

## Vehicle Use

### 703.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a system of accountability to ensure department vehicles are used appropriately. This policy provides guidelines for on- and off-duty use of department vehicles and shall not be construed to create or imply any contractual obligation by the City of Richmond to provide assigned take-home vehicles.

### 703.2 POLICY

The Richmond Police Department provides vehicles for department-related business and may assign patrol and unmarked vehicles based on a determination of operational efficiency, economic impact to the Department, requirements for tactical deployments, and other considerations.

#### 703.2.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Personnel assigned to routine scheduled field duties shall sign out their vehicle in the Patrol vehicle log at the start of his/her shift. Personnel shall then notify Communications Center and log onto their Mobile Data Computer (MDC) when going on duty. If the employee exchanges vehicles during the shift, the new vehicle number shall be called in and entered into the computer. At the conclusion of each shift, personnel shall sign in their vehicle in the aforementioned Patrol vehicle log.

The Watch Commander shall ensure a copy of the Daily Attendance roster indicating member assignments and vehicle numbers is completed for each shift and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. If a member exchanges vehicles during his/her shift, the new vehicle number shall be documented on the roster.

Employees shall be responsible for inspecting the interior and exterior of any assigned vehicle before taking the vehicle into service and at the conclusion of their shift. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents, or other problems with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented as appropriate.

In addition, when logging on and off with the Communications Center, personnel shall be required to give the dispatcher the mileage for the assigned vehicle. The dispatcher receiving the log on/off mileage shall enter this information into the computer-aided dispatch system.

#### 703.2.2 UNSCHEDULED USE OF VEHICLES

Personnel utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties shall notify the Watch Commander of the reasons for use. A notation will be made on the Daily Attendance indicating the operator's name and the vehicle number. This does not apply to personnel permanently assigned an individual vehicle (e.g., command staff, detectives), or to Property and Evidence Section personnel assigned transportation duties to and from the maintenance yard, etc. Property and Evidence Section personnel shall be responsible for maintaining records of the property transportation vehicles.

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##### 703.2.3 UNMARKED VEHICLES

Unmarked units, if not assigned to an individual employee, shall not be used without first obtaining approval from the respective unit supervisor.

##### 703.2.4 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

Personnel operating department-owned vehicles shall not permit persons other than City employees or persons required to be conveyed in the performance of their duties, or as otherwise authorized to ride, to be a passenger in their vehicle; unless prior permission from a supervisor has been obtained.

##### 703.2.5 PARKING

Except when responding to an emergency or when urgent department-related business requires otherwise, members driving department vehicles should obey all parking regulations at all times.

City-owned vehicles should be parked in their assigned stalls. Employees shall not park privately owned vehicles in any stall assigned to a City-owned vehicle or in other areas of the parking lot not designated as a parking space unless authorized by a supervisor. Privately owned motorcycles shall be parked in designated areas. Department members' personal vehicles shall not be parked in front of the Police Station.

##### 703.2.6 INSPECTIONS

Members shall be responsible for inspecting the interior and exterior of any assigned vehicle before taking the vehicle into service and at the conclusion of their shifts. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents, or other problems with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented as appropriate.

The interior of any vehicle that has been used to transport any person other than a member of this department should be inspected prior to placing another person in the vehicle and again after the person is removed. This is to ensure that unauthorized or personal items have not been left in the vehicle.

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When transporting any suspect, prisoner, or arrestee, the transporting member shall search all areas of the vehicle that are accessible by the person before and after that person is transported.

All department vehicles are subject to inspection and/or search at any time by a supervisor without notice and without cause. No member assigned to or operating such vehicle shall be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to the vehicle or its contents.

#### 703.2.7 OTHER USE OF VEHICLES

Members utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties or normal vehicle assignment (e.g., transportation to training, community event) shall first notify the Watch Commander. A notation will be made on the Daily Attendance roster indicating the member's name and vehicle number.

This subsection does not apply to those who are assigned to vehicle transportation duties to and from the maintenance yard or carwash.

#### 703.2.8 SECURITY AND UNATTENDED VEHICLES

Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging). Officers who exit a vehicle rapidly in an emergency situation or engage in a foot pursuit must carefully balance the need to exit the vehicle quickly with the need to secure the vehicle.

Members shall ensure all weapons are secured while the vehicle is unattended.

#### 703.2.9 MDC

Members assigned to vehicles equipped with a Mobile Digital Computer (MDC) shall log onto the MDC with the required information when going on duty. If the vehicle is not equipped with a working MDC, the member shall notify Communications Center. Use of the MDC is governed by the Mobile Digital Computer Use policy.

#### 703.2.10 VEHICLE LOCATION SYSTEM

Patrol and other vehicles, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, may be equipped with a system designed to track the vehicle's location. While the system may provide vehicle location and other information, members are not relieved of their responsibility to use required communication practices to report their location and status.

Members shall not make any unauthorized modifications to the system. At the start of each shift, members shall verify that the system is on and report any malfunctions to their supervisor. If the member finds that the system is not functioning properly at any time during the shift, he/she should exchange the vehicle for one with a working system, if available.

System data may be accessed by supervisors at any time. However, access to historical data by other than supervisors will require Division Commander approval.

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All data captured by the system shall be retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

##### 703.2.11 KEYS

Members approved to operate marked patrol vehicles should be issued a copy of the key as part of their initial equipment distribution. Members who are assigned a specific vehicle should be issued keys for that vehicle. The loss of a key shall be promptly reported in writing through the member's chain of command.

##### 703.2.12 ALCOHOL

Members who have consumed alcohol are prohibited from operating any department vehicle unless it is required by the duty assignment (e.g., task force, undercover work). Regardless of the assignment, members may not violate state law regarding vehicle operation while intoxicated.

##### 703.2.13 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

There shall be no modifications, additions, or removal of any equipment or accessories without written permission from the Fleet manager.

##### 703.2.14 PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER USE

Professional Staff members using marked emergency vehicles shall ensure that all weapons have been removed before going into service. Professional Staff members shall prominently display the "out of service" placards or light bar covers at all times. Professional Staff members shall not operate the emergency lights or sirens of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a supervisor.

#### **703.3 MAINTENANCE**

Members are responsible for the cleanliness (exterior and interior) and overall maintenance of their assigned vehicles. Cleaning and maintenance supplies will be provided by the Department. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in discipline and loss of vehicle assignment. The following should be performed as outlined below:

- (a) Members shall make daily inspections of their assigned vehicles for service/maintenance requirements and damage.
- (b) It is the member's responsibility to ensure that the assigned vehicle is maintained according to the established service and maintenance schedule.
- (c) All scheduled vehicle maintenance and car washes shall be performed as necessary at a facility approved by the department supervisor in charge of vehicle maintenance.
- (d) The Department shall be notified of problems with the vehicle and approve any major repairs before they are performed.
- (e) When leaving the vehicle at the maintenance facility, the member will complete a vehicle repair card explaining the service or repair, and leave it on the seat or dash.
- (f) All weapons shall be removed from any vehicle left for maintenance.
- (g) Supervisors shall make, at a minimum, bi-monthly inspections of vehicles assigned to members under their command to ensure the vehicles are being maintained in accordance with this policy.

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### **703.4 ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE**

When operating any department vehicle while off-duty, members may dress in a manner appropriate for their intended activity. Whenever in view of or in contact with the public, attire and appearance, regardless of the activity, should be suitable to reflect positively upon the Department.