



GENERAL ORDER ADM-23 DEPARTMENTAL VEHICLE POLICY

EFFECTIVE JULY 14, 2021

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

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I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall strive to maximize the safety of all personnel and citizens by providing procedures for the use of all HCPD vehicles.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL): Software and/or hardware systems on the Mobile Data Computer (MDC) and vehicle that allow the HCPD to identify the location of vehicles that have been equipped with the Global Positioning System (GPS).
- B. HCPD Form 1000, Vehicle Application: The form to be completed when applying for the PVSP/PAV/SAV program or when transferring between components, as detailed in this General Order.
- C. HCPD Form 1001, Monthly Vehicle Log: Form to be completed monthly by members assigned a SAV, PVSP, or PAV.
- D. Line Vehicle: A marked or unmarked vehicle assigned to multiple members of the appropriate patrol district or organizational component.
- E. Patrol Vehicle Saturation Program (PVSP): A marked vehicle assigned to a sworn officer who lives in Howard County.
- F. Personally Assigned Vehicle (PAV): A marked or unmarked vehicle assigned to a member residing outside of Howard County.
- G. Pool Vehicle: A marked or unmarked vehicle assigned to a bureau, district, division, or organizational component to be used by its members.
- H. Special Assignment Vehicle (SAV): An unmarked vehicle assigned to a member residing inside Howard County or any vehicle assigned to a member residing outside of Howard County based upon assignment, on-call status, or rank.
- I. Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV): Designated vehicles with set usage and limitations as detailed in General Order OPS-65, [Special Purpose Vehicles](#).

- J. Staff Vehicle: An unmarked vehicle assigned to essential personnel at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

III. ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES

- A. The Fleet/Facilities Services Section shall:
 - 1. Coordinate the acquisition, assignment, and maintenance of HCPD vehicles;
 - 2. Act as Program Director for and administer the PVSP and PAV programs;
 - 3. Compile the PVSP and SAV statistics on a monthly and annual basis; and
 - 4. Audit the PVSP/SAV/PAV program.
- B. The Fleet Coordinator shall maintain all PVSP/SAV/PAV applications for one (1) year after the member ceases participation in the program.
- C. Vehicles in the PVSP/SAV/PAV program shall be assigned to eligible members as vehicle availability permits.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. The following provisions, requirements, and limitations apply to all HCPD vehicles.
- B. Anyone assigned a PVSP/SAV/PAV vehicle who fails to comply with this policy or does not properly maintain the vehicle may be subject to suspension or termination from the program at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Administration Command.
- C. PVSP/SAV/PAV officers are required to complete HCPD Form 1001, Monthly Vehicle Log, every month.
 - 1. The form must be submitted to the Fleet/Facilities Services Section no more than five (5) days following the end of the reporting month.
 - 2. Exceptions may be granted by the Executive Director of the Administration Command.
- D. Civilians who are on-call and who are authorized to take a vehicle home shall complete the monthly vehicle log assigned to them by Howard County Central Fleet and submit the completed form to the Fleet/Facilities Service Section within five (5) days following the end of the reporting month.
- E. Members who are designated as "on-call" for a specific period of time may operate their assigned vehicle out of Howard County during their on-call period as long as they are able to respond to the scene of a call-in within 45 minutes of receiving the call. Exceptions to this provision may be granted by the member's Deputy Chief or his designee based on operational need.
- F. If an officer is assigned a PVSP/SAV/PAV vehicle and his duty assignment changes, he is required to complete a new HCPD Form 1000 and forward it to his new immediate supervisor for review.

Example: A member transferring from Southern Patrol to Northern Patrol would not be required to submit a new application. Transferring from Patrol to a specialty component such as CIB or vice versa would require a new application.

- 1. Supervisors will forward approved applications through the Chain of Command for assignment or placement on the eligibility list maintained by the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.

2. If a member is unsure if he should complete a new Form 1000, he should consult the Fleet Coordinator.
- G. All HCPD vehicles shall remain at the member's assigned duty station when the member is off duty with the exception of those provided to members enrolled in the PVSP/SAV/PAV programs. Any exceptions to this provision must be granted by the Chief of Police or his designee.
- H. Off-duty PVSP/SAV/PAV Use
1. The off-duty use of any HCPD vehicle is a privilege extended only to those members who meet the qualifications of and maintain compliance with all program requirements.
 2. Members provided with an HCPD vehicle should never rely solely upon that vehicle for off-duty use. The HCPD offers no guarantee of a replacement vehicle for any PVSP, SAV, or PAV that becomes unavailable due to mechanical service needs, collisions, reassignment, or suspension of the program.
 3. Off-duty officers will monitor the primary radio channel for the area in which they are traveling within Howard County while operating a police vehicle.
 4. Off-duty officers operating a police vehicle outside of Howard County will monitor the radio channel designated for the area closest to their location.
 5. If an off-duty officer needs to communicate via radio, the officer's four (4) digit ID number or specialty unit number should be used for identification purposes.
 6. Any action taken by the Chief of Police or his designee regarding off-duty vehicle use shall not be considered disciplinary action.
- I. Refer to General Order ADM-07, [Secondary Employment](#), for guidelines on the use of police vehicles during secondary employment and uniformed police service details (USPD).
- J. Off-duty use of any HCPD vehicle for reasons other than non-secondary employment by members not in the PVSP/SAV/PAV program must have permission from a Watch Commander, Division Commander, or above.
- K. Operating HCPD vehicles outside of Howard County
1. PVSP/SAV/PAV operators may operate their vehicles outside of Howard County consistent with the Howard County Police Officers Union contract and the Howard County Supervisors Alliance contract.
 2. Officers operating HCPD vehicles outside of Howard County shall not engage in routine traffic enforcement or law enforcement actions. Refer to General Order ADM-62, [Extrajurisdictional Authority for Police Officers](#), for additional information.
 3. Officers operating an HCPD vehicle outside of Howard County shall be observant to situations that require police intervention. Appropriate responses may include stopping to assess the situation and render immediate assistance or summoning other services as appropriate.
- L. No HCPD vehicle may be driven outside the State of Maryland without advance permission, consistent with the County Vehicle Use Policy.
- M. Officers who are on performance-based bi-monthly evaluations may not be eligible to participate in the PVSP/SAV/PAV program.

- N. Members on disability leave, light duty, no duty, or leave away from the county for more than twenty-one (21) calendar days may be required to turn their vehicle in to the program director. The program director may temporarily reassign the vehicle or have the officer park the vehicle at a District station.
- O. Members on a suspended status will not operate their vehicles and must turn the vehicle in to the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
- P. If an HCPD vehicle is taken out of service, the member will use a line or pool vehicle assigned to his bureau or district. Line and pool vehicles shall only be used for work during a member's normal tour of duty.
- Q. Civilians other than fleet maintenance personnel and members of the Fleet/Facilities Services Section are not permitted to operate a marked police vehicle without approval from a supervisor except in an emergency.
- R. All vehicles, required equipment, and supplies, regardless of assignment:
 - 1. Shall be maintained in a state of operational readiness at all times; and
 - 2. Shall be inspected monthly on the appropriate form, with completed forms turned in to the Fleet/Facilities Service Section.

V. PATROL VEHICLE SATURATION PROGRAM

- A. The PVSP is designed to have marked patrol vehicles assigned to eligible officers for on- and off-duty use inside of Howard County to provide greater police visibility, increase citizen security, enhance responsiveness to calls for service, and provide more efficient police service to County residents.
- B. The PVSP program is limited to sworn members who:
 - 1. Completed the required probationary period;
 - 2. Have a favorable recommendation from his Bureau or District Commander;
 - 3. Have an evaluation at the time of initial application and for continued participation that supports a step increment;
 - 4. Reside in Howard County; and
 - 5. Are not on light duty status or extended disability leave.
- C. Officers meeting these criteria may submit HCPD Form 1000 and forward it to their immediate supervisor for review. Supervisors will forward approved applications through the Chain of Command for assignment or placement on an eligibility list maintained by the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
- D. Approved PVSP applicants will be placed on an eligibility list arranged by rank and then seniority within rank that will be updated as needed by the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
 - 1. Seniority will be determined by date of hire as a Howard County Probationary Police Officer.
 - 2. Officers with equal rank and seniority will be assigned a vehicle based on their final class rank upon graduation from the academy.

- E. Off-duty PVSP officers may use their assigned vehicles within the borders of Howard County.
 - 1. Requests for approval to use the vehicles outside the boundaries of Howard County, i.e. for school, training seminars, etc. shall be made in writing to the requesting officer's Bureau or District Commander.
 - 2. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis by an on-duty supervisor or Watch Commander.
- F. Any officer who has been removed from the PVSP program may reapply for participation after one (1) year from the date of removal.

VI. SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT VEHICLE PROGRAM

- A. The Special Assignment Vehicle Program provides marked and unmarked vehicles to supervisors, commanders, and off-duty officers who may need to swiftly respond to police incidents.
 - 1. Officers meeting these criteria shall submit HCPD Form 1000 to their immediate supervisor for review.
 - 2. Supervisors will forward approved applications through the Chain of Command for assignment in the SAV program or placement on an eligibility list.
- B. Out-of-county SAV use shall be limited to:
 - 1. Driving to and from work only, including authorized overtime assignments.
 - 2. Reporting to an authorized UPSD, Board of Education extra-duty assignment, or Departmentally-scheduled security detail.
 - 3. Reporting to an officially sanctioned HCPD training assignment.
 - 4. Reporting for an HCPD-related Court appearance.
 - 5. Participating in HCPD sponsored events, i.e. the Police Pace, Torch Run, Relay for Life, etc.
 - 6. Officers should consult with the Fleet/Facilities Services Section if guidance or clarification is needed regarding authorized usage.
- C. Members who are on-call must always be able to respond to the County border within forty-five (45) minutes. Exceptions may be granted by the member's Deputy Chief or his designee, based on operational needs.
- D. Sergeants and Lieutenants:
 - 1. Residing within Howard County may operate their SAV outside of Howard County while off duty, but no more than five (5) miles from the County border.
 - 2. May drive their assigned vehicle to their out-of-county residence up to twenty-five (25) miles from the Howard County border based on the officer's assignment and as approved by the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
- E. Any officer who has been removed from the SAV program may reapply for participation after one (1) year from their date of removal.

VII. PERSONALLY ASSIGNED VEHICLE PROGRAM

- A. Consistent with the collective bargaining agreement, Howard County will make its best efforts to make off-duty vehicles available for eligible officers residing outside of Howard County in accordance with the limitations of the Personally Assigned Vehicle (PAV) program. The PVSP program will have priority in assigning available vehicles to eligible officers.
- B. The County will review the current fleet status and economic conditions when considering vehicle assignments.
 - 1. Some specialty assignments, i.e. CIB, TES, TAC, etc., may be assigned PAVs sooner than marked patrol vehicles due to fleet availability.
 - 2. PAV assignments shall be based upon the availability of vehicles and may be discontinued at any time with minimal advanced notice.
- C. Officers residing outside of Howard County who may be considered for a PAV must:
 - 1. Have completed serving five (5) years of HCPD sworn police service;
 - 2. Have a favorable recommendation from his Bureau or District Commander;
 - 3. Have an evaluation that supports a step increment at the time of application and for continued participation;
 - 4. Not be on light duty status or extended disability leave; and
 - 5. Reside within five (5) miles of the Howard County border, and the residence must be within Maryland. This will be gauged by entering the applicant's address into computer software, i.e. Google Earth, and determining the mileage to the closest Howard County border.
- D. Officers meeting the above criteria may submit HCPD Form 1000 to their immediate supervisor for review. Supervisors will forward approved applications through the Chain of Command for assignment or placement on an eligibility list maintained by the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
 - 1. Endorsed PAV applicants will be placed on an eligibility list arranged by rank and then seniority within rank that will be updated as needed by the Support Services Division Commander or his designee.
 - 2. Seniority will be determined by date of hire as a Howard County Probationary Police Officer. Officers with equal rank and seniority will be assigned a vehicle based on their final class rank upon graduation from the academy.
- E. Out-of-county vehicle use shall be limited to:
 - 1. Driving to and from work only, to include authorized overtime assignments.
 - 2. Reporting to an authorized UPSD, Board of Education extra-duty assignment, or Departmentally-scheduled security details. Officers should consult with the Fleet/Facilities Services Section if guidance or clarification is needed regarding authorized usage.
 - 3. Reporting to an officially sanctioned HCPD training assignment.
 - 4. Reporting for an HCPD-related Court appearance.

5. Participating in Departmentally sponsored events, i.e. the Police Pace, Torch, Relay for Life, etc.
- F. All provisions and limitations regarding the PAV program use shall be strictly enforced. Violations may result in immediate suspension of vehicle use, without warning.
- G. Any officer who has been removed from the PAV program may reapply for participation after one (1) year from their date of removal.

VIII. OFF-DUTY INCIDENTS

- A. Off-duty officers operating HCPD vehicles within Howard County are required to:
 1. Perform traffic stops in those incidents where the violations are life threatening and require immediate action or when inaction may be viewed unfavorably by the public.
 2. Respond to calls or incidents that come to the officers' attention either through contact with citizens, on-view incidents, or through the monitoring of a serious call within proximity to the officer.
 3. Handle all minor incidents encountered in sight. Any incident encountered that becomes involved or time consuming may be turned over to an on-duty officer with supervisory approval.
- B. Off-duty officers operating an HCPD vehicle outside of Howard County shall be observant to situations that require police intervention. Appropriate responses may include stopping to assess the situation and render immediate assistance or summoning local law enforcement or other services as appropriate.
- C. Whenever an officer with a civilian passenger is in the proximity of a serious or life-threatening call, i.e. homicide, armed robbery, burglary, assault with weapons, etc., the passenger must be discharged at a safe location prior to the officer's arrival at the scene. The off-duty officer may contact the Communications Division to have another officer pick up the civilian passenger.
- D. The following procedures shall be used for reporting of off-duty incidents.
 1. If the officer is involved in the handling of a serious Part I crime and is not scheduled to work within twenty-four (24) hours, a completed report shall be turned in to the supervisor of the area in which the incident occurred prior to the end of the supervisor's shift.
 2. If the officer is involved in the handling of a serious Part I crime and is scheduled to work within twenty-four (24) hours, a completed report shall be turned in to his regular supervisor by the end of his next scheduled shift.
 3. Any other reports shall be completed and turned in to the officer's regular supervisor within seventy-two (72) hours or at the beginning of his next scheduled work shift, whichever is the shortest length of time. A supervisor may direct the completion of any report when necessary.
 4. Any supervisor reviewing a report for an incident in another District shall forward a copy of the report to the Patrol Office of the appropriate District.
- E. Overtime pay or compensatory time will be granted for a period of time in excess of two (2) hours to participating officers who must work on an incident while in their PVSP/SAV/PAV in an off-duty status. The on-duty Area Supervisor must grant approval for an officer to work more than two hours.

IX. AUTHORIZED AND REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- A. Each unmarked vehicle except those designated as covert shall be equipped with emergency lights and a siren.¹
- B. Every marked vehicle used for patrol will be conspicuously marked and equipped with:²
 - 1. HCPD and accreditation decals;
 - 2. Red and blue emergency lights;
 - 3. Siren;
 - 4. Radio;
 - 5. Public Address system (PA);
 - 6. Spotlight;
 - 7. Crime scene processing kit;
 - 8. Flares, 1/2 box minimum;
 - 9. First Aid Kit;
 - 10. Disposable blankets (2);
 - 11. Charged fire extinguisher;
 - 12. Flex cuffs (6); and
 - 13. Traffic walking stick.
- C. All HCPD vehicles shall be inspected monthly by the supervisor or his designee and must be equipped with the items needed for the individual's assignment, which may include items from the list above.
- D. Vehicles operated by the Tactical Section and the members of the Decentralized Tactical Unit will be equipped with an alarm.
- E. Vehicles that will be used to transport subjects will have the rear window cranks removed or the power to the electric window disconnected and the rear interior door handles adjusted to prevent the door from being opened from inside the vehicle.³ Vehicles that are used for covert purposes are excluded.
- F. An officer desiring modifications or additions to his vehicle shall submit a request in writing through his chain of command to the Fleet/Facilities Services Section for consideration.
 - 1. All approved requests for additions and modifications will be completed or arranged for by Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
 - 2. Work will generally be scheduled for completion during the vehicle's next Preventative Maintenance (PM) date.

¹ CALEA 41.3.1

² CALEA 41.3.2

³ CALEA 70.4.2

- G. Animal Control Vehicles shall maintain the equipment detailed on HCPD Form 1011, Animal Control Vehicle Inspection.
- H. The HCPD assumes no responsibility for personal equipment that is lost, stolen, or damaged while in a HCPD vehicle.

X. MAINTENANCE

- A. All emergency and non-emergency repairs will be scheduled through the HCPD Fleet Liaison by email. The email should include the vehicle unit number, a description of the needed repair, and dates the operator is available to take the vehicle to the repair shop. The location of the vehicle shall be noted if it needs to be towed to the repair shop.
- B. Preventive Maintenance notices will be sent to the vehicle operator via the County's fleet system (SAP).
 - 1. The operator shall respond to the Fleet Liaison via email with dates they are available to take the vehicle to the Ridge Road or Dayton facility. An email will be sent to the operator with the date the vehicle is scheduled for service.
 - 2. The vehicle must be at the assigned repair shop no later than 0630 hours on the day of the repair or at any time prior to the scheduled date.
 - 3. When the vehicle service is complete, the operator will be notified by vehicle unit number via the daily global email labeled "Ready Line."
- C. Emissions testing will be done between the hours of 0800 and 1430, Monday through Friday, at the Ridge Road and Mayfield shops.
 - 1. The Fleet SAP system will email the operator a date that the emissions is scheduled, the emissions will need to be completed on, or before the scheduled due date.
 - 2. The emissions technician will give the operator a MD Emissions printout that shall be stored in the vehicle's glovebox for future reference.
- D. Prior to leaving a vehicle for any vehicle services, MDCs must be removed per General Order ADM-38, [Mobile Data Computer Procedures](#), and all firearms, weapon systems, equipment, and items of value, i.e. ballistic vest, night scope, speed measuring devices, etc. must be removed.
- E. Members of the Narcotics Section are exempt from these procedures and should refer to Standard Operation Procedure SOP V&N-05, [Credit Card Use and Vehicle Maintenance](#).
- F. Members are responsible for the interior and exterior cleanliness and equipment of their assigned vehicle, ensuring that all fluids are at their proper levels and tires are properly inflated.
- G. Members are required to immediately replenish supplies including first aid supplies, flares, fire extinguisher, etc. that are essential to operational readiness.
 - 1. Members shall replenish these supplies during their shift when possible, and always ensure they are present prior to the next shift.
 - 2. Members should secure replacement supplies from the Quartermaster during business hours. During non-business hours, members should coordinate with their supervisor, who may have access to District supply sources.⁴

⁴ CALEA 41.3.2

- H. Members shall completely remove snow and ice from the vehicle prior to operation. Operators are to make sure that the area behind the hood at the base of the windshield and all lights are free of snow and ice.
- I. All vehicles except those assigned to the Narcotics Section will be fueled using the issued gas cards. Narcotics officers should refer to SOP V&N-05, [Credit Card Use and Vehicle Maintenance](#), for instructions.
 - 1. If a member has lost or misplaced the gas card, he will sign out the spare card from the Duty Officer and return the card immediately after its use. When a member uses the spare gas card and fills out the gas log form, the form must be faxed to Central Fleet at the number on the form.
 - 2. Lost cards should be replaced as soon as possible. Members will complete and forward a lost/damage report to the Fleet/Facilities Services Section.
- J. The Chief of Staff and each Bureau or District Commander or his designee is responsible for documenting on the appropriate inspection form the monthly inspection of all vehicles assigned to their command. These inspections shall include operational readiness inspections of applicable equipment.

XI. RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR SERVICE

- A. Officers are duty bound to operate their emergency vehicle with due care regarding pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- B. The Department expects officers to respond to calls quickly to provide assistance to people in need. The Department also recognizes that operating in an emergency mode can pose potential risks to the officer and the community. Officers shall exercise due care when operating a vehicle in the emergency response mode.
- C. A lights and siren response is warranted when a quick response is necessary to prevent injury, render aid, or increase the likelihood of an apprehension. An emergency response is justified for in-progress or just occurred calls that are life-threatening, have the potential to become violent, or involve a weapon, including but not limited to:⁵
 - 1. Abduction;
 - 2. Assault;
 - 3. Breaking and entering;
 - 4. Carjacking;
 - 5. Escape;
 - 6. Rape;
 - 7. Robbery;
 - 8. Personal injury collisions;
 - 9. Signal 2 activation or an officer requests Signal 1 or 2;
 - 10. Subject shot or stabbed;

⁵ CALEA 41.2.1b and 41.2.1d

11. Subject threatening suicide; and
12. Vehicle theft.

NOTE: This list is not all inclusive of calls that warrant emergency response mode. Officers shall use their discretion when responding to calls.

- D. The first officer to arrive on the scene of a call involving an emergency response will advise other incoming units whether a slower response will suffice or if no other units are needed on the scene.
- E. Whenever an officer with a civilian passenger is in the proximity of a serious or life-threatening call, the passenger must be discharged at a safe location prior to the officer's arrival at the scene. The officer may contact Communications and have another officer pick up the civilian passenger.

XII. VEHICLE OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. Members on a no-duty or suspended status shall not operate a HCPD vehicle.
- B. A Watch Commander, Division Commander, or above may grant requests for approval for on-duty use of the vehicle outside the boundaries of Howard County.
- C. The Chief of Police may authorize members to operate their vehicles outside of Howard County at his discretion when it would otherwise not be permitted by this General Order.
- D. At no time shall a HCPD vehicle be driven outside the state of Maryland without authorization from the Howard County Chief Administrative Officer, consistent with Howard County Policy and Procedure 300.6A, Vehicle Use.
- E. Officers must carry their HCPD identification card, badge, and firearm when operating a HCPD vehicle, except while working in a covert assignment.
- F. Each District will maintain a vehicle assignment board for all patrol line and pool vehicles. Any officer operating a vehicle that is not assigned to him will write his unit number on the board in the space provided.
- G. Each vehicle will be inspected by the operator for safety equipment, fluid levels, and damage prior to the operation of the vehicle.
 1. Any deficiencies shall be noted on a Memorandum forwarded to the member's supervisor.
 - a. If the damage is indicative of a collision, the supervisor will direct or conduct an investigation consistent with General Order OPS-18, [Collision Investigations and Reporting](#).
 - b. The supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring the completion of all appropriate forms and ensure that the damage is noted on the district vehicle damage log to avoid repetition in reporting the vehicle damage.
 2. Any vehicle that is deemed unsafe by a member will not be operated. Unsafe vehicles will be deadlined by the member and will be so indicated on the vehicle assignment board. The member will notify their supervisor and the Fleet Liaison of the problem and location of the vehicle.

- H. Each vehicle will be inspected for contraband prior to its operation and before and after a subject is transported.⁶
 - 1. If contraband is recovered, the officer shall obtain an incident report number, submit the IR to their immediate supervisor, and submit the contraband to the Property & Evidence Section immediately.
 - 2. The supervisor will make all reasonable attempts to locate the source of the contraband and will then take all action required based on that investigation.
- I. On-duty and off-duty officers will monitor the primary radio channel for their assigned area of patrol.
- J. Firearms and other weapons will be stored in a manner consistent with General Order ADM-56, [Authorized Weapons, Qualifications, and Inspections](#), and this policy.
- K. All operators and their passengers will utilize seat belts and safety seats, as appropriate, when operating a County vehicle.⁷
- L. During normal operation of the vehicle and when responding to non-emergency calls for service, officers will follow the rules of the road and obey all traffic laws.⁸ All members will operate their vehicles in a safe and courteous manner.
- M. Cell phone and electronic messaging device use while operating an HCPD vehicle, on- or off-duty, shall only be allowed when utilizing a hands-free option such as speaker phone, headset, Bluetooth, etc. If the cell phone is not equipped with a hands-free option, the member shall pull to a stop in a safe location where they can safely engage in the use of the cellular device.
 - 1. Members shall not wear cell phone earpieces or wireless earphones when in contact with the public. The use of these devices should never be allowed to interfere with effective monitoring of the police radio or being attentive to the sounds of traffic and/or citizens.
 - 2. While on-duty or operating a HCPD vehicle, cell phone conversations should be kept to a short duration and should never interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle or the ability to maintain attentiveness to duty.
 - 3. While engaged in a priority response or vehicle pursuit, members are prohibited from using cell phone and electronic messaging devices in any capacity.
 - 4. Text messaging while driving is always prohibited. This includes reading messages and checking messages at stop signs or stop lights.
 - 5. Members shall not utilize cellular devices when interacting with the public or handling a call for service unless the call is directly related to handling the incident, engaging in traffic enforcement details, or directing traffic.
 - 6. Cell phones must be set to silent or vibration mode while on-duty and interacting with the public, working uniformed police secondary employment, or when representing the HCPD in any public capacity.
 - 7. Members and supervisors should remain mindful that with the use of cell phones instead of police radios the ability to monitor transmissions and capture critical data transmissions is lost.

⁶ CALEA 70.1.2

⁷ CALEA 41.3.3

⁸ CALEA 41.2.1a

- a. Officer safety and data retention should always be considered prior to choosing to use cell phones instead of recorded police radio channels.
 - b. Recorded data is often beneficial in investigations and litigation.
8. Members should be aware that cell phone and electronic messaging device records may be subject to subpoena by the courts and discovery in both criminal and civil litigation. This applies to cell phones and electronic messaging devices issued by the HCPD and may also apply to personal cell phones and electronic messaging devices when those devices are used while carrying out official duties.
 9. Members using cell phones and electronic messaging devices while on-duty or operating a HCPD vehicle should use good judgment and discretion, always keeping officer safety in mind. Public perception should also be kept in mind as citizens may feel that members are not paying full attention to their duties if they are talking on a cell phone.
 10. The use of any cell phone's camera feature while performing an official duty or handling a call for service shall be consistent with the provisions of General Order OPS-63, [Digital Cameras and Images](#).
- N. The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all vehicles owned or leased by the HCPD. This includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, cigars, or any other type of tobacco product.
- O. Non-sworn vehicle operators must follow all guidelines and procedures consistent with Howard County Policy and Procedure 300.6A, [Vehicle Use](#).
- P. Animals will not be transported in any HCPD vehicle except in unusual circumstances with supervisor approval. This does not apply to Canine or Animal Control officers.
1. The welfare and safety of animals confined in AC vehicles should be considered if the driver needs to leave the vehicle unattended.
 2. Heat or air conditioning, as appropriate, shall be utilized when a vehicle must be left parked with animals confined in the vehicle.
- Q. An HCPD vehicle shall not be utilized to carry excessively large or heavy loads or objects that protrude from the trunk or windows, except as required in the performance of official duties.
- R. Members, on- or off-duty, and any passengers, will be appropriately attired when operating or riding in a HCPD vehicle so as not to bring discredit upon the HCPD. Unacceptable attire includes but is not limited to:
1. Halter tops, tank tops, tube tops, or sleeveless t-shirts;
 2. Open toe sandals, flip flops, or shower shoes;
 3. Exposed swimming suits;
 4. Cutoff shorts; or
 5. Any clothing with offensive language, symbols, or graphics.
- S. Members are not permitted to place bumper stickers, decals, insignia, banners, flags, or placards on a HCPD vehicle without prior approval from the Chief of Police.
- T. Members are prohibited from operating their HCPD vehicle if they intend to or have engaged in the consumption of alcoholic beverages except for undercover officers involved in covert operations, consistent with General Order ADM-34, [Substance Abuse Policy](#).

- U. Alcoholic beverages and medical cannabis products shall not be transported in HCPD vehicles except when related to official duties.

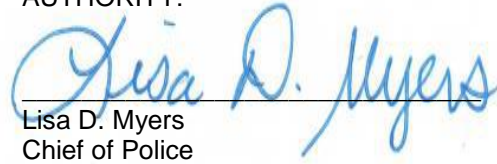
XIII. AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATOR (AVL)

- A. AVL may be used as a tool to aid in the review of critical incidents such as officer-involved collisions, pursuits, or other vehicle incidents. It may also be used to analyze response times, patrol tactics, and improve officer safety.
- B. Members assigned to patrol operations are required to log on their MDC during their tour of duty and use it consistent with General Order ADM-38, [Mobile Data Computer Procedures](#).
- C. Members not assigned to patrol operations but responding to support a patrol function are required to log on to their MDC, barring extenuating circumstances.
- D. Off-duty members are encouraged to log on to their MDC while their vehicles are in use.
- E. Members will not attempt to manipulate or disable any of the AVL software and/or hardware.

XIV. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order ADM-23, Departmental Vehicle Policy, dated December 4, 2018, and SOP AC-02, Animal Control Vehicle Operating Procedures, dated March 30, 2000.

AUTHORITY:



Lisa D. Myers
Chief of Police