

	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Department Vehicles and Equipment		
	GENERAL ORDER	606.1	
Effective Date	03/30/2016		
Authorized by:	Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE	DATE
		<i>Mark Sroka</i>	03/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish policy and procedures governing the use of Department vehicles by on duty personnel.

II. POLICY

The Department’s police vehicles are utilized to serve the citizens of the City by providing a high degree of visibility and the availability of personnel resources and equipment for rapid deployment. It is the policy of the Department to utilize both marked and unmarked vehicles as valuable tools to detect and deter crimes. The Department utilizes both types of vehicles for general patrol, traffic enforcement, and covert operations. To ensure accountability and uniformity, all personnel will strictly adhere to the guidelines and procedures outlined in this directive.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Department Vehicle

Within the context of this directive, the term “Department vehicle” refers to any motor vehicle owned by, leased, or assigned to the Gaithersburg Police Department.

B. Personal Patrol Vehicle (PPV)

Within the context of this directive, the term “Personal Patrol Vehicle” or “PPV” refers to any Department vehicle that is assigned for any period of time to a Department member for job related use, and may be taken to the place of residence or other approved location while not in an “on-duty” status.

C. Personnel

Within the context of this directive, the term “personnel” or “employee” refers to all employees of the Gaithersburg Police Department, unless a more direct distinction is made.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. General Provisions

1. Officers below the rank of Sergeant operate police vehicles that are conspicuously marked, unless an officer is issued or assigned use of an unmarked vehicle for a special assignment or purpose.
2. Personnel shall utilize Department vehicles' seat belts and shoulder harnesses in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
3. All Department vehicles utilized for general patrol are registered as emergency vehicles and are equipped pursuant to the provisions of [TA 21-106](#) and [TA 22-218](#) with:
 - a) An audible warning device (siren);
 - b) Visual signals (red and blue lights); and
 - c) Multi-channel mobile radio transceivers (City and County frequencies).
4. Department bicycles, and covert vehicles are either not equipped or registered as emergency vehicles, therefore operators must obey all traffic laws and do not have the privileges of emergency vehicles extended to them.
5. The Department's marked police vehicles bear the County wide emergency telephone number (911) on each rear fender.
6. Officers will not make any changes to Department vehicles, such as installing or removing equipment, markings, decals, wheel covers, etc.
 - a) Decals or emblems depicting the American flag or the insignia of a police association may be authorized by the Chief of Police, so long as no political statement is made.
 - b) Any alteration, modification or installation of equipment must first be approved by the Bureau Commander in writing, and forwarded to the Department's Fleet Coordinator and be in compliance with applicable CALEA standards.

7. The Department issues body armor to every officer and establishes requirements for its use while performing certain duties.
 - a) Officers who are not required to wear their issued body armor while performing other duties will have it readily available.
 - b) Body armor shall be worn by all officers engaged in preplanned, high risk situations.

B. Inspections and Maintenance

1. Department vehicles are seen by members of our community and others as a symbol of the City. Personnel who are assigned Department vehicles must maintain them, and the equipment contained therein, in a clean condition and state of operational readiness.
2. Officers shall maintain the exterior and interior of the vehicles in a condition that would allow the vehicle to pass an unannounced inspection.
3. Personnel will wash a Department vehicle when its unclean appearance detracts from the overall look of the vehicle and may reflect unfavorably on the Department and the City.
 - a) From April 1st through October 31st, officers are expected to hand wash PPVs and other assigned Department vehicles to reduce maintenance costs.
 - b) From November 1st through March 31st, personnel may use the contracted car wash service up to two times per month.
 - c) Supervisors may grant special approval for additional use of the contracted car wash service, where reasonable and necessary.
4. Personnel shall be responsible for the care of assigned Department vehicles and adherence to a maintenance schedule.
 - a) Scheduled preventive maintenance, normally at 3000 mile intervals, will be accomplished in a timely manner.
5. Personnel will inspect the Department vehicle issued for their tour of duty prior to use.
 - a) In accordance with General Order 601.1 Prisoner Searches

and Transports, before and after each transport and at the beginning of the shift, vehicles will be searched for weapons and items of potential evidence that may have been discarded from a previous transport.

b) Deficiencies or damage shall be documented on a GPD Form 95 to the Fleet Coordinator via their supervisor. Conditions that should be documented include, but are not limited to:

- 1) New damage or damage not previously noticed;
- 2) Malfunction of any emergency equipment;
- 3) Vehicle lighting deficiencies that cannot be immediately corrected;
- 4) Excessive tire wear damage;
- 5) Unsatisfactory overall cleanliness or appearance of the vehicle; and
- 6) Any condition or indication may render the vehicle unsafe.

c) Officers shall ensure their vehicles contain, at a minimum, the following equipment:

- 1) A first-aid kit containing an ample amount of supplies and rubber gloves;
- 2) Road flares;
- 3) A blanket;
- 4) A charged fire extinguisher;
- 5) A pry bar or tire iron; and
- 6) An inflated spare tire;

d) If the inspection of a vehicle reveals that equipment or supplies are missing, the officer shall immediately notify his or her supervisor of the need to replenish the equipment or supplies and make arrangements to acquire the item(s) from the Department Quartermaster or Fleet Vehicle Coordinator as soon as possible.

- 1) In the event that any vehicle lighting is inoperable or malfunctioning, the vehicle should immediately be taken to Public Works for replacement or repair of the affected item(s).
 - 2) Personnel will contact the officer designated to oversee the Department's first aid kits for supplies that need to be replenished.
7. Shift supervisors will complete the [Monthly Vehicle Inspection Form](#) to include an inspection of the In-Car camera, if equipped, using the Arbitrator System Testing Procedures (on page 2 of Monthly Vehicle Inspection Form).

C. Cameras and/or Computer Systems

1. The operators of Department vehicles equipped with in car camera and/or computer systems will operate them in accordance with:
 - a) General Order 604.10 Mobile Data Computers for in car computers; and
 - b) General Order 619.2 Audio/Visual Digital Recording Systems for in car cameras.
2. In car camera and/or computer systems will be checked prior to each tour of duty to ensure an appropriate state of operational readiness. Personnel will verify that, at a minimum:
 - a) In car computer systems:
 - 1) Have visible connecting cables checked and are not frayed, broken, or in need of repair; and
 - 2) Startup properly and two way communication appears to be functioning normally.
 - b) In car camera systems:
 - 1) Initialize properly and log the user on for use;
 - 2) Are free of any visible damage and that the cameras are pointed in the proper directions;
 - 3) Record audio and video properly and that wireless mics are charged; and

- 4) Have ample disc space available for recording during the tour of duty.