



<b>POLICE VEHICLES</b>		
<b>new:</b> ✓ rescinds: 42.1 ✓ amends: All previous		<b>cross-reference:</b>  <b>accreditation standards:</b> NYSLEAP Standard(s): 42.1, 42.3, 42.4, 55.3 & 64.1
<b>effective date:</b> March 28, 2016	<b>amend date:</b> November, 2024	

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Order is to establish and describe the policies and procedures for equipping and maintaining office vehicles and associated equipment.

**II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office to properly equip and maintain a fleet of police vehicles that will be utilized for accomplishing the department's mission, goals, and objectives.

**III. POLICE VEHICLE EQUIPMENT**

**A. Marked Police Vehicles**

1. Police vehicles assigned to patrol service will be conspicuously marked. These markings will include, but are not limited to:
  - Reflective decals on each side identifying it as a Tompkins County Sheriff's Office vehicle.
  - Distinctive front and rear reflective markings bearing the assigned vehicle number.
  - Any additional marking approved by the Sheriff.
2. All marked police vehicles assigned to patrol service, except those specified by the Sheriff, will at a minimum be equipped with the following:
  - Exterior-mounted emergency lights (rooftop light bar);
  - Alternating red and blue hazard lights located in the taillights, the front grill area, and a directional yellow hazard light integrated into the rooftop mounted light bar.
  - Alternating headlight flashers;

- Exterior spotlight;
  - Siren;
  - Mobile radio transceiver;
  - Public address/loudspeaker system;
  - Safety barrier designed to prevent a prisoner from having access to the driver's compartment of the vehicle;
  - Locking shotgun mount for a 12-gauge less-lethal shotgun and;
  - Locking rifle rack.
3. All marked police vehicles, except those specified by the Sheriff, shall be modified to minimize opportunities for prisoners to exit from the rear compartment of the vehicle without the aid of the transporting officer. Rear compartment window switches and door handles shall be removed or disabled. Door release locks shall be operated from the front compartment or from outside of the vehicle.
4. Marked patrol vehicles shall be equipped with the following equipment and supplies:

Vehicle equipment:

- Ballistic vest w/ (3) AR mags, rescue tool, tourniquet, BWC mount, and building access cards
- AR-15 in cruiser-ready condition
- Remington 870 less-lethal shotgun in cruiser-ready condition (not all vehicles will be equipped with this option)

Trunk contents:

- Spare tire and jack
- Flares (minimum of 10)
- Stop-Sticks
- Halligan Tool
- Snow brush
- Fire extinguisher

Trunk box and contents:

- Crime scene tape
- Bag rope
- Rescue disc
- Blanket
- Sharps container
- (optional) spare roll of Tracs paper, evidence collection supplies, community policing material

## B. Unmarked Police Vehicles

1. Unmarked police vehicles (except those used for undercover purposes) shall be equipped with:
  - Mobile radio transceiver.
  - Any additional equipment as designated by the Sheriff.

## C. Patrol Supervisors Vehicles

1. These are police vehicles specifically assigned for use by patrol supervisors and will be equipped with:
  - Interior mounted light bars;
  - No cage;
  - An exterior mounted spotlight.

## D. Special Purpose Vehicles

1. These are police vehicles that are utilized for specialized police services. Each Special Purpose Vehicle will be equipped and marked as outlined below, and/or at the discretion of the Sheriff.
2. These vehicles shall be inspected at least annually to verify that the vehicle is equipped in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and office policy, and that the vehicle/equipment is in good working condition. The Sergeant responsible for the fleet will assign vehicle inspection sheets on an annual basis. *See Special Vehicle Inspection Form.*
  - a. **K-9 Vehicle.** This police vehicle will be equipped the same as the Marked Patrol Vehicles. K-9 vehicles will be clearly marked with distinctive warning decals that denote the vehicle carries a working Police K-9. The K-9 vehicles will also be modified to transport the K-9 and ensure its safety and comfort.
  - b. **Marine Unit.** This unit shall have an exterior emergency light bar, required navigational lights, spotlight, siren and mobile radio. It shall be equipped with tow-rope, GPS, and required PFD. *See G.O. 731 Marine Patrol Unit.*
  - c. **All Terrain Vehicles/Utility Terrain Vehicles/Snowmobile Unit.** These special purpose vehicles are assigned for special patrol/emergency use and will have TSCO markings, identifying them as enforcement vehicles for TCSO. *See G.O. 729 All-Terrain Vehicles/Utility Terrain Vehicles & Snowmobiles.*

#### IV. OPERATION OF OFFICE VEHICLES

- A. Operation of assigned vehicles shall at all times comply with applicable traffic laws.
- B. Engagement in “authorized emergency operation” with an assigned vehicle must be in accordance with applicable provision of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law. Members will be held strictly accountable for justifying the “immediate and emergency” need for police services which authorized the use of emergency operation.
- C. Assigned vehicles shall at all times be properly parked in designated parking areas or locations, unless the member is actually engaged in providing immediate and emergency police services. In those cases, the vehicle shall be moved into a proper parking location as soon as the need for emergency services is over.

#### V. OCCUPANT SAFETY RESTRAINTS (SEAT BELTS)

- A. The Office mandates sworn personnel to wear the appropriate safety restraints when operating, or riding in, any Office vehicles.
- B. All non-sworn personnel will wear the appropriate safety restraints while operating, or riding in, any Office vehicle.
- C. All civilians riding in an Office vehicle will wear a seat belt at all times.
- D. Officers transporting prisoners will secure the prisoner(s) with safety restraints, unless exigent circumstances preclude the safe application of the restraint system, e.g. combative prisoner.

**Note:** The use of seat belts has a significant effect in reducing injuries resulting from traffic crashes and in assisting officers to maintain proper control of their vehicles in emergency response or pursuit driving situations. It is also recognized that there are circumstances in which the use of seat belts may hamper the efficient conduct of police functions.

#### VI. SECURING POLICE VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

- A. To ensure the security of police vehicles and equipment, the officer assigned to the vehicle shall adhere to the following procedures:
  - 1. Utilize the patrol vehicle **SAFE STOP** feature and lock the patrol vehicle whenever it is parked and not under the Officers immediate control.
  - 2. Under certain conditions, i.e., accident scenes, fire scenes, etc., it is necessary to leave the vehicle running to operate the emergency lighting systems on the vehicle. During these times officers may leave the vehicle running but should be aware of, and monitor, the condition of the vehicle at all times.

3. Remove any equipment not permanently assigned to that vehicle (i.e., camera's, go-bags, personal equipment, etc.) from the vehicle at the end of their tour of duty.
4. Officers **will not** leave any Warrants, Orders of Protections, Subpoenas, Summonses, or other documents of a sensitive or time-critical nature in any department vehicle.
5. Remove all weapons and turn off the mobile radio transceiver and PA system before leaving the vehicle at a repair facility.

## VII. POLICE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

### A. Daily Inspections *Updated November 2024*

1. Officers will thoroughly inspect both the interior and exterior of their assigned patrol vehicles, and any equipment/weapon(s) assigned to the vehicle (i.e., less-lethal shotgun, rifle), and complete the electronic *Daily Vehicle Inspection Form* at the beginning of their tour of duty, unless an emergency assignment or other situation requires an immediate response. In such cases the Officer will inspect the vehicle upon completion of the assignment.
2. Officers finding any damage, inoperative/malfunctioning equipment, or other problems that may render the vehicle unfit for service shall immediately notify the on-duty supervisor(s) of the problem and complete the *Vehicle Repair Form* and/or report it through the electronic *Daily Vehicle Inspection Form* to have the vehicle repaired.
3. Officers will closely inspect the rear passenger compartment of the vehicle before and after their respective shifts, as well as before and after transporting any prisoner(s).
  - Officers finding property or contraband in the patrol vehicle shall notify their immediate supervisor and follow the supervisor's instructions concerning the disposition of the property or contraband.
4. Officers are responsible for the cleanliness and care of their assigned patrol vehicles. Officers will ensure the patrol vehicle is cleaned of any trash/debris and/or personal or unnecessary equipment prior to the end of their tour of duty. Officers will wash the exterior and clean the interior of their patrol vehicle, daily, unless calls for service or assignments by a supervisor preclude this detail.
5. Officers are responsible for replenishing, or arranging for the replenishment of, any equipment or supplies (i.e., flares, disposable blankets, first aid items) they have used prior to the end of their tour of duty.
  - If an Officer uses any first aid equipment they will notify the designated Sergeant personally or in writing by memo, and request replacement of the supplies they used. If the Sergeant is unable to replenish the items, contact the jail nurse for possible replacement items. The Officer will be responsible to assure that the kit is replenished. The go-bag should be taken out of service until it is fully replenished.

6. Patrol vehicles that become contaminated with any biohazard will be taken out of service until such time as the Fleet Manager can arrange for the vehicle to be decontaminated.

**B. Monthly Vehicle Inspections** *Update July 2024*

1. The Sergeant responsible for the fleet will assign vehicle inspection sheets on a monthly basis. *See Monthly Vehicle Inspection Form.*
2. The Sergeants assigned to each shift will be responsible for ensuring that the officers assigned to their shift are completing the monthly vehicle inspections. The Sergeant will accompany the officer while they complete the vehicle inspection.
3. Upon completion, the *Monthly Vehicle Inspection Form* shall be forwarded to the Fleet Manager for review and filing.

**VIII. TOBACCO USE IN OFFICE OWNED VEHICLES**

- A. Office Rules and Regulations prohibit the use of tobacco products while serving the public in public view, to include Office vehicles.
  - Tobacco products include Vape Pens and eCigs.

**IV. FUELING OF POLICE VEHICLES**

- A. Officers will use their issued WEX credit card to fuel their assigned patrol vehicle at a participating gas station. The gas pump will ask for:
  1. The odometer of the vehicle and;
  2. The driver ID number. This is a 4-digit personalized number assigned to each officer.
- B. Officers assigned to operate a police vehicle shall be responsible to ensure that there is a minimum  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a tank of fuel in the vehicle prior to the end of their tour of duty.
- C. The loss or theft of any WEX card is to be reported immediately to a supervisor.

**V. SHERIFF'S OFFICE VEHICLE INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT**

- A. When a Sheriff's Office vehicle is involved in a motor vehicle accident that involves another vehicle(s) the following procedure shall be followed:
  1. The member involved in the accident will immediately notify the on-duty Sergeant.
  2. The Sergeant will make notification to the Lieutenant.
  3. The Sergeant will respond to the scene and complete the accident report, have photos taken of the scene, and update the chain of command as necessary.

- If the accident results in serious physical injury or death, the Sergeant will request that an alternative police agency with jurisdiction complete the accident investigation and associated report(s).
  - 4. All paperwork related to the accident shall be completed and forwarded to the Lieutenant and Fleet Manager prior to the member involved and the scene Sergeant going off duty.
  - 5. The Lieutenant shall forward the appropriate paperwork up the chain of command.
  - 6. After review, the Undersheriff shall send the County Incident Report to the County Risk Manager.
- B. When a Sheriff's Office vehicle is involved in a solo motor vehicle accident the following procedure shall be followed:
- 1. The member involved in the accident will immediately notify the on-duty Sergeant.
  - 2. The Sergeant will make notification to the Lieutenant.
  - 3. The member involved in the accident will complete the County Incident Report.
  - 4. The County Incident shall be completed and forwarded to the Lieutenant and Fleet Manager prior to the member involved going off duty.
  - 5. The Lieutenant shall forward the appropriate paperwork up the chain of command.
  - 6. After review, the Undersheriff shall send the County Incident Report to the County Risk Manager.
- C. Members involved in a motor vehicle accident and who are found to be at fault may be subject to disciplinary action.

Attachments:

- A. *Vehicle Repair Form*
- B. *Monthly Vehicle Inspection Form*
- C. *Special Vehicle Inspection Form*
- D. *Daily Vehicle Inspection Form (Laserfiche)*

By Order Of



Derek Osborne  
*Sheriff*