



Newport News Police Department - Administrative Manual

ADM-545 - ASSIGNED POLICE VEHICLE PROGRAM

Amends/Supersedes: ADM-545 (05/16/2019)

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I. GENERAL

- A. The Newport News Police Department has established a program where police vehicles are assigned to individual employees with the purpose of:
 - 1. Increasing the life of a vehicle and decreasing maintenance costs,
 - 2. Increasing the operational readiness of off-duty personnel during critical incidents,
 - 3. Improving the response process for personnel being called back to duty, and
 - 4. Increasing police visibility with the presence of marked patrol vehicles throughout the City.
- B. The Assigned Police Vehicle Program is in keeping with the department's overall goal to provide efficient and effective police service to the Newport News community.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Marked Police Vehicle*: Any city-owned vehicle belonging to the Newport News Police Department with visible markings on the vehicle's exterior, which would identify the vehicle as a police vehicle (i.e., exterior light bar, police decals, etc.).
- B. *On-Duty*: Assigned work hours in which the department is paying the employee.
- C. *Critical Position*: This means an employee whose responsibilities require responding to serious events when off duty, including those scheduled for call-back. These positions generally include command staff, lieutenants, and investigators.
- D. *Resident*: This means employees who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Newport News.
- E. *Take-Home Vehicle*: A police vehicle that is provided to a police employee to take home and utilize to increase police visibility in the community as well as provide a timely response during emergencies.
- F. *Assigned Vehicle*: Vehicles assigned by the Chief of Police to a police employee.

III. POLICY

- A. The Chief of Police may terminate the Assigned Police Vehicle Program in whole or part and withdraw any vehicle from the program at any time. Such actions are a management decision concerning using valuable city property and may not be grieved.
- B. Police vehicles may only be utilized within Newport News City limits unless conducting an assigned police duty outside its jurisdiction or traveling to and from their residence.
- C. Employees ineligible to take their assigned vehicle home will park it at an NNPD facility. Those who want to park their assigned vehicle at a location other than a police facility must be parked at a city facility with permission from the facility's manager (i.e., fire station, waterworks, etc.).
- D. All NNPD policies and procedures shall remain in effect at all times while assigned police vehicles are operated.

- E. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of the take-home vehicle unless the Chief of Police has approved a specific exemption.
- F. Take-Home Policy
 - 1. Take-home vehicles are considered a privilege and not a requirement.
 - 2. Residents and employees who reside within 15 miles of the City line are eligible to take assigned vehicles home. Generally, this includes all of Hampton, Poquoson, and Smithfield; parts of York County, James City County, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, Suffolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, and Norfolk, excluding Surry.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Administration

- 1. Commanders are responsible for the administration of the program within their areas. They will ensure that employee activities involving this program are monitored and any policy violations are investigated.
- 2. Commanders or designees will monitor the maintenance performed on take-home/assigned vehicles and address deviations from this policy.
- 3. Police employees assigned a take-home vehicle must sign a Receipt For Take-Home Car (NNPD Form #180).

B. Vehicle Assignment

- 1. Vehicles are assigned to personnel based on Department need and vehicle availability.
- 2. The Chief of Police may permit or restrict any vehicle assignment. The Chief of Police may authorize employees who live outside the City to participate in the program based on the needs of the department.
- 3. Generally, vehicles are assigned to positions. Upon transfer, employees with an assigned vehicle will not maintain their specific vehicle assignment. When eligible and available, a new vehicle assignment is made upon transfer. Exceptions to this rule include:
 - a. Investigations Bureau personnel (other than Special Investigations Division personnel) will maintain control over their originally assigned vehicle regardless of intra-bureau transfers.
 - b. Patrol officers with assigned marked vehicles will maintain control over their originally assigned vehicle when transferred to a different patrol assignment.
- 4. Employees will not trade vehicles among themselves without the concurrence of the fleet coordinator through the approval of the Logistics Division manager. Anytime employees swap out assigned vehicles, they must sign a new Receipt For Take-Home Car (NNPD Form #180) for the new vehicle.

C. Eligibility

- 1. Marked police vehicle assignments are limited to sworn personnel working in a patrol capacity (watch or H.I.P.) will be assigned. Personnel must submit a written request for a marked unit assignment through their chain of command.
- 2. Personnel assigned to critical positions are eligible for an assigned unmarked vehicle. No request is necessary, as unmarked vehicles are assigned upon transfer.
- 3. Officers must have completed their field training and not have an active performance improvement plan to be assigned a vehicle.

D. Radio Procedures while Off-Duty

Routine radio procedures shall be followed by off-duty personnel operating a police vehicle.

1. While off-duty personnel operating an assigned vehicle shall keep the police radio on at all times and remain alert to radio traffic. Personnel should monitor the channel assigned to the precinct in which they operate their vehicle.
2. Call Signs
 - a. Off-duty officers operating marked vehicles will use their computer number preceded by the number nine as their unit identifier (i.e., an officer assigned computer number 00269 would become unit 90269).
 - b. All other personnel operating police vehicles will continue to use their assigned radio call sign when off-duty.
3. Off-duty personnel shall keep radio traffic to a minimum. Contact with the Communications Division will be made only when police activity is initiated.
4. When circumstances dictate, supervisors or Communications Division personnel may request the location of off-duty units.

E. Vehicle Operation

1. Police vehicles will only be operated by authorized police personnel. Non-departmental personnel (i.e., family members) may not be transported in police vehicles on or off-duty unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police.
2. Officers operating a police vehicle off-duty are not expected to enforce all traffic laws; however, when officers observe a flagrant violation within the City limits (including running a red light), they are expected to take the appropriate action. Officers may not initiate traffic stops or proactive enforcement actions using their take-home vehicle outside the City limits unless the circumstances are life-threatening.
3. Officers operating marked vehicles are expected to render appropriate aid when they observe someone needing assistance (i.e., a crash just occurred, a vehicle broken down in an unsafe location) or are requested to assist. Officers should stand by until they are relieved or are no longer needed.
4. An off-duty officer operating a take-home vehicle will respond to calls for service within the jurisdiction of the City of Newport News, where their response may result in the prevention of a crime or perpetrator arrest unless a supervisor or Communications Division personnel cancel the response. The officer will:
 - a. Notify the Communications Division of their proximity to the incident;
 - b. Respond as if they were on duty (i.e., all department directives, policies, and procedures shall be adhered to);
 - c. Disengage their response when canceled by a supervisor or the Communications Division.
5. Employees will not assume special privileges, including exceeding posted speed limits, parking in restricted zones, or violating traffic regulations.
6. Officers assigned a vehicle shall make no alterations to their vehicle that affects the appearance, structure, or operation of installed police equipment. Factory-equipped radios may be installed in police vehicles by authorized personnel.
7. Sworn personnel can use their assigned vehicle to attend department-sanctioned training and approved college courses.

8. Off-Duty Personal Use of Assigned Vehicles.

- a. In addition to using assigned vehicles to travel between work and home, residents and those who reside within 15 miles of the Newport News City line are permitted to drive their assigned vehicles to and from college or other approved schools, to and from workout facilities, and for personal trips within the City.
- b. Personnel who are not eligible to take their assigned vehicle home are prohibited from using their vehicle off-duty except;
 - 1) When traveling to and from duty assignments,
 - 2) When traveling to and from stand-by assignments,
 - 3) When traveling to and from secondary employment locations within the City of Newport News.
- c. Civilian personnel provided with an assigned police vehicle may not take their vehicle home unless they are assigned to active call-back status. They will not utilize the assigned vehicle for personal business.
- d. Violations

Violations of this section may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of the take-home vehicle unless the Chief of Police has approved a specific exemption.

9. Assigned Vehicle Fuel Conservation

- a. All employees assigned a take-home vehicle will participate in any City or Department fuel conservation and emission control measures while operating the vehicle.
- b. Employees will reduce any unnecessary, unreasonable, and prolonged idling of any vehicle assigned to the department while being used for off-duty. Idling of all unattended police vehicles not being operated in an emergency capacity is prohibited.

F. Maintenance

1. Personnel operating assigned police vehicles are responsible for maintenance and cleanliness, including reporting issues, obtaining necessary repairs, and ensuring preventative maintenance is completed. See [ADM-550 Police Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs](#).
2. Towing
 - a. An assigned vehicle that becomes inoperable within the City limits will be handled per the emergency repair procedures in [ADM-550 Police Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs](#).

G. Availability

1. Off-duty personnel operating a take-home vehicle must be capable of responding to calls in an emergency and will be suitably attired.
 - a. Grooming and hygiene shall be per [ADM 230 Grooming & Appearance Standards](#).
 - b. Clothing shall be neat, clean, and free of holes and tears. Cut-off shorts, tank tops, cropped tops, and bathing suits are inappropriate attire.
 - c. Officers shall not wear shoes that will hinder them in performing their duties if called upon to assist (i.e., beach sandals, cleats, etc.).
2. Sworn personnel will carry their official Police Department identification card, badge, and issued service weapon or authorized off-duty weapon while operating a police vehicle off-duty.
3. If off-duty personnel operating a police vehicle encounter a vehicle crash, they will notify the

Communications Division, rendering any assistance necessary until their presence is no longer needed.

4. Police personnel (on or off-duty) shall not operate a City vehicle while receiving Workers' Compensation benefits **or** while assigned to light duty.

H. Compensation while operating the vehicle off-duty

1. Officers who become involved in any off-duty police activity in their assigned take-home vehicles will not receive compensation until involvement in that or any following police activity exceeds seven minutes. The officer must have an on-duty supervisor sign off on a work slip in the Leave & Time System for any off-duty activity that exceeds seven minutes. This provision in no way denies overtime compensation to personnel assigned take-home vehicles for on-duty assignments which extend beyond regular work schedules or to those who are requested to work additional hours beyond regular scheduling. This section applies to non-ranking personnel only.
2. When an off-duty officer assigned a take-home vehicle becomes involved in any official off-duty police activity and is injured, Workers' Compensation claims will follow the same procedure as if the officer was on-duty when injured ([ADM-325 Injury On/Off Duty, FMLA](#)).
3. If a police department employee is involved in a motor vehicle crash while off-duty and not involved in police activity, the employee will be covered by the City's self-insurance program. However, the employee will not be eligible for Workers' Compensation benefit coverage.


I. Taxation of Take-Home Vehicles

The use of unmarked take-home police vehicles is not taxable if:

1. Personal use is authorized by Department policy.
2. Such use is incident to law enforcement functions (Ex.: being able to report directly to an emergency).

J. Vehicle Restrictions

1. Police employees and passengers shall not smoke or use any tobacco product in any police vehicle, whether on or off duty.
2. Officers shall not transport any items that cannot be adequately secured in the vehicle's interior unless directed by a supervisor.
3. Officers will ensure that weapon(s), police identification, phone, and other equipment and personal items are secured in any unattended vehicle's trunk (or lockbox of SUV).
4. Officers shall not use their assigned Department vehicle to purchase, transport, or consume alcoholic beverages.
 - a. Officers will not operate any city vehicle while impaired by alcohol or some other substance. Officers will wait a reasonable time to ensure safe vehicle operation if they are used.
 - b. Officers shall refrain from consuming any substance that may impair-driving abilities when on stand-by or call-back status.


Steven R. Drew
Chief of Police