
LAURENS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP# P-190

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SUBJECT: POLICE VEHICLES:

INDEX AS: VEHICLES: POLICE VEHICLES: VEHICLE OPERATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/8/2005 REVISED DATE:

I. PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the use, maintenance and care of Department vehicles by Uniformed, Investigative Officers or other assigned personnel of the Laurens County Law Enforcement Center.

II. SCOPE:

This policy will apply to all personnel operating vehicles.

A. General Provisions:

1. Vehicles will be assigned to officers by the Division Captain, based upon the best information and experience at the time concerning the officers progress with this department. No officer residing outside the County will be issued a vehicle for off duty use.
- B. Vehicles must at all times display the issued government license plate. Unmarked vehicles shall display the issued government license plate unless authorized by the sheriff in compliance with current Georgia Law.
- C. Employees shall not presume any special privileges with an assigned vehicle while off duty, such as parking in reserved or no parking areas.
- D. Unattended vehicle of off duty officers shall be locked

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at all times and weapons and other valuables shall be secured by the officer. All rules and regulations pertaining to on duty officers shall apply to off duty officers while operating an assigned vehicle.

- E. Vehicles may be taken outside Laurens County ONLY ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS.
- F. Vehicles will not be utilized for carrying heavy or excessive loads and will not have objects protruding from the trunk or windows.
- G. Officers or members participating in the program are subject to calls either on-view or assigned. In the event an incident is handled by an off-duty unit, the officer will handle all associated paper-work and will be given the appropriate compensated time for time consumed.
- H. Off-duty Officers are NOT ALLOWED to ride with on-duty officers at any time unless necessary to establish an official mission of the department and with the approval of the on-duty shift commander. Off-duty Officers will be expected to answer emergency calls if they are in their assigned vehicle and are close to the scene. Off-duty Officers/Investigators must have the approval of the Major before they are allowed to have dependents in their units and they must be dependants that can be left on their own. Juvenile dependents are not to be taken to calls by any Officer. Emergency situations will be handled through the Chain of Command.
- I. Officers shall not use departmental vehicles on secondary employment jobs as part of the employment without prior approval of the Division Captain. Vehicles may be driven to and from such employment provided such employment is police related or the Officer is under "ON CALL" status.
- J. Off duty officers are to advise the Dispatcher when they are in their assigned vehicle and when they are completed with their trip.

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- K. There shall be no extra equipment, radios, or gadgets installed or placed on the vehicle, except upon written request approved by the Division Captain. Decals, special license plates, etc., are not permitted. There will be no unauthorized bumper stickers or devices affixed to the police vehicle.
- L. Member or employees are strictly forbidden to operate a county vehicle while consuming or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medications which may impair driving ability. This will be considered a serious breach of policy and may result in dismissal.
- M. All officers, off duty and on duty, shall wear a safety restraint when riding in a county vehicle. Members of this department not complying with this policy will be considered in violation of a state law as well as this policy.
- N. All accidents or damage to a department vehicle must be reported immediately and a supervisor called to the scene.
- O. All officers assigned vehicles shall have in their possession a valid Georgia Drivers permit at all times while operating a Laurens County vehicle. Officers shall exercise good judgment in utilizing the vehicle and shall not drive, use, or park vehicle in such a manner that will cause unfavorable comment or reflect discredit upon the department. Vehicles shall not be parked at lounges, bars, package stores, movie theaters, and etc., or used for the purpose of purchasing alcoholic beverages unless performing an official act.

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- P. Officers operating County Vehicles off duty shall be properly attired in order to effectively perform a police function while at the same time a favorable public image. Badge identification, authorized weapon, and drivers permit shall be accessible whenever the Officer is operating a County vehicle.
- Q. When responding to calls involving a felony, while off duty, officers may be required to handle the call in order to best preserve and/or handle evidence and maintain continuity. Off duty units are responsible for handling or referring to an on duty patrol officer all incidents coming to their attention and for rendering of any aid necessary until an on duty unit arrives.
- R. Off duty officers will use their identification number when calling dispatcher or other units. They will use their assigned radio call numbers when handling calls or incidents while off duty. No member shall operate a departmental vehicle without a valid Georgia driving permit issued to them and in their possession at the time of operation.
- S. Drivers shall not leave vehicle unattended with keys in the ignition. Do not leave engine idling for extended periods, as this may cause engine or air conditioning damages. It is also the duty of each driver to ensure the following methods for reducing fuel consumption are strictly adhered to:
1. Strict observation of the speed limit with the exception of pursuit driving.
 2. Reduce unnecessary idling of vehicles.
 3. Reduce the use of vehicle whenever possible for other than delivery of police services.

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IV. PATROL VEHICLE MARKINGS AND EQUIPMENT:

A. Patrol vehicles assigned to this Agency shall be marked and equipped in a manner that will present clear identity to the general public. Patrol vehicles will be marked in the following manner:

1. The Agency name on each side of the vehicle;
2. **SHERIFF'S PATROL** in (6) six inch lettering on each Front or Rear Fender of the vehicle;
3. Vehicle unit number on the Rear of the vehicle;
4. Emergency number on each Fender of Vehicle and on rear trunk lid.
5. Flashing blue strobe lights mounted on the roof or in the grill;
6. A siren and public address system mounted on the light bar or in the grill;
7. A mobile radio transceiver;
8. Alley lights mounted on the light bar.

B. Sheriff's Department vehicles will be equipped with the following special equipment and supplies as soon as they are available:

1. One- First Aid kit;
2. One- Fire Extinguisher mounted in trunk;
3. One- Blanket;
4. One- Wrecking bar- (traffic cars only);
5. One- Reflective Vest.

V. INVESTIGATIVE VEHICLES:

A. Vehicles used by investigative personnel shall be unmarked except for Blue lights mounted in the front grill.

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B. The following equipment shall be maintained in all vehicles used by investigative personnel as soon as it is available.

1. One- Fire Extinguisher mounted in trunk;
2. One- Fingerprint kit;

**Note- Excepted vehicles will be those used in special operations or undercover.

VI. ROUTINE VEHICLES OPERATION:

Under normal, non-emergency conditions, and while responding to routine calls for service, operators of Department Vehicles will strictly adhere to all traffic laws, and will drive defensively in a safe and courteous manner. Deputies will exercise prudent judgment and care with due regard to the safety of life and property.

- A. Department Vehicles shall be operated by personnel as authorized by the Sheriff and/or Chief Deputy.
- B. Personnel assigned the duty of operating a Department Vehicle must maintain a valid Georgia Drivers License.
- C. Personnel operating a Department Vehicle shall be responsible for the proper use and care of vehicles and all accessories, equipment and tools assigned to the vehicle.

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2. Seat belts and harness's shall be worn whenever Department vehicles are in motion by both the driver and passengers. (Prisoners Excluded)
3. Never exceed the posted limit that would prevent response to a call safer than conditions permit.
4. Do not drive up immediately behind another vehicle and sound the siren. The motorist may stop suddenly.
5. Do not pass to the right of a vehicle in traffic, unless absolutely necessary.
6. Always maintain adequate radio volume and remain cognizant, the dispatcher may wish to relay additional information to you while operating as an emergency vehicle.
7. When approaching an intersection, extreme caution will be used.
 - a. Slow to normal speed when approaching and crossing an intersection with the light.
 - b. Before going through an intersection against the light, all emergency vehicles will be capable of coming to a complete stop to insure all traffic has seen the vehicle before crossing the intersection
 - c. The above sections; 1 and 2, also apply to STOP signs.

Note: Remember most accidents involving law enforcement Vehicles occur at intersections.

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****Note: Excessive speed and carelessness shall not be permitted nor will it warrant the risk involved.

- D. Emergency Use of Vehicles- The driver of any law enforcement vehicle responding to an emergency call will use the blue light and siren. If the siren would warn of the officer's approach and aid in a criminal's escape, the siren may be disengaged upon approaching the audible range. At this time the officer shall come out of emergency vehicle operating status.
- E. Emergency Escort Prohibited- Members of this department will not attempt to escort private vehicles on an emergency run.

VII. PACING

- A. Pacing is not to be defined as an emergency operation, nor is it subject to emergency vehicle status.
- B. Officers, while pacing a traffic offender, may exceed the speed limit to establish a pace, but must do so with due regard to the safety of others.
- C. Officers may not violate any other traffic laws other than exceeding the speed limit when establishing the pace of a traffic violator.
- D. When pacing a traffic violator, an officer may operate without emergency equipment engaged in order to avoid warning the violator and avoid accelerating a traffic stop into a fleeing violation situation.

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VIII. EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS:

Department vehicles may engage in emergency operations when responding to an existing emergency or in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law. The provisions of this section will not relieve the operator of a Department vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor will these provisions protect the operator of a Sheriff's Department vehicle from the consequences of careless disregard for the safety of others.

*** **UNMARKED VEHICLES AND PATROL WAGONS** are not properly equipped to apprehend speeders or become involved in high speed chases and they shall not be so used except when absolutely necessary in the performance of law enforcement related duty.

An unmarked unit shall only be used in a high speed chase when either by initiation of the pursuit or other circumstances warrant this vehicle as the primary vehicle.

*** **CONSIDERATIONS OF EMERGENCY USE-** Before engaging in the emergency use of a vehicle, several factors in addition to vehicle control, due regard and true emergency considerations must be weighed. Typical examples include but are not limited to:

1. The type and condition of the vehicle being operated.
2. The type and condition of the roadway to be traveled and the officers familiarity.
3. Obstacles, both present and potential that must be avoided (e.g., foreign objects on the roadway,
4. Experience and the training of the officer in high speed vehicle operation
5. The nature of the offense and the circumstances known concerning the call.
6. The time of day, amount and type of traffic encountered (the potential danger to the driver and others by operating at a high speed).
- 7.

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7. Visibility and illumination available to the operator in the area being traveled.
 8. Existing weather conditions and roadway surfaces. (construction, gravel, standing water, etc.)
- A. All Department vehicles engaged in emergency operations shall utilize emergency lights and siren to warn vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the emergency route.
1. An officer may fluctuate the sound of the siren so that emergency vehicle can be heard.
- B. When engaged in emergency operations, the operator of the Department vehicle shall exercise extreme care.
- C. A Laurens County Law Enforcement Center vehicle engaged in emergency operations may:
1. Exceed the speed limit as long as life or property are not endangered. Speed shall be limited by road conditions, exercise of good judgment and the Pursuit Policy (SOP # P-280).
 2. Proceed past a stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing or stopping as may be necessary for safe operation. Department vehicles will not enter a controlled intersection without first stopping. The emergency lights and siren will be on and the vehicle will not proceed further until the right-of-way has been established and there is not extreme risk of an accident.
- D. VEHICLES INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS:
1. Any accident involving Laurens County Law Enforcement Center personnel, driving a Department vehicle, will be reviewed by the Accident Review

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board. Personnel involved in an accident that is determined to be their fault by the Accident Review Board, will be subject to disciplinary action and the accident shall remain on the individuals Laurens County Record for 3 years from the date of the accident.

First Offense- Written Reprimand

Second Offense- Written Reprimand with Mandatory Training

Third Offense- Reassignment/and/or suspension without pay.

Fourth Offense- Dismissal.

IX. USE OF EQUIPMENT:

The proper use of emergency equipment on the Patrol vehicle is essential to the safety of the Deputy and other motorist.

A. The emergency blue lights and flashers shall be utilized in the following incidents:

1. Stopping the traffic violator;
2. Assisting motorist in roadway;
3. Response to a Priority call;
4. Roadway is blocked by debris;
5. Any situation where it is necessary to provide visibility for the Deputy.

B. The siren will be used along with blue lights only in the following incidents:

1. To assist in stopping the traffic violator;
2. Pursuing vehicles;
3. Response to a Priority call where siren will not be a detriment;
4. At all intersections where it is necessary for a Sheriff's Department vehicle to enter a intersection in emergency operation;

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5. Any time where the vehicle operation impedes with the normal flow of traffic.

C. The public address system will be utilized in the following incidents:

1. Felony vehicle stops;
2. Control of large crowds;
3. Barricaded person/hostage situation.

D. Spotlights will be used to check buildings and on traffic stops at night.

X. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

A. Officers assigned vehicles shall be fully responsible for general maintenance, upkeep and proper care of the assigned vehicle. The below listed items are NOT authorized and will NOT be accomplished:

1. Making adjustments except of a minor nature.
2. Altering the body, general design, appearance, markings, mechanical electrical system.
3. Making or having repairs made to the vehicle other than by the authorized center.
4. Using fuel, oil, lubricant or other additives other than those approved by this department.

B. Officers will be responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of vehicle, both interior and exterior. Vehicle will be kept clean at all times. Officers with take-home privileges will be responsible for the following:

1. Tire repair will be made by maintenance center personnel upon delivery to authorized repair center.

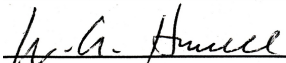
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2. All normal maintenance, service or repair shall be accomplished by the assigned officer during his/her time off from duty, where possible, except for emergency repair. Officers may take their vehicle for repair or maintenance on their own time. However the department will not recognize maintenance repair time as on duty time and will not be responsible for compensatory time or monetary compensation.
3. Oil will be changed every 3000 miles and transmission serviced at least one time a year or whatever is recommended by the dealer.
4. All shift commanders shall be responsible for inspecting all vehicles of personnel assigned under his/her command. This inspection shall be accomplished monthly and a copy of it forwarded to the Division Captain no later than the 5th of each month.


W. A. HARRELL
SHERIFF

06/08/2005

EFFECTIVE DATE: