

COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy Manual

706 VEHICLE USE

706.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes a system of accountability to ensure City-owned vehicles are used appropriately. For the purposes of this policy, "City-owned" includes any vehicle owned, leased or rented by the City.

706.2 POLICY

The Department provides vehicles for official business use and may assign take-home vehicles based on a determination of operational efficiency, economic impact to the Department, tactical deployments and other considerations.

706.3 USE OF VEHICLES

City-owned vehicles shall only be used for official business and, when approved, for commuting to allow members to respond to department-related business outside their regular work hours.

Members shall not operate a City-owned vehicle at any time when impaired by drugs and/or alcohol.

Any member operating a vehicle equipped with a two-way communications radio, MDT and/or a GPS device shall ensure the devices are on whenever the vehicle is in operation.

706.3.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Members who use a fleet vehicle as part of their work assignment shall ensure that the vehicle is properly checked out, according to current procedures, prior to taking it into service. If for any reason during the shift the vehicle is exchanged, the member shall ensure that the exchanged vehicle is likewise properly checked out.

706.3.2 UNSCHEDULED USE OF PATROL VEHICLES

Members utilizing a patrol vehicle for any purpose other than regularly assigned duties shall first notify a field supervisor of the reason for use and, after gaining approval, check out the vehicle. This section does not apply to members permanently assigned an individual vehicle (e.g., command staff, PIO, etc), who regularly use the vehicle on an unscheduled basis as part of their normal assignment.

706.3.3 UNMARKED VEHICLES

Except for use by the assigned member, unmarked units shall not be used without first obtaining approval from the supervisor of the unit to which the vehicle is assigned (e.g., CID, TRU, etc).

706.3.5 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

Members operating City-owned vehicles shall not permit persons other than City members or persons required to be conveyed in the performance of duty, or as otherwise authorized, to ride as a passenger in their vehicle.

706.3.6 PARKING

Except when responding to an emergency or other urgent official business that requires otherwise, members driving City-owned vehicles should obey all parking regulations at all times.

706.3.7 I 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 the shift. 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 used to transport any person other than a member should be inspected prior to placing him/her in the vehicle and again after he/she is removed. This is to ensure that unauthorized or personal items have not been left in the vehicle.

706.3.8 PRIVACY

All City-owned 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.

706.4 ASSIGNED VEHICLE AGREEMENT

Members who have been assigned a take-home vehicle may use the vehicle to commute to the workplace and for department-related business. The member must sign an agreement that includes the following criteria:

- a) The member must live within a specified range of his/her regularly assigned work location.
- b) Except in approved circumstances, time spent during normal commuting is not compensable.
- c) City-owned vehicles shall not be used for personal errands or other personal business unless approved by a supervisor for exceptional circumstances.
- d) The member may be responsible for ensuring care and maintenance of the vehicle is completed.
- e) Vehicles shall be locked when not attended.
- f) If the vehicle is not secured inside a locked garage, all firearms and weapons shall be removed from the interior of the vehicle and properly secured in the residence.
- g) When the member will be away (e.g., on vacation) for periods exceeding one week the vehicle shall be stored in a secure garage at the member's residence or at the appropriate department facility.

The assignment of vehicles is at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time and/or permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

706.5 KEYS AND SECURITY

The loss of any key shall be promptly reported in writing through the member's chain of command.

706.6 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

When driving an assigned vehicle to and from work outside of the jurisdiction of the Columbia Police Department, an officer should avoid becoming directly involved in enforcement actions except, in those circumstances where a potential threat to life or serious property damage exists.

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

Officers shall, at all times while driving a marked City-owned vehicle, be armed, appropriately attired and carry their department-issued identification.

706.7 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

No modifications, additions or removal of any equipment or accessories shall be made to the vehicle without written authorization.