

PALM BEACH GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ASSIGNED VEHICLE PROGRAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURE 4.2.1.9

Effective Date :

03/12/14

Accreditation Standards:

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CFA

Review Date:

10/01/2016

CONTENTS

1. **Criteria for Participation in Assigned Vehicle Program**
2. **Authorized Use of Assigned Vehicle**
3. **Off-Duty Use of Assigned Vehicle**
4. **Prohibited Uses**
5. **Care and Maintenance of Assigned Vehicle**
6. **Record Keeping**
7. **Off-Duty Action Documentation Form**

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the assignment of department vehicles to specific individuals, and to establish guidelines for the operation of those vehicles.

SCOPE: This policy and procedure applies to all members participating in the assigned vehicle program.

REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY: Administrative\Investigations Division Assistant Chief

POLICY: The Palm Beach Gardens Police Department establishes an assigned vehicle program as a means of increasing police visibility on the streets and in the neighborhoods of the city, providing for prompt response by on and off-duty members to certain incidents, and increasing longevity of department owned vehicles. All members operating assigned vehicles shall comply with the provisions of this policy and with all other policies and procedures relating to the operation of vehicles owned or leased by the city or department. Failure to do so may result in the suspension or removal of the member from the assigned vehicle program and/or other disciplinary action.

PROCEDURES:

1. CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION IN ASSIGNED VEHICLE PROGRAM

- a. Senior Staff Officers (Majors and above) will be assigned vehicles to facilitate their need to travel within the area in order to conduct police department business and to be available for response to a variety of incidents, both on and off-duty.
- b. Other officers and members subject to call-out (for example: Detectives, Crime Scene, Internal Affairs, and Public Information) may be assigned vehicles subject to availability and at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
- c. Patrol officers who have successfully completed probation may be assigned marked patrol vehicles depending on availability and at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
 - i. First priority for such assignment will be those officers living within the city limits, and priority within this group shall be by seniority.
 - ii. Second priority will be those officers living within 10 miles of the city limits and priority within this group will be established by proximity to the city limits.
 - iii. The third priority will be those officers who live farther than 10 but within the 30 mile radius from the city limits or outside of Palm Beach County, and priority within this group will be by seniority.

- d. Officers normally assigned to a marked patrol vehicle and who are off work due to disability or worker's compensation or are on light or modified duty shall not be authorized to operate that vehicle. That member's assigned vehicle shall be placed into the fleet as a pool car or may be assigned to another eligible member until the original member returns to full duty status.
- e. Officers and members normally assigned to an unmarked vehicle and who are off work due to disability or worker's compensation shall not be authorized to operate that vehicle. That member's assigned vehicle shall be placed into the fleet as a pool car or may be assigned to another eligible member until the original member returns to full duty status. If the member is on light or modified duty or returns to light or modified duty, that member may be allowed to operate the unmarked vehicle with the approval of his\her supervisor.
- f. Any member who is or will be absent from work for more than three consecutive days (excluding regular days off) due to vacation, military leave or other reasons shall park his\her assigned vehicle at the police department and shall give the keys to his\her supervisor, unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police. That vehicle may be made available for use by other members during that period.

2. AUTHORIZED USE OF ASSIGNED VEHICLE

- a. While on-duty, a member may use an assigned vehicle for official business only. This also applies to member use of any other city or department owned vehicle and is subject to all applicable city and department policies and procedures.
- b. Those members residing within Palm Beach County shall be allowed to drive their assigned vehicle to and from their residence and in an off-duty status, subject to the requirements of Section 3. Members residing outside of Palm Beach County, but within the 30 mile radius or as otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police, may participate in the assigned vehicle program but are only authorized to drive their vehicles to and from work for business purposes only.
- c. Unless authorized by the Chief of Police, assigned vehicles may not be operated outside of Palm Beach County except on official business and with the knowledge and consent of the member's supervisor.

3. OFF-DUTY USE OF ASSIGNED VEHICLE

- a. Members authorized pursuant to Section 2 to operate an assigned vehicle in an off-duty status may use those vehicles to travel to and from work and may park those vehicles at their residences.
- b. Members authorized pursuant to Section 2 to operate an assigned vehicle in an off-duty status may use those vehicles for personal business or errands only when such business or errand reasonably requires the member to travel to, through or within the city limits of Palm Beach Gardens, or when otherwise approved by the Chief of Police. This would include stops made when traveling to and from work when such stops are reasonably along the way. The vehicle shall not be driven beyond the 30 mile radius except on official business or with the approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.
- c. Off-duty officers operating an assigned marked patrol vehicle will monitor the police radio and advise communications when going in or out of service, when responding to a call and when handling any police related situation.
- d. Off-duty officers operating an assigned vehicle shall wear appropriate attire and will carry a department approved handgun on their person or readily accessible in the front passenger compartment of the vehicle, will have at least one pair of handcuffs available, and will have their police badge and identification, driver's license and portable radio. Appropriate attire is that which creates a favorable image for the department and does not create a safety hazard for the officer. Clothing such as tank tops, bathing suits, flip-flops, and shirts or clothing with offensive words or designs are prohibited.
- e. Off-duty officers operating an assigned vehicle are required to respond to incidents or calls for service within the city which come to their attention through any of the following: on view, citizen walk-ups or flag down, and radio dispatched activity of a serious nature occurring within reasonable proximity to their location. Failure to do so may constitute neglect of duties and may result in disciplinary action and/or

removal from the assigned vehicle program. For such incidents occurring outside the city limits, the officer should ensure that the appropriate authorities are notified.

- f. Off-duty officers operating a marked patrol vehicle while wearing civilian clothes should not make routine traffic stops unless inaction would reflect unfavorably upon the department or when the violation is flagrant and likely to cause damage or personal injury.
- g. Off-duty officers operating a marked patrol unit equipped for prisoner transportation (i.e., a vehicle with a barrier separating the front and rear passenger areas) may transport only one passenger and only in the front passenger seat. Seat belts will be used at all times by passengers in the vehicle. Any officer transporting a passenger and who is required to respond to a serious incident should make every effort to first drop that passenger off in a safe location.

4. PROHIBITED USES

- a. An assigned vehicle may not be used if the member is consuming alcohol or is under the influence of alcohol or after the member has ingested any drug which impairs the member's ability to operate the vehicle.
- b. An assigned vehicle may not be used while purchasing alcohol or patronizing an establishment whose main business is the sale of alcohol for consumption on or off the premises. No alcoholic beverages may be carried in the vehicle unless they are seized as evidence or contraband.
- c. Only the assigned member may operate the vehicle. Family members and others are prohibited from doing so. This prohibition does not apply to other city members operating the vehicle in the course of their duties.
- d. Members may not use an assigned vehicle in any circumstance which would tend to discredit the city or department, nor shall the vehicle be used as a means of intimidation in personal or business disputes.
- e. Members may not use their assigned vehicle as part of any outside employment, except the vehicle may be driven to and from the place of employment if it is located within the city limits.
- f. Members may not use their assigned vehicles to transport large or heavy loads or loads that extend outside of the vehicle such as lumber or building supplies, nor to tow trailers or other vehicles, except when required in the performance of their official duties.
- g. Members are prohibited from using their assigned vehicles while engaged in political activities such as setting up signs, attending rallies, promotional events, or any other activity that may inappropriately suggest department or city endorsement. No banners, placards, decals or bumper stickers of any type may be attached to the vehicle. Safety related decals or bumper stickers may be attached to the vehicle with the approval of the Chief of Police.

5. CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF ASSIGNED VEHICLES

- a. Members operating assigned vehicles are expected to utilize good fuel conservation practices in order to control gasoline use. Excessive fuel use when compared to similar members operating assigned vehicles may be cause for the revocation of a member's "take home" car privileges or removal from the assigned vehicle program.
- b. Off-duty usage should be kept to a reasonable level. The Fleet Manager will review off-duty mileage and repair requests and make appropriate recommendations to the member's supervisor. Members may be required to turn in their vehicle or have restrictions placed on their use if the off-duty use privilege is abused.
- c. Members participating in the assigned vehicle program are responsible for the care, cleanliness and condition of their assigned vehicle. Supervisors are responsible for inspecting, at least monthly, the vehicles of all members under their command. Such inspections shall include internal and external cleanliness, adherence to preventative maintenance practices, the condition and availability of required equipment, and the presence of unauthorized modifications. The Fleet Manager shall develop a form for this purpose and shall maintain a file of completed inspections. The failure of a member to properly

- maintain their vehicle may be cause for the removal of the member from the assigned vehicle program.
- d. Members participating in the assigned vehicle program are prohibited from making any mechanical or electrical repairs, adjustments or alterations unless authorized; altering the body, frame, general design, appearance or marking of the vehicle or having any repairs made to the vehicle other than at the city's Public Works department unless prior approval is obtained.
 - e. With the exception of approved emergency repairs and minor repairs as listed in Section 5-g, all maintenance, service and repair work must be done or arranged by the City's Public Works department.
 - f. Weapons, ammunition, and police equipment such as laptops, bullet-proof vests or ballistic helmets, shall be removed from the vehicle when it is left for service or repair. These same items should be removed when the vehicle is left at any other location, excluding the department's secured parking lot, for an extended period of time.
 - g. Members operating assigned vehicles while off-duty are expected to handle minor emergency maintenance issues (specifically: flat tires, dead batteries and running out of fuel) themselves. Members are expected to familiarize themselves with the vehicles operating manual so they are familiar with the proper procedures. If a member is unsure as to how to change a tire or jump start a vehicle, they are expected to contact Public Works in advance to receive appropriate instruction in these techniques before they are needed.
 - h. In the event a member does need to change a tire or jump start the vehicle while off-duty, Public Works will be notified as soon as the member returns to duty so that they may inspect the vehicle, replace the spare tire, etc. Such notification will be made during normal working hours of Public Works.
 - i. Any assigned vehicle needing maintenance or repairs or due for scheduled maintenance shall be delivered to Public Works. The member may then use a pool vehicle for on-duty use while that member's assigned vehicle is being repaired or maintained.
 - j. Officers driving marked patrol units shall ensure that their vehicle's fuel tank is filled up at the end of their shift and prior to driving the vehicle home or parking it in the police lot. This will ensure sufficient fuel for the member to respond to an emergency or call-out.
 - k. Members may, if they wish, purchase fuel for their vehicle at any service station selling a major brand of gasoline. Such purchase will be at the member's own expense.

6. RECORD KEEPING

- a. In order to assist in monitoring, any off-duty officer who takes police action while operating an assigned vehicle will call the incident into communications via the radio and will complete an "Off-Duty Action Documentation Form." This form will be submitted to the Fleet Manager via the officer's chain of command.
- b. The Patrol Operations Bureau Major will monitor the incidence and types of off-duty activity involving assigned vehicles and officers to ensure the objectives of the program are being met.
- c. Annually or as otherwise requested, the Fleet Manager will complete a statistical summary of these forms and incidents and forward the report to the Chief of Police.
- d. The Fleet Manager will be on the notification list for change of address notices for officers participating in the assigned vehicle program and will prepare and submit a personnel action report, if needed, to update deductions as a result of the change of address.
- e. The Administrative Operations Major will conduct an annual audit in conjunction with the annual employee address verification to ensure all assigned vehicle deductions are current and accurate.

INDEX AS:

- ASSIGNED VEHICLE PROGRAM
- VEHICLE USE

RESPONSIBILITY INDEX

- CHIEF OF POLICE
- ASSISTANT CHIEFS
- PATROL OPERATIONS BUREAU MAJOR
- ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS MAJOR
- FLEET MANAGER

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APPROVED:



Stephen J. Stepp
Chief of Police

03/12/14
Date

Date: _____ Time: _____ Case/CAD Number: _____

☐ Back-Up
☐ Traffic Stop
☐ Crime Report
☐ Assist to Motorist
☐ Accident
☐ Other (explain) _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

OFFICER:	VEHICLE NUMBER:
SHIFT/UNIT SUPERVISOR:	
OPERATIONS BUREAU COMMANDER:	