



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations

Section: 405.3

Subject: Vehicle Operations

Topic: Operation of Special Purpose Vehicles

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Review: 10/01/2025

I. PURPOSE

The intent of this directive is to establish operational guidelines for all [special purpose vehicles](#) that are used by personnel in the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office as well as criteria for their use.

II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to maintain a sufficient number and type of special purpose vehicles to meet the operational needs of the agency. In addition, the agency shall ensure that all persons assigned to operate a special purpose vehicle fully understand the capabilities, limitations, and criteria for deployment, and associated operational procedures and techniques. To achieve these goals, the agency shall establish minimum training standards and qualifications for each designated operator of each vehicle.

Each special purpose vehicle shall maintain a written inventory of specialized equipment that is assigned to the vehicle.

Each special purpose vehicle, or trailer they are stored on, may have a usage log. After usage of the vehicle or trailer, it shall be the responsibility of the operator to complete the usage log.

III. VEHICLE TYPE AND SPECIFICATIONS

A. Motorcycles

1. Operational Objectives

- a. Motorcycles shall be used in specific circumstances and areas to increase mobility and close contact with the public.

2. Motorcycles shall be used in the following situations/areas:

- a. Shopping centers, congested residential and commercial complexes, school grounds, where cruiser maneuverability is restricted or impractical, public parks, trails, and recreational areas where high visibility is desired, but vehicle operation is limited due to terrain and/or pedestrian traffic.
- b. Selective traffic enforcement on heavily traveled roadways, where maneuverability is restricted due to vehicle congestion.

- c. Ceremonial functions where high visibility and maneuverability is desired.
- 3. In addition to compliance with other directives and policies regarding Sheriff's Office vehicle operation, adherence to the following guidelines is required when operating an agency motorcycle:
 - a. Pursuits shall be discontinued as soon as a marked patrol vehicle (cruiser) is in position to assume the chase.
 - b. Only motorcycles equipped with emergency blue lights, siren, and a mobile radio transceiver shall engage in emergency response modes and/or participate in a pursuit.
 - c. Agency motorcycles shall not be used to transport any persons other than the operator, except under the most exigent circumstances.
 - d. Motorcycles shall not be operated in any manner which may endanger the public.
- 4. Strict adherence to agency policies and procedures pertaining to the maintenance, repair, and operational readiness of motorcycles is required.
- 5. Motorcycles shall be deployed in accordance with the guidelines established in this General Order and in conjunction with existing agency policies.
- 6. The following person(s) is/are authorized to direct the deployment and operation of Sheriff's Office motorcycles:
 - a. Sheriff, Bureau Commander, or his/her designee
 - b. Operational Support Division Commander or Assistant Division Commander
 - c. Traffic Safety Section Supervisor
- 7. Based on criteria established by the Sheriff or his/her designee, deputies shall be chosen for assignment as a motorcycle operator through a designated selection process.
 - a. Deputies must possess a valid motorcycle operator's license (Class "M") issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles and be physically fit. A complete physical examination may be required before assignment, at the discretion of the Sheriff.
 - b. Persons selected for motorcycle duty must complete a recognized Law Enforcement Motorcycle Operator's course of at least eighty hours in length and on-the-job training prior to being assigned to regular motorcycle duty.

- c. Unless under the direct supervision of a certified Law Enforcement Motorcycle Operator, only those persons who have met the minimum qualifications and completed the appropriate training shall operate a Sheriff's Office motorcycle for any purpose other than traveling to and from their agency-approved training course.
 - 8. Sheriff's Office motorcycles shall be equipped with, at minimum, the following equipment:
 - a. First aid kit
 - b. Mobile radio transceiver
 - c. Emergency lights
 - d. Siren
 - 9. Deputies assigned to motorcycle patrol shall inspect the motorcycle at the beginning and end of each tour of duty for mechanical and safety defects. Mechanical and/or safety problems shall be immediately brought to the attention of the Traffic Safety Section Supervisor. The supervisor of the Traffic Safety Section shall be responsible for ensuring the operational readiness of agency motorcycles.
 - a. The Traffic Safety Section Supervisor shall ensure that routine and emergency mechanical service is conducted at facilities designated by the County's Department of General Services Fleet Operations.
- B. All-Terrain Vehicles ("ATVs") and Utility Terrain Vehicles ("UTVs")
- 1. Operational Objectives
 - a. ATVs/UTVs shall be used in areas where conventional Sheriff's vehicles are not suited for travel.
 - 2. Conditions and Limitations of Use
 - a. The deployment and/or operation of ATVs/UTVs shall be at the direction of the Operational Support Division Commander or his/her designee or the staff duty officer if an incident commander is at an active scene. The Operational Support Division Commander shall be notified whenever ATVs/UTVs are deployed.
 - 3. Operational Requirements

- a. Operators shall have successfully completed a qualified ATV/UTV training program administered by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office.
- b. Operators shall wear the proper safety equipment to include helmet, shield or safety glasses, over-the-ankle boots, long pants, and a shirt that is clearly recognized as Sheriff's Office issue (if appropriate) when operating an ATV/UTV.

4. Inspection/ Maintenance

- a. Each operator shall be responsible for the inspection and maintenance of the ATV/UTV.
 - i. Fluid checks shall be completed prior to deployment.
 - ii. The operator shall ensure the fuel tank is full prior to storing the ATV/UTV.
 - iii. Whenever possible the ATV should be cleaned off prior to storage. If this cannot be done, the Search and Rescue Program Coordinator shall be notified prior to storing the ATV.
 - iv. Maintenance problems or damage shall be reported to the Search and Rescue Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

5. Equipment

- a. Each ATV/UTV shall be equipped with adequate helmets and other emergency equipment as deemed necessary by the Operational Support Division Commander and the Search and Rescue Program Coordinator.

C. Prisoner Transport Vans and Work Force Program Van/Truck

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The prisoner transport vans, and Work Force Program vehicles shall be used to facilitate the movement of multiple prisoners and/or prisoners with special needs to increase safety and/or efficiency.

2. Conditions and Limitations of Use

- a. A prisoner transport van or the Work Force Program vehicle shall be used to facilitate the movement of prisoners to locations both within and outside the county, as deemed appropriate.

- b. Prisoner transport vans shall also be used to transport subjects in custody who, because of a medical condition or violent nature, may be at risk in a regular patrol vehicle.
 - c. The vans and trucks may also be used to transport Sheriff's Office personnel and equipment in support of official activities, as deemed appropriate.
 - d. The vans and trucks shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policies relating to motor vehicle operation and prisoner transportation.
 - e. A prisoner transport van shall not engage in pursuits, except under the most exigent circumstances and when no prisoners are being transported. Under no circumstance shall the Work Force Program vehicle engage in any pursuit.
 - f. Operation of a prisoner transport van or Work Force Program vehicle shall be limited to those persons designated as drivers by the appropriate division commander where the vehicle is assigned.
3. The Transportation Unit supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring the mechanical and operational readiness of the ADC prisoner transport vans and shall coordinate both routine and emergency mechanical service, as appropriate. The Work Release Program supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring the operational readiness of the Work Force Program van/truck and shall coordinate both routine and emergency mechanical service, as needed.
4. Prisoner transport vans shall be equipped with, at a minimum, the following equipment:
- a. Mobile radio transceiver
 - b. Emergency lights
 - c. Siren
 - d. First aid kit
 - e. Other equipment as deemed necessary and appropriate by the appropriate Division Commander where the vehicle is assigned.

D. Special Operations Section (S.O.S.) Support Vehicle

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall be used to provide a readily moveable and available vehicle in which support equipment is stored and then transported to the scene of operations. Once on the scene, the S.O.S. Support Vehicle may function as the S.O.S. command post. Depending upon the nature of the incident, the vehicle may be deployed from the command post to the target location as a forward operating post.
- b. Conditions and Limitations of Use
 - i. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall be utilized as a secure, moveable container in which S.O.S. support equipment may be transported to the scene of any approved operation.
 - ii. All equipment, including firearms, maintained on the S.O.S. Support Vehicle will be stored in an appropriate manner in an approved locking system.
 - iii. On the scene of any operation, the S.O.S. Support Vehicle may function as the team's command post.
 - iv. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle may be used to transport team members from staging areas to incidents in situations where advance notice of an operation is made.
 - v. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, and directives relating to the operation of Sheriff's vehicles.
 - vi. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall not engage in any pursuit of a motor vehicle, except under the most exigent of circumstances.
 - vii. Operation of the S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall be limited to those persons designated as drivers by the Field Operations Division Commander, S.O.S., Team Commander, or his/her designee.
2. The S.O.S. Team Commander or his/her designee shall be responsible for ensuring the mechanical and operational readiness of the vehicle and shall coordinate both routine and emergency mechanical service, as necessary.
3. The S.O.S. Support Vehicle shall be equipped with, at a minimum, the following equipment:
 - a. Mobile radio

- b. Emergency lights
- c. Siren
- d. Other equipment deemed necessary and appropriate by the S.O.S. Commander.

E. Special Operations Section (S.O.S.) Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV)

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The S.O.S. ARV shall be used to provide a readily moveable and available position cover. Depending on the situation the ARV may serve as the S.O.S. command post or be deployed to the target location and serve as a forward operating post.

2. Conditions and Limitations of Use

- a. The S.O.S. ARV may serve to:
 - i. Provide a secure and safer means to conduct rescues of individuals during critical incidents.
 - ii. Transport Sheriff's Office personnel to approved operations.
 - iii. Provide a position of cover to Sheriff's Office personnel on scene at operations.
 - iv. On the scene of an operation, the S.O.S. ARV may function as the team's command post.
 - v. The S.O.S. ARV may be used to transport team members from staging areas to incidents in situations where advance notice of an operation is made.
- b. All equipment, including firearms, maintained on the S.O.S. ARV will be stored in an appropriate manner in an approved locking system.
- c. The S.O.S. ARV shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, and directives relating to the operation of Sheriff's vehicles.
- d. The S.O.S. ARV shall not engage in any motor vehicle pursuit, except under the most exigent conditions.

- e. Operation of the S.O.S. ARV shall be limited to those persons designated as drivers by the Field Operations Division Commander or S.O.S. Team Commander
- 3. The S.O.S. Team Commander or his/her designee shall be responsible for ensuring the mechanical and operational readiness of the S.O.S. ARV and shall coordinate both routine and emergency mechanical service as necessary.
- 4. The S.O.S. ARV shall be equipped with, at a minimum, the following equipment:
 - a. Mobile radio
 - b. Emergency lights
 - c. Siren
 - d. Other equipment as deemed necessary and appropriate by the S.O.S. Commander.

F. Traffic Safety Truck

- 1. Operational Objectives
 - a. The Traffic Safety Truck shall be utilized to enhance the response of the Traffic Safety Section to major motor vehicle crashes and other traffic safety related responses.
- 2. Conditions and Limitations of Use
 - a. The Traffic Safety Truck shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policy, procedure, and directives related to the operation of Sheriff's vehicles.
 - b. Operation of the Traffic Safety Truck shall be limited to the members of the Traffic Safety Section or their designee.
 - c. The Traffic Safety Truck shall not engage in the pursuit of a motor vehicle, except under the most exigent circumstances.
 - d. The Traffic Safety Truck shall be used to store support equipment that may be transported to the scene of a motor vehicle crash.
 - e. The Traffic Safety Truck may be used to tow speed trailers, signboards, and other agency trailers.

G. Mobile Command Unit

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The Mobile Command Unit shall be utilized as a command post and/or communication van at the scene of a major incident.
- b. Conditions and Limitations of Use
 - i. The Mobile Command Unit shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policy, procedure, and directives related to the operations of Sheriff's vehicles.
 - ii. Operation of the Mobile Command Unit shall be limited to persons designated as a driver by the Operational Support Division Commander or his/her designee.
 - iii. The Mobile Command Unit shall not engage in the pursuit of a motor vehicle except under the most exigent circumstances.
- c. The Mobile Command Unit shall house equipment for emergency incidents, which may include but is not limited to surveillance cameras, video recorder/player and television, agency radios, scene lighting, and equipment and supplies related to large-scale events.

H. Underwater Search and Evidence Recovery Team ("USERT") Vehicle

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The USERT vehicle shall be used to transport equipment and personnel to the site of water-related recoveries and investigations.

2. Conditions and Limitations of Use

- a. The USERT vehicle shall be used to store and transport dive equipment to the scene of a USERT operation.
- b. The USERT vehicle shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, and directives related to the operation of Sheriff's vehicles.
- c. Operation of the USERT vehicle shall be limited to those persons designated as drivers by the Operational Support Division Commander.
- d. The USERT vehicle shall not engage in the pursuit of a motor vehicle except under the most exigent circumstances.

3. The USERT vehicle shall be equipped with, at minimum, the following equipment:

- a. First aid kit
- b. Mobile radio transceiver
- c. Emergency lights
- d. Siren

I. USERT Boat

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The USERT boat shall only be used for active search and recovery work of all types of evidence.

2. Conditions and Limitations of Use:

- a. Operation of the USERT boat shall be limited to those persons certified in boat operations by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries who also possess a valid United States Coast Guard Boat operator's license.
- b. The operator of the boat is responsible for the safe operation of the boat and will determine where the boat may go as well as the course and speed the boat is driven in the body of water.

J. Crisis Negotiation Team ("CNT") Vehicle

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The Sheriff's Office CNT vehicle shall be used to provide a readily moveable and available vehicle in which support equipment is stored and then transported to the scene of a critical incident. Once on the scene of an incident, the CNT vehicle functions as the Crisis Negotiation Team's command post and serves as a platform for crisis negotiations to take place.

2. Conditions and Limitations of Use

- a. The CNT vehicle shall be utilized as a secure, moveable unit in which CNT equipment may be transported and utilized at the scene of a critical incident.
- b. On the scene of any critical incident, the CNT vehicle shall function as the CNT command post.

- c. The CNT vehicle shall be utilized for all CNT members to conduct negotiations and intelligence gathering during critical incidents.
 - d. During periods the CNT vehicle is not being utilized, the vehicle may be used as a platform for the staging and deployment of other Sheriff's Office teams and personnel for events and incidents as the need arises under the direction of the Operational Support Division Commander or his/her designee.
 - e. The CNT vehicle shall be operated in accordance with all Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, and directives relating to the operations of Sheriff's vehicles.
 - f. The CNT vehicle shall not engage in any pursuit of a motor vehicle, except under the most exigent circumstances.
 - g. Operation of the CNT vehicle shall be limited to CNT members or to persons designated by the Operational Support Division Commander or the CNT Commander.
 - h. The CNT Commander or his/her designee shall be responsible for ensuring the mechanical and operational readiness of the vehicle and shall coordinate both routine and emergency mechanical service, as appropriate.
3. The CNT vehicle shall be equipped with, at a minimum, the following equipment:
- a. Mobile radio
 - b. Emergency lights
 - c. Siren
 - d. Other equipment as deemed necessary and appropriate by the CNT Commander

K. Operational Support Division Trailers

1. Operational Objectives

- a. The Operational Support Division trailers shall be used to transport vehicles, equipment and other items authorized by the Sheriff or his/her designee to locations where they are needed.
- b. Conditions and Limitations of Use

- i. There are several specialty trailers of different sizes and with different towing requirements assigned to the Operational Support Division.
- ii. The vehicle being operated shall be capable of handling the size and weight of the trailer it is towing.
- iii. The driver shall understand the capabilities and limitations of the vehicle and trailer that is being operated.
- iv. Drivers shall attend a trailer towing course offered by EVOC staff or an approved academy.

V. SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

- A. At least semi-annually, each unit supervisor who has designated special purpose vehicles under his/her control shall inspect all equipment designated for use during unusual occurrences for operational readiness. These formal, written inspections shall be routed through each Division Commander to the Accreditation Unit.