

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: JUNE 1, 2021

NUMBER: 1.12 - ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: OPERATION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

RELATED POLICY: [1.12](#)

ORIGINATING DIVISION: TRAFFIC

NEW PROCEDURE:

PROCEDURAL CHANGE: **MINOR CHANGES**

SUPERSEDES: DP 1.12 – 07/17/2020

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for operating Police Department vehicles.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

All personnel should exercise due care and caution when operating Police Department vehicles.

Refer to Department Procedures 1.13, Emergency Vehicle Operation and 1.03, Pursuit Procedures for further information related to specialized driving.

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. All vehicles should be inspected for any defects prior to being taken into the field.
1. To eliminate potential complaints, horns and sirens should not be tested at the area stations.

2. When defects are discovered, they shall be reported to garage personnel by completing a Vehicle Maintenance Request form (PD-1039-AM). The forms are available at the Vehicle Maintenance Facility, and at area stations garages.
 3. Radio discrepancies are documented on a yellow Service Report form (GS-1359).
 4. Officers experiencing MPS issues should contact the Help Desk at (619) 531-2228 and create a Help Desk Ticket for resolution. If a vehicle is taken out of service to correct the issue, then officers should also complete a Vehicle Maintenance Request form (PD-1039-AM).
- B. All personnel using a Department vehicle that is not assigned to them will sign out the vehicle prior to leaving the station.
1. Each area station will maintain a log.
 2. Upon securing, the vehicle shall be signed in.
 3. If there is a doubt about which vehicles are available for use, a supervisor from the area station must be consulted.
 4. Use of pastel or undercover vehicles will be regulated by the unit to which the vehicles are assigned.
 5. In emergencies, permission for use of pastel or undercover vehicles may be obtained from the Watch Commander.
 6. Officers wishing to use area command vehicles for special events must obtain permission from a supervisor from that division prior to taking the vehicle.
- C. Upon securing from duty, the driver shall be responsible for removing all trash and debris from the vehicle. Vehicles with less than 3/4 of a tank of fuel shall be refilled. Any vehicle defects or damage shall be reported prior to securing.
- D. Personnel shall only take out vehicles that they are certified to drive. Personnel are required to attend special training classes and have a City Operator Identification Card in their possession to drive vehicles such as 4 x 4s, motor homes, vans, and step vans.

- E. All patrol vehicles shall have an identifying number/letter affixed to both the front and rear designating the unit of assignment. The following is a list of unit designators:

<u>Area Commands</u>	<u>Marking</u>
Northern	1
Northeastern	2
Eastern	3
Southeastern	4
Central	5
Western	6
Southern	7
Mid-City	8
Northwestern	9
Traffic	T

- F. Specialized units (pastels and other vehicles) will be assigned identifying numbers/letters by the Fleet Manager.
- G. All Fleet Services repair facilities are closed on weekends. Gasoline may be obtained, but no personnel are available to perform repairs. In an emergency, the Fleet Manager can be contacted by the Watch Commander on weekends or after hours.

Outside of normal duty hours and on holidays when garages are closed, personnel who require a Department vehicle tow should use one of the City's contracted tow providers. This requires the following:

1. Personnel will initiate a tow request via the Mobile for Public Safety (MPS) application or, if not available, via phone to the Communications Division, indicating the tow is for a Department vehicle.
2. The individual will accompany the tow truck to the assigned garage location.
3. The individual will complete a Vehicle Maintenance Request form (PD-1039-AM) to indicate the vehicle's problem and leave that form with the vehicle (after duty hours) or garage personnel (during normal operating hours).
4. The individual will sign for the tow and will ensure that the tow receipt is turned in, delivered to the garage supervisor, or attached to the Vehicle Maintenance Request form (PD-1039-AM).

- H. Department members shall fuel their own Department vehicle. Full service is not provided at area stations, or at the Vehicle Maintenance Facility. During normal operating hours, any member unfamiliar with the Automated Fuel System may request assistance from garage personnel, who will, in turn, provide on-the-spot training. Fleet Services Division supervisors should make themselves available to inform the Department on trends and training tips.
- I. Personnel shall unload and secure all weapons located inside the vehicle when securing at the end of their shift in accordance with established Department Procedures.
- J. All Police Department vehicles shall be inspected pursuant to the Police Department Inspections Guide.

V. SPARE TIRE PROCEDURES

- A. Definitions
 - 1. Conventional spare tire – a tire that is identical to the other four tires mounted on a vehicle.
 - 2. Pursuit vehicle – a vehicle manufactured as a “Police Pursuit Vehicle.”
 - 3. Serviceable tire – a tire that meets the following criteria:
 - a) A speed rated tire that has only had a single repair;
 - b) No more than two repairs for all other tires;
 - c) Has a minimum of 3/32” tread thickness;
 - d) Is free from sidewall damage; and,
 - e) Maintains proper inflation, according to manufacturer specifications.
 - 4. Speed rated tire – a tire which is rated for high-speed use (e.g., pursuit tire, 120 MPH or higher).
 - 5. Temporary spare tire – a tire that is smaller than a regular tire and is under high pressure. These tires are generally marked “Temporary Use Only” for easy identification.

B. Procedures

1. Any designated spare tire, in or on a vehicle, will be a serviceable tire, as described above. Generally, all spare tires should be inspected monthly.
2. Pursuit vehicles will have a speed rated tire as a spare at all times, unless the unit is authorized by the Police Fleet Liaison (Assistant Chief of Traffic, Youth and Event Services) not to carry a spare tire for mission requirements. This authorization must be in writing. The spare will match the size and tread of the four mounted tires. A temporary or conventional spare tire will not be used on a pursuit vehicle.
3. All other vehicles will be equipped with a conventional or temporary spare according to the vehicle manufacturer's specifications.
4. Regardless of the type of spare tire, it should be used to get the vehicle to a police repair facility as soon as practical. Repairs should be made, and the vehicle equipped with a serviceable spare as soon as practical. Department personnel should report the use of any spare tire to Fleet Services personnel as soon as practical.
5. Department personnel should generally contact Communications Division to request assistance from Department authorized tow truck companies. Department personnel may change the tire themselves or use their personal roadside assistance policy at the employee's own expense.
6. The vehicle and tire manufacturer's references shall be used to affirm any technical information.

VI. FIELD OPERATIONS PROCEDURES

NEW

- A. Municipal Code Section 81.0104 requires drivers of City vehicles to comply with all parking regulations. However, City vehicles bearing "E" (Government) plates are exempt from parking meter enforcement (Memo from Chief Operating Officer regarding City Employee Parking Policy, dated, October 20, 2006).
1. Except in emergency circumstances, all Department vehicles are to be locked and secured when parked and unattended. This applies to marked and unmarked vehicles parked at secured or unsecured police facilities and on public and private property. The shift lever on automatic transmissions shall be placed in the park position before exiting from the vehicle and the parking brake should be set.

If a Department member encounters a circumstance where he / she must leave their Department vehicle unattended and unsecured, the member leaving the vehicle unsecured will ensure the vehicle is secured as soon as reasonably possible.

2. It is recommended that any time an officer exits his or her patrol vehicle and is going to leave it running, if the vehicle is equipped with the Safe Idle system, the system should be activated. The ignition key should be removed, and the vehicle doors should be closed and locked.

It should be noted that engagement of the Safe Idle system does not prevent disengagement of the shotgun / AR 15 racks inside the vehicle.

Upon returning to the vehicle, place the key into the ignition and turn it to the right two notches. The vehicle will operate as normal. If the key is over rotated to the START position by accident, the system will not allow the starter to engage.

- B. Emergency overhead lights should be turned off as soon as practical when conducting an enforcement stop on the freeway. The four-way flashers or rear flashing lights are recommended when the emergency has been stabilized.
- C. With few exceptions, an officer should not block a private drive or enter private property to issue traffic warnings or citations. When necessary to do so, complete the contact as soon as possible so that business operations are not disrupted.
- D. Backing Vehicles
 1. Whenever possible, drivers should attempt to park their vehicles either so that they do not have to back up, or so they back up the shortest possible distance.
 2. Officers driving alone shall always check the rear of their vehicles for any obstructions prior to backing.
 3. In cases of two-officer units during non-emergency situations, the passenger should exit the vehicle to guide the driver safely in the backing process.

- E. Jump-starting police and private vehicles using jumper cables is **prohibited** except under exigent circumstances. Jump-starting with cables introduces the likelihood of severe electrical and computer systems damage. If a police vehicle cannot be started within an area command, Headquarters Building, or Central Division parking area, garage personnel should be notified. The garage is equipped with starting devices (booster packs), which do not damage sensitive electrical components found in police vehicles. Police contract tow companies possess these starting devices and are to be notified when experiencing start problems in the field, or when police garage personnel are unavailable. **Any police vehicle, which has been jump-started, should be driven to a police repair facility for examination by service technicians.**
- F. Driving during hours of darkness without the use of headlights is generally prohibited, except as necessary to facilitate officer safety or to accomplish enforcement objectives. Damage to vehicles or property resulting from such operation may be reported as a police equipment collision.
- G. Personnel should use extreme caution when driving on non-paved surfaces, such as turf and sand, frequently found in park/beach recreational areas. Special attention should be given to prevent damage to the turf and irrigation systems.
- H. When traveling on uneven surfaces, which limit the driver's view, personnel will exit the vehicle and view the terrain prior to proceeding.

VII. POLICE EQUIPMENT COLLISIONS

- A. Should you become involved in a police equipment collision, your first duty is to notify the radio dispatcher.
 - 1. Protect the scene and render first aid as necessary until additional police units arrive.
 - 2. Do not make any statements concerning the collision or possible civil liability.
- B. Members who do not have access to a police radio shall immediately notify the radio dispatcher of the collision by telephone.

- C. All traffic collisions involving Police Department employees and volunteers, while operating City vehicles or vehicles/equipment leased, rented, or borrowed by the City to be utilized by Police Department employees or volunteers in the performance of their duties, will be investigated by Traffic Division personnel. This excludes collisions that occur within other cities or jurisdictions within the county, unless the agency within whose jurisdiction the collision occurs is unable or unwilling to take a collision report. In such cases, a Traffic Division officer, a motor officer, or a patrol officer will conduct the investigation of record and prepare a "Courtesy Report" for the agency with jurisdiction over the collision.
- D. The Traffic Investigations Unit (TIU) Sergeant and the Fleet Safety Sergeant shall be notified immediately any time one of the following types of collisions occurs involving an officer or civilian Police Department employee/volunteer, while driving a City vehicle/equipment or vehicle/equipment leased, rented, or borrowed by the City for use by an officer or civilian employee/volunteer.
1. Fatality or serious injury to the officer, civilian employee, volunteer or citizen;
 2. Probable felony prosecution; and,
 3. A pursuit resulting in a serious injury or fatality (the officer does not have to be involved in the collision, or be the person injured or deceased).
- The TIU Sergeant and Fleet Safety Sergeant will determine if their immediate response is necessary and will decide if a TIU Detective or additional investigative resources will be called to the scene.
- E. If you must move your vehicle for safety reasons prior to the arrival of investigating personnel, mark the location of the vehicles before moving.
- F. The Watch Commander will notify Risk Management personnel as situations dictate.
- G. The last known driver or person having control of the City vehicle or vehicle leased, rented, or borrowed by the City, must fill out an Employee Vehicle Accident /Industrial Incident Damage Report form (RM-1551) within 24 hours of the collision.
1. If the driver is unable to fill out the form, the employee's supervisor will complete and sign the form for the employee.
 2. The "on scene" supervisor investigating the collision must fill out a Supervisor's Vehicle Accident/Industrial Incident Investigation Report, form (RM-1555) within 48 hours of the incident and ensure that both forms are forwarded to the Fleet Safety Sergeant (MS 732).

VIII. DRIVING OVER CURBS

Most vehicles utilized by this Department are not designed for driving over or “jumping” curbs. On those rare occasions when the officer must traverse a curb, the following procedures shall be followed:

- A. Curb height must be low enough so the vehicle can clear without being damaged;
- B. The curb must be approached at angles less than 45 degrees;
- C. The vehicle must be stopped before touching the curb;
- D. Low speed, less than 5 MPH, should be used; and,
- E. One wheel at a time should be moved over the curb.

Damage that occurs when a vehicle crosses a curb will be classified as a police equipment collision.

IX. SPECIAL PARKING AREAS

- A. Parking at Police Facilities
 - 1. All Department and personal vehicles parked at police facilities must properly display a Department-issued parking placard. The Facilities Management & Development (FM&D) Unit is responsible for issuing placards. No other units may issue temporary or permanent placards for use at police facilities.
 - 2. All Department employees, employees of other public agencies working in a police facility, as well as interns, volunteers, and vendors may obtain a parking placard if they have been cleared through Background Investigations and currently have a Department photo identification card. To obtain a parking placard, eligible personnel must complete the Application for Parking Placard for Police Facility and submit it to the FM&D Unit (MS 770). The application is available on the LAN system at F:\Templates\Administration\Parking Permit. No application is required for Department vehicles. FM&D staff provides parking placards to assigned vehicles. Units obtaining additional vehicles should contact FM&D for additional placards.
 - 3. Each placard will be assigned to an individual or a specific Department vehicle. With the exception of employees with multiple personal vehicles, placards are only to be used for the assigned vehicle.

4. Parking at the Headquarters building is only authorized as follows:
 - a. Personal vehicles displaying a red parking placard may park in spaces designated for employees.
 - b. Personal vehicles displaying a magenta parking placard may park in spaces designated for employees.
 - c. Department vehicles displaying a dark blue parking placard may park in spaces designated as Headquarters Pool.
 - d. Personal vehicles displaying a yellow Headquarters Pool Parking placard authorized by FM&D may park in spaces designated as Headquarters Pool, for the days and times designated on the placard only. Parking in a Pool space with a yellow placard shall only be used when all parking designated for employees is at full capacity.
5. Due to parking space limitations at Police Headquarters, employees shall comply with directives requiring them to park at a designated alternate location, as necessary. FM&D staff will maintain a list of those employees affected and their designated parking location.
6. Area station personnel shall develop parking plans for their facility, have appropriate signage posted, and ensure the facility parking plan is being followed. Appropriate corrective action will be taken when violations occur. An on-line database of issued placards will be available to the Watch Commander's Office.

NEW

B. Court Parking (Downtown Court Facilities)

While it is recognized there is limited parking near the court facilities, Police Department personnel are required to comply with parking regulations.

There are several transportation options available to Department personnel to minimize the need to park vehicles near the court:

1. The Trolley is available for sworn and civilian personnel to use as transportation to and from the downtown courthouse. The Trolley may be boarded at 12th and "C" Street, the Civic Center Station, or at the Courthouse Station depending on the employee's destination. Members are not required to buy tickets for the Trolley but must show their Department identification card to Trolley security officers if asked to show their ticket. Department identification cards may be used in place of

Trolley tickets by members on official business only. Members shall not use their Department ID when riding the Trolley on personal business.

2. Arrangements have been made permitting employees on Department business or attending court, to park Department vehicles, or their private vehicles, at the Evan Jones Parkade.

Employees must take a parking ticket when entering the parking facility. Upon exiting, the employee must advise the attendant that he/she was on Department business or attending court. Employees are not required to present parking validation stamps. Concourse parking facility personnel have a Department log that must be signed by each employee and the following information completed:

- a. Name and identification number;
- b. Time in and out of parking facility; and,
- c. Number of validation stamps required for reimbursement.

Officers in marked police vehicles will continue to take a parking ticket and sign and return it to the attendant. The log should not be signed. Any questions regarding Community Concourse parking should be directed to the Court Liaison Sergeant at (619) 533-5587.

3. Department vehicles with “exempt” license plates may park at metered spaces without having to deposit coins into the meters, and for periods of time longer than indicated.

C. All Other Parking

1. Any City, police or private vehicle used for taking evidence to court must be legally parked. Parking citations received by officers in non-emergency situations will not be approved for dismissal.
2. Under no circumstances is double parking permitted, and officers are not to use the City Operations Building lot, 1200 First Avenue, when attending court or visiting the County Jail.
3. Department personnel shall not park at red, yellow, white, or disabled parking zones or spaces. The only exceptions to this would be in the event of police or fire emergencies, or circumstances designated as appropriate by the Chief of Police.

X. USE OF MARKED PATROL UNITS BY CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES AND LIGHT DUTY OFFICERS

- A. Civilian employees and light duty officers are authorized to drive a marked patrol unit under the following circumstances:
 - 1. No unmarked Department vehicle is available.
 - 2. The use is work-related.
- B. Prior to using a marked unit, personnel shall:
 - 1. Obtain permission from the unit lieutenant (or in the lieutenant's absence, the unit sergeant);
 - 2. Complete the vehicle sign-out log;
 - 3. Secure a light bar cover over the light bar;
 - 4. Place a magnetic "Out of Service" sign on each of the rear side doors of the vehicle;
 - 5. Light duty officers shall wear civilian clothing over their uniform that covers their badges and patches, such as a jacket or sweater, or wear civilian clothing when driving the "Out of Service" marked car.

XI. USE OF ALL TOLL ROADS

Toll fees are collected for all vehicles on all California toll roads. Drivers of any San Diego Police Department vehicle or any other City vehicle, including emergency vehicles and those with "exempt" license plate must pay a toll fee, except in certain limited circumstances.

The South Bay Expressway (SBE) toll road has exemptions that are limited to the following:

- A. Marked police units may use the SBE during emergency situations. Officers shall notify Communications of the SBE use and Communications will enter that information into the CAD incident report. In addition, the driver officer shall notify Operational Support within four days after SBE use so the Department can rectify invalid violations and associated fees.
- B. Officers may use the SBE in a Department vehicle during surveillance operations. Officers shall notify Communications of the SBE use and Communications will enter that information into the CAD incident report. If this is not practical,

officers shall notify their supervisor. In addition, the driver officer shall notify Operational Support within four days after SBE use so the Department can rectify invalid violations and associated fees.

- C. Officers may use the SBE for certain police activities deemed necessary for official police business with prior approval from their Commanding Officer.
 - 1. Operational Support will provide commands with a limited number of transponders according to their needs for this purpose. Transponders automatically validate vehicles passing through the SBE, therefore no notifications are required. A monthly report will be sent to the Commanding Officer to verify usage by an employee was within Department Policy.
 - 2. In order to receive a transponder, a memorandum will be prepared by the unit's Commanding Officer that will include justification for its use. The memorandum will then be routed to the Operational Support Lieutenant for equipment issuance.