

Anchorage Police Department Regulations and Procedures Manual	Operational Procedures 3.06.000	
Policy and Procedure Title Use of Police Vehicles	Effective Date December 8, 2022	Page 1 of 9
Replaces Prior Policy: September 21, 2021	Approved by: Chief Michael Kerle	

This policy is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This policy should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.

3.06.000 Use of Police Vehicles

PURPOSE

To advise all personnel of the proper methods of operating police vehicles.

POLICY

Members of the Department shall use any police vehicle in the safest and most effective fashion for delivery of police services.

DEFINITIONS

Marked Police Vehicle: For purposes of this procedure, a “marked unit” or “marked police vehicle” refers to any vehicle displaying regulation police department colors and insignia and equipped with approved emergency warning equipment.

Emergency Warning Equipment: For purposes of this procedure, emergency warning equipment includes at least a flashing red light visible to the front of the police vehicle and an audible siren, both meeting State of Alaska requirements.

Unmarked Police Vehicle: For purposes of this procedure, any motorized vehicle legally applied to police services by an employee of the police department and equipped with emergency warning equipment. Vehicles not equipped with emergency warning equipment (i.e., undercover vehicles) are expressly prohibited from partaking in enforcement actions when not accompanied by a marked police vehicle.

Specialty Vehicles: For purposes of this procedure, any remaining unit operated under the control and responsibility of the police department. This includes, but is not limited to, leased vehicles, vans, light and heavy trucks, buses, snow machines, motorcycles, and bicycles.

Emergency Assignment: For purposes of this procedure, an emergency assignment is any call for service that requires accelerated response on the part of the officer. This includes, but is not limited to, assaults in progress, burglaries in progress, injury collisions, and in progress weapons violations.

PROCEDURES

I. ROUTINE PATROL

A. Compliance with Traffic Laws. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with existing traffic laws when in routine operation.

B. Parking Compliance. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with existing parking regulations, except when specifically exempted by ordinance or procedure.

1. AMC 9.08.080 allows authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency to be exempt from the parking ordinances. This exemption does not relieve the operator from parking safely.
2. In instances when a unit is responding to any type of call and receives a parking citation, the employee may write the case number and brief explanation of the circumstances on the front of the citation and forward it to the Traffic Sergeant for review.
 - a). If this is not done, or if the Traffic Sergeant denies exemption, the employee is responsible for paying the parking ticket and/or impound fee.
3. In all other circumstances, employees shall abide by all parking ordinances.
4. Prisoner transport parking.
 - a). Reserve parking in the Court House parking lot has been allocated for the Warrants Section's exclusive use.
 - b). Reserved parking for patrol vehicles is available on 3rd Ave., K St. and I St. These spaces are for on-duty officers transporting prisoners or for police vehicles which cannot access the Captain Cook Parking Garage.

C. Patrol Service Area. Vehicles operated under the color of authority may not leave the currently patrolled areas of the Municipality of Anchorage, without prior approval from a Supervisor.

II. RESPONSE CODES

A. Types. Police vehicles respond to both emergency and non-emergency calls for service. When responding to emergency assignments, the driver may reasonably suspend any traffic law with cause, but shall always abide by AMC 9.08.080 D, which states that no provision shall relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. This duty applies

to ALL codes of driving. The type and manner of response is coded as follows:

1. Code Two. A non-emergency response code that instructs the operator to proceed directly to the location in question, but to abide by all moving traffic laws. Use of any emergency warning equipment en route is inappropriate. Unless otherwise notified, all responses are presumed to be code two. Emergency warning equipment may be used at a non-emergency scene, such as at a traffic accident, for visibility.

2. Code Three. Emergency assignments where there is actual or threat of serious injury or death of a person, or known circumstances dictate an accelerated response on the part of the officer. Response shall be with both emergency lights and siren in operation to allow all practical haste.

Extreme care will be used when passing through traffic signs or signals. Only after stopping or clearing the intersection to the extent necessary to ensure due regard for the safety of the public will Officers be allowed to proceed through. When two or more emergency operated vehicles approach an intersection at the same time from different directions where traffic control devices are installed, said devices will determine the right-of-way.

3. Code Four. Emergency assignments where the use of the emergency warning equipment (especially the siren) may interfere with the effective performance of the police task. Code four allows emergency operation of police vehicles, with cause, with less than full use of the emergency warning equipment.

B. Initiation. Code three and code four operations can be initiated by Dispatch Center, a supervisor, or the operator of the vehicle. Selection of code will be based on this policy:

Dispatch Center will give the most appropriate code based on their best information, but the officer is the final authority of what code to use. That choice must be based on the available facts. The officer must be able to articulate the reasons for any code modification (up or down).

C. Termination and Reduction. "Running code" is one of the most hazardous operations in police work. If an officer receives information which changes the nature of the emergency response, the officer may reduce or terminate the code response.

This reduction or termination of code response should be based on reasonable facts. Conversely, the officer may elevate the code response based on reasonable facts. An officer should notify dispatch of a modification to the code they are dispatched. This can alert cover officers and the patrol supervisor of the modification. For instance, an officer may know from past experience that an alarm at a business is generally a valid burglary, or they may have personal knowledge of a DV situation that could require a 'code response.

D. Non-Sworn Member Codes. Non-sworn members may operate Department vehicles only in the code two mode.

III. USE OF EMERGENCY WARNING EQUIPMENT

A. Use. Emergency equipment shall be used in the following instances, and in the following fashion:

1. Dispatched Emergencies, as follows:

- a). Code Three
- b). Code Four

2. Escorts, as follows:

a). Types of Escorts. For purposes of this procedure, two types of escorts are recognized, namely:

- i. Emergency escorts. When serious injury or death might result in delaying the movement of an escorted vehicle.
- ii. Non-emergency escorts. When police escort is provided for traffic control, tradition, events, or other non-urgent reasons. These include house moves and other oversized loads, funeral escorts, and diplomatic escorts. Non-emergency escorts shall not be conducted unless approved by the Captain of Patrol.

b). Equipment. Escorts may be provided only with units having all emergency warning devices functional.

c). Method. The following methods shall be used:

- i. Emergency escorts shall be conducted under the same provisions as discussed in "Code Three" operations.
- ii. Non-emergency escorts are to be conducted as instructed by the field supervisor or Commander.

d). Limitations to Emergency Escorts. In lieu of escorting a non-emergency vehicle under emergency conditions, officers will transport in their vehicle, or will arrange for transport in an appropriate emergency vehicle whenever practical.

3. Traffic stops. Emergency equipment serves the purposes of:

- a). Alerting the operator to stop the vehicle; and/or
- b). Making the stopped vehicles more visible, reducing the likelihood of an accident; and/or
- c). Making the scene of the stop more easily found by other units, should assistance be necessary.

4. Other events that require:

- a). The legitimate suspension of compliance with traffic laws; and/or
- b). Enhanced visibility; and/or
- c). Alerting other(s) to stop or yield.

B. Exceptions. Nothing in this procedure precludes officers from exceeding the speed limit a reasonable amount without activating the emergency equipment to “clock” a speeding vehicle.

IV. SPECIALTY VEHICLES

A. In General. The Anchorage Police Department uses various types and classes of specialty vehicles in its law enforcement and public service mission.

Specialty vehicles may be employed where their unique attributes enhance a police function or make possible an operation’s successful completion. Specialty vehicles may be marked or unmarked units.

B. Application of Specialty Vehicle Equipment. The use of any specialty vehicle shall be at the authority of the appropriate unit or shift commander, except that:

1. All operations of any specialty vehicle shall be in a manner not creating undue hazard to the public, to property, or to the operator, and not creating unwarranted disturbance to the public or to the environment.
2. Specialty vehicles will not be assigned or used as take-home vehicles. During specialty vehicle use, assigned take-home vehicles will be parked in an appropriate manner in the APD parking area or they may be legally parked near the designated or storage area for the specialty vehicle, so long as they do not interfere with any other Division or Section’s parking or operation.
3. Specialty vehicles will be secured at the end of each tour of duty in the location approved for them and shall be made ready for the next duty tour before being so secured. Operators shall ensure that the specialty vehicle is serviced, if necessary, prior to securing it for the next use.

C. Motorized specialty vehicles.

1. Motorized specialty vehicles, including snow machines, certain trucks, and buses, require additional skills, training, and/or licensing to be operated safely and legally.

- a). Only personnel who have successfully completed a departmentally approved course for the specific motorized specialty vehicle type are authorized to operate such vehicles.

2. As a general rule, operators of motorized specialty vehicles shall not be dispatched as the initial responding vehicle on any call for service, including traffic accidents, and will not be dispatched “Code 3.” Motorized

specialty vehicles shall not initiate or become actively involved in any vehicular pursuit.

a). Operators of motorized specialty vehicles not equipped as emergency response vehicles as defined in this procedure may respond to urgent calls for service within reason, at the discretion of the operator within the guidelines of current general operating procedure and any operating procedures of the unit to which they are assigned, and "Code 2" only is permitted.

b). Operators of motorized specialty vehicles properly equipped as emergency response vehicles meeting the requirements of 13AAC 04.210(d) and 13AAC 04.090, may respond "Code 3" to emergency assignments where there is actual or threat of serious injury or death of a person. Operators shall abide by AMC 9.08.080 D and "Code 3" guidelines, current general operating procedure, and any operating procedures of the unit to which they are assigned.

c). Operators of specialty vehicles may be authorized to wear appropriate uniforms or equipment during their tours of duty. Should it become necessary to return to a standard marked or unmarked police vehicle during that tour, the operator will not normally be required to change uniforms or equipment.

V. "HOME CAR" SPECIAL PROCEDURES

A. Purpose. The fundamental purpose of the "home car" program is to provide the community with substantially expanded police availability at little additional expense by:

1. Increased police presence. Off-duty officers in marked units contribute to police "omnipresence."
2. Quicker response time. More units, randomly located, give potentially shorter response times to emergency situations--again, at reduced costs.
3. Better police access. Should a citizen need non-emergency services, an off-duty officer can more quickly assess the services sought and link that person with the appropriate facilities.
4. More efficient use of equipment. Experience has shown that fleet vehicles get less attention than assigned ones, so the cost of vehicle operations decreases, and the expected vehicle lifetime increases.

B. Duties of the Department. The Department's duties in the program include:

1. Administering the program by making vehicle assignments, providing regulations, and similar duties.

2. Home car assignments will be based upon proper fleet management principles. A recruit will not be allowed to take their car home until they have completed their Field Training Observation (FTO) Period.

3. Furnishing gasoline, oil, maintenance, and insurance for the vehicles.

C. Duties of the Assigned Officers. Officers assigned a “home car” shall:

1. Comply with directed administrative tasks, including:

a). Participating in any assigned program or equipment evaluations.

b). Ensuring maintenance schedules are met.

c). Operators shall ensure vehicle fluids are maintained at proper levels (i.e., oil, coolant, power steering, brake and transmission fluids).

d). Operators are to make sure they arrange their home car maintenance service as required and posted by the light duty shop. These maintenance requirements include, but are not limited to fleet vehicles, snow machines, ATV’s, and any other vehicle assigned to that employee.

2. Operate the vehicle in compliance with all laws, Department regulations and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This includes, but is not limited to:

a). Proper use of seat belts and child restraints.

b). Remaining within the Anchorage Patrol Service Area, when off duty.

c). Adherence to specific regulations regarding use of Home Cars by officers on light duty status.

3. Conform to the following general regulations:

a). Not allow any non-employees to operate the vehicle except upon authorization of a Command Officer.

b). Ensure the vehicle is reasonably clean, both inside and out.

c). Do not alter the vehicle, except as authorized by the Department, including the application/display of logos, stickers, advertising, or political messages or statements on either the interior or exterior of the vehicle.

i. Exception: Military service stickers of a reasonably small size, inoffensive and directly related to the operator are permissible.

d). Vehicles shall be locked during all unattended periods.

e). No equipment shall be left in an unlocked, unattended vehicle. No weapons shall be left unsecured in any vehicle at any time. No sensitive or expensive equipment or property (i.e., AED, MDC, etc.) shall be left in any vehicle left unattended for protracted periods of

time. All equipment and property should be removed when the vehicle will be accessed by non-Department personnel.

i. Exception: It is permissible to leave equipment in an unattended vehicle when the vehicle is left only with Fleet Services personnel for the purposes of gaining service, however firearms shall be removed. In the event firearms are required for installation of weapons racks, the firearms will be unloaded or otherwise made inoperable.

f). Vehicles shall be stored at a location designated by the Department when the assigned officer is to be off of work for extended periods of time.

g). Vehicles shall never be operated in such a fashion, nor taken to such a location, as to bring embarrassment or discredit to the Department. Although non-police personnel may accompany officers as passengers when the vehicle is operated off duty, that officer is responsible for the appearance and conduct of those passengers.

h). Vehicles shall not be operated:

i. With the odor of alcohol on the operator's breath; or

ii. While impaired, however slightly, by any substance: or

iii. With any physical or mental/emotional condition that manifestly impairs the operator's reaction or judgment. (See [Code of Conduct 1.02.015G](#) and [1.02.015H](#))

i). No pets shall be allowed inside police vehicles, whether on or off duty, unless they are certified Police Canines or Police Canines-in-training in a departmentally approved training program. However, this does not prevent officers from providing normal police services that may involve transporting animals.

j). No juvenile will be left unattended in any police vehicle.

4. Monitor the police radio at all times.

5. Respond for police services when appropriate. When responding:

a). Discharge all non-police personnel prior to responding to any potentially dangerous situations.

b). Take appropriate action on any police service situation. This can range from calling an on-duty unit to full police action by the off-duty officer. See "Arrests—General.

i. Any paperwork generated shall be turned in to the Department as expeditiously as possible.

ii. No off-duty officer shall be dispatched to anything other than an emergency situation.

6. Actively enforce observed traffic violations.

VI. RELATED TOPICS

A. Use of Privately Owned Vehicles. The use of privately owned vehicles for police application shall only be conducted with prior approval of the Division Commander.

B. Off-Roadway Use of Police Vehicles. No police vehicle shall be operated off the normally traveled portion of a roadway unless one of the following conditions is met:

1. The vehicle is specifically designed for off-roadway application; or
2. There is an emergency so urgent as to justify the possible damage and injury this type of operation may cause, and the officer can articulate that urgency.

C. Accidents Involving Police Vehicles. Whenever a marked, unmarked, or a specialty police vehicle is involved in a collision, whether there is visible damage or not, a supervisor must be notified before any vehicle involved leaves the scene.

*****END OF DOCUMENT*****