



## **CHAPTER 14 DEPARTMENT VEHICLE OPERATION**

**Effective: June 2007**

**Revised: July 2022**

### **14.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for the use of department vehicles.

### **14.1 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Golden Police Department that its members maintain and operate city vehicles in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons, while complying with all applicable directives and traffic laws. Only department members, or those individuals authorized by the department, will operate city vehicles.

### **14.2 VEHICLE INSPECTIONS**

Members are required to conduct a pre-trip inspection of their vehicle prior to leaving the department. When they are finished using the vehicle, a post-trip inspection will be completed.

Pre-trip inspections:

- A. The vehicle exterior will be inspected for any signs of damage.
  - 1. Any new damage discovered is to be immediately reported to the watch commander who will inspect the damage and note it in the *Vehicle Inspection Log*.
  - 2. When unreported damage is discovered, the watch commander will attempt to determine who last used the vehicle and cause an investigation into how the damage occurred and the reason it was not reported. A report of the findings will be forwarded to the appropriate division head.
- B. The vehicle interior and trunk / cargo area will be inspected for any signs of damage as well as weapons, contraband or property / evidence left in the vehicle.
  - 1. Any damage to the interior will be handled in the same manner as exterior damage.
  - 2. Any weapons, contraband or property / evidence discovered are to be immediately reported to the watch commander who will immediately take proper custody of the item and submit it to the Property and Evidence Unit. The watch commander will attempt to determine who last used the

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vehicle and cause an investigation of the incident. A report of the findings will be forwarded to the appropriate division head. Documentation in a case report will be completed, as appropriate.

- C. Other items (e.g., tires, fuel level, vehicle lights, locking mechanisms, safety belts, emergency equipment) will be inspected.
- D. The equipment stored in the trunk / cargo area of patrol vehicles will be inspected.
  - 1. The equipment should contain, at minimum:
    - a. Safety flares (15);
    - b. Traffic cones (5);
    - c. Automated external defibrillator (AED);
    - d. Bag valve mask (BVM) resuscitator;
    - e. Disposable blanket;
    - f. Roll of crime scene tape;
    - g. Measuring device (e.g., roll-a-tape);
    - h. Spray paint;
    - i. Charged fire extinguisher;
    - j. Stuffed animal; and
    - k. Ballistic helmet and plate carrier.
  - 2. Members will re-supply the items from on-hand inventories.

**Post-trip inspections:**

- A. The vehicle exterior, interior and trunk / cargo area will be inspected for any signs of new damage.
- B. The vehicle interior and trunk / cargo area will be inspected for weapons, contraband or property / evidence.

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- C. Any used supplies will be replenished (e.g., flares, blanket)
- D. The vehicle will be returned to the parking lot with an acceptable level of fuel.
  - 1. Patrol and code enforcement vehicles – at least 3/4 of a tank of fuel.
  - 2. Other vehicles – at least 1/2 a tank of fuel.
- B. The vehicle will be left clean and cleared of trash.
- C. Additional equipment (e.g., speed measuring devices, issued weapons, gear / equipment bags) will be removed.
- D. Vehicle keys will be returned to the proper location.

**14.3 DOWNED VEHICLES**

Whenever a vehicle is removed from operational use because of mechanical breakdown, servicing or other reason, the member removing it from service will notify fleet. In the case of a patrol vehicle, they will enter the information on the maintenance board. In the case of another type of vehicle (e.g., Criminal Investigation Section administrative vehicles), they will notify any affected personnel.

**14.4 DEPARTMENT VEHICLE PARKING PLAN**

The Patrol Division Captain will be responsible for regulating the parking of department and personal vehicles in the parking lot to the south / east of the building. Information will be updated and disseminated to affected personnel, as needed.

**14.5 USE OF SEAT BELTS**

All vehicle occupants to include any passengers or detainees, will use a seat belt while the vehicle is in operation unless:

- A. The vehicle will be traveling at slow speeds and it may be necessary for a sworn member to exit the vehicle quickly in which case the use of a seat belt is at their discretion (§ 42-4-237(3)(c), C.R.S.); or
- B. A detainee is restrained in such a manner that the ability to use a seat belt is impeded.

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**14.6 VEHICLE SECURITY**

Members will secure their vehicle when they will be away from the immediate vicinity. Members will turn off the ignition unless it necessary to leave the vehicle running.

**14.7 SCENE PROTECTION**

Members should strategically position vehicles and utilize emergency equipment when such use is necessary (e.g., traffic contacts, crash scenes, crime scenes, motorist assists, traffic direction).

**14.8 USE OF PUSH BUMPERS**

Pursuant to § 42-4-1803(2), C.R.S., in order to eliminate an obstruction to traffic or proper roadway maintenance, members may use a vehicle equipped with push bumpers to move an attended or unattended vehicle, cargo, or debris from a public roadway. Additionally, members will not be liable for any damages so long as their actions were intended to clear the obstruction and create as little damage as possible.

Documentation and reporting of damage:

- A. Damage caused by use of the push bumpers is not a traffic crash.
- B. In cases of minor damage occurring, relative to the nature of the obstruction to be removed (e.g., scratches / dents), the watch commander will be notified and a description of the damage will be noted in the incident related documentation (e.g., CAD notes, case report). No Incident Review Board documentation or review is necessary.
- C. In cases of more serious damage, the directives for the reporting of damage to property (e.g., Incident Review Board) will apply.
- D. In cases where the extent of the damage is questionable the watch commander will respond to the location and assess / classify the damage.

Push bumpers will not be used to pull an obstruction or, unless exigency requires it, used in a way that would likely result in damage to the push bumpers and/or the vehicle they are attached to.

**14.9 VEHICLE OPERATING PROCEDURES – NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Under normal, non-emergency operating conditions and when responding to calls for service, vehicle operators will adhere to all traffic laws, drive in a safe and courteous manner and comply with parking regulations.

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**14.10 VEHICLE OPERATING PROCEDURES – EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Emergency response to an emergency call will be made in compliance with § 42-1-102(6), § 42-4-108, and § 42-4-213, C.R.S. In addition, the following guidelines will apply:

- A. Both emergency lights and siren will be utilized unless use of the siren would be detrimental to the situation (e.g., tactical considerations / needs);
- B. The number of members responding will be commensurate with the type of situation and the resources needed; and
- C. When practical, a member will advise the Communications Center of the emergency response.

All members authorized to engage in emergency response will be knowledgeable of all applicable laws, directives and other relevant information.

**14.11 TRAFFIC CRASHES INVOLVING DEPARTMENT VEHICLES**

All traffic crashes involving department vehicles will be reported to the watch commander as soon as possible and the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction. The watch commander will notify an on duty or the on-call division head, as necessary.

If the traffic crash occurs within the department's jurisdiction:

- A. The watch commander will respond to the location and ensure a complete investigation is conducted.
- B. Investigative responsibility:
  - 1. If the crash is minor in nature (e.g., single car, minor damage, minor traffic violations), the watch commander will complete the investigation. They may utilize the expertise and technical knowledge of others to assist.
  - 2. If the watch commander is involved, or the nature of the crash is serious in nature or involves a potential conflict of interest, impropriety or liability concerns (e.g., injuries, serious traffic / criminal charges, severity of damage), the watch commander will contact an on duty or on-call division head. Upon consideration of the available facts, the division head may choose to have the watch commander complete the investigation or have an outside law enforcement agency respond and complete the investigation.

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- C. All crashes, regardless of extent of damage, will be photographed, if practical. The photographs should clearly depict all aspects of the crash (e.g., evidentiary materials or items, damage sustained by all vehicles, property involved, road conditions, weather conditions, obstructions to vision).
- D. Any non-department member found to be at fault may be issued a summons and complaint at the scene.
- E. If the crash was investigated by the department, the Chief of Police in conjunction with a member's division head, will determine if traffic and/or criminal charges should be initiated against a member following the completion of the investigation and any internal reviews (e.g., Incident Review Board, Professional Standards Investigation).

If the traffic crash occurs outside of the department's jurisdiction:

- A. The investigation will be conducted by the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction in accordance with their procedures.
- B. The watch commander will be responsible for obtaining copies of all necessary paperwork for internal use.

Traffic crashes will be reported and reviewed in accordance with the procedures in *GPD PPM Chapter 8 – Incident Review Board*.

Field observation following a preventable accident:

- A. If it is determined that a member is deemed to be at fault for a traffic crash deemed by the Incident Review Board process as "preventable", they may be required to complete a field observation of their driving abilities.
- B. The observer will be determined by the involved member's division head.
- C. The observation will occur within 30 days of the crash being deemed preventable and an observer being selected.
- D. The observer will be responsible for completing a *Field Driver Observation Form* and forwarding it to Human Resources via the involved member's division head.

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**14.12 TAKE HOME VEHICLE GUIDELINES**

Members authorized to use a take home vehicle by the Chief of Police (or his / her designee) will abide by the guidelines listed in this policy. Take home vehicles fall into two categories that will define the latitude of use:

- A. Unmarked vehicles: Include any City of Golden owned or leased vehicle that does not display Golden Police Department insignia or markings and is assigned to a member primarily in an on-call capacity. Approval is for full vehicle use within the geographic parameters, up to 50 miles from the office when off duty and the member is officially serving in an on-call capacity or is assigned a vehicle as a stipulation of their position (Chief / Deputy Chief).
- B. Marked vehicles: Include any City of Golden owned or leased vehicle or motorcycle that displays Golden Police Department insignia or markings and is assigned to a member. Approval is allowed for the assigned member to travel to and from work and for other Golden Police Department official duties.

Each member authorized to drive a city vehicle during off-duty time shall follow the following guidelines:

- A. The City shall pay for all gas, oil, and other required maintenance or repair of the take home vehicle.
- B. Take home vehicles shall be driven in a safe and proper manner with the member operating the vehicle in full compliance with all department and city policies and in accordance with all traffic laws and regulations.
- C. The member shall not consume any alcoholic beverage before or during the use of the take home vehicle.
- D. While not in use, all unmarked vehicles shall be stored in a garage when possible. If not possible, the member shall ensure that all weapons and other department equipment will be removed from the vehicle. Regardless of parked location, the vehicle shall remain locked when not in use.
- E. All marked vehicles will be stored in a garage when not in use. This includes patrol vehicles, the canine patrol car, and police motorcycles.
- F. Absent an emergency, the assigned member is the only authorized person to operate the take home vehicle outside of work duties.
- G. Members will maintain a plan for the safe transportation of their families should they be called into work.