



APPENDIX 17 – A

DIVISIONAL VEHICLES

UPDATED 05/05/2026

I. VEHICLE OPERATION

Any officer found to be in violation of any portion of this policy may have their privilege to operate an assigned vehicle suspended or revoked.

A. Operational Requirements

1. It is not sufficient that an officer merely utilizes good judgment and officer safety tactics while handling citizens' calls for police service. It is imperative that sound judgments, the safety of our officers, and the safety of our citizens become the priority during every moment that a New Castle County Police Officer is operating a police vehicle.
2. Assigned officers should take great care to observe all traffic and parking regulations. Except under emergency circumstances, assigned officers will not exceed the speed limit and shall also not obstruct the normal flow of vehicular traffic.
3. The safe operation of a police vehicle shall always be the responsibility of the operating officer. The use of a laptop, police radio, or any other device while driving shall always be secondary to the safe operation of the police vehicle. Officers should carefully consider the need to safely stop the police vehicle before using any of the aforementioned devices, if such usage will divert the officer's attention from the safe operation of the police vehicle.
 - a. The utilization of handheld phones during the operation of police vehicles significantly increases operator distraction from the task at hand. As such, it will now be mandatory that all police personnel operating a divisionally issued vehicle utilize a hands-free device to make and receive all calls. New Castle County employees who are issued a cellular phone will be issued a hands-free device at the County's expense. All officers utilizing personal cell phones while operating police vehicles will be required to furnish their own hands-free device. Employees are reminded that the definition of 'operating a vehicle' includes those vehicles that are stationary due to traffic, a traffic signal, stop sign or similar device.
 - b. Additionally, the use of the laptop, cellular communication devices, and other items that might distract the police officer from driving shall be limited to the following:
 - i. Acknowledging an emergency call or message when a delay would be unreasonable.
 - ii. Reporting a disposition when necessary.
 - iii. Running a time-sensitive MDT or telephone inquiry (e.g., registration and/or wanted check).

- iv. The safe operation of police vehicles is paramount, and collisions involving distractions while driving a police vehicle will be handled through the divisional discipline matrix for collisions.
- 4. No employee will tamper with, disconnect, or intentionally disable any county owned or leased equipment, including any equipment which may be temporarily or permanently installed on or about a county police vehicle.
- 5. No members of the Division will leave their vehicle unattended while the engine is running. The only exception to this policy is for the members of the Patrol Canine Team. Members of the Patrol Canine Team may leave their vehicle's engine running while the vehicle is unattended to ensure the safety of the canine present in the vehicle.
- 6. Whenever operating a New Castle County Police vehicle, officers must carry in their possession their division issued identification card, police badge, firearm, and handcuffs. While involvement in a non-essential policing task is discouraged, officers must always be prepared for an emergency.
- 7. While it is not a requirement that officers be in uniform while operating an assigned vehicle during off-duty hours, it is required that they maintain a well-groomed appearance, which should be reflected in their chosen attire.
- 8. While in off-duty status, assigned officers are responsible for ensuring the well-being of any stranded or disabled motorists in an emergency or life-threatening situation. The officer shall assist and address the needs of the motorist in distress.
 - a. The same rule will apply to traffic hazards and criminal violations observed by the officer during off-duty hours while operating a division vehicle.
 - b. The officer shall summon help from another officer or agency if necessary.
 - i. If outside of New Castle County, but within the State of Delaware, the officer will use the appropriate radio frequency to communicate with the appropriate communications center, to provide the details of the situation, and request any necessary assistance.
 - c. At no time will an officer be neglectful of their duty merely because they are in an off-duty capacity.
 - d. Overtime will only be authorized in unusual situations which require the officer's commitment for an extended period, with the knowledge and approval of an on-duty supervisor.

B. Operational Accountability

1. Officers should be aware that the operation of police vehicles should conform to Division policy, procedures, and State laws.
2. All police vehicles equipped with a GPS system can be monitored to determine the vehicle's location. Vehicles may also be equipped with in-car audio/video camera systems. Should the need arise, GPS information and in-car audio/video camera systems content can be retrieved or examined to evaluate both an officer's driving and conduct.
 - a. Officers must have their GPS activated and functioning whenever they are in (equipped) NCCPD vehicles and on duty.
 - i. The GPS connects to the computer via a USB cable or if the vehicle is equipped with integrated Wi-Fi, it connects wirelessly.
 - 1) If the GPS is not tracking, the officer should re-run the set-up wizard on their computer to attempt to reconnect.
 - 2) If connection/tracking issues persist, the officer must contact their supervisor and the Axon/Wireless Technology Administrator immediately.

C. Occupant safety restraining devices

1. The driver and passenger(s) shall wear their seat belts while traveling in a County-owned vehicle.
2. Whenever possible, all prisoners in transport shall wear seatbelts.
 - a. It may be impractical at times due to unusual circumstances; however, every effort shall be made to use seat belts on prisoners.
3. Absent lifesaving efforts, no member of the Division shall modify, damage, or cut any seat belt or shoulder harness. Any officer who is found responsible for such damage shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Note: For further information, refer to Appendix 26-B Division of Police General Conduct and Penalties.

4. All children must be properly secured in a seatbelt or restrained in a federally approved child safety seat appropriate for the child's age, weight, and height.
5. Child safety seats can only be used in Division vehicles that do not have prisoner partitions and/or plastic prisoner restraint seats.
6. All children must be transported in the rear seat of the automobile. **(41.3.3)**

D. Collisions

1. Any police officer whose contributory negligence or recklessness results in a division collision may be relieved from duty and assigned to either the Traffic Services Unit or the Training Unit for driver reevaluation, and/or remedial training. Progressive discipline under the Division's Collision Matrix will be applied. The Chief of Police, or designee, will give final approval for an officer to resume normal operational status following reevaluation and/or the successful completion of remedial driver training, as communicated by the Professional Development Section Commander.

E. Fatal Collisions

1. Officers involved in any fatal collision operating a county-owned vehicle shall be removed from the line of duty and placed on paid administrative leave by the Chief of Police, through consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The paid administrative leave shall be for a period of up to 72 hours (three workdays), at which time a determination will be made by the Chief of Police if the paid administrative leave should be continued. While on paid administrative leave, the involved officer(s) shall remain available for any necessary administrative investigations. The involved officer(s) may be authorized additional administrative leave with the approval of the Chief of Police, or if the Division psychologist is not ready to release the officer(s) to modified duty.
 - a. The Staff Medical Liaison shall notify the County Attorney and the County's Risk Manager of the incident.
 - b. The Staff Medical Liaison, through the New Castle County Risk Management Office, shall arrange with the Division's contracted psychologist to have the involved officer(s) seen for a psychological consultation. Upon completion of a psychological consultation, the officer may be returned to work in a modified duty status until the conclusion of the investigations. When possible, the psychological consultation should occur no more than five (5) calendar days after the incident.
 - c. Involved officers who appear to be coping well immediately after a critical incident may later experience difficult psychological symptoms; therefore, an involved officer shall report for a follow-up psychological consultation four (4) months after the event. If an involved officer wishes to meet with a psychologist for additional consultation, he/she shall be afforded the opportunity to do so at no cost to the involved officer(s).
 - d. Neither the psychological consultation, nor the administrative leave, will be interpreted in any manner that would give the impression that some form of discipline is being imposed.
 - i. Any division personnel riding in the vehicle will be afforded an opportunity to meet with a psychologist for a consultation at no cost.
 - e. All collisions involving injury or extensive property damage within Delaware involving Department of Public Safety vehicles are investigated by the Traffic Services Unit.

Note: For details related to collision investigations, refer to Directive 61, Traffic.

II. EQUIPMENT

A. Vehicle Equipment

1. Only vehicles with emergency equipment and authorized as emergency vehicles, as defined in Title 21 § 4106 and 21 § 4307 of the Delaware Traffic Code, shall conduct traffic stops, engage in pursuits, and participate in emergency responses.
 - a. Undercover vehicles will not be used to conduct traffic stops, engage in pursuits, participate in emergency responses, or disregard traffic control devices.
 - i. An undercover vehicle is defined as a vehicle without Divisional markings and with no emergency equipment.

2. Each police vehicle used for daily patrol will be equipped with at least the following equipment for easy identification by the public:
 - a. The Division's name on the side-mounted door seals, the rear of the trunk lid and on the front license plate.
 - b. The numbers 9-1-1, designating the Division's emergency number, on both sides.
 - c. The vehicle number on the front and rear bumper.
 - d. Reflective materials on both sides and rear to increase safety.
3. Each police vehicle used for routine patrol shall be equipped with at least the following additional equipment:
 - a. A siren, which can be operated through the siren box or vehicle horn button.
 - b. A public address system.
 - c. A mobile radio transceiver.
 - d. A rooftop light bar which includes:
 - i. Red, blue, and white emergency lights.
 - ii. Forward facing takedown spotlights (white).
 - iii. Side-facing alley lights (white).
 - iv. Alternating high beam headlights.
4. Semi-marked patrol vehicles shall meet at least the following requirements:
 - a. Concealed red and/or blue grille lights.
 - b. An acceptable form of rear emergency lights.
 - c. Alternating high beam headlights.
 - d. A mobile police radio transceiver.
 - e. A public address system.
 - f. A siren, which can be operated through the siren box or vehicle horn button.
 - g. The Division's name on the side mounted door seals.
 - h. The numbers 9-1-1, designating the Division's emergency numbers on both sides.
 - i. Reflective materials on both sides to increase safety.
 - j. The vehicle number on the front and rear bumper.
5. Patrol vehicles/unmarked vehicles used for covert purposes/operations shall meet at least the following requirements:
 - a. Concealed red and/or blue grille lights.
 - b. An acceptable form of rear emergency lights.
 - c. Alternating high beam headlights.
 - d. A mobile police radio transceiver.
 - e. A public address system.
 - f. A siren, which can be operated through the siren box or vehicle horn button.

B. Other Equipment

1. Equipment to be carried inside the fully marked patrol vehicle, the semi-marked vehicle, and the unmarked vehicle:

a. The following equipment is mandatory:

- i. First aid kit.
- ii. Fire extinguisher.
- iii. At least 12 emergency flares.
- iv. Emergency Response Guidebook (physical or digital).
- v. Bag mask device (manual resuscitator).
- vi. Disposable gloves.
- vii. Spare tire and jack.
- viii. Reflective traffic vest.
 - 1) Officers are required to wear reflective clothing while directing traffic or in the roadway controlling traffic.
- ix. Air purifying respirator mask.

b. The following items, if assigned to an officer and/or installed in the assigned vehicle, shall be kept in a state of operational readiness and available for use by the officer during their tour of duty:

i. Laptop computers.

Note: For details, refer to Appendix 41-C Computer Use Policy.

ii. In-car audio/video recording system.

Note: For details, refer to Appendix 41-D Mobile Video System.

iii. Mobile Handheld Fingerprint Scanner.

Note: For details, refer to Appendix 41-M Mobile Handheld Fingerprint Scanner.

iv. Printer and paper.

v. Radar unit.

vi. Division approved interior partition shotgun/rifle rack.

Note: The shotgun/rifle rack will only be used by officers who have received training by the Primary Firearms Instructor or designee in the proper use of the rack.

vii. Division issued shotgun/rifle.

viii. Less lethal weapons.

ix. Tire deflation devices.

Note: Tire deflation devices must be kept secured to prevent loss or unauthorized access, whether on or off duty.

While on duty, the Piranha device may be stored in the glove box for quick access. When off duty, it should be secured in the truck safe of the patrol vehicle.

- x. Police whistle.
- xi. Light box key.
- xii. Flex-cuffs.
- xiii. Web gear.
- xiv. Narcan kits.
- xv. AED.
- xvi. Ballistic helmet.

Note: Helmets should be marked with the Officer's Employee Identification Number from PeopleSoft. **(46.1.11)**

- xvii. Ballistic shields.
 - xviii. Rifle vest.
 - xix. Trauma Pack.
 - xx. Tourniquet kit.
 - xxi. All other division-issued material necessary for the duties associated with the officer's assignment.
 - 1) Patrol officers must carry their division issued evidence detection kit for processing crime scenes.
 - c. All the equipment and supplies listed above are issued by the Division and are available to be replaced and/or repaired to ensure each item's state of operational readiness. **(41.3.2)**
 - d. Fire extinguishers are to be maintained in the vehicle's trunk area. It shall be the assigned officer's responsibility to ensure the extinguisher is secured in the trunk bracket and is properly charged and tagged.
2. Equipment which the officer may, at their option, take with them on patrol:
- a. Blankets.
 - b. Extraction devices.
 - c. Collision investigation devices (Traffic Services Unit personnel shall have this equipment assigned to them). **(41.3.4)**
 - d. Sharp knife.

Note: Division members are authorized to carry a knife for use in situations requiring a cutting edge that may arise in the performance of their duties (i.e., cutting rope, etc.).

C. Equipment Care and Storage Responsibilities

1. The care of division issued equipment is the responsibility of the assigned officer. This equipment includes (but is not limited to) portable radios, handcuffs, ASP batons, Taser Energy Weapon (TEW), OC spray, firearms, magazines, ammunition, less lethal weapons and ammunition, body armor, department issued badge and identification, and uniforms, including coats and jackets, and non-uniform attire containing police identifiers (including but not limited to items with screen print badges, patches, etc.). These items should never be left in plain view during off-duty hours.
 - a. Firearms, magazines, ammunition, uniforms, and the department issued identification, and badges must be removed from the vehicle during off-duty hours. They must be stored in a locked, secure location at either the officer's residence or the Cpl. Paul J. Sweeney Public Safety Building.
 - i. The trunk or gun vault installed in an officer's assigned vehicle is NOT considered to be an acceptable secure location for firearms, magazines, ammunition, uniforms, or departmentally issued identification and badges during off-duty hours.
 - b. During off-duty hours, an officer's (personal or departmentally issued) rifle shall never be left secured in the shotgun/rifle rack in the interior compartment of the officer's assigned vehicle. The rifle shall be removed from the shotgun/rifle rack and secured inside the officer's residence. The Cpl. Paul J. Sweeney Public Safety Building is the only other acceptable location.
 - c. Anytime a patrol vehicle is left unattended for an extended period while on-duty, i.e. training or a court appearance, it is recommended that the rifle or shotgun be removed from the shotgun/rifle rack and stored in the trunk of the vehicle or the gun vault. If equipped, a division issued cable trunk lock must be utilized to further secure the trunk of the vehicle.
 - d. Laptops must be locked in the computer mount at all times when left in the vehicle, on or off duty.
 - e. All officers will remove the above-mentioned equipment anytime the assigned vehicle is left at Churchman's Garage for preventive maintenance and/or repairs.
2. Assigned officers are to conduct both a pre-shift and post-shift inspection of their assigned vehicles. The vehicles should be checked for any new damage, and to ensure they are equipped to Division specifications. Any issues or discrepancies will be reported to the assigned officer's immediate supervisor upon discovery.
3. New Castle County Police vehicles are among the most visible symbols of our presence in the communities. For this reason, special care should be taken to ensure that the vehicle's appearance is in keeping with the high standards of the New Castle County Police. The vehicle's exterior, windows, radio equipment, radar units, floor and trunk area are to be kept clean. A vendor is selected each year to perform the car wash function, and assigned officers are responsible for ensuring that their vehicles are washed on a regular basis.

III. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

- A. The basic care of and responsibility for New Castle County Division of Police vehicles, particularly those assigned to individual officers, rests with the assigned police officer. Any complex maintenance or repairs to be performed on these vehicles shall be the primary responsibility of the Fleet Manager in conjunction with the Department of Special Services.
1. Officers needing to have county owned vehicles towed are to contact RECOM who will make the proper notification to Churchman's Garage or the approved vendor for towing services. At no time are personnel to request or permit the towing of county vehicles by any other tow service, private individual or other officer. This includes vehicles disabled due to mechanical issues, vehicle damage, road and/or weather conditions.
 2. A supervisor will be advised when a county owned vehicle requires towing or the vehicle becomes disabled due to mechanical issues, vehicle damage, road and/or weather conditions.
- B. Routine periodic maintenance (PM) shall be completed based on the schedule established by Special Services Personnel. Special Services personnel will affix a static cling service reminder to the inside of the windshield. The reminder will display the mileage or date of next service; whichever comes first. Vehicles will be serviced within 500 miles (under or over) of the mileage requirement. Personnel whose vehicles are over the 500-mile requirement will be subject to progressive discipline.
1. Any officer who is going on vacation, for any amount of time, must return any pool vehicle to Churchman's Road garage personnel, prior to starting the vacation. In addition, officers will not keep pool cars for any period after they have been notified that their assigned vehicle is ready for pick-up at Churchman's Garage.
- C. All requests for vehicle repair/service will be made in writing on a vehicle repair ("down slip") form. The following information is mandated on the described form:
1. Date.
 2. Odometer reading.
 3. Repairs or maintenance requested.
 4. Vehicle number.
 5. Name and IBM number of officer making the request.
- D. To prevent extensive vehicle damage, officers inspecting their vehicles will pay particular attention to the vehicle fluid levels, (i.e., oil, antifreeze) and vehicle tire inflation level. Engine oil, antifreeze, washer fluid, emergency flares, and other items are available at Churchman's Garage. Engine oil, washer fluid, emergency flares and an air hose are also available at the Cpl. Paul J. Sweeney Public Safety Headquarters Building. Any officer who needs assistance with conducting fluid level checks should consult with their supervisor.
- E. Officers shall not make any alterations nor remove any issued equipment or have installed extra equipment, lights, radios, gadgets, or other unauthorized instruments on their assigned vehicles except upon written approval of the Chief of Police. There shall be no unauthorized bumper stickers, devices, decals, special license plates, radio speakers etc. affixed to the police vehicles without permission of the Chief of Police.

- F. Refueling of vehicles shall be the responsibility of the assigned officer and may be accomplished at either the Churchmans Road facility or at contracted service stations serving the Southern District. During the fueling process, officers are expected to remain outside of the vehicle and in view of the fuel pump nozzle. Personnel that cause damage to the vehicle and/or the fuel pump station during refueling will be subject to progressive discipline. Officers should make every effort to refuel prior to the start of their shift or after their shift ends.

IV. TAKE-HOME VEHICLE POLICY

A. Vehicle Assignments

1. The assignment of a take-home vehicle is a privilege and not a benefit guaranteed to each officer, but a means to fulfill our mission statement. It is not a right or entitlement; nor is it the subject for a grievance. Vehicle assignments will be based on Division needs and direction as determined by the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police has the discretion to revoke, suspend, or restrict these privileges at any time if an officer violates any of the provisions of this policy or any Divisional policy, rule, or regulation. The operation of an assigned vehicle shall be governed by division policy and according to the law with safety considerations always being a matter of primary concern to the operator. The Take-Home Vehicle policy may be curtailed, in whole or part, by the Chief of Police.
 - a. Officers, who have been placed on modified duty which limits their ability to drive a police service vehicle, as determined by County medical personnel, will not be authorized to operate their take-home vehicles. Officers who are serving a period of suspension shall not operate their take home vehicle during the period of suspension. Officers will notify their chain of command in writing of any changes to the status of their driver's license. Officers are permitted to drive their assigned police vehicles to and from work or to a designated parking area after they have successfully completed the Field Training Program. The officers will also adhere to all the provisions set forth in this appendix once they are permitted to drive their assigned vehicles home or to a designated parking area.

B. Parking

1. Annually, Division members must complete an Assigned Divisional Vehicle Parking Location form, available on the web-based pass-on system and submit the form through their chain of command to the Chief of Police.
 - a. The form will be valid for one (**1**) year, starting July 1st. A new form must be submitted by June 30th.
 - b. If a Division member changes their parking location for any reason, including a change of residence, or has a change in assignment, including CMG team member status, a new form must be submitted within **15** calendar days of the change.
 - c. Parking locations will be approved at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

2. Vehicles assigned to New Castle County police officers shall be parked at the officer's primary residence during off-duty hours. All officers are required to update the web-based pass-on system with their current primary address. Parking the assigned vehicle at any address other than the primary residence requires the permission of the Chief of Police.
 - a. If the officer resides outside the State of Delaware, the officer must leave the vehicle in the State of Delaware unless otherwise authorized in the exceptions identified below. The officer, with the permission of the Chief of Police, may park the vehicle at a police facility (or other approved location) inside the State of Delaware. The vehicle must remain within the boundaries of the State of Delaware unless on official business or unless authorized in the exceptions identified below.
 - i. All sworn officers taking their vehicles home outside of New Castle County shall only utilize their vehicle to travel to and from work. Conducting personal business in an assigned divisional vehicle while outside of New Castle County is strictly prohibited.
 - b. The following locations will be authorized for off duty hours parking of Division of Police vehicles issued to Officers who reside outside of the State of Delaware. Other locations may be approved at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
 - i. The primary residence of a New Castle County police officer who lives within the boundaries of the State of Delaware, as long as it is with the knowledge and permission of the officer who resides at that location. This option is limited to a maximum total of three (3) Division vehicles per location, unless written approval is obtained from the Chief of Police.
 - ii. The Cpl. Paul J. Sweeney Public Safety Headquarters Building can be used by those officers who reside in surrounding states.
 - iii. 605 North Broad Street, Middletown, Delaware (Former Southern Patrol Unit Building).
 - iv. The Hockessin PAL.
 - v. Delaware State Police Troop 2 – This site has room for three of our units, and requests to use this site will be addressed in writing to the Chief of Police and approval will be issued according to seniority.
3. Exceptions to out-of-state parking
 - a. Command Staff Officers, members of the Professional Standards Unit, Canine Officers, Facility Dog Officers, members of the Investigative Services Section, officers assigned to Crisis Management Group teams (SWAT, EOD, UAS, and CNT), and members of the Mobile Field Force who reside outside of the State of Delaware may take their vehicle home to their primary residence.
 - b. All sworn officers taking their vehicles home outside of New Castle County or the State of Delaware shall only utilize their vehicle to travel to and from work. Conducting personal business in an assigned divisional vehicle while outside of New Castle County or the State of Delaware is strictly prohibited regardless of your on-call status.

4. Officers on extended leave or vacation for **14** calendar days or more and are away from home will park their assigned vehicle at New Castle County Police Headquarters. The officer shall notify their immediate supervisor in writing of the vehicle's disposition and leave the keys to the vehicle with the supervisor for the duration of this vacation period. An officer of command rank may authorize a permanently assigned vehicle to remain at the residence of the vacationing officer if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Division.

C. Conduct

1. New Castle County police officers will be held accountable for the security of their assigned vehicles. For this reason, officers are required to close vehicle windows and lock doors when the vehicles are not in use. This measure will help to ensure that the vehicles are not stolen, as well as safeguarding the contents of the vehicles. Vehicle keys must be removed and properly secured when vehicles are not in use.
2. All officers assigned vehicles shall exercise good judgment while utilizing their vehicle and shall not drive, use, or park vehicles in such a manner or in places that may cause unfavorable comment or reflect discredit upon New Castle County or the Division of Police. The vehicle may not be driven to any political activity or function without prior approval of the Chief of Police.
3. Assigned vehicles will not be driven out of state for any off-duty purpose.
4. The use of any tobacco products is prohibited in any Division vehicles, including the assigned "take home" vehicles.
5. The procurement, storage, transportation, and/or use of alcoholic beverages in assigned vehicles is strictly forbidden. No "take home" vehicle will be operated after an officer has consumed an alcoholic beverage or has used prescription medications, which may impair their driving abilities.
6. Assigned vehicles shall not be used for personal employment or be used to transport a member to and from personal employment.
7. Assigned vehicles will not be utilized off duty to carry heavy or excessive loads and will not have objects protruding from the trunk or windows. The towing package, if equipped, and all associated parts are not to be utilized off duty unless authorized by a supervisor in accordance with their duties.

V. SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES

- A. This Division, at certain times, employs the use of special purpose vehicles.
- B. The use of each special purpose vehicle shall be regulated by Internal Operating Procedures of the unit each vehicle is assigned to. The following areas are addressed:
 1. A statement of the objectives of operation or usage.
 2. Authorization, conditions, and limitations on usage. **(41.1.3.a)**
 3. Qualifications and training for personnel assigned to operate the vehicle. **(41.1.3.b)**
 4. Designation of a person or a position responsible for the condition and maintenance of the vehicle. **(41.1.3.c)**
 5. A listing of equipment, if any, to be kept in or on the vehicle. **(41.1.3.d)**
 6. A list of people or positions authorized to operate the vehicle and its equipment.

Note: For a list of special purpose vehicles, refer to Appendix 41-A.