


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 4.29</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT & OPERATION</p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned Vehicles Spare Vehicles Special Purpose Vehicles Take Home Vehicles Vehicle Operations 	<p>State Certification Standards:</p>		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policy and procedures for Rabun County Sheriff's Office vehicles.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office to operate all county owned vehicles in accordance with state law and the guidelines of the Sheriff's Office.

DISCUSSION

Rabun County Sheriff's Office vehicles are the most visible representation of this agency to the public. Officers should bear in mind that the manner in which Sheriff's Office vehicles are operated is a direct reflection on the organization as a whole. The citizens of Rabun County have an expectation that public property will not be abused and will be used to conduct "official county" business and to provide timely law enforcement services. The safety of all persons on the roadway is the primary concern when operating a Sheriff's Office vehicle.

I. VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT

A. Individual Assignment

1. Sheriff's Office vehicles are assigned to certain individual officers to facilitate the performance of their duties and ensure a quick response when necessary. The assignment of a Rabun County Sheriff's Office vehicle for the exclusive use of designated individuals is viewed as a convenience to the agency and not a fringe benefit or right of employment. This assignment is contingent upon the recognition that assigned vehicles are not for personal use and, therefore, privileges may be revoked at any time by the Sheriff if the provisions of this General Order are violated.
2. Employees of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office residing within 25 miles of the Rabun County Line will be permitted to drive their assigned vehicle to and from work, while on county related business, while working approved extra duty employment, to attend court, and to attend training. The use of county vehicles for off-duty employment is prohibited.
3. Employees of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office residing outside 25 miles of the Rabun County Line, will leave their assigned vehicle at the closest fire station or law enforcement agency (with permission) to the employee's residence, providing the station is manned on a 24 hour basis.
4. All Major(s), Division Commanders, will be assigned individual vehicles.
5. All sworn employees of the following divisions will be assigned individual vehicles (based on availability):
 - a. Uniform Patrol Division;
 - b. Criminal Investigation Division; and
 - c. Court Services Division Commander.
6. Any employee assigned a vehicle will be required to operate that vehicle until such time that the vehicle is no longer serviceable or until the employee transfers to another position requiring a different type of vehicle.
7. New vehicles will be assigned based on the need to replace the vehicle currently used due to serviceability factors established by the Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor.
8. Division Commanders will be assigned new vehicles at the discretion of the Sheriff .
9. Other sworn and/or non-sworn employees who make frequent use of Sheriff's Office vehicles during their normal tour of duty may be assigned vehicles at the discretion of the Sheriff.
10. All items necessary for the performance of an officer's duties will be maintained in assigned vehicles.

B. Division/Unit Assignment

1. Employees assigned to the Jail Division will not be assigned an individual vehicle. Rather, vehicles will be assigned to Divisions/Units within the Jail, for on-duty use.

2. It is the responsibility of the employee/division assigned a vehicle to take the vehicle to the Law Enforcement Center, or any other location at the discretion of the motor Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor for repair or maintenance when requested to do so.

C. Uniform

1. Sworn and certified employees while in a marked patrol vehicle will wear the complete Class A uniform to include full uniform gun belt with issued primary duty firearm or the dress down Polo and BDU pants when driving a marked patrol vehicle. Exceptions to this will be made on a case by case basis and must be approved by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy.

II. VEHICLE OPERATION AND CARE

A. Operation

1. When operating a Sheriff's Office vehicle, all employees will abide by rules and regulations pertaining to vehicle operations.
2. When operating a Sheriff's Office vehicle under normal conditions, officers shall obey all traffic laws and drive in a safe and courteous manner.
3. Except in Emergency situations, Sheriff's Office vehicles will not be parked in violation of the law, to include fire lanes, loading only areas, double-parked, blocking traffic or facing the wrong direction.
4. Parking spaces set aside specifically for Law Enforcement vehicles on public or private property shall be reserved for the use of on-duty officers operating a departmental vehicle.
5. Only personnel authorized by the Sheriff's Office will operate a Sheriff's Office vehicle.
6. Sheriff's Office personnel will be required to attend a driver's safety course as soon as possible upon employment. A record of attendance will be maintained in the employees personnel file. Personnel whose job requirements do not include operation of a Sheriff's Office vehicle may be exempt from a driver's safety course.
7. All officers will be required to wear safety belts while operating county owned vehicles. Passengers will also be required to wear safety belts when riding in a county vehicle.
8. Employees assigned a Sheriff's vehicle will have the vehicle ready for duty at all times.
9. If an employee, while off-duty in an assigned vehicle, finds it necessary to become involved in an incident, the employee shall assume control of the incident until the arrival of an on-duty officer.

B. Care

1. Employees are responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of the vehicle, both interior and exterior.
2. Under normal circumstances quick starts and stops should be avoided.

I.

3. Turning off the engine, when practical, rather than idling it for long periods of time can minimize unnecessary engine wear. If the engine must be idled to maintain lighting, etc., then the air conditioner should be turned off and the hood raised slightly to avoid overheating.
 4. Tire pressure should be checked at least once per week. Tire condition should be checked daily before going on-duty. When a tire goes flat during the operation of the vehicle, the officer should stop the vehicle as soon as safe and practical. Vehicles shall not be operated on a flat tire.
 5. Employees are responsible for contacting the county shop in order to have flat tires changed.
 6. Lubricant levels should be checked at least twice per week and any necessary fluid added. Older vehicles may require more frequent checks.
 7. During periods of snow and ice snow tires or snow chains maybe installed on police vehicles to aid traction. Vehicles equipped with snow tires or chains shall not be operated over 45 mph. If during a tour of duty a chain breaks, the vehicle should be stopped as soon as possible and the chain removed. In the event a chain cannot be removed on the road, a supervisor should be notified of the situation and appropriate action taken.
 8. Supervisors will conduct vehicle inspections at least once per month to assure compliance with these regulations. Any assigned vehicles will be subject to inspection at anytime. The vehicle and equipment check sheet will be used for all vehicle inspections.
- C. Willful negligence on the part of any employee in the care and operation of the vehicle or failure to follow any regulations pertaining to assigned vehicles will be cause for the vehicle to be taken away from the employee for a period of up to one (1) year in addition to any other appropriate disciplinary action.

III. SPARE VEHICLES

- A. Spare vehicles are available for use by personnel. Personnel who require a spare vehicle will sign out the vehicle on the spare vehicle log and state the reason the spare vehicle is being used. The keys for spare vehicles are located in the key box in the patrol office.
- B. The spare vehicle is for use as a replacement until the officer's permanently assigned vehicle is returned to service.
- C. It is the officer's responsibility to check the spare vehicle to make sure it is not damaged, is in good working order, and that engine fluids are in the safe operating range prior to the officer beginning his tour of duty. Vehicles, which need to be repaired, will be written up on a "Vehicle Maintenance Request" form. It is the responsibility of the officer operating the vehicle to complete the request for service. It is also the responsibility of the officer operating the vehicle to fill the vehicle with gasoline prior to returning the vehicle. The officer will return the vehicle keys to the key box and sign the vehicle back into service.

IV. SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES

Special purpose vehicles and equipment will only be operated by employees who are post certified in the use and operation of said vehicles/equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, Transport van, ATV's Boats etc. No special purpose vehicle will be operated without the proper class operator's license.

V. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

- A. The Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor and Division Commanders are responsible for the issuance and maintenance of all Sheriff's Office motor vehicles. The Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor and Division Commanders shall approve any maintenance, alterations, modifications, etc.
- B. A "Vehicle Maintenance Request" form will be used for requesting maintenance on all Sheriff's Office vehicles. The form will be completed and forwarded to the Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor.
- C. Normal service intervals for vehicles assigned to the Department are as follows:
 - 1. Uniform Patrol Vehicles –5,000
 - 2. Court Services, Investigations, and Administrative – 5,000
- D. Any vehicle requiring warranty work should be left at the county shop. They will take care of getting the patrol to the correct dealership. If requested by the county shop a deputy may take the vehicle to the dealership for warranty work. On requests for service other than the routine, the officer should describe the problem and not the cure.

VI. RESTRICTIONS

- A. Employees of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office residing outside 25 miles from the Rabun County Line, will leave their assigned vehicle at the Hall County Fire Station closest to the employee's residence, providing the station is manned on a 24 hour basis. Marked patrol vehicles will not be assigned to those who live outside the state unless authorized by the Sheriff.
- B. Personnel will exercise good judgment in utilizing their assigned vehicle and shall not drive or use their vehicle so as to cause unfavorable comment or bring discredit upon the agency.
- C. Under no circumstances will an employee of the agency consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol or medication which may impair their driving ability while operating a Sheriff's Office vehicle.
- D. While driving the vehicle to and from work, individuals may stop to conduct personal business within Rabun County of a limited and necessary nature. Such stops are for the purpose of conducting business that would otherwise cause an undo hardship on the individual if he/she had to first obtain their private automobile. Examples of personal stops that may be made with an assigned vehicle are:
 - 1. Laundry;
 - 2. Bank;
 - 3. Grocery store; or
 - 4. Medical appointment.

- E. Family members or other non-agency personnel will not operate assigned vehicles.
- F. Any employee who has had a chargeable accident during the preceding twelve (12) month period or who has had assigned vehicle privileges revoked will only be allowed to use the vehicle while on duty. At the end of the employee's tour of duty, the vehicle will remain at the Sheriff's Office.
- G. Employees on light duty status for an extended period may have their vehicles taken away from personal assignment, depending upon the type of illness or injury, at the discretion of the Sheriff.
- H. If an assigned vehicle is, or may be, subject to an act of vandalism because of its parked location the officer should remove the vehicle to the Sheriff's Office.
- I. If it is known in advance that an officer will be out of work on sick leave for one (1) full work week or more, for example, surgery, severe illness, etc., arrangements may be made to have the assigned vehicle moved to the Sheriff's Office.

Note: In the event of a family emergency or crisis and contingent upon supervisor approval, the officer may be allowed to transport family members in his/her assigned vehicle. Routine, or day to day transport of family members in assigned vehicle is prohibited unless authorized by the Sheriff.

VII. EXCEPTIONS

- A. Employees with the following Divisions/Units are exempt from the 25 mile rule:
 - 1. All Criminal Investigation Division personnel who are on-call status will be permitted to drive their assigned vehicle to and from work while on-call.
 - 2. The Canine Unit, due to continual call-out schedule, will be permitted to drive the assigned vehicle to and from work.
 - 4. The Court Services Division Commander.
- B. Any and all other exceptions to these procedures will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and are subject to the prior approval of the Sheriff.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**
Sheriff, Rabun County