



FIRE RESCUE

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Subject:	Vehicle Use and Maintenance
Reference Number:	SAP-DEP-044
Effective Date:	August 1, 2009
Last Revision Date:	N/A
Signature of Approval:	 J. Dan Eggleston, Chief

PURPOSE

This SAP establishes procedures governing the operation and maintenance of department vehicles and equipment.

DEFINITIONS

Normal or routine driving- That driving which dictates vehicle speed consistent with the normal flow of traffic, obedience to traffic laws and adherence to commonly-understood "rules of the road".

Off-duty usage- That usage of a Department vehicle when not assigned to official departmental duties.

Take-home Vehicle- The authorization and privilege for a Department member to take an issued vehicle to his/her private residence or other suitable location when off-duty.

Light-duty status- When a member of the department is limited in his/her work activities for medical reasons and unable to perform his/her regular duties.

POLICY

All personnel operating Department vehicles will exercise due regard for the care, use and maintenance of County vehicles and equipment, and for the safety of all persons. No task, call, or incident justifies disregard of public safety. Further, the public expects its public safety personnel to demonstrate exemplary driving behavior. All Department members while operating department vehicles will comply with normal rules of the road and safe driving and will carry out vehicle maintenance procedures outlined herein.

A. GENERAL

1. Members operating Department vehicles must have a valid Virginia operator's license, EVOC certification appropriate to the size vehicle being driven, and permission from their supervisor. If, for any reason, a department member's license is suspended or revoked, or if a department member has received a ticket for reckless driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol, he/she must notify an immediate supervisor at least one hour prior to the start of his/her next scheduled work shift.
2. All Department vehicles will be driven safely and properly in full compliance with all traffic laws, as well as other County policies.
3. All Department members will receive biennial training for:
 - a. Defensive and emergency driving ;
 - b. Review of relevant sections of the Virginia Code and Department written SAP's and SOG's.
4. Department vehicles will not be driven out of Albemarle County without supervisory approval unless on official department business or as allowed by the Take-Home vehicle provision of this policy (see Section C.1. below).
5. For personnel living outside of Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville who do not qualify for a take-home vehicle (i.e. employees home is greater than 15 miles from the Albemarle County line), a County owned vehicle may be parked at a safe location (in Albemarle County), as approved by a supervisor, and with permission of the landowner.
6. Any equipment installations or vehicle modifications (internal or external) must have the approval of the Deputy Chief.

7. No driver will modify, remove, de-activate, or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts, emission control device, or any part of the vehicle which affects its operation, without approval of the Deputy Chief.
8. Vehicles will not be left unattended with the motor running unless to keep the emergency lights activated.
9. During periods of ice or snow the driver will, before driving the vehicle, properly remove ice, snow, or frost from all windows, windshield, headlights and taillights to assure good visibility.
10. If a Department vehicle becomes inoperable, the ECC shall be contacted to send the next wrecker on rotation to tow the vehicle to the County Vehicle Maintenance Facility. Notification to the immediate supervisor and duty officer shall also be made.
11. In case of an accident or damage to any vehicle, the driver will immediately contact his supervisor and the duty officer (in accordance with policy SAP-DEP-017.)
12. Employees are required to ensure that the use of any wireless communication device is done in a manner that in no way interferes with the safe operation of the Department vehicle.
 - a. The use of cellular telephones, pagers, Blackberries, and mobile computer terminals while driving is strongly discouraged. Employees should safely pull off of the road and/or stop to use any of these devices. If it is not possible to safely stop the vehicle, then hands-free and/or voice activated devices should be used.
 - b. Employees shall not operate text messaging devices or other devices that require keyboarding while simultaneously driving the vehicle, except with voice activated software. Likewise, reading a text or e-mail while operating a moving vehicle is prohibited.
13. All supervisors will be held responsible for monitoring, inspecting or otherwise assuring the appropriate use, care and maintenance of Department vehicles by those they supervise.
14. Generally, no personal use of the department vehicle is permitted. Stopping along the route involved to conduct official department business or on the commute to or from work as an ACFR employee with an assigned take-home vehicle is permissible; due regard for the County's values, particularly integrity and stewardship, should be exercised when making this decision.
15. Operational Procedures
 - a. While using the vehicle on or off-duty, personnel must monitor the radio.
 - b. Personnel, on or off duty, while operating a department vehicle are required to respond to incidents or calls for service which come to their attention through any of the following means:
 - 1) On-view;
 - 2) Citizen report; and
 - 3) Radio monitored activity of a serious nature occurring within a reasonable proximity to their location.

B. ROUTINE OPERATION

1. Alley lights and spotlights may be used when the vehicle is stationary or moving at speeds not to exceed 15 miles per hour and will not be used in a manner which will blind or interfere with the vision of operators of other approaching vehicles (Virginia Code §46.2-1028).
2. Use of safety restraints
 - a. All occupants of department vehicles shall properly wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in operation.
3. Citizen Transports
 - a. Citizens may be transported in a Department vehicle whenever necessary for the accomplishment of department purposes.

C. OFF-DUTY OPERATION

1. Take-Home vehicles
 - a. The purpose for allowing the take-home vehicle privilege is:
 - 1) To enhance response time to emergency calls for service; and
 - 2) To increase the availability of command staff after hours for the safety of both department members and the public.
 - 3) To allow for efficient and effective time management for those who do not report regularly to the same physical location to begin and end the ACFR work day. For this reason, there is value to the County to have personnel take vehicles home.
 - b. The use of County vehicles by personnel is a privilege and not a part of the County's benefits package.
 - c. This privilege is limited to sworn personnel and may be revoked, altered or suspended at any time, via memorandum approved by the Chief, Deputy Chief, Division Chief, or immediate supervisor.

- d. Employees may drive their assigned vehicles back and forth from their residence for commuting purposes if the following criteria are met:
 - 1) Residence must be located within Albemarle County or within a county that shares a border with Albemarle County.
 - 2) If outside of Albemarle County, the residence must be located within 15 or less road miles from the Albemarle County line.
- e. Before taking the department vehicle to their residence outside the boundaries of Albemarle County, department members must comply with the following:
 - 1) A written request for permission must be forwarded through the employee's chain of command.
 - 2) The employee must receive written approval from the Chief confirming they meet the requirements as set forth in this policy.

2. Restrictions

- a. Vehicles will not be operated within eight (8) hours after the employee has ingested any amount of alcohol.
- b. No alcoholic beverages will be carried in the vehicle.
- c. Civilian attire must be such that it projects a favorable image for the Department and does not create a safety hazard for the employee.
 - 1) Personnel are prohibited from wearing open-toe sandals, shower shoes, swimsuits, "muscle shirts", or shoes with more than a 2" heel.
 - 2) The minimum acceptable attire will be long pants or "Bermuda" length shorts, a sleeved shirt, socks and shoes or tennis shoes. Additionally, skirts and dresses are acceptable for female employees.
- d. No unauthorized personnel or citizens are permitted to operate or ride in the vehicle unless as described in section B. 3. above.

D. INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE, AND NON-ISSUED EQUIPMENT

1. Department members who are assigned or operate Department vehicles have the ongoing responsibility to maintain the cleanliness and general operability of Department vehicles.
2. Drivers of Department vehicles should regularly check the safety features of the assigned vehicle. This check should include, at a minimum, all lights, brakes, siren, horn, and steering.
3. Drivers of Department vehicles should regularly check the oil, radiator coolant, tire condition, transmission fluid, power steering fluid, and brake fluid in the vehicle. The vehicle should also be inspected for damage on a regular basis; damage found should be reported to the immediate supervisor.
4. The driver of a Department vehicle must ensure that both the interior and exterior of the vehicle is kept clean and orderly.
5. During periods of inclement weather when vehicles cannot be washed regularly, the driver must keep headlight and taillight lenses clean, insofar as circumstances permit.
6. Routine maintenance should be performed at the vehicle maintenance facility every 5000 miles or 6 months, whichever comes first. The Department member to whom the vehicle is assigned is responsible for contacting the department fleet maintenance manager for direction on making the appointment and delivering the vehicle for this service.
7. The Department member operating a Department vehicle is responsible for handling flat tires and other minor emergency maintenance when the problem occurs. The Vehicle Maintenance Facility is the department's primary source of repair and maintenance. Other private assistance may be utilized with the authorization of the immediate supervisor.
8. Department members may be held responsible for repairs to Department vehicles required due to neglect of routine attention and maintenance.
9. No bumper stickers, decals, insignia, banners or placards of any type may be attached to the vehicle without supervisory approval.

E. FUELING DEPARTMENT VEHICLES

1. Refueling Locations
 - a. Albemarle County Office Building
 - b. Albemarle County Vehicular Maintenance Facility (Bus Shop)
 - c. Western Albemarle High School
 - d. Walton Middle School
2. Fuel Fob
 - a. The fuel fob can only be used at refueling locations specifically equipped and owned by Albemarle County for fuel fob purchases.

- b. The fuel fob must only be used for the vehicle to which it is assigned. The computer system will automatically charge all fuel obtained on the fob to its assigned vehicle.
- c. The fob will be kept in the assigned vehicle on the issued fob ring and visibly displayed on the gear selector lever or turn signal switch, wherever possible.
- d. Following this procedure, all Department vehicles can be fueled using the fob assigned to the vehicle and a valid employee code.