



Policy 311: Use of Police Vehicles and Driving Conduct

POLICY

Our policy is to utilize department vehicles for maximum safety and exposure with minimum risk and expense.

Note: See Lakeville City Policy (6.14) regarding “Use of Vehicles”

Order 311.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a system of accountability to ensure department vehicles are use appropriately. This policy provides guidelines for on and off duty use of department vehicles.

Order 311.2 Assignment and Use of Department Vehicles

Primary Patrol Marked, Subdued Marked and Unmarked Units:

- Patrol marked, unmarked and subdued marked units are to be used primarily by sworn uniformed members of the department.
- Reserve Officers may have a vehicle assigned to the unit for their use.
- Use of Patrol Division vehicles is allowed with permission of the Watch Commander.
- The Patrol Lieutenant or designee may assign two or three officers to each vehicle.
- Officers assigned to a vehicle shall ensure the following:
 - They are expected to use that vehicle when available
 - The vehicles are kept clean, inspected before and after each shift for damage
 - Receive maintenance when needed.
 - Fuel tanks are filled after use.
- Vehicles with safety issues should be tagged “out of service” and a notice sent to fleet services and the CSO division.

Unmarked Units:

- Civilian appearance unmarked police units are assigned to Command Staff, SROs, and Investigators.
- They may be used for duties out of the City such as court or meetings, with approval of a supervisor.
- Civilian appearance unmarked units should only be used for patrol purposes if all marked units are unavailable or with the approval of a supervisor.

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Parking at Officer's Residences:

- Police vehicles may be parked at officer's residences ONLY with supervisor approval.

Special Duty Vehicles:

- The use of special duty vehicles such as bicycles are specific to assignments and weather conditions.
- The use of these vehicles will be coordinated and approved by the Watch Commander.

Non-Sworn Personnel:

- Operating vehicles assigned to another division for the purpose of patrol requires the approval of a supervisor.

Order 311.2 Unattended Vehicles

Assigned vehicles are to be secured and locked while unattended at all times unless an exigent circumstance exists that would require an officer to exit the vehicle immediately.

- The officer would need to articulate the need to leave the vehicle quickly such as a foot pursuit or other emergency situation and carefully weigh the need to quickly leave the vehicle with the need to secure the vehicle.

Order 311.3 Keys

Employees will be provided a set of keys for their assigned vehicles.

- They shall not duplicate the keys without the permission from a supervisor.
- Any loss or theft of keys will be directly reported to their direct supervisor.

Order 311.4 Maintenance

Employees are required to keep both the interior and exterior of their assigned vehicles clean and ensure that their assigned equipment is functional and ready for emergency service.

- The department will provide access to all cleaning and general maintenance supplies.
- Daily inspections before and after an employee's shift are required of both the interior and exterior of their assigned vehicles for cleanliness, damage, functionality, and overall maintenance.
 - Any issues with assigned vehicles should be promptly reported in an email to the supervisor in charge of fleet maintenance.
- All weapons shall be removed from assigned vehicles and secured in the armory before being sent in for maintenance.
- Vehicles shall be fueled and ready for emergency use at the end of each patrol shift for the upcoming patrol shift.
- An employee's failure to comply with these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action.

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311.5 Traffic Accidents and Damage

Employees shall promptly notify their direct supervisor in the case of any traffic accident or damage of any kind to the vehicle they are assigned to or operating.

- This includes any traffic accidents or damages of the vehicle they are operating while in the city or outside of the city for work purposes for example: training, court etc.
- If the employee discovers damage to their assigned vehicle during their initial required inspection of said vehicle, they need to immediately report it to their direct supervisor.

311.6 Vehicle Alterations

Any type of modification or alterations to an assigned vehicle is prohibited without the express authorization of the supervisor in charge of fleet maintenance.

311.7 Driving Regulations

- Officers must follow all applicable traffic regulations for normal and emergency driving per Minnesota State Statute.
 - Abuses and violations may result in disciplinary action.
- Members shall operate City vehicles only if they possess a valid Minnesota driver's license.
- All department employees will use seat belts in department vehicles in accordance with State law.
- Officers must report any circumstance that may affect their driving privileges to their supervisor as soon as possible.

311.8 Use of Wireless Communications Device in Vehicles/Hands-Free Regulations

- Officers/employees operating department vehicles shall not use their department issued phone or personal cell phone at any time, unless it is paired to the vehicle or in hands-free mode.
 - Exceptions:
 - If an officer/employee is transporting a prisoner, you may use your phone to make a call if the information you are sharing needs to be kept private from the prisoner.
 - If officers are handling a major incident and by the nature of the incident the inability to communicate while operating a vehicle would hinder our ability to protect and serve our citizens.
- Officers/employees shall pair their work issued cell phone to the vehicle they are operating, if the vehicle is equipped with such technology. When the phone is paired to the vehicle you are operating, officers/employees may use the phone as normal in hands-free mode.

Order 311.9 Driving Without Headlights:

The department recognizes there are times when it is beneficial for law enforcement for officers to drive without lights. Officers will follow this procedure in accordance with MSS 169.541:

- Only full-time licensed officers may operate police vehicles without lights.

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- Operation without lights must be part of the officer's duties.
- The officer operating without lights must reasonably believe it is necessary under the circumstances to investigate an actual or suspected violation of law.
- Operation without lights is allowable to enter areas undetected, for investigative purposes, and/or when following a suspected violator at a safe distance.
- Operation without lights is not permitted on interstate freeways, at speeds greater than the posted limit and what is reasonable and prudent under existing weather, road and traffic conditions, in a pursuit (See Order 303), or for petty misdemeanor traffic violations.