care for their assigned vehicles.

3.6 Required equipment for police vehicles is listed on the *Vehicle Inspection Form*. Contact the Fleet Manager for equipment replacement or repair. [CALEA 41.3.2]

3.6.1 It is the responsibility of each officer to maintain his/her own supplies necessary to perform their required duties. Those items can be replenished from their respective department division. [CALEA 41.3.2]

#### **4 Preventative Maintenance**

4.1 Vehicle motor oil is to be changed every 3,000 miles or 3 months, whichever comes first. Vehicle operators are responsible for insuring their assigned vehicle's oil is changed as required. Leased vehicles will be serviced in accordance with the lease agreement.

4.2 The Fleet Manager is responsible for reviewing vehicle manufacturer's recommendations, and developing and implementing a preventative maintenance schedule for department vehicles.

#### **5 Corrective Maintenance**

5.1 Vehicles requiring maintenance will be transported to the City Garage for evaluation. The unit or area commander, will be responsible for insuring the vehicle is transported to the City Garage for maintenance, notifying the fleet manager that the vehicle requires maintenance and for having the vehicle retrieved in a timely manner, upon completion of the work.

5.2 Except in emergency circumstances, no vehicle will be taken to an outside vendor for repairs without the authorization of the Department's fleet manager or the patrol captain.

#### **6 Vehicle Refueling Procedures**

##### **6.1 Driver Cards**

6.1.1 Members are issued driver's cards which allow the member to obtain fuel for any departmental vehicle.

6.1.2 This card will be maintained by the member and should not be stored in departmental vehicles.

6.1.3 Members with driver's cards are assigned a personal identification number (PIN). The PIN will be the last three digits of the member's social security number.

6.1.4 Members shall immediately notify their immediate supervisor and fleet manager should the driver's card be lost, stolen, or damaged.

##### **6.2 Vehicle Cards**

6.2.1 Each departmental vehicle is equipped with a vehicle card assigned to that vehicle.

6.2.2 The vehicle card is to remain with the vehicle at all times.

6.2.3 Vehicle cards shall not be used to obtain fuel for other vehicles.

6.2.4 Should the card be lost, stolen, or damaged, the driver will immediately notify his/her supervisor and the fleet manager.

6.2.5 Fuel cards are to be used for the purchase of fuel for department owned and operated vehicles only.

##### **6.3 Card Maintenance**

6.3.1 Both cards operate by using a magnetic strip coding system. Cards can fail if exposed to magnetic or strong electrical fields. Cards should be stored in the sheaths provided. Cards should not be stored in eel skin wallets or purses. They should not be placed near strong magnetic sources or electrical fields, such as TV sets or store price scanners.

##### **6.4 Fueling Locations**

6.4.1 All department vehicles, except motorcycles, will be fueled at the fuel pumps located on the City Garage compound, unless otherwise specified in this directive.

6.4.2 If the City's fuel pumps become inoperative for an extended period, fuel may be obtained at any gas station that utilizes the FuelMan system.

6.4.3 During certain emergency situations, the Chief of Police or his designee may instruct personnel to utilize the closest FuelMan station.

6.4.4 During authorized out-of-town travel, any FuelMan location may be used.

##### **6.5 Gasoline**

6.5.1 Only unleaded, 87 octane, gasoline will be used in department vehicles unless instructed otherwise by the Chief, Division Commander, or the fleet manager.

##### **6.6 Mileage**

6.6.1 Mileage must be entered correctly when fueling department vehicles, as this information is necessary for proper scheduling of preventive maintenance and vehicle replacement.

##### **6.7 Responsibility**

6.7.1 It is the responsibility of each driver to insure that their assigned vehicle is fully fueled prior to the end of his tour of duty.

- 6.7.2 Drivers are also responsible for checking and maintaining the fluid levels when refueling their assigned vehicle.
- 6.7.3 The Fleet Manager is responsible for stocking oil, transmission fluid, fuses, and headlights in an area accessible to the Patrol Division for use when the city garage is closed.

## 7 Vehicle Contamination

- 7.1 The definition of contamination for the purpose of this directive is: exposure to blood borne pathogens.
- 7.2 Vehicles that become contaminated during the normal business hours of the department's car wash vendor will be taken to said vendor for decontamination.
  - 7.2.1 Authorization for the additional expense must be obtained from a supervisor.
- 7.3 Vehicles that become contaminated after the normal business hours of the car wash vendor will be removed from service immediately. The vehicle will be conspicuously marked with the warning BIO-HAZARD. Unit and area commanders will be responsible for insuring that the vehicle is decontaminated as soon as possible.
- 7.4 Should the vehicle be contaminated to the point it cannot be driven safely without direct exposure to the operator, the vehicle will be towed to the car wash vendor during normal business hours or to headquarters after normal business hours. If the vehicle is towed to headquarters, it will be marked BIO-HAZARD, and the fleet manager will be notified as soon as possible. The fleet manager will be responsible for insuring the vehicle is decontaminated and returned to the area or unit.

## 8 Accidents/Damage to City Vehicles

- 8.1 All accidents involving police vehicles will be thoroughly and impartially investigated.
  - 8.1.1 At the discretion of the on-scene supervisor, no accident report is required in a one vehicle accident involving no damage to private property and damage of less than \$250.00 to a NLRPD vehicle. However, a supervisor must be notified, and the accident investigated before a decision is made on filing a report. An *Intradepartmental Communication* detailing the circumstances of the accident will be completed by the driver. [CALEA 61.2.2d]
- 8.2 Any member who damages a city vehicle or becomes involved in a motor vehicle accident with a city owned, rented, leased, or seized vehicle will immediately notify his/her immediate supervisor if available, or an on-duty patrol supervisor if the immediate supervisor is not available. [CALEA 61.2.2d]
  - 8.2.1 A patrol supervisor will respond to the scene and closely monitor the accident investigation to ensure the integrity of the investigation.
  - 8.2.2 The patrol supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that a state SR-1 form is completed when required.
  - 8.2.3 If a fatality, serious injury, or extensive property damage has occurred; the employee's division commander, the Public Information Officer, the Investigations Division on call supervisor, and the Chief of Police will be notified as soon as possible. The accident reconstruction team will also be notified.
  - 8.2.4 The responding patrol supervisor will determine fault in the accident and will also determine if a citation will be issued to the non-member driver.
- 8.3 Review of Accidents
  - 8.3.1 A file will be completed on all accidents involving city owned vehicles. The file will contain: [CALEA 61.2.2d]
    - 8.3.1.1 A copy of the accident report;
    - 8.3.1.2 An *Intradepartmental Communication* from the driver of the city vehicle;
    - 8.3.1.3 Original state SR-1 form, if required;
    - 8.3.1.4 Recommendations (s) from the member's supervisor;
    - 8.3.1.5 *Personnel Conference Memo*, if required;
    - 8.3.1.6 Copies of any citations issued; and
    - 8.3.1.7 Photographs of damage.
  - 8.3.2 The accident file will be reviewed by each level of the member's chain of command and recommendations attached.
  - 8.3.3 After review, the accident file and any recommendations will be forwarded to the Chief of Police by the member's division commander.
- 8.4 The member's division commander will forward a copy of the accident report and the original SR-1 form to the fleet manager. The fleet manager will be responsible for sending the SR-1 form to the state and coordinating repair of the department vehicle.