



Sheridan Police Department
Policies and Procedures
19.1
Chapter 19 – Vehicle Operation
Section 1 – Routine Operations, Maintenance and Security

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Signature:

Officers will spend a great deal of time driving and its importance can be easily overlooked when performing the numerous other tasks an officer may be doing at the same time. Both the department and the public expect employees to demonstrate exemplary driving behavior while exercising due regard for the safety of themselves and the public. Whether the situation is routine or emergency, the driver must be ever mindful of driving safely.

19.1.1 Routine Operation

- A. All personnel operating department vehicles shall exercise due regard for the safety of all people and comply with safe driving procedures.
- B. Only designated police vehicles will be used while on duty. Deviations from this must be authorized by the chief of police.
- C. The operator of a patrol vehicle is responsible to ensure the safety features of the vehicle are working before commencing operation. Safety equipment includes (but is not limited to) all lights, brakes, siren, horn, and steering.
- D. Only authorized Sheridan Police Department and approved vehicle maintenance personnel are permitted to operate police vehicles.
- E. It is the responsibility of every employee, whose duties include driving, to maintain a valid driver's license issued by the State of Wyoming.
- F. Drivers and all passengers will wear seat belts. Officers should buckle the seat belt for prisoners unless the prisoner's behavior makes the application of the seatbelt unsafe.
- G. Drivers shall obey all traffic laws and parking regulations unless it is necessary and legally permissible to not do so when responding to an incident.
- H. Drivers must recognize the variable factors of visibility, road surface conditions, road contour, and traffic congestion, all of which directly affect the safe operation of any motor vehicle, and drive the vehicle in accordance with those factors.
- I. Employees will not transport people in police vehicles unless such transportation is in connection with official department business or as authorized in the ride along policy or by a commanding officer.
- J. Officers on light duty status shall not operate a marked police vehicle until such time as they can return to full duty status.
- K. Excluding traffic stops and investigations, a non-canine law enforcement vehicle should not be left unattended with its engine running unless weather conditions are so extreme the engine must remain engaged. Examples include when the temperature is below zero and when fog or snow would otherwise accumulate on the windows. Vehicles shall not be left running while unattended solely to operate the air conditioner. If a vehicle battery has become too low to effectively operate, a vehicle may be left running to recharge the battery.

- L. At the scene of a crime, a motor vehicle crash or other law enforcement incident, a law enforcement vehicle shall be parked in such a manner so as to not create an unnecessary obstacle or hazard to other traffic. The emergency lights and four-way flashing lights should be used to warn other drivers approaching the location.

19.1.2 Inspection, Care and Maintenance

- A. No employee will operate any law enforcement vehicle that the employee believes to be unsafe.
- B. When a department vehicle is involved in an accident, the involved employee will render necessary aid to the injured, remove any hazards to life or property, and contact the on-duty shift supervisor immediately.
- C. Officers shall maintain the cleanliness of their assigned vehicle. Employees are responsible for fueling vehicles they use.
- D. Officers are responsible for ensuring that their police vehicle is properly equipped. Vehicle inspections shall be conducted regularly to ensure the vehicle is ready for service.
- E. Employees shall promptly report any damage to the vehicle to the shift supervisor.
- F. When a vehicle needs service or to be repaired, the employee shall notify their supervisor who will make arrangements to have the work completed. Should the vehicle become disabled, the officer shall notify a supervisor for guidance. The supervisor will determine the need for and the location of a tow, if required.
- G. Approved service providers are to be determined by the chief of police or designee.
- H. Employees shall not perform mechanical work on the car except in emergency situations. Employees may not add, move, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with any equipment installed on the police vehicle without prior approval of the chief of police or his designee.
- I. Supervisors will closely monitor the condition of all vehicles through regular inspections.
- J. Abuse of police vehicles will result in severe disciplinary action. Abuse may be considered by both willful and unintentional acts. Collisions or criminal charges including traffic violations that result from an employee's negligence may result in disciplinary action.

19.1.3 Security

- A. Officers shall lock the police vehicle when unattended.
- B. When officers are on vacation or any other absence of five or more days, the patrol vehicle shall be left at the police department so it is available for others to use as needed.
- C. Except for evidence, only department-approved weapons, that the officer is trained in and approved to use, may be carried in the police vehicle. Handguns shall not be left in the passenger compartment when the vehicle is parked between shifts. Firearms and all other sensitive items shall be removed from the vehicle before being left for maintenance or repair. Rifles may be left in the vehicle's rifle locking mechanism when the vehicle is parked between shifts while at the officer's home. Anytime a vehicle is required to be left for service or left due to an officer's extended absence, the rifle will be removed and secured.
- D. Officers shall thoroughly examine their vehicles before and after transporting prisoners to search for evidence, contraband, or property discarded by prisoners or others.