

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT DIVISION VEHICLES	POLICY NUMBER 17.15
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17.15.01 PURPOSE

To establish policy, guidelines and limitations concerning the use of Division vehicles by members of the Florida Highway Patrol.

17.15.02 AUTHORITY

Chapter 321, Florida Statutes

Chapter 60B-1, Florida Administrative Code

17.15.03 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to ensure that all members are properly equipped, maintain a professional appearance, and are capable of responding to law enforcement responsibilities at all times; and to ensure that Division vehicles are properly maintained and operated in a legal manner.

17.15.04 OBJECTIVE

To establish specific guidelines to ensure that all members are equipped and capable of responding to law enforcement responsibilities at all times; to ensure Division vehicles are properly maintained and operated in a legal manner.

17.15.05 PROCEDURES

A. VEHICLES

1. A Division vehicle will be assigned to each member in order for the member to respond to law enforcement responsibilities at all times, regardless of duty assignment.
 - a. These assignments are made pursuant to Rule 60B-1.008, Florida Administrative Code, Special Assignment.
 - b. It will be the responsibility of the member to provide reasonable security and maintenance for the vehicle, and to operate the vehicle in accordance with the regulations in

Policies 6.01, 6.03 and 17.05 of this manual and the recommendations of the vehicle's manufacturer.

2. Members are responsible for determining that their patrol vehicle is properly equipped with shotgun, extra ammunition, appropriate traffic safety equipment, first aid/trauma kit, fire extinguisher, infectious disease control kit, and communication equipment, as well as required Division forms before beginning their shift.
3. All Division vehicles will be inspected by members to see that the vehicle is undamaged and ready for service prior to being driven. Members should be alert for faulty or inoperative equipment. Special attention should be given to brakes, lights, and emergency equipment. Any damage to the vehicle or inoperative or faulty equipment will be reported to a supervisor immediately.
4. Members will ensure their vehicle is adequately fueled before ending their shift so as to provide for immediate response to law enforcement responsibilities should the member be called back to duty.
5. Members will not check speedometers for any person by means of the Division vehicle's speedometer, Division radar or any other speed-timing device.

B. VEHICLE OPERATION

1. All members will operate Division vehicles with due regard for safety and in compliance with all traffic laws regulating the operation of emergency vehicles whether in an emergency situation or on routine patrol. When responding to emergency or pursuit situations members shall follow the policies outlined in Policy 17.05 of this manual.
2. Members will use all occupant restraint devices while operating Division vehicles, leased or rental vehicles, and all personal vehicles used on state business. The operator of a Division vehicle will require all passengers to use the vehicle's occupant restraint devices.
 - a. Members will not operate a Division vehicle in which the safety belt in the driver's position is inoperable. No person shall be transported in a seating position in which the safety belt is inoperable.
 - b. Members shall not modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle's safety belts or occupant restraint systems.
 - c. Inoperable restraint systems will be immediately reported to a supervisor. Prompt action will be taken to replace or repair the system.

- d. While stopping a vehicle for a violation, members may remove the safety belt just prior to the stop so as to enable the member to quickly exit their vehicle if necessary. Members should exercise caution to ensure the violator is going to stop so as to avoid becoming involved in a pursuit without the use of the restraint system.
3. Members will park Division vehicles in a manner that permits them to exit quickly and easily in an emergency situation.
4. The routine carrying or transporting of gasoline or other flammable liquids in the trunk of a Division vehicle is prohibited. However, members are authorized to transport gasoline or other petroleum products in appropriate containers when necessary to assist motorists who have become disabled from a lack of fuel. Such transportation shall be consistent with safety regulations for transporting fuel.
5. When a Division vehicle is involved in a traffic crash, members will render necessary aid to the injured, remove any hazard to life or property in accordance with Chapter 316, Florida Statutes, and immediately notify a supervisor. The supervisor will conduct an appropriate investigation in accordance with DHSMV Policy #10.02 and Division regulations.
6. When a member is attending an official function on Department business, and the inclusion of the member's spouse or other family members at the function would enhance the image of the Florida Highway Patrol, the Division may authorize the spouse/family member(s) to be included in the official function, and the Division may authorize the spouse/family member(s) to travel in the member's Division vehicle. This authorization is made pursuant to Rule, 60B-1.008, Florida Administrative Code, and DHSMV Policy #10.02.

C. DRIVING DIVISION VEHICLES OFF-DUTY

1. All members off-duty who drive or occupy a Division vehicle shall be in an approved FHP uniform, **appropriate** civilian, business casual or in-service training attire, as defined in FHP Policy 6.01 – Uniforms and Personal Appearance. Members assigned marked or unmarked take home Division vehicles shall utilize the FHP radio or MDC RMS/CAD program when checking into or out of service. With authorization from their Troop Commander, off-duty members may wear civilian, business casual or in-service training attire as defined in Policy 6.01 under the following circumstances:
 - a. Traveling to and from college or school.

- b. Attending law enforcement training classes at facilities other than FHP training sites.
 - c. Traveling to and from an authorized gym or exercise facility. (Athletic or workout attire is never appropriate when operating or occupying a Division vehicle.)
2. In instances when members are operating FHP vehicles (both marked and unmarked) while not in uniform, they are required to be in possession of their FHP credentials (ID card and badge), Division issued firearm, and handcuffs. This will enable them to take appropriate action or respond to emergency situations if the need arises.

D. STORAGE OF DAMAGED OR INOPERABLE DIVISION VEHICLES

Division vehicles damaged in traffic crashes or made inoperable due to fire/water/storm damage, or other similar damage, shall be stored at FHP stations, Department of Transportation yards or other state facilities where the Division will not incur storage charges.

1. Division vehicles will not be stored at commercial wrecker storage buildings or facilities where they will accumulate storage charges.
2. Troop Commanders are responsible for locating suitable storage sites and publishing a list of approved sites within their areas of command. Troop Commanders will update these lists annually.

E. ANTI-THEFT DEVICE

The anti-theft device will be activated at all times unless there is a specific valid reason for it to be turned off. An example would be the use of the vehicle for service or maintenance by non-law enforcement personnel. Neither the disclosure nor the operating procedures of the anti-theft device in patrol vehicles should be revealed to any non-law enforcement personnel without supervisor approval. This includes vehicle service personnel, as the device should be turned off prior to releasing the vehicle for service or maintenance. Refer to FHP Service Bulletin 12-07 for more information.