CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER

DEPARTMENT VEHICLE OPERATION

GENERAL ORDER: 09.01	**CREATED:** February 22, 2019	**ISSUE DATE:** October 9, 2025
CALEA STANDARDS: 41.3.2, 61.3.3 **NCLEA STANDARDS:**		**EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 16, 2025
ACTION: Amends general order dated October 1, 2022.		

09.01.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish procedures for the use, care, operation and maintenance of all vehicles owned and operated by the Concord Police Department.

09.01.1 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Concord Police Department to ensure that all vehicles owned by the department are properly managed, maintained, and operated to promote operator safety and prolonged vehicle life.

09.01.2 ONE-CAR, ONE-OFFICER PROGRAM

A. All officers that meet the eligibility requirements may be assigned a department owned police vehicle that may either be driven to the officer's residence or parked at a department-approved facility when the officer is off duty.

B. The "One Car, One Officer" program is designed to fulfill several objectives.

1. The program places department vehicles throughout the city in a highly visible manner, which serves as a deterrent to criminal activity and can be comforting to residents in areas where the officer resides.

2. In addition to deterring criminal activity, the high visibility of these vehicles impacts traffic safety in residential areas. With large numbers of department vehicles visible to the public, the "police visibility" is expanded throughout the city.

3. The program increases the efficiency of vehicle operations and maintenance through a reduction in maintenance costs and extended vehicle life.

4. The program enhances the department's ability to quickly summon off-duty officers in emergency situations.

C. ELIGIBILITY

1. Officers must first be eligible to operate a city vehicle in accordance to City of Concord Personnel Policy 8.15 – Driver Authorization.

2. Approval shall be obtained by completion of a Take Home / Overnight Vehicle Request (Form VEH-1). Form VEH-1 shall be completed at the time an officer is first assigned a take home vehicle and each time an officer is assigned a

different vehicle, other than a temporary spare, or the overnight location is altered.

NOTE: Officers are required to notify their immediate supervisor of any change in residence location – reasonably in advance of such change taking place – so that a new VEH-1 can be submitted and reviewed for compliance with this policy.

3. Officers residing within 30 miles from police headquarters (straight line distance) may be allowed to drive assigned vehicles to and from their residence and their duty assignment.

4. Officers who do not live within 30 miles from police headquarters (straight line distance) may park their assigned vehicle at a location near the route they use between their residence and the Concord Police Department. The location shall be highly visible 24 hours a day and be within the 30 mile limit. Approval of this location shall be obtained by completion of Form VEH-1.

5. Officers assigned to units that may require callback (e.g., CID, K-9 handlers, SWAT, crash reconstructionist) may obtain permission to drive their assigned vehicle to and from their residence overnight outside of the established 30 mile distance from police headquarters. Permission must first be granted by the Chief of Police and shall be considered on a case by case basis.

D. RESTRICTIONS

1. Department vehicles are to be used only for official police and city business. Personal use of department vehicles is prohibited.

2. Officers shall utilize department vehicles in accordance with applicable sections of the City of Concord Personnel Policy 8.8 and 8.15.

3. Officers shall not store weapons (e.g., firearms, Tasers, and other less lethal weaponry) or specialized equipment (e.g., SWAT gear, crowd/riot control gear, police bicycle, etc.) in their unattended vehicle when off duty unless the vehicle is parked in a secured garage, or a similar locked facility, or at the officer's residence.

09.01.3 VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

A. All patrol vehicles shall be equipped with a mobile radio transceiver, approved siren, and blue emergency light(s). Patrol vehicles may also be equipped with additional equipment to include:

1. Basic first-aid equipment;

2. Fire Extinguisher;

3. Stop Sticks;

4. Printer;

5. USDOT Emergency (Hazardous Materials) Response Guidebook (electronic);

6. In Car Camera;

7. Radar;

8. Personal Protective Equipment

B. Officers shall advise their commanding officer of equipment that needs to be replaced due to damage, loss, disrepair, etc. Commanding officers shall facilitate the replenishment of such equipment.

09.01.4 VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

A. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officers are responsible for their assigned department vehicle or the department vehicle they operate.

2. Prior to operating a department vehicle, it shall be inspected to determine whether it is in serviceable condition and the vehicle is filled with gasoline, oil, and other pertinent fluids.

3. Any maintenance issue found that is beyond the repair capability of the operator shall be reported to the coworker's supervisor as soon as practicable. No coworker shall drive a department vehicle that is not safe for operation.

4. Any damage, defects, and items in need of repair or replacement shall be reported to a supervisor. Any coworker failing to report a defect or damage to a department vehicle, it shall be assumed that the defect or damage occurred during their operation of the vehicle.

5. Officers shall inspect their vehicle at the beginning and end of their tour of duty, including before and after any prisoner or citizen is placed inside the vehicle, to determine whether the vehicle contains any contraband and/or unauthorized items (e.g., weapons, drugs, property intended to be inventoried).

6. Officers shall keep their vehicles, both interior and exterior, clean, clear of debris and trash, and well maintained.

B. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Supervisors are responsible for the monthly inspection of vehicles assigned to their coworkers.

2. Should a supervisor find a vehicle to be defective or unsafe to operate, the officers shall be assigned a spare vehicle until their assigned vehicle is repaired.

09.01.5 EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION

All officers are expected to operate all city owned vehicles **with due regard** for safety and to avoid negligent damage. Some law enforcement situations present such a high potential for death or serious injury to innocent citizens that immediate and rapid response is needed. Officers must be mindful of the balance between achieving the goals of law enforcement while maintaining the public's safety.

A. PROCEDURES

1. Officers shall not intentionally exceed the speed limit or deviate from the traffic laws normally applicable to non-emergency vehicles unless responding to a situation where Code 2 or Code 3 driving is authorized, or while attempting to apprehend a suspected violator of the law pursuant to General Order 09.03 Fresh Pursuit of a Vehicle.

2. It shall be the responsibility of a officers responding to a call for service or other situation requiring law enforcement action to make the initial determination as to whether the situation calls for the emergency operation of their vehicle (Code 2 or Code 3). Generally, emergency responses are limited to situations involving crimes in progress of an emergency nature or an imminent threat of violence or danger of personal injury exists.

   NOTE: Generally, incidents involving non-violent misdemeanors, property damage or similar type incidents would be excluded from those deserving of an emergency response (Code 3) on the part of the officers.

3. Requests from outside agencies for emergency assistance shall be evaluated by a supervisor on a call by call basis.

4. No more than two (2) officers shall be permitted to respond to one location while driving emergency traffic (Code 3) unless authorized by a supervisor. In certain circumstances where such probability exists a significant risk of injury or loss of life exists, it is implied that any and all officers within a reasonable distance should respond emergency traffic without having to announce his/her intentions over the radio. Each coworker shall still respond **with due regard** for the safety of themselves and all others.

5. Vehicles engaged in emergency operation (Code 2 or Code 3) are required to use BOTH emergency lights and siren. Anytime either emergency lights or siren has been discontinued, emergency operation shall be terminated, and all speed and traffic laws shall be observed.

   NOTE: This section does not apply to officers "pacing" or catching up with a vehicle to establish a speeding violation, conducting surveillance on a suspect vehicle, or when an officer believes a vehicle is being operated and/or occupied by a suspected dangerous person(s) and such use would present an imminent danger to the officer or aid in the escape of a dangerous wanted person(s).

B. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. It shall be the responsibility of any supervisor to direct responding officers to cease emergency vehicle operations (Code 2 or Code 3) if it appears that such a response is unwarranted or that the risk to the public is too great.

2. Officers engaged in emergency vehicle operations (Code 2 or Code 3) shall cease exceeding the speed limit and/or deviating from traffic laws normally applicable to non-emergency vehicles if:

   a. Directed by a supervisor;

b. If the responding officer learns that the situation originally warranting emergency vehicle operations no longer exists or that other units have arrived on the scene in sufficient numbers to handle the situation;

c. Traffic, weather, visibility, or the conditions increase the risk of danger to the public to such a degree that emergency vehicle operations are no longer authorized under this policy.

NOTE: Regardless of the response level (as outlined below), officers shall operate department vehicles within their own personal capabilities/limitations, that of the vehicle they are operating, and that of the roadway/weather conditions that exist at the time.

C. RESPONSE LEVELS

1. Routine Response (Code 1)

Routine response is based upon situations that are not, nor have the potential to be, considered life threatening. During a routine response (Code 1) the vehicle's emergency lights and siren are not in use and all roadway traffic regulations are obeyed.

2. Urgent Response (Code 2)

a. Urgent response is based upon situations that have potential to develop into a life threatening situation or other moderate sense of urgency (see (b) below). During an urgent response (Code 2) the vehicle's emergency lights and siren are activated continuously or intermittently as needed. Roadway traffic exemptions may be utilized to clear traffic while operating the vehicle with due regard for public safety. Urgent response driving requires the operator to continuously monitor existing traffic and road conditions for public safety.

b. Some examples of a moderate sense of urgency for which Code 2 driving may be utilized include but are not limited to the following:

i. Having to travel a long distance or through heavy traffic to arrive at a call for service where such distance or such traffic will significantly impact arrival time to the call.

ii. Supervisors responding to an incident where administrative action is required (use of force, vehicle accident, etc.) and a prompt arrival is deemed necessary.

c. Excessive speed (speed greater than 15 MPH over the posted limit) is not authorized for urgent response (Code 2) driving.

d. During urgent response (Code 2) driving, and upon approaching an intersection against a signal or stop sign, officers shall stop their vehicle prior to entering the intersection to ensure no other vehicle will be adversely affected or struck. Only upon determining it is safe to proceed through the intersection may a coworker do so.

e. During urgent response (Code 2) driving officers shall not use their MCT while in motion. A driver's attention instead shall be focused on the

environment outside of their vehicle. Officers shall rely upon radio (audio) updates in lieu of electronic MCT messaging.

3. Emergency Response (Code 3)

   a. Emergency response (Code 3) is based upon situations where an exigent priority exists. Emergency response (Code 3) driving is reserved for those situations where there is a likelihood for loss of life or serious bodily injury; or a serious crime is in progress. During an emergency response the vehicle's emergency lights and siren are activated continuously. Roadway traffic exemptions may be utilized to clear traffic while operating the vehicle with due regard for public safety. Emergency response driving requires the operator to continuously monitor existing traffic and road conditions for public safety.

   b. Excessive speed is authorized for emergency response (Code 3) driving; however, such speed shall not exceed the personal, vehicle, road, and weather limitations outlined in (B) above.

   c. During emergency response (Code 3) driving officers shall not use their MCT while in motion. A driver's attention instead shall be focused on the environment outside of their vehicle. Officers shall rely upon radio (audio) updates in lieu of electronic MCT messaging.

   d. When practicable to do so, officers initiating a Code 3 emergency response shall immediately notify communications using the term "Code 3" or "emergency traffic" and provide their current location.

      Example: "4115 responding emergency traffic [or, Code 3] from Church Street and Lake Concord Road."

      NOTE: NC GS 20-156(b) specifies when appropriate warning signals are being given, an emergency vehicle may proceed through an intersection or other place when the emergency vehicle is facing a stop sign, a yield sign, or a traffic light which is emitting a flashing strobe signal or a beam of steady or flashing red light. This provision shall not operate to relieve the driver of a police department vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

      NC GS 20-145 specifies speed limitations shall not apply to vehicles when operated with due regard for safety under the direction of the police in the chase or apprehension of violators of the law or of persons charged with or suspected of any such violation, nor to any of the following when either operated by a law enforcement officer in the chase or apprehension of violators of the law or of persons charged with or suspected of any such violation.

09.01.6 EMERGENCY TRANSPORTS OR ESCORTS

A. INJURED COWORKER ESCORTS

1. Should a coworker be critically injured and require emergency transport to an emergency medical facility, the emergency medical transport vehicle may be escorted by two department vehicles, one leading and the other behind the transport vehicle.

2. Supervisors may place officers at intersections and other locations along the route to the medical facility to assist with traffic control.

B. CITIZEN TRANSPORTATION

An officer discovering a citizen requiring or requesting transportation to an emergency facility shall:

1. Immediately request an ambulance or another appropriate emergency service;

2. Administer first aid if practical and make the injured person as comfortable as possible; and

3. Control traffic to provide access for vehicles.

NOTE: A prisoner whose jail confinement is contingent upon the receipt of medical attention may be transported in a departmental vehicle to a medical facility.

C. CITIZEN ESCORTS

1. Due to inherent dangers and risks, emergency escorting of private vehicles shall only be undertaken if no viable alternative exists.

2. Officers shall receive confirmation from a supervisor prior to escorting any private vehicle to a medical facility.

3. Officers shall use due regard and obey all traffic laws during an escort.

4. If injury or illness is of a serious nature, the officer shall advise the medical facility via the communications center of the nature of the injury or illness and the estimated time of arrival.

09.01.7 NON-EMERGENCY ESCORTS

A. The department provides vehicular escorts under certain conditions to assist with traffic flow and ensure public safety. All vehicular escorts shall be conducted using marked patrol vehicles.

B. The Chief of Police or designee shall receive and process requests for escorts of parades, demonstrations, marches, and similar events which require the issuance of a parade permit.

C. Requests for funeral escorts shall be received by communications and assigned to patrol units.

D. Business escorts to effect after-hours bank deposits are not routinely provided by the department, but may be conducted with supervisor approval. When such escorts are approved, the business employee shall travel in their private vehicle with the officer following in a patrol vehicle. Officers shall remain with the employee until the bank deposit is complete.

09.01.8 SEAT BELT USAGE

A. Coworkers operating department vehicles shall wear seat belts at all times, except when doing so would endanger the safety of the coworker or another, or when the officer has provided medical certification that they are unable to do so.

B. No coworker shall operate a department vehicle in which any safety belt located in the driver's seating position is inoperable.

C. No coworker shall modify, remove, deactivate, or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts except for vehicle maintenance and repair.

D. All passengers shall use the vehicle's seat belts including the use of child safety restraints as applicable.

E. When circumstances dictate, such as a violent, resisting suspect, the wearing of seat belts by persons in custody in the rear seat shall be left to the discretion of the officer.

09.01.9 POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE CRASH INVESTIGATION

All motor vehicle crashes involving department vehicles shall be investigated in accordance with this general order and City of Concord Personnel Policy 8.15 Driver Authorization Policy.

A. COWORKER RESPONSIBILITY

1. When a department vehicle is involved in a crash, the operating coworker shall notify the communications center as soon as practicable, giving the accident’s location and advising whether there is property damage or personal injury.

2. Coworkers involved in a crash and their immediate supervisors shall complete the required paperwork as soon as practicable.

3. The coworker shall submit to a post-incident drug screening if:

   a. If the crash involves a fatality;

   b. If it is suspected that the coworker was a contributing factor in the crash;

   c. If the driver or any passenger requires medical treatment;

   d. If any vehicle must be towed from the scene;

   e. If a citizen is involved, whether or not there was a reported injury.

NOTE: Injured coworkers should receive post-incident drug screening during their initial medical treatment if applicable.

B. ON-SCENE INVESTIGATION

1. When the communications center has been notified that a department vehicle has been involved in a crash, the supervisor at the next highest level from the coworker involved in the crash shall be responsible for the crash investigation and completion of all required paperwork. If assistance is needed or desired, the appropriate supervisor may contact the on-call traffic/motor officer for assistance.

2. As a result of the on-scene investigation, **IF** a supervisor believes the coworker operating the vehicle at the time of the crash should be criminally charged, they shall first follow the procedures outlined in G.O. 03.17 Personnel Investigations and Discipline for an internally generated complaint, and make a recommendation for charges through the chain of command.

3. If there is death or a probability of life threatening injuries to either a citizen or a coworker, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol shall be requested to conduct the investigation into any traffic or criminal charges. The Concord Police Department shall conduct a parallel internal investigation for civil and administrative purposes.

C. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY

1. The coworker's immediate supervisor shall complete the required City of Concord paperwork and submit it through the chain of command, which is to be forwarded to Safety and Risk Management within 24 hours.

2. In crashes that result in serious injury to the coworker, the coworker's bureau commander or, in his/her absence, the Chief of Police shall be notified. The watch commander shall decide what other steps are necessary (e.g., notification of family members).

3. The watch commander shall ensure that photos and/or video relevant to the accident are retained for future reference.

09.01.3 SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES

A. GOLF CARTS / UTVS

The objective of the department's golf carts / utvs is to provide for more efficient response and travel capability while officers are working in congested areas and during special events (e.g., Concord Mills Mall, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Z-Max Dragway, Center City events).

1. Department golf carts / utvs shall be operated from the driver's side only.

2. The occupant capacity of each department golf cart / utv shall not exceed the manufacturer provided seating.

3. Use of department golf carts / utvs shall be authorized by any captain or above and the Support Services Division Commander.

4. Department golf carts / utvs shall only be operated by officers of the Concord Police Department unless otherwise authorized by the rank of Major or above.

5. The Support Services Division Commander shall be responsible for the maintenance and transport of all department golf carts / utvs.

6. Department golf carts / utvs shall only be operated on roads or other surfaces conducive to the vehicle's capabilities and design.

7. Trash and other items shall not be left in golf carts / utvs. Officers utilizing department golf carts / utvs shall ensure that the vehicle has ample amounts of gas and is clean prior to completing its use.

B. PARKING ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES

1. Parking enforcement vehicles shall be used for enforcement of local and state parking laws.

2. The Operations Bureau shall be responsible for the maintenance of all parking enforcement vehicles.

3. Parking enforcement vehicles shall only be operated on roads or other surfaces conducive to the vehicle's capabilities and design.

4. Parking enforcement vehicles shall only be operated by coworkers authorized by the Operations Bureau.

C. PRISONER TRANSPORT VAN

1. The department maintains a prisoner transport van at police headquarters for use during circumstances that prohibit the transport of a prisoner(s) in a standard police vehicle (e.g. large persons, violent or combative prisoners, highly intoxicated persons).

2. The keys to the prisoner transport van shall be kept in the wall mounted lockbox in the basement area of police headquarters.

3. The prisoner transport van may also be utilized at special events (e.g. concerts, race track) where there is a potential for use and/or multiple arrests.

4. The prisoner transport van may be operated by any officer. During exigent circumstances, the closest available officer may respond to police headquarters to procure the transport van.

5. Before and after each transport, a search shall be conducted of the prisoner transport compartment for contraband.

6. When transporting prisoners, officers shall ensure that the vehicle’s camera system is activated.

7. Prior to use, the prisoner transport van shall be disconnected from the

attached battery charger. After operation is complete, the battery charging system shall be reconnected to the van.

8. All operations of the prisoner transport van shall comply with G.O. 07.01 Arrest Authority and Procedures.

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