

**10.05**  
**CRAIG POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Office of Chief of Police**  
**General Order**

**Date Issued:** July 25, 1997  
**Subject:** Vehicle Use  
**To:** All Employees

**Revision Date:** April 1, 2009  
**Reference:** CACP STD 180.5

**I. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the department to assign City-owned police vehicles to individual police officers through a take-home vehicle plan. Officers operating department vehicles will drive in a safe and courteous manner that sets an example for the general public. No task, call, or incident justifies disregard of public safety. Vehicles will be driven so as to prolong the operational life of the vehicle by avoiding unnecessary wear and tear. Maintenance will be performed to achieve safe operation and maximum utilization of department vehicles. The department generally requires that any maintenance be scheduled so it can be completed on the officer's off duty time.

**II. PURPOSE:**

- A. To increase the number of marked police vehicles that are visible on the city streets, either parked or in motion, adding to an observer's sense of "visible police presence" and display to citizens that there are police in Craig ready to respond when needed, thereby contributing to peace of mind and a sense of safety.
- B. To increase the number of police units available to respond to the scenes of reported crime or other urgent calls for assistance.
- C. To enhance our ability to summon off duty officers in emergencies and have them report in equipped police vehicles directly to the site where they are needed.
- D. To improve the maintenance and reliability of police vehicles by placing the responsibility for personal care of each vehicle with an individual officer.
- E. To allow patrol officers coming on duty to replace the relieved officer in the assigned area, without having to report to the station to change vehicles.

**III. ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Officers to whom individual vehicles are assigned must reside within the service area defined by a circle with a ten (10) mile radius, with its center at Yampa and Victory Way. Officers who reside outside of these geographical boundaries will be required to leave their assigned vehicle at the Public Safety Center or the City Shop when not on duty.
- B. These geographical boundaries apply to all sworn officers with no exceptions.
- C. An officer may be assigned an individual vehicle upon hire but may not take the vehicle home until successful completion of the FTO Training Program, subject to vehicle availability.

D. Officers who are assigned individual vehicles must maintain their peace officer status in order to continue to participate in the one-to-one vehicle plan.

1. Officers need to maintain their basic police officer skills, such as firearms qualification, and be physically able to act as a peace officer upon immediate notice.

#### **IV. USE OF CITY VEHICLES**

A. Marked city-owned vehicles may only be used for work related activities, and shall be operated only by police personnel.

1. Non-uniformed officers who are on call are required to respond as quickly as possible when they are needed. As a result, if they are assigned an unmarked vehicle, they may use the vehicle when off duty in order to immediately respond to calls. All other restrictions on vehicle use apply.

B. General rules of conduct that apply to an on-duty officer in uniform shall also apply to an off-duty officer in civilian clothes while driving a City vehicle.

1. Off-duty officers who are operating a City vehicle should be appropriately attired to effectively perform a police function and make public contacts. Clothing such as cut-offs, thongs, tank tops and T-shirts displaying inappropriate graphics are prohibited.

C. All personnel shall exercise good judgment in operating and utilizing a City vehicle, and shall not drive or use the vehicle in a manner, which may cause unfavorable comment or reflect negatively on the Department.

1. Personnel will not presume any special privileges with a City vehicle. For example, an individual living in an apartment complex must park the vehicle in the designated area, not in a restricted parking zone.

2. Unattended vehicles must be locked at all times.

D. All officers are required to have the police radio turned on while operating a police vehicle, and to take action on observed violations.

1. Officers will use their assigned radio call sign.
2. It is not necessary to check in and out of service with the dispatcher when off-duty.
3. In minor incidents, an off-duty officer may summon an on-duty officer to handle the situation, and assist until the on-duty officer arrives. If immediate action is required, the off-duty officer shall take whatever action is necessary.
4. Officers are reminded that jurisdictional issues should be considered when operating a police vehicle outside the Craig city limits (i.e., out-of-town training).

E. Persons who are not department employees may only accompany the officer as passengers, when the City vehicle is operated off-duty, if they are involved in an official police related activity.

F. Officers will not use the vehicle on a part-time or temporary job where the use of the car is a required condition of employment unless specifically authorized by a Division Commander. However, the vehicle may be driven to and from temporary or part-time security employment that has been coordinated through the department.

G. Use of alcoholic beverages or medication:

1. If an individual plans on consuming an alcoholic beverage or medication, which alters mood, skills, or judgment, or has consumed an alcoholic beverage or such medication, he/she shall not drive a City vehicle. A supervisor who suspects such use of alcohol or medication may require a breath or blood test from that individual.
2. Certain assignments may require the controlled consumption of alcoholic beverages while on duty. However, such consumption must have prior supervisory approval and shall not be to the extent of impairment of the individual's judgment or coordination.
3. Possession of an alcoholic beverage in a City-owned vehicle is prohibited unless it is directly related to a duty function.

H. Officers on light duty status will retain the use of their assigned City vehicle, but the vehicle may be used only for travel to and from their duty assignment. Any other use of the vehicle is prohibited.

1. The officer's knowledge of the extent of his/her injury or condition should be the determining factor in what enforcement actions they become involved in during the limited use of the car.
2. This limitation includes all City vehicles, whether marked or unmarked.

I. During vacations or when the officer is out of the city for extended periods of time, the department may require that the City vehicle be stored at a City facility. If the vehicle is stored at the officer's house, it must be accessible for department use. Other officers will not use the vehicle unless special needs arise.

## **V. OPERATION OF CITY VEHICLES**

A. General

1. All department employees must have a valid Colorado Driver's license on their person while operating a City-owned vehicle, and they must conform to all City Ordinances and State Statutes regulating traffic.
2. All department employees will conduct an examination of their assigned vehicle before each shift to insure the vehicle has not been tampered with since last used, is mechanically safe, is free of damage or defect and is properly equipped for use.
3. Employees shall drive City vehicles in a reasonable manner in order to conserve fuel and ensure efficiency of operation, to include:

a. Stopping the engine rather than idling for extended periods of time (except during very cold winter weather). (Leaving the vehicle running during the summer is discouraged because severe engine damage from over heating can occur very quickly.)

b. Keeping the prisoner shield closed as much as possible when operating the air conditioner.

4. When vehicles are parked and left unattended for extended periods of time (i.e. at the department, at home, code 7, etc.) the keys are to be removed from the ignition (except during very cold winter weather when the vehicle may be left running), and the vehicle shall be locked.

5. Employees shall set an example of good driving habits while operating City vehicles.

a. Employees shall not park the vehicle improperly except in an emergency.

b. Employees may receive citations and/or disciplinary action for driving violations.

6. When it is necessary for employees to use non-assigned department vehicles for department business while off-duty or while on special assignment, approval must first be obtained from a supervisor.

## B. Seat belts

1. The driver and all passengers shall wear their seat belts when riding in a City vehicle. Refer to General Order [10.04 Safety Belts](#) for some limited exceptions.

2. Prisoners will be secured in a seat belt except when the use of the seat belt may aggravate the situation and cause further difficulties for the officer.

3. The consequences of not utilizing a seat belt could be serious injury, the refusal of the City insurance carrier to cover injuries, and/or possible disciplinary action in accordance with City personnel regulations.

## VI. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

A. Officers will be responsible for the general maintenance, proper care, appearance and cleanliness of the vehicle they are driving (or are assigned to), both interior and exterior.

1. Except for emergencies, all maintenance, service work, and repair work will be scheduled with the City Shop to be done during off-duty time.

2. Officers may voluntarily wash the vehicle on off-duty time at the current designated car wash, or at their homes.

3. Officers will be responsible for changing flat tires. Tires will be repaired at the authorized garage and a maintenance form completed.

4. Patrol vehicles are expected to have at least a 3/4 full tank of gasoline at the beginning of a shift.

**B. Officers shall refrain from:**

1. Performing mechanical work on the car without approval of the Division Commander.
2. Altering the body, general design, appearance, markings, mechanical or electrical systems.
3. Officers shall not alter, mark, perform repairs or mechanical work (with the exception of minor repairs such as changing headlights) to the vehicle without the approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.
4. Adding accessories or equipment, with the exception of satellite radios without written approval of the Chief of Police.

**C. Supervisors will periodically check the vehicles of officers under their command to ensure that maintenance is being performed at the proper mileage intervals that all equipment is present and in good working order, and that the vehicle is clean.**

**D. Officers are held strictly accountable and subject to disciplinary action for damage caused by abuse or negligence, or for the loss of equipment or property.**

1. In addition to traditional disciplinary action, the officer may be charged for damage expense as follows:

- a. Damage up to and including \$1000 - reimbursed by the officer.
- b. Damage above \$1000 - decided on an individual basis; however, it may not be any less than for damage up to \$1000, and could result in a temporary or permanent suspension of the officer's vehicle privileges.

2. Damage to the vehicle for which the officer is not at fault will be repaired at no cost to the officer.

**Approved By:**



**Walter K. Vanatta  
Chief of Police**