

# Truro Police Department

## DEPARTMENT VEHICLES READINESS AND USE

*Policy Number: OPS-6.09*  
**REFERENCE:**

*Effective Date: June 1, 2000*  
*Revised Date: September 30, 2004*

*Accreditation Standards: 41.1.4., 41.2.2., 41.1.3., 41.3.2., 41.3.3., 41.3.4.*  
*Mass. Gen. Law Mass. Gen. Law Chap. 89, Sec. 7B; Chap. 90 Sec. 14*  
*Other:*

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### **POLICY:**

All Truro Police Department personnel who operate department motor vehicles will comply with safe driving procedures herein, with particular attention paid to procedures for responding to calls for police service or engaging in pursuits. Emergency warning lights and siren shall be used in a manner consistent with safe performance of the police function and the safety of the public and police personnel.

Police vehicles are conspicuous symbols of authority on the streets, and many observe the actions of police drivers. This places the responsibility on each police driver to set a visible example of good driving behavior and habits.

### **Chapter 89, Section 7-B, of the Massachusetts General Laws:**

" The driver of a vehicle of a fire, police, or recognized protective department, and the driver of an ambulance shall be subject to the provisions of any statute, rule, regulation, ordinance, or bylaw relating to the operation or parking of vehicles, except that a driver of fire apparatus while going to a fire or responding to an alarm, or the driver of a police or a recognized protective department or the driver of an ambulance, in an emergency and while in performance of a public duty or while transporting a sick or injured person to a hospital or other destination where professional medical services are available, may drive such vehicle at a speed in excess of the applicable speed limit if he exercises caution and due regard under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property, and may drive such vehicle through an intersection of ways contrary to any traffic signs or signals regulating traffic at such intersection if he first brings such vehicle to a full stop and then proceeds with caution and due regard for the safety of persons and property, unless otherwise directed by a police officer regulating traffic at such intersection."

"The driver of any such approaching emergency vehicle shall comply with the provisions of Section 14 of Chapter 90 when approaching a school bus which has stopped to allow passengers to alight or board from the same, and whose red lamps are flashing."

### **PROCEDURES:**

- 1. SAFE DRIVING OF POLICE VEHICLES:** The driver of any department vehicle shall operate said vehicle in a reasonable and safe manner, exercising due caution and judgment. He shall operate the department vehicle in compliance with the motor vehicle laws and traffic regulations of the Commonwealth. **WHEN IN AN ACTUAL PURSUIT OR WHEN RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY, HE SHALL STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE DRIVING PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED FOR THE OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW, CHAPTER 89, SECTION 7B, and any Truro Police Department policies and procedure, rules or regulations,** *(Revised September 30, 2004)*
- 2. LICENSE REQUIREMENTS:** No person shall operate a department vehicle of any kind unless he has a valid Massachusetts driver's license to operate such vehicle.
- 3. AUTHORITY TO OPERATE:** No person shall operate a department vehicle without receiving orders or permission from a superior officer authorized to give such orders or permission.
- 4. PASSENGERS:** No person shall be permitted to be an occupant or to ride as a passenger in a department vehicle, except when necessary for the performance of a proper police duty, unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee.
- 5. SEATBELTS - POLICE OFFICERS: All officers are required to wear seatbelts at all times.** The use of seatbelts can have a significant effect in reducing the number of deaths and the severity of injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents. Seatbelts also assist officers in maintaining proper control of their vehicles during pursuit or emergency high-speed operations. In addition, officers using seatbelts during the deployment of the air bag in a collision will be held in a position to receive maximum protection.
- 6. SEATBELTS - CIVILIANS:** In all cases, civilian passengers must wear safety seatbelts when riding and/or a passenger in a department vehicle.
- 7. SICK AND INJURED PERSONS:** Sick and injured persons are to be transported by ambulance. Police officers are first responders in many instances, and as such will provide what assistance they can to sick or injured persons until the ambulance arrives.

- 8. RESPONSIBILITY FOR VEHICLE:** Any member of the department who is assigned the operator of a department vehicle, shall be responsible for the instant serviceability of the vehicle assigned to his/her use.

Officers who operate police vehicles shall at the beginning of each month, inspect the vehicle assigned to them and complete the Vehicle and Equipment Inspection Form. The form, when completed, shall be submitted to the Staff Sergeant. Officers who operate vehicles are to search their assigned vehicle at the beginning of the tour of duty for the presence of weapons, contraband, or other items, such as evidence.

Officers who are assigned a cruiser, and authorized to commute to and from work with said cruiser, shall be armed and ready for duty while using said cruiser, and shall sign on and off prior to each use via the police radio.

- 9. CLEANLINESS OF VEHICLES:** All members of the department shall keep the interiors of department vehicles clean of litter. Any member who is assigned to a vehicle that he/she finds to be littered shall also notify his Shift Commander.

- 10. OXYGEN TANKS:** All officers shall check make sure oxygen tanks are full and operational. If tanks are not in operational readiness, the tank then should be placed on the workbench at the Truro Fire Department, notification left with the appropriate personnel, and a full tank should be taken from the fire department.

- 11. PLACING OF ARTICLES IN TRUNKS:** No member of the department is to place any article in the trunk of a department vehicle that may cause damage to radio equipment, electrical wiring, or other authorized equipment. When in doubt, officers should request permission from the OIC before transporting items in the trunk. Articles that might cause damage if placed in the trunk should be transported by another vehicle or the Truro Department of Public Works. *(Revised September 30, 2004)*

- 12. PUSHING OR JUMP STARTING ANOTHER VEHICLE:** No department vehicle shall be used for the purpose of pushing another vehicle. No department vehicle shall be used for "jump starting" a vehicle other than another department vehicle.

- 13. TOWING OF DEPARTMENT VEHICLES:** Towing of department vehicles shall be done only by towing facilities provided by the department, unless otherwise decided by the Shift Commander.

- 14. OPERATING DEPARTMENT VEHICLE WITH A FLAT TIRE OR MECHANICAL DEFECT:** No member shall operate a department vehicle with a flat tire or an apparent mechanical defect. In the event a department vehicle sustains a flat tire, the operator shall either change the tire, or have the vehicle towed to the Truro Police Department.

**15. OPERATING DEPARTMENT VEHICLE WITH SERIOUS MECHANICAL DEFECT:** Officers shall immediately notify a Shift Commander upon discovery of a mechanical defect which would affect the safe operation of the vehicle or could lead to vehicle damage. A Shift Commander, upon receipt of such notification, shall remove the vehicle from service for evaluation and repair, if necessary.

**16. UNATTENDED POLICE VEHICLES:**

- A. The operator of a department vehicle shall lock the ignition and remove the keys from his vehicle upon leaving the vehicle, unless the vehicle needs to remain running for lights, or other emergency equipment.
- B. When leaving a department vehicle unattended for more than a brief period, the doors of such vehicle shall be locked.
- C. In responding to a call where the reasonable potential for arrest exists, the rear doors of marked cruisers may be left unlocked.
- D. Vehicles left for repair and unattended will have any weapons removed from compartment.

**17. SECURING VEHICLE AT END OF TOUR OF DUTY:** At the end of their tour of duty, officers are to make certain that their vehicles are locked, windows rolled up, and lights, radio and ignition are turned off. Gas tanks shall be filled if under  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a tank. Keys shall be returned to key box in the Communications room. *(Revised September 30, 2004)*

**18. ACCIDENTS INVOLVING DEPARTMENT VEHICLES:** All accidents involving department vehicles shall be investigated by or under the direct supervision of a Sergeant or above. The following procedures shall be followed by all officers.

- A. Immediately contact the Shift Commander, who shall contact a superior officer, and/or Chief of Police to the accident scene.
  - 1. An outside agency may be called to assist in the investigation, to avoid biases, or to assist in the technical aspect of the investigation, if so directed by a Sergeant or the Chief of Police.
- B. Do not move vehicles prior to the arrival of the superior officer if personal injury or substantial property damage has occurred.
- C. Request appropriate assistance (Ambulance, Rescue, etc.).
- D. Assist the injured.
- E. Cooperate and assist in the investigation as requested by a Shift Commander.

- F. The investigating officer/agency shall conduct a thorough investigation of the accident and shall, when appropriate:
1. Obtain photographs of the vehicles involved and the scene.
  2. Issue citations.
  3. Notify accident investigators or the State Police.
- G. The officer operating the department vehicle shall submit a complete report the Chief of Police before securing from duty. If said officer is injured, then the investigating officer shall submit a preliminary report to the Chief before.
- H. Common sense and the severity of the accident will normally dictate the level of conformity to the section.
- 19. USE OF SIRENS AND BLUE LIGHTS:** Officers operating department vehicles are to activate sirens and blue lights as necessary and appropriate.
- 20. PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS:** All vehicles have a public address system capability, which may be used to broadcast emergency messages or to hear radio transmissions while out of the vehicle for an extended period. Care must be taken that appropriate volume levels are maintained.
- 21. ALLEY LIGHTS AND SPOT LIGHTS:** All marked cruisers are equipped with spot lights, takedown lights and/or alley lights. Officers are to use these lights as appropriate, but in doing so must make certain that their use does not create a hazard by blinding or interfering with the vision of operators of approaching vehicles. *(Revised September 30, 2004)*
- 22. HAZARDOUS WARNING LIGHTS (EMERGENCY FLASHERS):** When stopping a cruiser in a potentially hazardous location, operators are to activate their emergency flashers and any other lights necessary to maximize the vehicle's visibility.
- 23. RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR SERVICE:** *A response level is inappropriate when the response itself creates a greater danger to the safety of the community than the situation being responded to.* The purpose of the following procedures is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of the urgency of a police response to a given situation. These policies and procedures are designed to guide the officer in the manner in which he/she will respond to a call, For the purpose of this policy, consistent with the law, the prioritization codes shall be defined as the following:

- A. **CODE THREE RESPONSES:** Involves the use of both emergency blue lights and siren. This response should be made as quickly as possible, and should be made by the closest units in a quick but safe manner, taking into consideration the traffic conditions, the safety of the officers and the general public. Units responding to Code Three calls should be attentive to their radio, as the situation may quickly change to a more or less serious incident.

A Code Three Response is indicated when an officer is needed at the scene and an immediate response is essential. Conditions that will warrant a Code Three Response are:

1. Any apparent threat to life or danger of serious physical injury or major property damage.
2. Any on-going felony or misdemeanor that involves violence and may result in injury.
3. Any felony or violent misdemeanor that has just occurred, and there is reason to believe the suspect is still in the area.
4. Any incident that involves exigent or unique circumstances that demand an immediate police response.
5. An "Officer in Trouble" call, or any request from an officer for a Code Three Response.
6. **EXCEPTIONS TO THESE PROCEDURES MAY BE APPROPRIATE WHEN THE SAFETY OF THE OFFICERS AND THE PUBLIC WARRANTS A SILENT RESPONSE.** Example: To avoid precipitating a hostage-taking situation.
7. **THIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE DOES NOT RELIEVE THE OFFICER FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DRIVE WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL PERSONS, NOR DOES IT AFFORD PROTECTION FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.**

- B. CODE TWO RESPONSES:** Involves the use of emergency blue lights only. The response should be made by the closest units in a quick but safe manner. Units responding to Code Two calls should be attentive to their radio, as the situation may quickly change to a more or less serious incident.

A Code Two Response is indicated when an officer's presence is needed at the scene but the need is not immediate. Situations that will warrant a Code Two Response are:

1. Any incident that does not represent a significant threat to life and property (such as disorderly groups) or a felony that has occurred without injury and the suspect has fled the area.
  2. Any in-progress incident that could be classified as a possible crime (a suspicious person, vehicle, etc.).
  3. Any incident that represents a significant obstacle to the flow of traffic.
  4. Any incident that requires a prompt, non-emergency response.
  5. Officers calling for non-emergency assistance (a backup unit, potential but not a present problem) or any officer requesting a Code Two Response.
  6. Officers holding a prisoner and requesting transport will receive a Code Two Response unless special circumstances dictate otherwise.
  7. **THIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE DOES NOT RELIEVE THE OFFICER FROM THE DUTY TO DRIVE WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL PERSONS, NOR DOES IT AFFORD PROTECTION FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.**
  8. Panic alarms, burglar alarms at open commercial establishments.
- C. CODE ONE RESPONSE:** Involves no emergency lights or siren. It is a normal traffic speed response, such as:
1. Calls for service
  2. To take a report
  3. Residential burglar alarms
  4. Transport of prisoners

**D. TELECOMMUNICATORS SHALL NOT NEITHER DECIDE NOR DICTATE HOW OFFICERS SHOULD RESPOND.**

**24. SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES/EQUIPMENT:** The department utilizes a utility trailer which serves also as a speed “radar display” unit. This trailer is placed in areas of Truro as assigned. (see below) (*revised September 30, 2004*)

**A. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE:** only authorized members who have received the necessary training in their use shall use special purpose vehicles.. If a member wants to utilize a special purpose vehicle for a function, he must first obtain the permission of the Shift Commander.

**25. POLICE VEHICLE EQUIPMENT:** The following emergency equipment shall be carried in all *marked* police vehicles: (*September 30, 2004*)

- A. Complete first aid kit (*maintained by TFD*)
- B. A blanket in a suitable container;
- C. Fire extinguisher;
- D. road flares;
- E. Stop Sticks
- F. Hazardous material book.
- G. Spare tire, jack and wrench;
- H. Oxygen jump kit; (*maintained by TFD*)
- I. Traffic cones (*May be removed with permission from the Chief of Police*)
- J. Police line tape
- K. Siren and Emergency lights
- L. Patrol Rifle and Shotgun
- M. Shovel
- N. Officers ready bag with equipment

**26. UNMARKED POLICE VEHICLE EQUIPMENT:** Unmarked cruisers shall have the same equipment as marked cruisers, unless altered by the Chief of Police.

**27. UTILITY TRAILER EQUIPMENT:** The utility trailer shall have the following equipment contained therein, and said equipment shall be checked once per month by the officer assigned to maintain the trailer. This equipment checklist shall be on the back of the cruiser checklist, and shall be submitted at the same time and manner as the cruisers. All members are trained in the use and mobilization of the utility trailer.

- A. Radar unit with tuning forks, paperwork
- B. LED display
- C. 3 collapsible reflective cone kits (in yellow bags)
- D. 2 high intensity lighting systems on tripods
- E. 1 generator (with attached light)
- F. Traffic cones
- G. 1 roll police line tape
- H. 1 empty gas can (to be filled before anticipated use.)



**MONTHLY CRUISER CHECK SHEET**  
*Return to the Staff Sergeant*

DATE	CRUISER	OFFICER/ID	MILEAGE

EQUIPMENT	OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	COMMENTS
Circle Check <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency Lights (sirens)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Radios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Radar Unit/Forks (Serial #)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Front/Rear Heads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Blanket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spotlight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Flashlight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
StopSticks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Traffic Cones (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Oxygen Kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Manual Resuscitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Road Flares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Crime Scene Tape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Roller Tape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fire Extinguisher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shotgun (Serial #)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patrol Rifle (Serial #)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shovel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Care Bears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HAZMAT Handbook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tire Jack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Officers Ready Bag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Problems affecting the safe operation and use of any cruiser shall be documented immediately in the log, and shall be put out of service. The shift commander shall be notified. A cruiser maintenance slip shall be completed noting the problem.

Immediate correction shall take place of any item or problem found that serviceability could be easily achieved. Officers shall note the problem and the action taken to correct the problem.

*Created December 10, 2000*  
*Revised September 30, 2004*

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<sup>1</sup> Officers shall walk around cruiser and check ALL vehicle lights, tires, and body of cruiser for any non-operational or damaged items.



**UTILITY TRAILER CHECK SHEET**  
*Return to the Staff Sergeant*

DATE	CRUISER	OFFICER/ ID	

EQUIPMENT	OK	NEEDS ATTENTION	COMMENTS
Circle Check <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency Lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Radar Unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LED Display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Generator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gas can (should be empty)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tripod Lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tuning Forks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 collapsible reflective cone kits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Police Line Tape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Problems affecting the safe operation and use of the trailer shall be documented immediately in the log, and shall be put out of service. The shift commander shall be notified. A cruiser maintenance slip shall be completed noting the problem.

Immediate correction shall take place of any item or problem found that serviceability could be easily achieved. Officers shall note the problem and the action taken to correct the problem.

*Revised September 30, 2004*

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<sup>2</sup> Officers shall walk around trailer and check ALL lights, tires, and body of trailer for any non-operational or damaged items.