

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: USE OF POLICE VEHICLES

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I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the use, maintenance, and care of police department vehicles.

II. Patrol Vehicles Markings and Equipment

A. Patrol vehicles assigned shall be marked and equipped in a manner that will present a clear identity to the public. Patrol vehicles will be marked in the following manner:

1. The agency name on each side of the vehicle.
2. "Police" in six-inch lettering on each side of the vehicle and on trunk lid.
3. Vehicle unit number on the front and rear of the vehicle.
4. 911 emergency number lower on each quarter panel.
5. "First In Georgia Internationally Accredited" decal on top of each quarter panel.
6. Flashing blue lights mounted on the roof or in grill.
7. A siren and public address system mounted on light bar or in grill.
8. A mobile radio transceiver with eight channel capabilities.

B. Patrol vehicles will be equipped with the following special equipment and supplies. The officer assigned to maintain the vehicles will be responsible for checking the vehicles, at least once every two weeks, to inventory all equipment and supplies for operational readiness. If equipment is missing or supplies depleted, he/she will make arrangements to resupply the vehicles involved.

1. Fire extinguisher.
2. Bloodborne pathogen kit.
3. First aid kit.

4. 100 ft. tape measure.
5. One blanket.
6. Crime scene tape.
7. Box of latex gloves.
8. Rescue tool
9. HazMat Emergency Response Guidebook

III. Investigative Vehicles

- A. Vehicles used by Criminal Investigative Division shall be unmarked except for blue lights mounted in the grill or dash mounted, with strobes in the head and taillights.
- B. The following equipment shall be maintained in all vehicles used by investigative personnel. Excepted vehicles will be those used in special operations or undercover.
 1. Bloodborne pathogen kit.
 2. One fire extinguisher mounted in trunk.
 3. One first aid kit.

IV. Routine Vehicle Operation

Under normal, non-emergency conditions, and while responding to routine calls for service, operators of police department vehicles will strictly adhere to all traffic laws and will drive defensively in a safe and courteous manner. Officers will exercise prudent judgment and care with due regard to the safety of life and property.

- A. Only sworn police personnel shall be permitted to operate department vehicles, unless the request is approved, or activity is directed by a department supervisor.
- B. Police personnel shall maintain a valid Georgia driver's license.
- C. Police personnel operating a police department vehicle shall be responsible for the proper use and care of each vehicle and all accessories, equipment and tools assigned to the vehicle.
- D. Seat belts and shoulder harnesses shall be worn whenever police vehicles are in motion by both the driver and passengers.

V. Emergency Vehicle Operation

Covington Police Department vehicles may engage in emergency operations when responding to an existing emergency or when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law. The provision of this section will not relieve the operator of a police department vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor will these provisions protect the operator of a police department vehicle from the consequences of careless disregard for the safety of others.

- A. A police department vehicle engaged in emergency operations shall utilize emergency lights and siren to warn vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the emergency route.
- B. When engaged in emergency operations, the operator of a police department vehicle shall exercise extreme care.
- C. A police department vehicle engaged in emergency operation may:
 - 1. Exceed the speed limit so long as life or property is not endangered. Speed shall be limited by road conditions, weather, traffic volume and the exercise of good judgment.
 - 2. Proceed past a stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing or stopping as may be necessary for safe operation. Police department vehicles will not enter a controlled intersection without first stopping. The emergency lights and siren will be on, and the vehicle will not proceed further until the right-of-way has been established and there is no extreme risk of accident.

VI. Use of Emergency Equipment

The proper use of emergency equipment of the patrol vehicle is essential to the safety of the officer and other motorists.

- A. The emergency blue lights shall be utilized in the following incidents:
 - 1. Stopping the traffic violator.
 - 2. Assisting motorists in roadway.
 - 3. Roadway is blocked.
 - 4. Any situation where it is necessary to provide visibility for the officer.
- B. The siren will be used along with blue lights only in the following incidents:
 - 1. To assist in stopping a traffic violator.
 - 2. Vehicle pursuits.
 - 3. Response to a priority I call.
 - 4. At all intersections where it is necessary for police vehicle to enter intersection in emergency operations mode.
 - 5. Anytime where police vehicle operation impedes with the normal flow of traffic.
- C. The public address system may be utilized in the following incidents:
 - 1. Felony stops of vehicles.
 - 2. Control of large crowds.
 - 3. Barricaded person or hostage situation.

D. Spotlight will be used to check buildings and on traffic stops at night.

VII. Special Purpose Vehicles

A. Emergency Services Unit (ESU)

The ESU vehicle will be used for the purpose of transporting team members and equipment to and from emergency call-outs and training locations. Operation and maintenance of the vehicle will be the responsibility of the ESU.

B. K-9 Vehicles

The Department owns and maintains two patrol vehicles used exclusively for the K-9 units. Operation and maintenance of the vehicles are the responsibility of the K-9 officer to whom the vehicle is assigned.

C. Segway Police Personal Transporter (PT)

The Department owns and operates two Segways, which are two-wheeled battery powered electric transportation devices. Operation of the Segways is limited to officers who have been trained. Maintenance shall be the responsibility of the Patrol Division Captain or his designee.

D. Polaris Ranger Crew 570 ATV

The Department owns and maintains a multi-purpose all-terrain vehicle. This vehicle can be operated by any member of the police department or anyone who is working under the umbrella of the police department (Explorers, Interns) and has permission to do so. The ATV may be used for a multitude of applications, including but not limited to, parades, events on the square, Fuzz Run, search for missing persons, etc.

E. Bicycles

The Department utilizes bicycles which provide increased mobility for patrol during special events and congested areas throughout the city. Patrolling on bicycles also works to strengthen relations between the Department and community. Officers may participate in patrolling on bicycles on a volunteer basis as the Department does not have a dedicated Bicycle Unit. Interested officers should be in good physical condition and be able to show proficiency in operation of their bicycles. Each authorized officer will be assigned a police bicycle equipped with the following basic equipment. (approved helmet-to be worn at all times while riding bike, one flashing blue headlight, one flashing blue taillight, one bike rack, one toolkit, one water bottle rack). It will be the responsibility of the officer to maintain their assigned bicycle and equipment in a condition that is clean and functional. When possible, officers should ride in pairs for safety, visibility, and protection of the officers and their equipment.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton

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Chief of Police