



Florida Highway Patrol Policy Manual

SUBJECT SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES	POLICY NUMBER 17.18	ISSUE DATE 02/01/1996
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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 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.
- C. **PUBLIC RELATIONS VEHICLES** - Vehicles used to call attention to and enhance the image of the Florida Highway Patrol by their use during special events by members in uniform. The vehicles are automobiles painted the distinctive patrol colors. These vehicles can be privately owned if approved by the Director.

- D. **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, canine vehicles, mobile communications/command vehicles, public relations vehicles, and motorcycles.
- E. **SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) VEHICLES** - An armored vehicle utilized in response to natural or manmade disasters, high risk situations, or a vehicle designated for use by the SRT for transporting equipment and deployment of team members during response.

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.
- C. To ensure members operating special purpose vehicles are knowledgeable of their unique characteristics and maintain the appropriate licensing class and endorsement for the particular vehicle operated.
- D. To ensure special purpose vehicles are operated in accordance with DHSMV Policy 10.02 and FHP Policy 17.15.

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 class and 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 VEHICLES**
 - 1. The mobile communications/command vehicles are equipped to respond to any emergency situations located within the State of Florida.

- a. Mobile communications vehicles are equipped to provide radio communications and command capabilities between the division and other emergency response agencies during disasters and joint operations for large scale special events.
 - b. Mobile command vehicles serve as a mobile command post. They are equipped to provide local on-site command capabilities between division personnel during disasters and special events.
2. Requests for the assignment of the mobile communications/command vehicles will be directed to the Director or their 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 vehicles will be staffed during the assignment by authorized sworn and non-sworn FHP personnel. 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 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. The shift commander is 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 with the proper class and endorsements for the type of vehicle operated and must be trained in all procedures involving the operation and setup of the vehicle.

- c. Regional 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 or their designee to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced, in a good state of repair, and a monthly inspection is completed and documented on the Command Post Inspection Report (HSMV 61015). The monthly inspection form will be forwarded to the Communications Commander and the Emergency Operations Coordinator each month.
- 6. It is the responsibility of the troop commander or designee to make certain all communications equipment is always operational.
- 7. The following equipment will be maintained in the mobile communications/command vehicles:
 - a. Traffic safety equipment.
 - b. First-aid kit.
 - c. Properly charged fire extinguisher.
 - d. Rechargeable flashlight.
 - e. Appropriate communications equipment.
 - f. Lists depicting telephone numbers and radio frequencies for other emergency service providers in the detail area.
 - g. Four-way lug wrench.
 - h. Other equipment deemed necessary by communications personnel.

B. SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) VEHICLES

- 1. The SRT vehicles are equipped to respond for deployment to any disaster or high-risk situation.

2. The need for deployment of an SRT vehicle shall be determined by the team commander in consultation with the troop commander and appropriate chief. The chief requesting the deployment will direct the request to the Director, appropriate Deputy Director or designee for final approval identifying the reasons the vehicle is needed and the location of the incident.
 - a. The vehicles are equipped to serve as an armored personnel carrier. They may be used in any high-risk situation in which it can provide maximum protection to members of the SRT or others.
 - b. The SRT vehicles may be used in the following situations based on the location of the event and the time constraints involving travel to the location. During a deployment event approved by the Director or appropriate Deputy Director, the team commander may authorize the use of the vehicle in other situations that would provide maximum protection to team members or others.
 - 1) Natural or manmade disasters.
 - 2) Quick Reaction Force or Mobile Field Force security and rescue operations.
 - 3) Hostage and barricaded subject situations.
 - 4) Sniper incidents.
 - 5) High risk rescue operations.
 - 6) Service of a high-risk warrant.
 - 7) Civil unrest.
3. 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 vehicles be staffed solely by personnel from another agency.**

- a. The team commander is 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.
4. It is the responsibility of the team commander to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced and in a good state of repair.
5. The SRT vehicles shall be equipped with the following equipment:
 - a. Blue lights
 - b. Siren and PA system
 - c. Properly charged fire extinguisher
 - d. First aid kit
 - e. Communications equipment
6. Optional equipment for the SRT vehicle may include:
 - a. Video recording equipment
 - b. Flood light system
 - c. Equipment racks
 - d. Weapons racks
7. The SRT vehicle operator will be a sworn member 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; and
- f. Fully trained in all aspects of the operation of the vehicle and its intended uses.

C. PUBLIC RELATIONS VEHICLES

1. The use and display of the public relations vehicles 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.
2. The public relations vehicles are not authorized emergency vehicles and will not be used to take law enforcement action except under exigent circumstances.
3. The vehicles will not be used to promote any commercial endeavor, nor will they be used for any solicitation purposes.
4. The vehicles will be authorized for use by the appropriate troop commander or district commander.
5. 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.
6. Only certified sworn Florida Highway Patrol members are authorized to operate the vehicles.
7. The member assigned to operate the vehicle must be capable of operating a standard shift transmission, when applicable.

8. The operator is required to possess a valid Florida driver's license.
9. The vehicle will only be operated when in transit to and from authorized events and for appropriate maintenance procedures. Older vehicles will normally be transported by trailer to the event site.
10. 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.

D. 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. One fan 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.

E. 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.