

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES	POLICY NUMBER 17.18
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17.18.01 PURPOSE

To specify procedures relating to the operation, routine care and maintenance of Florida Highway Patrol special purpose vehicles.

17.18.02 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to properly equip and maintain special purpose vehicles; and to ensure such vehicles are operated by authorized and qualified personnel.

17.18.03 DEFINITIONS

- A. **CANINE VEHICLE** - A patrol vehicle utilized for and specially equipped to transport a police work dog.

- B. **MOBILE BREATH ALCOHOL TESTING UNIT (MBATU)** - A van type vehicle equipped with portable breath alcohol testing equipment used to provide breath testing capabilities in the field.

- C. **MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS/COMMAND VEHICLE** - A vehicle equipped with radio and telephone equipment, maps and other items making it capable of being used as a mobile communications vehicle and/or a command post.

- D. **PUBLIC RELATIONS VEHICLES** - Vehicles used to call attention to and enhance the image of the Florida Highway Patrol by their use during special events. The vehicles are automobiles painted the distinctive patrol colors. At the present time there are three public relations vehicles; two 1940 Ford patrol cars painted and equipped to depict FHP patrol cars used during that era and one Mazda Miata painted and equipped to resemble a miniature patrol car.

- E. **SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES** - A Division vehicle other than an administrative or regular patrol car used for special operations and events, including fixed and rotary wing aircraft, armored personnel carriers, prisoner transport vans, canine vehicles, mobile breath alcohol testing vehicles, mobile communications/command vehicles, public relations vehicles and motorcycles.

- F. **SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) VEHICLE** - An armored vehicle utilized in response to high risk situations.

17.18.04 OBJECTIVES

- A. To formulate written policy and procedures governing the use of special purpose vehicles.
- B. To ensure special purpose vehicles are maintained in a state of operational readiness at all times.
- C. To ensure those members operating special purpose vehicles are knowledgeable of their unique characteristics and maintain the appropriate licensing endorsement for the particular vehicle operated.
- D. To ensure special purpose vehicles are operated in accordance with Chapter 10.02, DHSMV Management Manual and FHP Policy 17.16.

17.18.05 RESPONSIBILITIES

Troop Commanders or District Commanders will ensure that each member assigned to operate a special purpose vehicle possesses a valid Florida driver's license with the proper endorsements for the type of vehicle operated. Troop Commanders shall also be responsible for ensuring that personnel have received the proper training, if required, for the type of vehicle assigned.

17.18.06 PROCEDURES

- A. **MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS/COMMAND VEHICLE**
 - 1. The mobile communications/command vehicle is equipped to respond to any emergency situation located within the State of Florida. The vehicle shall be assigned to General Headquarters.
 - a. The vehicle serves as a mobile command post. It is equipped to provide communications capabilities between division personnel during natural and man-made disasters, and during special events of a magnitude that would severely tax local communications capabilities.
 - b. The vehicle is equipped to provide radio communications between the division and other emergency response agencies during natural and man-made disasters, and during joint operations for large scale special events.
 - 2. Requests for the assignment of the mobile communication/command vehicle will be directed to the Director or his/her designee through the appropriate chain of command. The request will indicate the reasons the vehicle is needed, length of time needed, if known, the location of the disaster or event, and the agency requesting FHP assistance.
 - 3. Once assigned to an incident by the Director, appropriate sworn or non-sworn personnel will be directed to deliver the unit.
 - 4. The mobile communications/command vehicle will be staffed during the assignment by authorized sworn and non-sworn FHP personnel. The

Troop Commander or Detail Commander may authorize personnel from other agencies to staff the vehicle in conjunction with FHP personnel. **In no event will the mobile communications/command vehicle be staffed solely by personnel from another agency.**

- a. An FHP supervisor of the rank of lieutenant or higher will be assigned to the vehicle to serve as the Shift Commander. He or she will be responsible for the proper use of the vehicle and will determine the assignment of personnel to various detail functions in consultation with the Troop and/or Detail Commander.
 - b. Members operating the vehicle must possess a valid Florida driver license and must be trained in all procedures involving the operation and setup of the vehicle.
 - c. Duty officers may be assigned to perform communications duties related to the detail. In the event a sworn member is assigned to communications duties, only members with the knowledge and certifications required to operate communications equipment will be utilized.
5. It is the responsibility of the Troop Commander to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced and in a good state of repair.
 6. It is the responsibility of the Troop Commander or his/her designee to make certain all communications equipment is operational at all times.
 7. The following equipment will be maintained in the mobile communications/command vehicles:
 - a. Traffic safety equipment.
 - b. First-aid kit.
 - c. Fire extinguisher.
 - d. Rechargeable flashlight.
 - e. Appropriate communications equipment.
 - f. Area maps; depicting the location of hospitals, social services agencies, shelters, food distribution centers, and other emergency provider agencies.
 - g. Lists depicting telephone numbers and radio frequencies for other emergency service providers in the detail area.
 - h. Four-way lug wrench.
 - i. Other equipment deemed necessary by communications personnel.
- B. Special Response Team (SRT) Vehicle

1. The SRT vehicle is equipped to respond for deployment to any high risk situation occurring within the State of Florida. One vehicle is assigned to Troop E, Miami, and one vehicle is assigned to Troop D, Orlando.
2. The need for deployment of the SRT vehicle shall be determined by the TRT Commander in consultation with the Troop Commander. The Troop Commander shall authorize the use of the SRT vehicle.
 - a. The vehicle is equipped to serve as an armored personnel carrier. It is used in any high risk situation in which it can provide maximum protection to members of the SRT or others.
 - b. The SRT vehicle will be used in the following situations whenever possible, based on the location of the event and the time constraints involving travel to the location:
 - (1) Mobile Field Force security and rescue operations.
 - (2) Hostage and barricaded subject situations.
 - (3) Sniper incidents.
 - (4) High risk rescue operations.
3. The use of the SRT vehicle will not be limited to the above listed situations. After careful evaluation of the circumstances, the SRT Commander may authorize the use of the vehicle in other situations that would provide maximum protection to team members or others.
4. In the event the SRT vehicle is needed for deployment in another area of the state, the Troop Commander requesting the deployment will direct his or her request to the Deputy Director of Patrol Operations. The request will indicate the reasons the vehicle is needed and the location of the incident.
5. The SRT vehicle will be staffed by authorized members of the Florida Highway Patrol. The Troop or Detail Commander may authorize personnel from other agencies to staff the vehicle in conjunction with FHP personnel. **In no event will the SRT vehicle be staffed solely by personnel from another agency.**
 - a. The SRT Commander will be responsible for the proper use of the vehicle and will determine the assignment of personnel to staff the vehicle.
 - b. Only sworn members of the FHP will be authorized to staff the vehicle during a deployment.
6. It is the responsibility of the SRT Commander to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced and in a good state of repair.
7. The SRT vehicle shall be equipped with the following equipment:
 - a. Blue lights

- b. Siren and PA system
 - c. Fire extinguisher
 - d. First aid kit
 - e. Communications equipment
8. Optional equipment for the SRT vehicle may include:
- a. Video recording equipment
 - b. Flood light system
 - c. Equipment racks
 - d. Weapons racks
9. The SRT vehicle operator will be a sworn member of the FHP with the following qualifications:
- a. At least three years of service as a sworn member of the FHP and the troop SRT.
 - b. A safe driving record.
 - c. Free from injury or disability which could prevent physical performance and prevent the member from performing the essential duties of the position.
 - d. Low absenteeism rate.
 - e. Willingness to train each month during the year.
 - f. The member assigned to operate the vehicle must be trained in all aspects of the operation of the vehicle and its intended uses.

C. MOBILE BREATH ALCOHOL TESTING UNIT

1. The mobile breath alcohol testing unit (MBATU) is equipped with portable breath testing equipment. It is capable of being set up at various locations for the purpose of processing individuals arrested for the offense of driving while under the influence.
2. MBATU's are assigned to various troops throughout the state. The vehicles are maintained and stored at district facilities designated by the Troop Commander.
 - a. The District Commander will be responsible for assigning trained personnel to the MBATU. Training will include information on the proper care and use of the vehicle.
 - b. The District Commander will be responsible for ensuring that all members and equipment assigned to the MBATU are certified and that the certificates are valid.

- c. The District Commander will ensure the MBATU and assigned equipment are properly maintained and serviced.
3. MBATU will be authorized for use by the Troop Commander. It can be utilized for the following details:
 - a. Comprehensive roadside sobriety checkpoints
 - b. In conjunction with intensified DUI enforcement efforts.
 - c. Assisting city and county law enforcement agencies with DUI enforcement efforts as approved by the Troop Commander.
4. Only sworn members of the Florida Highway Patrol or members of the FHP Auxiliary will operate the vehicle.
 - a. Members operating the vehicle must possess a valid Florida driver license and be trained in the operation of the vehicle as well as its care and maintenance.
 - b. The member operating the vehicle must be fully versed in the setup procedures for the vehicle.
 - c. A sworn member of the Florida Highway Patrol must always be present at the MBATU.
5. Only certified breath test device operators will be authorized to operate the breath test instrument.
 - a. The breath test device operator may be either a sworn or non sworn member of the agency, or a member of the FHP Auxiliary.
 - b. Breath test operators from other agencies may be assigned to operate the breath test device upon the approval of the district commander.
6. The MBATU will be equipped with the following equipment:
 - a. Intoxilyzer 8000 series Breath Testing Instrument
 - b. Video recorder and monitor
 - c. Camera tripod
 - d. Cellular telephone
 - e. Two-way radio
 - f. Portable floodlights
 - g. Unit mounted floodlights
 - h. Electrical generator
 - i. All forms required to process a DUI violator.

D. PUBLIC RELATIONS VEHICLES

1. The Florida Highway Patrol public relations vehicles consist of two 1940 Ford patrol cars painted and equipped to depict FHP patrol cars used during that era and one Mazda Miata painted and equipped to resemble a miniature patrol car.
2. The use and display of the 1940 Fords and the Mazda Miata will be for the sole purpose of promoting the Florida Highway Patrol and public safety. Examples of those functions are:
 - a. FHP/FHPA recruitment activities
 - b. Promotion of highway safety and community policing efforts
 - c. Parades and other public displays in which the FHP is an official participant.
 - d. FHP approved press conferences
 - e. Any other functions deemed appropriate by the authorizing command personnel that are consistent with FHP's mission.
3. The Mazda Miata will not be used to take law enforcement action except under exigent circumstances. The 1940 Fords will not be used to take law enforcement action under any circumstances.
4. The vehicles will not be used to promote any commercial endeavor, nor will they be used for any solicitation purposes.
5. The Mazda Miata will be stored and maintained at the Troop L headquarters office in Lantana. One 1940 Ford will be stored and maintained at the district office in Jacksonville and the other at the district office in Miami.
6. The vehicles will be authorized for use by the appropriate Troop Commander or District Commander.
7. In the event there is a need for a public relations vehicle in a troop other than the troop of assignment, the request will be made by the appropriate Troop Commander to the Troop Commander of the troop to which the vehicle is assigned.
8. Only certified law enforcement officers or auxiliary officers of the Florida Highway Patrol are authorized to operate the vehicles.
9. The member assigned to operate the vehicle must be capable of operating a standard shift transmission.
10. The operator is required to possess a valid Florida driver license.
11. The vehicle will only be operated when in transit to and from authorized events and for appropriate maintenance procedures. The 1940 Fords will normally be transported by trailer to the event site,

12. The District Commander in charge of the facility where the vehicle is stored is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of the vehicle.
 - a. In the event one of the vehicles is damaged, the appropriate FHP station will be notified and a report made of the incident or crash. Copies of the reports will be forwarded to the appropriate district and Troop Commander for handling as described in FHP Policy 8.01.
 - b. Members assigned to operate the vehicles will ensure that the vehicles are clean and properly serviced before participating in any special event and before returning the vehicle to the storage facility.
13. The following equipment will be maintained in the Mazda Miata:
 - a. One Impulse 200 roof mounted blue light system.
 - b. One Dashmaster red and blue twin strobe light system.
 - c. One SVP electronic siren and control module.
 - d. One Uniden Bearcat BC760 XLT programmable VHF radio.
14. The following equipment will be maintained in the 1940 Fords:
 - a. One red spot light bulb.
 - b. One siren.
 - c. A radio control head, (non-functioning).

E. CANINE VEHICLES

1. Canine vehicles are used by the Florida Highway Patrol to transport its police canines on routine patrol and to scenes where the use of a police canine is needed.
2. Canine vehicles are authorized to be used in any situation/manner that patrol vehicles are used, except that prisoners will not be transported in any canine vehicle while the canine is present.
3. Canine vehicles may be operated by any member, however, the canine handler must be present if the canine is in the vehicle. Members operating canine vehicles must possess a valid Florida driver license and be trained in the operation of the vehicle as well as its care and maintenance.
4. The member to whom the vehicle is assigned is responsible for the proper care and maintenance of the vehicle.
5. Canine vehicles will be equipped with the same items as a patrol vehicle and:

- a. A vehicle temperature alarm sensor.
- b. Two fans mounted to provide maximum air circulation for the canine.
- c. One lockable storage aluminum box bolted to the floor in the rear area of the canine handler's patrol vehicle for training aids.
- d. One smaller lockable storage box containing training aids that shall be stored within "c" above when not being used for training purposes.

F. OTHER SPECIAL USE VEHICLES

Information concerning the operation, routine care and maintenance of Florida Highway Patrol special purpose vehicles not listed in this policy is located in the policy which addresses the specific function for which the vehicle is used.