

# Operation and Care of Agency Vehicles by Auxiliary Deputies

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## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for the operation, care, and servicing of vehicles owned, leased, or utilized by the Office of the Sheriff. This directive specifically applies to Auxiliary Deputies for the Office of the Sheriff.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to maintain and operate vehicles owned, leased, or utilized by the Office in a safe and efficient manner, and in conformance with applicable Maryland State laws. Only authorized personnel assigned to the Office of the Sheriff, or maintenance personnel authorized to conduct vehicular repairs, are allowed to operate or service agency vehicles.

## **III. Operation of Agency Vehicles**

### **A. Operator Responsibilities**

The following procedures apply to all Auxiliary Deputies when operating any agency vehicle.

1. Auxiliary Deputies must have in their possession a valid driver's license issued by their state of residence.
2. Auxiliary Deputies are required to operate agency vehicles in a safe, legal, and courteous manner at all times.
3. Auxiliary Deputies will not make traffic stops or respond to dispatched calls for service; however, if they observe a hazardous situation (i.e. disabled motor vehicle, motor vehicle collision, etc.) they may protect the scene from further incident by utilizing their assigned vehicle with all emergency lights activated.
4. Auxiliary Deputies will drive in a manner that is reasonable and prudent based on existing conditions, including but not limited to road and traffic conditions, maximum speed

limits, weather, presence of pedestrians, and performance capabilities of their vehicle.

5. Auxiliary Deputies will not drive, use, or park agency vehicles, on or off duty, so as to reflect unfavorably on the Office of the Sheriff.

6. Only authorized persons are allowed to ride in agency vehicles, unless necessary for the performance of duty or otherwise directed by a supervisor. Authorized persons generally include those employed by the Office of the Sheriff, the Queen Anne's County Government, and persons authorized under the ride-along program. Operators are responsible for the behavior of all passengers.

7. Auxiliary Deputies will not transport detainees, but may accompany or assist a Deputy Sheriff who is transporting a detainee if a second deputy is not available.

8. Agency vehicles may not be used to push or tow any other vehicle, except an approved trailer with properly installed hitch, or in an emergency situation.

9. Auxiliary Deputies using radio-equipped vehicles will not transmit within fifty feet of known electronic blasting areas or electronically detonated devices. Explosives that are normally associated with causing serious injury or damage (i.e. dynamite, nitroglycerin, etc.) will not be transported in agency vehicles. Minor types of explosive devices, such as ammunition and fireworks, may be transported in the trunk if considered safe to do so and they are not suspected of detonating inadvertently.

10. Auxiliary Deputies are prohibited from operating an agency vehicle within 8 hours after consuming an alcoholic beverage, or any medication that may impair the person's ability to operate a vehicle in a safe manner.

11. Due to the potential of causing serious damage to the mobile radio, as well as other electrical equipment, operators of agency vehicles are prohibited from assisting motorists with jump-starting their vehicles (providing ōhot shotsō).

12. All operators and passengers will use seat belts and other available occupant safety devices while the vehicle is in motion.

13. To enhance safety while operating agency vehicles operators will not utilize cell phones or other hand-held devices for talking, emailing, or text messaging while driving, except in situations where the use of a cell phone is necessary for the performance of their duty and it is not safe or practical to pull off the traveled portion of the roadway.

14. Unoccupied agency vehicles must be locked at all times, unless the vehicle is in close proximity to the operator and leaving it unlocked is necessary for the performance of duty (i.e. leaving it momentarily while directing traffic at the scene of a motor vehicle collision, etc.).

15. Unoccupied agency vehicles must have their engines turned off, unless leaving it turned on is necessary for the performance of duty (i.e. leaving it momentarily while directing traffic at the scene of a motor vehicle collision, etc.).

16. Auxiliary Deputies may not take an agency vehicle outside the borders of Queen Anneō County unless authorized in advance by an on duty supervisor for legitimate agency business.

17. Division Commanders will immediately address and document any concerns, inconsistencies, or violations that arise from the use of agency vehicles by Auxiliary Deputies, and report those to the Commander of the Sheriffōs Resource Unit.

## **B. Escorts**

### **1. Emergency Escorts**

Emergency escorts will not be conducted by Auxiliary Deputies. If the need for an emergency escort arises they must contact an on duty supervisor and inform them of the need.

### **2. Non-Emergency Escorts**

Escort arrangements for non-emergency escorts (i.e., funerals, hazardous materials shipments,

highway construction equipment, military convoys, oversize vehicles, parades, etc.) may be conducted at the direction of an on duty supervisor.

### **3. VIP Escorts**

Escorts for prominent public officials, celebrities, persons in jeopardy, etc. may be granted only by a lieutenant or above.

## **IV. Assignment of Agency Vehicles to Auxiliary Deputies**

A. Before using an agency vehicle, the operator must ōsign outō the vehicle by completing the appropriate log. The log must include the operatorōs name, vehicle number, type of assignment, any damage or defects noted, and the fuel level before and after the assignment.

B. The operator of an agency vehicle is responsible for the cleanliness of its interior and exterior, the level of fuel upon return of the vehicle, and notification to the Commander of the Sheriffōs Resource Unit for any routine maintenance or repairs that are noted while operating that vehicle.

C. At the conclusion of an assignment the vehicle will be returned to Headquarters, or its assigned area, and parked in one of the designated parking spaces.

D. Auxiliary Deputies that typically work more than 20 hours per week and live within Queen Anneō County are permitted to keep an assigned agency vehicle in their possession, and park the vehicle at their residence, as long as they are working another assignment within forty-eight (48) hours.

E. Auxiliary Deputies are required to wear the appropriate uniform while operating any agency vehicle. If a uniform is not required for their specific duty assignment, they will dress in a manner that reflects positively on the Office of the Sheriff.

F. Auxiliary Deputies who qualify to take an agency vehicle home pending another assignment will not use the vehicle in an ōoff dutyō capacity or for personal business.

G. The Commander of the Sheriffōs Resource Unit will conduct quarterly inspections of all vehicles commonly used by Auxiliary

Deputies, and arrange for any needed maintenance or repairs.

**V. Vehicle Inspections**

**A. Operator Responsibilities**

Before the beginning of each assignment, operators will carefully inspect their assigned vehicle to ensure that it is in a safe operable condition and properly equipped. The inspection must include, at a minimum, a check of the following items:

1. Gasoline, oil and coolant levels, battery and tires.
2. Brakes, lights, windshield wipers and horn.
3. Emergency lights and siren.
4. Safety equipment.
5. Defects and unreported damage.

**B. Report of Defect or Damage**

If any defect, damage, or loss of equipment is discovered, the operator will provide written notice on the sign out log. If the defect or damage is such that operation of the vehicle might cause further or greater damage, the vehicle will not be driven and arrangements will be made to have the vehicle taken to the County garage for the necessary repairs. However, if the defect or damage is associated with the mobile radio or emergency equipment, the Fleet Manager will be contacted in lieu of the County garage. Any unreported defect, damage, or loss discovered after the vehicle was inspected and placed into service will be considered to have occurred during the tour of duty or assignment.

**C. Damage/Defect While in Operation**

If damage or a mechanical defect occurs to an agency vehicle, or its installed emergency equipment, the operator will notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible. If the damage or defect is such that further operation would be unsafe, or might cause greater damage, the vehicle will not be moved and arrangements will be made to have the vehicle transported to the County garage. The operator will document the incident by submitting a written report. Vehicle damage that does not affect the safe and efficient operation of the vehicle will be reported; however, the vehicle will be kept in service until scheduled for repairs.

**V. Violations of Policy**

Auxiliary Deputies found in violation of any part this policy may be subject to reprimand, re-training, or removal from the program.

**VI. CALEA References:** 41.2.1, 61.3.3a, 61.3.3b & 70.1.2.

**VII. Proponent Unit:** Support Services

**VIII. Cancellation:** None

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Sheriff Gary Hofmann