
Vehicle Use

704.1 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 Barstow to provide assigned take-home vehicles.

704.2 POLICY

The Barstow 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.

704.2.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Personnel assigned to patrol duties shall be assigned a patrol vehicle by the on-duty watch-commander or as assigned by the division commander. All patrol units shall be equipped with a Mobile Data Computer (MDC) and all officers are required to log onto the MDC at the beginning of each assigned shift or duty assignment, and to remain logged-in to the MDC for the duration of their duty assignment. The officer shall input the required information when going on duty. If the vehicle is not equipped with a working MDC, the officer shall notify the dispatch center for entry of the vehicle number and mileage on the officers history report. If the employee exchanges vehicles during the shift, with the approval of the on-duty watch commander, the new unit number shall be provided to the dispatch center, as well as the time the exchange occurs.

All Department employees are required to drive their assigned vehicle when reporting for duty or when a vehicle is requested for City authorized business. No switching or exchanging of assigned vehicles is authorized by any Department employee without the authorization of their immediate supervisor, the on-duty watch commander, or division commander.

704.2.2 UNSCHEDULED USE OF VEHICLES

Personnel utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties shall first notify the on-duty watch commander of the reasons for use and a notation will be made on the shift roster indicating the operator's name and vehicle number. This section does not apply to personnel permanently assigned an individual vehicle (e.g., command staff, detectives, etc.), or to property and evidence section personnel or volunteer personnel assigned transportation duties to and from the maintenance yard, etc.

The use of any City owned vehicles, not assigned to the Department employee, must be approved by the employees immediate supervisor, on-duty watch commander, or the division commander. No Department employee may use or take a City owned vehicle for any purpose without first obtaining authorization, unless the vehicle was previously assigned or, in the case of an emergency, prior authorization is not practical. In those emergency situations when prior

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authorization was not obtained the on-duty watch commander or the employees immediate supervisor shall be notified as soon as practical.

704.2.3 UNMARKED DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

Department employees assigned to the Detective Division or non-sworn employees shall utilize unmarked Department vehicles. For sworn employees, the Detective Division unmarked City owned vehicles shall be utilized and may contain specific safety equipment, including firearms or other weapons. Non-sworn Department employees shall utilize City owned unmarked Department "Pool" vehicles.

Administrative Vehicles - The Chief of Police, Police Captain, and Division Commander(s) shall be assigned an unmarked vehicle for their respective administrative duties. As with other Department employees, the Chief of Police, Police Captain, and Division Commander(s) are responsible for the regular scheduled maintenance (through the City Fleet Maintenance Department), operation, and appearance of any vehicle assigned to that position during the duration of the vehicle assignment.

Detective Vehicles - Each assigned Detective/Investigator assigned to the Detective Division of the Barstow Police Department may be assigned a Department vehicle. All Detectives/Investigators assigned a Department vehicle are responsible for the regular scheduled maintenance (through the City Fleet Maintenance Department), operation, and appearance of any vehicle assigned to that position during the duration of the vehicle assignment.

704.2.4 DETECTIVE BUREAU VEHICLES

Detective Division vehicle use is generally restricted to sworn personnel of the Department. Exceptions may be authorized by the Detective Division supervisor, the on-duty watch commander, or the Division Commander. Detective Division employees are authorized the use of unmarked City owned vehicles for official duties only and those vehicles must be secured at the end of each work assignment. The on-call duty detective is authorized to maintain possession of the unmarked City owned vehicle assigned to that individual for the duration of the on-call assignment, including driving to and from the employees residence or other location where the vehicle will be secured pending being called into service. Response time from the on-call employees residence or other secured location must not exceed a 45-minute response time. In no case shall the on-call employee utilize City owned vehicles for personal use during the employees on-call status.

704.2.5 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

All Department personnel operating City owned vehicles shall not permit any person other than City employees or persons required to be transported in the performance of assigned duties to ride as a passenger in any City owned vehicle, except when performing department related functions or attending a department sanctioned event and/or at the direction of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

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704.2.6 PARKING

City owned vehicles should be parked in their assigned parking locations. Employees shall not park privately owned vehicles in any location assigned to a City owned vehicle or in other areas of any City owned property not designated for private vehicle parking unless authorized by the employee's immediate supervisor, the on-duty watch commander, the division commander, or Chief of Police. Privately owned motorcycles shall be parked in designated areas and should not be operated in any area where the exhaust noise interferes with City business or employees. All marked patrol vehicles and unmarked detective division vehicles shall be backed into the parking locations. No City owned vehicles, except canine vehicles, shall be left running while unattended in the Department parking areas.

704.2.7 INSPECTIONS

All City owned vehicles may be inspected by a supervisor or management employee at any time to insure vehicles are being utilized in a safe manner and are kept clean and professional in appearance.

All City owned vehicles used in the transportation of prisoners shall be inspected at the beginning of each duty assignment and immediately after the transportation of any prisoner to insure no items of contraband or dangerous items which may cause an officer safety issue are present and accessible to additional passengers and for use in the prosecution of additional charges against the person discarding such items.

At any time the operation, appearance, or care of City owned vehicles becomes an issue, the Chief of Police, or his/her designee, may order daily inspections of all City owned vehicles operated by Department personnel. All Department personnel are responsible for the care and operation of City owned vehicles as set forth throughout this policy chapter.

704.3 USE OF VEHICLES

704.3.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

The Watch Commander shall ensure a copy of the shift assignment 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 the member's shift, the new vehicle number shall be documented on the roster.

704.3.2 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 shift assignment 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.

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704.3.3 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.

When transporting any person in custody, 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.

704.3.4 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 to 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.

704.3.5 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 the Dispatch Center. Use of the MDC is governed by the Mobile Digital Computer Use Policy.

704.3.6 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.

704.3.7 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.

Members shall not duplicate keys. The loss of a key shall be promptly reported in writing through the member's chain of command.

704.3.8 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

Members operating department vehicles shall not permit persons other than City personnel or persons required to be conveyed in the performance of duty, or as otherwise authorized, to ride as passengers in the vehicle, except as stated in the Ride-Along Policy.

704.3.9 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 assignment, members may not violate state law regarding vehicle operation while intoxicated.

704.3.10 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.

Department vehicles should be parked in assigned stalls. Members shall not park privately owned vehicles in stalls assigned to department vehicles or in other areas of the parking lot that are not so designated unless authorized by a supervisor. Privately owned motorcycles shall be parked in designated areas.

704.3.11 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

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

704.3.12 NON-SWORN MEMBER USE

Non-sworn shall refrain from using marked police vehicles when at all possible. Non-sworn members using marked emergency vehicles shall ensure that all weapons have been removed before going into service. Non-sworn members shall prominently display the "out of service" placards or light bar covers at all times. Non-sworn members shall not operate the emergency lights or siren of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a supervisor.

704.4 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER ASSIGNMENT TO VEHICLES

Department vehicles may be assigned to individual members at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Vehicles may be assigned for on-duty and/or take-home use. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time. Permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

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The assignment of vehicles may be suspended when the member is unable to perform the member's regular assignment.

704.4.1 KEYS

All Department personnel approved to operate City owned vehicles as a normal part of their assigned duties shall be issued their own vehicle key as part of their initial equipment issue upon hiring. Personnel assigned a permanent vehicle shall be issued keys for their respective vehicle. The loss of any assigned key shall be promptly reported, verbally and in writing, to the employee's immediate supervisor or on-duty watch commander. The supervisor receiving the written report shall forward that report to the division commander. All Department personnel found to be negligent or who fail to provide adequate security for any issued vehicle key will be liable for the replacement costs of such replacement key(s).

704.4.2 ON-DUTY USE

Vehicle assignments shall be based on the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions, and employment or appointment status. Vehicles may be reassigned or utilized by other department members at the discretion of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

704.4.3 UNSCHEDULED TAKE-HOME USE

Circumstances may arise where department vehicles must be used by members to commute to and from a work assignment. Members may take home department vehicles only with prior approval of a supervisor and shall meet the following criteria:

- (a) The circumstances are unplanned and were created by the needs of the department.
- (b) Other reasonable transportation options are not available.
- (c) The member lives within a reasonable distance (generally not to exceed a 60-minute drive time) of the Barstow City limits.
- (d) Off-street parking will be available at the member's residence.
- (e) Vehicles will be locked when not attended.
- (f) All firearms, weapons and control devices will be removed from the interior of the vehicle and properly secured in the residence when the vehicle is not attended, unless the vehicle is parked in a locked garage.

704.4.4 ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Assignment of take-home vehicles shall be based on the location of the member's residence, the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions, and employment or appointment status. Residence in the City of Barstow is a prime consideration for assignment of a take-home vehicle. Members who reside outside the City of Barstow may be required to secure the vehicle at a designated location or the Department at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

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Department members shall sign a take-home vehicle agreement that outlines certain standards, including, but not limited to, how the vehicle shall be used, where it shall be parked when the member is not on-duty, vehicle maintenance responsibilities and member enforcement actions.

Members are cautioned that under federal and local tax rules, personal use of a City vehicle may create an income tax liability for the member. Questions regarding tax rules should be directed to the member's tax adviser.

Criteria for use of take-home vehicles include the following:

- (a) Vehicles shall only be used for work-related purposes and shall not be used for personal errands or transports, unless special circumstances exist and the Chief of Police or a Division Commander gives authorization.
- (b) Vehicles may be used to transport the member to and from the member's residence for work-related purposes.
- (c) Vehicles will not be used when off-duty except:
 - 1. In circumstances when a member has been placed on call by the Chief of Police or Division Commanders and there is a high probability that the member will be called back to duty.
 - 2. When the member is performing a work-related function during what normally would be an off-duty period, including vehicle maintenance or travelling to or from a work-related activity or function.
 - 3. When the member has received permission from the Chief of Police or Division Commanders.
 - 4. When the vehicle is being used by the Chief of Police, Division Commanders or members who are in on-call administrative positions.
 - 5. When the vehicle is being used by on-call investigators.
- (d) While operating the vehicle, authorized members will carry and have accessible their duty firearms and be prepared to perform any function they would be expected to perform while on-duty.
- (e) The two-way communications radio, MDC and global positioning satellite device, if equipped, must be on and set to an audible volume when the vehicle is in operation.
- (f) Unattended vehicles are to be locked and secured at all times.
 - 1. 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).
 - 2. All weapons shall be secured while the vehicle is unattended.
 - 3. All department identification, portable radios and equipment should be secured.
- (g) Vehicles are to be parked off-street at the member's residence unless prior arrangements have been made with the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. If the vehicle is not secured inside a locked garage, all firearms and kinetic impact

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weapons shall be removed and properly secured in the residence (see the Firearms Policy regarding safe storage of firearms at home).

- (h) Vehicles are to be secured at the member's residence or the appropriate department facility, at the discretion of the Department when a member will be away (e.g., on vacation) for periods exceeding one week.
 - 1. If the vehicle remains at the residence of the member, the Department shall have access to the vehicle.
 - 2. If the member is unable to provide access to the vehicle, it shall be parked at the Department.
- (i) The member is responsible for the care and maintenance of the vehicle.

704.4.5 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

When driving a take-home vehicle to and from work outside of the jurisdiction of the Barstow Police Department or while off-duty, an officer shall not initiate enforcement actions except in those circumstances where a potential threat to life or serious property damage exists (see the Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions and Law Enforcement Authority policies).

Officers may render public assistance when it is deemed prudent (e.g., to a stranded motorist).

Officers driving take-home vehicles shall be armed, appropriately attired and carry their department-issued identification. Officers should also ensure that department radio communication capabilities are maintained to the extent feasible.

704.4.6 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.
- (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, 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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704.5 DAMAGE, ABUSE AND MISUSE

When any department vehicle is involved in a traffic collision or otherwise incurs damage, the involved member shall promptly notify a supervisor. Any traffic collision report shall be filed with the agency having jurisdiction (see the Traffic Collision Reporting Policy).

Damage to any department vehicle that was not caused by a traffic collision shall be immediately reported during the shift in which the damage was discovered. The Watch Commander will document the damage and any associated collision in a memorandum to the Division Commander.

704.6 TOLL ROAD USAGE

Law enforcement vehicles are not routinely exempted from incurring toll road charges.

To avoid unnecessary toll road charges, all members operating department vehicles on a toll road shall adhere to the following:

- (a) Members operating department vehicles for any reason other than in response to an emergency shall pay the appropriate toll charge or utilize the appropriate toll way transponder. Members may submit a request for reimbursement from the City for any toll fees incurred in the course of official business.
- (b) Members passing through a toll plaza or booth during a response to an emergency shall notify, in writing, the appropriate Division Commander within five working days explaining the circumstances.

704.7 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.