

# Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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**Series:** Law Enforcement and Security

**Part 446:** Law Enforcement

**Chapter 12:** Vehicle Standards

**Originating Office:** Office of Law Enforcement and Security

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## 446 DM 12

12.1 **Purpose.** This chapter establishes policy concerning the standards for vehicles assigned to Departmental Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) who are engaged in law enforcement duties.

12.2 **Scope.** This policy applies to all bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior (Department / DOI).

12.3 **Definitions.** For the purpose of this chapter, the terms below are defined as follows:

A. Law Enforcement Officer (LEO): A DOI employee who is sworn and commissioned to enforce criminal statutes and who is authorized to carry firearms, execute and serve warrants, search, seize, make arrests, and perform such duties as authorized by law.

B. Law Enforcement Vehicles (Vehicles): Any Department owned or leased vehicle, marked or unmarked, that is acquired by a bureau or office law enforcement program specifically for use in law enforcement work.

12.4 **Policy.** The policy and procedures described in this Department Manual shall apply to all bureau/office LEOs who use vehicles in the possession of the United States Government in the performance of their official duties.

12.5 **Responsibility.**

A. The Deputy Assistant Secretary - Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Management is responsible for policy development and provides program guidance and oversight of the Department's law enforcement programs.

B. Heads of Bureaus and Offices are responsible for promulgating any counterpart policy or procedure required to implement the policy established in this chapter. Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement (BDLEs) shall:

(1) Be responsible for each vehicle under control of the law enforcement program;

(2) Annually check the driver's license status of law enforcement officers operating program managed vehicles;

(3) Develop guidance for home-to-work use of government vehicles as directed in the Authorization for Use of Government Passenger Carrier(s) for Home-to-Work Transportation [Secretarial Directive August 27, 2008].

C. Bureau / Office Law Enforcement Supervisors shall ensure that only trained law enforcement officers operate law enforcement vehicles. If marked law enforcement vehicles are operated by non-commissioned personnel, then the vehicles should be identified as "out of service".

D. Bureau / Office LEOs are responsible for complying with established policy and procedures governing law enforcement vehicle use and shall:

(1) Be responsible at all times for exercising reasonable diligence in the care of their assigned law enforcement vehicle;

(2) Be responsible for the proper operation and security of the vehicle, complying with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws regulating motor vehicle operations, including Part 412 of the Departmental Manual;

(3) Within five days of receiving any moving violation from a law enforcement or governmental agency while on duty, LEOs will notify their supervisor;

(4) Report any motor vehicle collision involving a law enforcement vehicle in accordance with Bureau/Office policy;

(5) Not operate a vehicle while impaired due to ingesting alcohol or any other drug including prescription and over-the-counter medications. No alcoholic beverages shall be carried in a law enforcement vehicle except when they are seized as evidence or contraband or as otherwise authorized in accordance with bureau/office policy;

(6) Ensure that all mechanical, safety, and special equipment are operational at all times, and report maintenance issues and initiate repairs in accordance with established maintenance procedures or agreements; and

(7) Ensure that law enforcement vehicle use is for official government business.

12.6 **Standards.** This section sets forth minimum standards for the use of law enforcement vehicles within the Department.

A. General Conditions.

(1) Law enforcement vehicles shall be clearly identifiable to the public, except for those vehicles used for surveillance, undercover operations, or administrative purposes. All vehicles will be properly equipped to perform assigned functions efficiently and safely.

(2) Marked law enforcement vehicles shall meet minimum safety and visibility standards for emergency lighting, retro-reflective markings, etc. as established by Department, bureau or office guidelines and directives.

(3) Law enforcement vehicles shall meet the minimum standards established by the General Services Administration for law enforcement work and shall have appropriate equipment to fulfill prescribed operational needs.

(4) Law enforcement vehicles such as sedans, SUVs, and motorcycles will be equipped to meet the needs of the bureau or office. Bureau or office law enforcement programs may use special vehicles such as Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and/or Off Road Vehicles (ORV) according to need.

(5) A government vehicle parked at a LEO's domicile or other approved location shall be stored in a manner that will provide protection from theft or damage to vehicle or contents. The vehicle shall be locked at all times when not in use.

#### B. Vehicle Use Training.

(1) Prior to operating a law enforcement or emergency vehicle, LEOs will successfully complete a bureau or office approved operator's training course for all vehicle types used in the performance of their duties.

(2) Vehicle certification and training curricula will include the following:

(a) Vehicle fundamentals (e.g., routine vehicle operation and maintenance, safety features, etc.); and

(b) Emergency vehicle operation and use (e.g., legal updates, pursuit policy, etc.).

(3) Emergency vehicle operation and use (e.g., legal updates, pursuit policy, etc.) will be included in annual law enforcement in-service training.

(4) The bureau or office will maintain vehicle operator training records.

#### C. Reporting Requirements.

(1) Bureaus or offices will document and maintain the following:

(a) A record of all vehicles maintained by vehicle identification numbers and/or property identifying information; and

(b) A tracking system to monitor vehicle maintenance, safety equipment, and fuel consumption as deemed appropriate by the bureaus or offices.

(2) All records will be maintained in accordance with bureau/office or GSA fleet management established record schedules.