

Somerville Police Department 	TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		POLICY NUMBER: 417	VERSION: 4.00
	Subject: Police Vehicles			
	Issuing Authority: Charles Femino Chief of Police		Signature: 	Effective Date: December 23, 2021
Accreditation Standards (6th Edition) 41.1.3, 41.3.1, 41.3.2, 41.3.3		<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revised <input type="checkbox"/> Amended		
Revision & Reissued Dates:	1/18/16	3/28/16	12/13/16	

Purpose

Police department vehicles are purchased and maintained for the purpose of delivering police services to this municipality. The Somerville Police Department is committed to maintaining agency vehicles to be safe, dependable, and professional in appearance. Vehicles should be maintained with equipment and stocked with supplies so that employees may effectively carry out their job functions. Employees are required to upkeep the vehicles by cleaning them, assuring that proper supplies are present, and reporting defects and damage in a timely manner.

Policy

It is the policy of the Somerville Police Department that:

- A. Department vehicles shall only be used for police purposes, as determined by the Chief of Police
- B. All agency vehicles shall be maintained in a clean, safe, and dependable condition
- C. Crashes involving department vehicles shall be reported immediately to a supervisor, documented, and investigated

Definitions

Fleet Manager: The City of Somerville Motor Vehicle Fleet manager is also the fleet manager for the Police Department.

Patrol Vehicle: A marked or unmarked four wheel sedan or SUV intended for regular patrol duties by uniformed personnel.

Unmarked Vehicle: A sedan, SUV or truck without the visible paint, markings, and equipment which would make it easily identifiable as a police vehicle.

Specialty Vehicle: A motor vehicle intended for a specific purpose, such as a mobile incident command vehicle, detainee transport vehicle, animal control van, motorcycle, bicycle and ATV.

Procedures

A. Fleet Manager: The City of Somerville Fleet Manager shall be responsible for coordinating the equipping, stocking, maintaining and replacing of department vehicles. [41.1.3]

B. Operation

1. Authorization

- a. Department vehicles may be operated only by employees authorized to do so by a supervisor.
- b. Department vehicles may be issued to specific individuals by the authority of the Chief of Police. The following persons are issued take-home department vehicles:
 - (1). Chief of Police
 - (2). Deputy Chief Operations
 - (3). Deputy Chief Support
 - (4). CID Captain

2. Licensing:

- a. Persons operating department vehicles must possess a valid driver's license.
- b. An employee who's right to operate has been suspended or revoked must inform his/her supervisor immediately upon learning of a suspension or revocation.
- c. If not properly licensed, the employee must advise any supervisory employee that he/she is not licensed if directed to operate a motor vehicle by a supervisor.
- d. At the beginning of each calendar year, the Administrative Captain will verify that all employees, who are required to operate department vehicles, have a valid driver's license.

3. User Responsibilities

- a. Before operating a department vehicle, normally at the beginning of an employee's tour of duty, employees must inspect the vehicle to ensure that the equipment is operating properly, and must check for cleanliness, adequate supplies, and damage.

Any issues related to these items the employee shall report such issues to their immediate supervisor.

- (1). In the case of an emergency, a vehicle inspection may be postponed until the emergency has passed, at which time an inspection shall be conducted.
 - (2). Operators shall identify and report defective equipment, like headlights, directional lights, and marker lights, auxiliary emergency lights, and radios.
 - (3). Body fenders, bumpers, glass, and tires shall be viewed for signs of damage.
 - (4). Tires shall be inspected for damage and proper inflation.
 - (5). Supplies carried by the vehicle shall be checked and replaced or replenished daily, or as they are used/needed, by the Fleet Manager. [41.3.2]
 - (6). Other equipment found to be inoperative or defective, like radar, Lojack receivers, gun racks, and scanners, shall be reported when discovered.
 - i. Defective or damaged vehicles shall be reported to the patrol supervisor, who will inspect the reported deficiency and forward the report to the Fleet Manager or ensure that a CAD item is generated.
 - ii. The patrol supervisor shall initiate an investigation of any unexplained damage.
 - iii. In the event that department property is found bearing evidence of damage which has not been previously reported, it will be considered prima facie evidence that the last person using the property or vehicle is responsible for the damage and they will complete a report accordingly.
 - (7). Vehicles used to transport detainees shall be inspected for contraband and weapons. See [303 - Detainee Transportation](#).
- b.** Before returning the vehicle, the operator shall ensure that the vehicle is fueled and the interior is clean and presentable.

4. Equipment and Supplies

a. Patrol Vehicles

- (1). All marked and unmarked patrol vehicles shall be equipped with emergency lights, a siren, and the supplies and equipment specified in Appendix A of this policy. [41.3.1] [41.3.2]

- (2).Supplies for patrol vehicles are maintained by the Fleet Manager. Any vehicle operator noticing a missing item shall inform the Fleet Manager immediately. If neither the Fleet Manager nor garage mechanic is available, the patrol supervisor shall be informed and a CAD item generated. [41.3.2]

b. Unmarked Vehicles

- (1).All police department unmarked vehicles, with the exception of “soft” cars, intended for use other than for normal patrol shall be equipped with the supplies and equipment specified in Appendix A of this policy.
 - (2).Investigators’ vehicles may carry additional equipment at the discretion of the CID supervisor.
 - (3).Administrative vehicles shall carry equipment specified under this section. Except as specified below, additional equipment may be carried at the discretion of the employee assigned to the vehicle’s use. Additional permanently mounted radios, firearms and racks, equipment vaults, Lojack receivers, auxiliary emergency lights, push bumpers, must be authorized by the Deputy in charge of Operations before being installed.
 - (4).No body or paint modifications may be made without the prior approval of Deputy in charge of Operations.
- 5. Passengers:** No person shall be permitted to be an occupant or ride as a passenger in a department vehicle, except when necessary in the performance of a police function, unless authorized by the Chief of Police or their designee.

6. Safety Belts [41.3.3]

- a.** The wearing of safety belts in all department vehicles is mandatory for all employees.
- b.** Safety belts are mandatory for all passengers.
 - (1).Children traveling as passengers must use car seats appropriate for the child’s age and size.
 - (2).Children may be transported without a car seat only if car seats are not available.
 - (3).The safety belt must never be bypassed by locking it behind the occupant or by the use of any bypass device.

Note: To protect an occupant during a crash, the airbag control module may fire the safety belt tensioners, which lock a safety belt tightly in place around the wearer, fire the airbag, or both, depending upon the severity of the impact. If the

safety belt indicates that it is being worn, the airbag control module may make a decision to deploy only the safety belt tensioner. If the safety belt is not being worn, the occupant will not be protected.

- (4).When practical, safety belts should be used when transporting detainees in department vehicles. See Policy 303- Detainee Transportation for transport exceptions.

7. Pushing Vehicles:

- a.** Department vehicles shall not be used for pushing another vehicle.

8. Jump Starting Vehicles:

- a.** Department vehicles may not be used to jump-start vehicles.

9. Routine Operation:

- A.** Employees shall operate department vehicles carefully, obeying all statutes, rules, regulations, ordinances, and bylaws relating to the operation and parking of vehicles. Employees shall exercise due care and judgment.
- B.** In responding to an emergency, operators may drive in excess of applicable speed limits, provided that due caution is exercised under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property. Operators may drive through an intersection contrary to traffic signals and signs, provided that the vehicle is brought to a full stop and then proceeds with caution.

C. Specialty Vehicles [41.1.3]

1. The following specialty vehicles are available to members of this department:

a. Detainee Transport Vehicle

- (1).This vehicle is authorized to be used by any officer.
- (2).This vehicle is to be used primarily to transport detainees, but can be used for patrol functions, if ordered by a supervisor.
- (3).Limitations on use: none.
- (4).Qualifications and training: none.
- (5).The Station Officers are responsible for filing a Department Cruiser History and Maintenance Sheet at the beginning of every shift.

(6).No special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.

b. Animal Control Vehicle

(1).This vehicle is authorized for use by the Animal Control Officer or by any officer in an emergency. Operators must be licensed to operate a motor vehicle.

(2).This vehicle may be used for animal control functions or other police functions in an emergency.

(3).Limitations on use: none.

(4).Qualifications and training: none.

(5).The Animal Control Officer is responsible for stocking the vehicle with supplies and coordinating maintenance with the Fleet Manager.

(6).A list of equipment and supplies to be kept on the vehicle are listed in Appendix A of this policy.

c. Motorcycle

(1).This vehicle is authorized for use only by officers who have a valid motorcycle operator's license and who have taken, and passed, a motorcycle safety course sponsored by the Mass Police Training Council.

(2).This vehicle may be used for police operations and for special events.

(3).Limitations on use: none.

(4).Qualifications and Training: none

(5).The Traffic Unit Sergeant shall coordinate upkeep and maintenance.

(6).No special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.

d. Bicycle

(1).The bicycle is authorized for use by officers certified by COBWEB.

(2).This vehicle may be used for police operations by officers and NPOs for special events.

(3).Limitations on use: none.

(4). Qualifications and Training: none.

(5). The Special Operations Sergeant shall coordinate upkeep and maintenance of all bicycles.

(6). No special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.

e. Bus

(1). This vehicle is authorized to be used by any officer.

(2). This vehicle is to be used primarily to transport passengers, but can be used for patrol functions, if ordered by a supervisor.

(3). Limitations on use: none.

(4). Qualifications and training: none.

(5). Officers are responsible for filing a Department Cruiser History and Maintenance Sheet at the beginning of every shift.

(6). No special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.

f. Special Response Team Van

(1). This vehicle is authorized to be used by any Special Response Team member.

(2). This vehicle is to be used primarily to transport officers, but can be used for patrol functions, if ordered by a supervisor.

(3). Limitations on use: none.

(4). Qualifications and training: none.

(5). The officers are responsible for filing a Department Cruiser History and Maintenance Sheet at the beginning of every shift.

(6). Officer's special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.

g. ATV

(1). This vehicle is authorized to be used by any officer.

- (2). This vehicle is to be used by officers during special assignments or events, but can be used for patrol functions, if ordered by a supervisor.
 - (3). Limitations on use: none.
 - (4). Qualifications and training: none.
 - (5). The officers are responsible for filing a Department Cruiser History and Maintenance Sheet at the beginning of every shift.
 - (6). No special equipment is normally carried on or assigned to this vehicle.
- h.** Additional equipment may be carried at the discretion of the supervisor of the function to which the vehicle is assigned:

D. Maintenance

1. Regular Maintenance

- a.** Regular scheduled maintenance, such as oil changes, state safety inspections, tire replacements, etc., shall be coordinated by the Fleet Manager.
- b.** In the event that a tire is discovered to be flat or damaged, the tire should be changed by Pat's Tow.

2. Mechanical and Auxiliary Equipment Problems

- a.** Mechanical and equipment problems shall be reported to his/her supervisor who will determine if the vehicle should be taken out of service. The supervisor shall email the Fleet Manager, cc the Administrative Captain and a CAD item shall be generated. If the fleet manager is unavailable, the supervisor shall notify by email, the Administrative Captain, who in turn will notify the fleet manager when they become available.
- b.** If, in the discretion of the applicable supervisor, a condition exists that makes a vehicle unsafe, the supervisor shall take the vehicle out of service.

3. Towing: If a police vehicle becomes disabled and needs to be towed:

- a.** If the vehicle is in the local area, the operator shall call Dispatch who shall arrange for the vehicle to be towed.
- b.** If the vehicle is outside of the local area, the operator shall notify the patrol supervisor. The State Police or local police department in whose jurisdiction the disabled vehicle is located may be called to arrange for the towing of the vehicle.

E. Crashes

1. Generally

- a.** Officers who are involved in a crash with a department vehicle, or when a vehicle is disabled and has been damaged, shall not move the vehicle except in an emergency.
- b.** A patrol supervisor shall immediately go to the scene, photograph the damage, and begin an investigation, forwarding all information to the Administrative Captain.
- c.** The officer involved shall promptly submit a crash report and a written report in accordance with this policy.
- d.** The operation of a department vehicle on duty or any time in a department vehicle off duty, by an employee, which results in a fatal traffic accident or an accident causing any injury or property damage in excess of \$5000, shall be considered a “critical incident” and is subject to post-incident drug testing.

2. Outside of the Jurisdiction

- a.** Officers who are involved in a crash with a department vehicle outside of the agency’s jurisdiction shall immediately notify their supervisor.
- b.** The Shift Commander shall notify the State Police or police department of the jurisdiction where the crash occurred.
- c.** The crash shall be investigated by the State Police or the police department of that jurisdiction.
- d.** At the discretion of the Shift Commander or a superior officer, the patrol supervisor may respond to take photographs and render assistance.

F. Disposal

- 1.** When a police department vehicle is to be disposed of through auction, trade-in, and possession by an insurance company, or other means, the Fleet Manager shall make sure all supplies and equipment have been removed from the vehicle.
- 2.** The vehicle shall be stripped of all retro-fitted equipment that is unique to public safety vehicles, like two-way radios, emergency lights, prisoner cages, radio racks, MDT mounts, push bars, and sirens.

Appendix A

Mandatory Equipment – All Patrol Vehicles

- Mobile Two-Way Radio
- Siren
- Emergency Auxiliary Lights
- First Aid Kit (contents listed on inside cover)
- Adult and Pedi Ambu Bag
- Fire Extinguisher
- Sharps Box
- Blanket
- Emergency Hammer
- Throw Line and Life Ring
- Police Line Tape

Mandatory Equipment – All Unmarked Vehicles

- Mobile Two-Way Radio
- Siren
- Emergency Auxiliary Lights
- First Aid Kit (contents listed on inside cover)
- Adult and Pedi Ambu Bag
- Fire Extinguisher
- Sharps Box
- Blanket
- Police Line Tape

Mandatory Equipment – Animal Control Vehicles

- Emergency Auxiliary Lights
- First Aid Kit (contents listed on inside cover)
- Rabies Poles
- Have a Hart Traps
- Infrared Thermometer
- Bolt Cutters
- Emergency Stretcher
- Snappy Snare
- Small Animal Cages
- Heavy Duty Gloves