


Fort Collins Police Services Policy Manual

 FORT COLLINS POLICE	POLICY	708
	TITLE	Assigned Vehicle Use

708.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Agency may provide a vehicle to full-time officers based upon assignment. This policy shall not be construed to create or imply any contractual obligation by the City to provide vehicles, and the assignment of vehicles is at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Assigned vehicles have demonstrated a long-term fiscal and service benefit to the City. Assigned vehicles get better care during operation and storage and accumulate fewer service miles and hours of operation. Vehicle assignment results in an extended vehicle service life over pool patrol use vehicle assignment. Vehicles subsequently require less frequent replacement and a reduced frequency of transfer and replacement of support equipment (radios, emergency, and safety equipment). Ultimately, per-mile operational costs are reduced. Additionally, the ability for fully equipped officers to respond in case of emergencies from home results in a force multiplier for the Agency.

708.2 USE OF CITY VEHICLES

- (a) Assigned City-owned vehicles shall be operated only by police personnel.
- (b) General rules of conduct that apply to on-duty employees shall also apply to off-duty employees while driving a City vehicle.
 - 1. Off-duty employees who are operating a City vehicle should be appropriately attired to effectively perform an Agency function and make public contacts. Clothing displaying inappropriate graphics is prohibited.
- (c) All personnel shall exercise good judgement in operating and utilizing a City vehicle and shall not drive or use the vehicle in a manner that may cause unfavorable comment or reflect negatively on the Agency.
- (d) All employees are required to have the police radio (if present) turned on while operating a police vehicle, and to take action on observed violations.
 - 1. Employees will use the appropriate radio call sign when using the police radio off-duty.
 - 2. It is not necessary to check in and out of service with the dispatcher when off-duty.
 - 3. In minor incidents, an off-duty employee may request an on-duty employee to handle the situation and assist until the on-duty officer arrives. If immediate action is required, the off-duty employee shall take whatever action is necessary and appropriate.
 - 4. Sworn officers are reminded that jurisdictional issues should be considered when operating a police vehicle outside the Fort Collins city limits.
- (e) Persons who are not Agency employees may accompany the officer as passengers when the City vehicle is operated off-duty.
 - 1. Employees are responsible for the proper appearance and conduct of all passengers.
 - 2. The safety of passengers' rests solely with the employee operating the vehicle.
 - (a) When asked to respond to a call with non-sworn personnel as passenger(s), employees may first leave the passenger(s) at a convenient and safe location and

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- then respond to the call. If there is no opportunity to leave passenger(s), the employee may notify the dispatcher that he/she is unable to respond to the call.
- (f) Police officers and community service officers (CSOs) are allowed to use their assigned police vehicle in off-duty activity with the City’s Growth Management Area (GMA).
 - 1. The vehicle will not be utilized for carrying heavy or excessive loads, towing non-Agency items, and will not have objects protruding from the trunk or windows, or attached to the top of the car.
 - 2. Employees will not use the vehicle on a part-time or temporary job where the use of the car is a required condition of employment unless specifically authorized by an assistant chief, deputy chief, or director. The vehicle may be driven to and from temporary or part time employment that is located within the GMA subject to the terms of section 708.2.12 below.
 - (g) Use of alcoholic beverages or medication:
 - 1. Agency vehicles shall not be operated by any employee who has consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage, taken any drug that would tend to adversely affect the employee’s sense or judgement, or consumed an alcoholic beverage within four hours.
 - (a) A supervisor who suspects such use of alcohol or medication may require a breath or blood test from that individual per Policy 1012 – Alcohol and Drug Use.
 - 2. Possession of an open alcoholic beverage container in a City owned vehicle is prohibited unless it is directly related to a duty function.
 - (h) Employees on light-duty status shall not operate a marked police vehicle unless authorized by an assistant chief or the Deputy Chief. The City is not obligated to issue an unmarked vehicle to those employees on light-duty.
 - 1. During vacations or when an employee is out of the City for extended periods of time, the Agency may require that the City vehicle be stored at a City facility. If the vehicle is stored at the employee’s house, it must be accessible for Agency use. Other employees will not use the vehicle unless special needs arise.

708.2.1 ELIGIBILITY

- (a) Employees to whom individual vehicles are assigned must reside within the service area defined by a circle with a 20-mile radius with its center at the intersection of Mulberry Street and College Avenue. Employees who reside outside of this geographical boundary will be required to leave their assigned vehicle at the police building or the City Service Center when not on-duty, unless otherwise authorized by a supervisor.
- (b) Police officers and CSOs to whom individual vehicles are assigned are allowed to drive their assigned vehicles while on or off-duty within the GMA but are not allowed to drive their vehicles while off-duty outside of a one-mile buffer surrounding the GMA, except as is necessary to drive to/from their home. Employees will not use a marked vehicle to stop at residences or businesses along their route to/from home unless it is within the GMA or that one-mile buffer.
 - 1. Police officers and CSOs who reside outside the GMA will be assessed a nominal fee to be paid through payroll deductions, based upon the distance that they live from the nearest GMA boundary.
 - 2. Employees assigned to the Drug Task Force who live outside the GMA will not be charged a fee based upon where they live due to the unique nature of their off-site

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- assignment. However, they will not be allowed to drive their vehicles while off-duty unless they are driving to the Task Force building or the GMA as outlined in section (b).
3. A fee schedule charged to employees shall be maintained in the Office of the Chief of Police and is subject to annual review and modification in January of each year.
 4. Agency employees who are not police officers or CSOs who are assigned a vehicle will follow IRS reporting rules as provided by the City Finance Office.
- (c) A sworn police officer or community service officer may be assigned an individual vehicle upon successful completion of the FTO Training Program, subject to vehicle availability.
- (d) Sworn officers who are assigned individual vehicles must maintain their peace officer status.
1. Officers need to maintain their basic profile officer skills, such as firearms qualification, and be physically able to act as a peace officer upon immediate notice.

708.2.2 OPERATIONS OF CITY VEHICLES

(a) General

1. All Agency employees must have a valid driver's license on their person while operating a City-owned vehicle, and they must conform to all City Ordinances and state statutes regarding traffic.
2. Employees shall drive City vehicles in a reasonable manner in order to conserve fuel and ensure efficiency of operation, to include:
 - (a) Stopping the engine rather than idling for extended periods of time.
 - (b) Keeping the prisoner shield closed as much as possible when operating the air conditioner.
 - (c) Avoiding extended engine warm-ups during the winter months.
3. Employees shall set an example of good driving habits while operating City vehicles.
 - (a) Employees shall not park the vehicle improperly except in an emergency.
 - (b) Employees may receive citations and/or discipline for driving violations.

(b) Seat Belts

1. The driver and all passengers shall wear their seat belts/restraint devices when riding in a City vehicle.
 - (a) The consequences of not utilizing a seatbelt could be serious injury, the refusal of the City insurance carrier to cover injuries, and/or possible disciplinary action in accordance with City personnel regulations.
 - (b) Prisoners will be secured in a seat belt except when the use of the seat belt may aggravate the situation and cause further difficulties for the officer.
 - (c) Child transported in a City vehicle will be properly restrained with a seatbelt, booster seat, and/or child car seat as is appropriate for the child's age/size.

(c) Vehicle Push Bars

1. Vehicle push bars are used only to clear vehicles from intersections or the roadway when their presence obstructs the normal movement of traffic.
2. Disabled vehicles will be moved only as far as is necessary to clear the roadway.
3. The vehicle to be moved shall be examined for damage prior to utilizing the push bars, and again after it has been moved.
4. The employee shall visually inspect the alignment of push bars to bumper prior to contact. If the bumper and push bars do not align or there is a reasonable possibility that one will ride up over the other, the push will not be attempted.

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- (a) If the vehicle to be moved has no bumper, the push bar will not be used.
- 5. Prior to pushing another vehicle, the officer/CSO will check the route for sudden drops or dips in the road, or other obstacles that might interfere with the push bars' position on the vehicle being pushed. If it is absolutely necessary to negotiate such as an obstacle, disengage prior to entering the obstacle, allowing the disabled vehicle to coast through the obstacle and come to a stop; then engage again and continue.
- 6. The driver of the vehicle being pushed shall be instructed as to where the vehicle will be pushed and to not make any sudden stops or sharp turns.
- 7. The vehicle being pushed shall be in neutral gear with the engine off.
- 8. Maximum speed when pushing another vehicle shall not exceed 10 MPH.
- 9. The emergency lights of the City vehicle shall be activated during the time it is being utilized to push another vehicle.
- 10. If damage results from pushing a vehicle, the employee shall immediately notify a supervisor who will respond to the scene. The damage will be documented on an Incident Report and photographs of the damage will be taken.
- 11. Vehicle push bars shall not be used for:
 - (a) Moving vehicles that would be further damaged by the movement.
 - (b) Push starting stalled vehicles.
- (d) Jump-Starting of Vehicles
 - 1. Due to the possible problems that may result from jump-starts, discretion should be used in their application. The use of push bars is preferred for clearing stalled vehicles from intersections and roadways.
 - 2. Prior to attempting a jump-start, the driver of the vehicle to be started should be advised of the possible problems before any connection is made.

708.3 VEHICLE ALTERATIONS

Alterations, of any type, to Agency vehicles require prior written authorization of the Chief of Police or his/her authorized designee.

708.4 MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Each employee who is assigned a City-owned vehicle is responsible for the general maintenance and proper care and appearance of the vehicle.
 - 1. Except for emergencies, all maintenance, service work, and repair work will be scheduled with the City Service Center or a designated vendor.
 - 2. Employees will notify the City Service Center when flat tires occur and make the appropriate arrangements for the tire to be changed and repaired.
 - (a) If the flat tire occurs while an employee is on-duty, he or she shall notify the tow truck company under contract with Police Services for immediate repair in the field.
- (b) Employees shall refrain from:
 - 1. Performing mechanical work on the car.
 - 2. Altering the body, general design, appearance, markings, mechanical, or electrical systems.
 - 3. Making any repairs or having any repairs made to the vehicle other than at the City Service Center or a designated vendor at the discretion of the City Service Center.

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4. Adding accessories or equipment, with the exception of cellular telephones, satellite radio receivers, GPS navigation units and scanners, without written approval of their assistant chief, deputy chief, or director.
 5. Supervisors will check the vehicles of employees under their command twice a year (at the shift rotation or as spaced by approximately six months) to ensure that maintenance is being performed at the proper mileage intervals, that all equipment is present and in good working order, and that the vehicle is clean.
- (c) Employees are held strictly accountable and subject to discipline for damage caused by abuse or negligence or for the loss of equipment or property.
1. In addition to traditional disciplinary action, the employee may be charged for damage expense as follows:
 - (a) Damage up to and including \$1000 – reimbursed by the employee.
 - (b) Damage above \$1000 – decided on an individual basis; however, it may not be any less than for damage up to \$1000.
 - (c) Damage caused by abuse or negligence could result in a temporary or permanent suspension of the officer's vehicle privileges.
 2. Damage to the vehicle for which the employee is not at fault will be repaired at no cost to the employee.

708.5 ATTIRE AND APPERANCE

When operating a City vehicle off-duty, employees may dress in a manner appropriate for their intended activity. Attire and appearance whenever in view of or in contact with the public, regardless of the activity, should be suitable to reflect positively upon the Agency.

708.6 VEHICLE DAMAGE, ABUSE, AND MISUSE

- (a) When a collision involves a City vehicle and when a member of this Agency is an involved driver in a collision that occurs in this jurisdiction, and the collision results in serious bodily injury or death, the CRASH and CIRT teams shall be summoned to handle the investigation.
- (b) For any motor vehicle accident (MVA) involving a City-owned vehicle, a copy of the MVA report along with a Risk Management report and photographs of the damage are to be forwarded to Risk Management. An EIS incident report shall also be made by the employee's supervisor.
 1. The employee involved in the collision shall complete the City's vehicle collision form. If the employee is incapable, the supervisor shall complete the form.
- (c) Any damage to a vehicle that was not caused by a traffic collision shall be immediately reported during the shift in which the damage was discovered, documented in memorandum format, and forwarded to the shift supervisor and the employee's supervisor.
- (d) An administrative investigation may be conducted to determine if there is any vehicle abuse or misuse. If it is determined that misuse or abuse was a result of negligent conduct or operation, appropriate disciplinary action may result.