


## Vehicle Use

### 703.1 POLICY HEADER

<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b>
September 1, 2021	January 4, 2023
Authorization:  Jason Haberman Chief of Police	

### 703.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a system of accountability to ensure department vehicles are used appropriately. This policy provides guidelines for on- and off-duty use of department vehicles and shall not be construed to create or imply any contractual obligation by the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon to provide assigned take-home vehicles.

### 703.3 POLICY

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department provides vehicles for department-related business and may assign patrol and unmarked vehicles based on a determination of operational efficiency, economic impact to the Department, requirements for tactical deployments and other considerations.

### 703.4 USE OF VEHICLES

For additional procedure on [ROUTINE OPERATION-MARKED Vehicles](#) click here.

For additional procedure on [SAFETY BARRIERS](#) click here.

#### 703.4.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

The Watch Commander shall ensure a copy of the shift assignment roster, indicating member assignments and vehicle numbers, is completed for each shift and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. If a member exchanges vehicles during his/her shift, the new vehicle number shall be documented on the roster.

#### 703.4.2 OTHER USE OF VEHICLES

Members utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties or normal vehicle assignment (e.g., transportation to training, community event) shall first notify the Watch Commander. A notation will be made on the shift assignment roster indicating the member's name and vehicle number.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

This subsection does not apply to those who are assigned to transport vehicles to and from the Department of Public Works.

#### 703.4.3 INSPECTIONS

Members shall be responsible for inspecting the interior and exterior of any assigned vehicle before taking the vehicle into service and at the conclusion of their shifts. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents or other problems with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented as appropriate.

The interior of any vehicle that has been used to transport any person other than a member of this department should be inspected prior to placing another person in the vehicle and again after the person is removed. This is to ensure that unauthorized or personal items have not been left in the vehicle.

When transporting any suspect, prisoner or arrestee, the transporting member shall search all areas of the vehicle that are accessible by the person before and after that person is transported.

All department vehicles are subject to inspection and/or search at any time by a supervisor without notice and without cause. No member assigned to or operating such vehicle shall be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to the vehicle or its contents.

[For additional procedure on VEHICLE INSPECTION click here.](#)

#### 703.4.4 SECURITY AND UNATTENDED VEHICLES

Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging). Officers who exit a vehicle rapidly in an emergency situation or to engage in a foot pursuit must carefully balance the need to exit the vehicle quickly with the need to secure the vehicle.

Members shall ensure all weapons are secured while the vehicle is unattended.

#### 703.4.5 MOBILE DATA TERMINAL

Members assigned to vehicles equipped with a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) shall log onto the MDT with the required information when going on-duty and remain "logged on" for the duration of their shift. If the vehicle is not equipped with a working MDT, the member shall notify the Watch Commander. Use of the MDT is governed by the MDT Policy.

#### 703.4.6 VEHICLE LOCATION SYSTEM

Patrol and other vehicles, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, may be equipped with a system designed to track the vehicle's location. While the system may provide vehicle location and other information, members are not relieved of their responsibility to use required communication practices to report their location and status.

Members shall not make any unauthorized modifications to the system.

System data may be accessed by supervisors at any time.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

#### 703.4.7 KEYS

Members approved to operate marked patrol vehicles should be issued a copy of the key as part of their initial equipment distribution. Members who are assigned a specific vehicle should be issued keys for that vehicle.

Members shall not duplicate keys without the approval of a supervisor. The loss of a key shall be promptly reported in writing through the member's chain of command.

#### 703.4.8 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

Members operating department vehicles shall not permit persons other than Municipality personnel or persons required to be conveyed in the performance of duty, or as otherwise authorized, to ride as passengers in the vehicle, except as stated in the Ride-Alongs Policy.

#### 703.4.9 ALCOHOL

Members who have consumed alcohol are prohibited from operating any department vehicle unless it is required by the duty assignment (e.g., task force, undercover work). Regardless of assignment, members may not violate state law regarding vehicle operation while intoxicated.

#### 703.4.10 PARKING

Except when responding to an emergency or when urgent department-related business requires otherwise, members driving department vehicles should obey all parking regulations at all times.

Department vehicles should be parked in assigned stalls. Members shall not park privately owned vehicles in stalls assigned to department vehicles or in other areas of the parking lot that are not so designated unless authorized by a supervisor.

#### 703.4.11 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

There shall be no modifications, additions or removal of any equipment or accessories without written permission from the assigned vehicle program manager.

#### 703.4.12 CIVILIAN MEMBER USE

Civilian members using marked emergency vehicles shall ensure that all weapons have been removed before going into service. Civilian members shall not operate the emergency lights or siren of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a supervisor.

#### 703.4.13 OPERATION OF PRIVATE VEHICLE

Personnel shall not operate a personal/private vehicle while on-duty, unless driving to and from or remaining stationary at an approved department detail.

### **703.5 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER ASSIGNMENT TO VEHICLES**

Department vehicles may be assigned to individual members at the discretion of the Chief of Police. Vehicles may be assigned for on-duty and/or take-home use. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time. Permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

The assignment of vehicles may be suspended when the member is unable to perform his/her regular assignment.

[For additional procedure on INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS click here.](#)

#### 703.5.1 ON-DUTY USE

Vehicle assignments shall be based on the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions, and employment or appointment status. Vehicles may be reassigned or utilized by other department members at the discretion of the Chief of Police or the authorized designee.

#### 703.5.2 UNSCHEDULED TAKE-HOME USE

Circumstances may arise where department vehicles must be used by members to commute to and from a work assignment. Members may take home department vehicles only with prior approval of the Duty Officer and shall meet the following criteria:

- (a) The circumstances were created by the needs of the Department.
- (b) Other reasonable transportation options are not available.
- (c) The member lives within a reasonable distance (generally not to exceed a 20 air miles) of the Mt. Lebanon Public Safety Center.
- (d) Off-street parking will be available at the member's residence.
- (e) The vehicle will be locked when not attended.
- (f) All firearms, weapons and control devices will be removed from the interior of the vehicle and properly secured in the residence when the vehicle is not attended, unless the vehicle is parked in a locked garage.

#### 703.5.3 ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Assignment of take-home vehicles shall be based on the location of the member's residence; the nature of the member's duties, job description and essential functions; and the member's employment or appointment status.

Members are cautioned that under federal and local tax rules, personal use of a Municipality vehicle may create an income tax liability for the member. Questions regarding tax rules should be directed to the member's tax adviser.

Criteria for use of take-home vehicles, with the exception of those assigned to members of Police Administration, include the following:

- (a) Vehicles shall only be used for work-related purposes and shall not be used for personal errands or transports, unless special circumstances exist and the Chief of Police or a Deputy Chief of Police gives authorization.
- (b) Vehicles may be used to transport the member to and from the member's residence for work-related purposes.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

- (c) Vehicles will not be used when off-duty except:
  - 1. In circumstances when a member has been placed on call by the Chief of Police or a Deputy Chief of Police and there is a high probability that the member will be called back to duty.
  - 2. When the member is performing a work-related function during what normally would be an off-duty period, including vehicle maintenance or traveling to or from a work-related activity or function.
  - 3. When the member has received permission from the Chief of Police or a Deputy Chief of Police.
  - 4. When the vehicle is being used by on-call investigators.
- (d) While operating the vehicle, authorized members will carry and have accessible their duty firearms and be prepared to perform any function they would be expected to perform while on-duty.
- (e) The two-way communications radio, and MDT, if equipped, must be on and set to an audible volume when the vehicle is in operation.
- (f) Unattended vehicles are to be locked and secured at all times.
  - 1. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging).
  - 2. All weapons shall be secured while the vehicle is unattended.
  - 3. All department identification, portable radios and equipment should be secured.
- (g) Vehicles are to be parked off-street at the member's residence unless prior arrangements have been made with the Chief of Police or the authorized designee. If the vehicle is not secured inside a locked garage, all firearms and kinetic impact weapons shall be removed and properly secured in the residence (see the Firearms Policy regarding safe storage of firearms at home).
- (h) Vehicles are to be secured at the member's residence or the appropriate department facility, at the discretion of the Department, when a member will be away (e.g., on vacation) for periods exceeding one week.
  - 1. If the vehicle remains at the residence of the member, the Department shall have access to the vehicle.
  - 2. If the member is unable to provide access to the vehicle, it shall be parked at the Department.
- (i) The member is responsible for the care of the vehicle.

#### 703.5.4 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

When driving a take-home vehicle to and from work outside of the jurisdiction of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department or while off-duty, an officer shall not initiate enforcement actions except in those circumstances where a potential threat to life or serious property damage exists (see the Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions and Law Enforcement Authority policies).

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

Officers may render public assistance when it is deemed prudent (e.g., to a stranded motorist).

Officers driving take-home vehicles shall be armed and shall carry their department-issued identification. Officers should also ensure that department radio communication capabilities are maintained to the extent feasible.

#### **703.5.5 MAINTENANCE**

Members are responsible for the cleanliness (exterior and interior) and overall maintenance of their assigned vehicles. Cleaning and maintenance supplies will be provided by the Department. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in discipline and loss of vehicle assignment. The following should be performed as outlined below:

- (a) Members shall make daily inspections of their assigned vehicles for service/maintenance requirements and damage.
- (b) All scheduled vehicle maintenance shall be performed as necessary at the Department of Public Works.
- (c) The Department shall be notified of problems with the vehicle and approve any major repairs before they are performed.
- (d) When leaving the vehicle at the Department of Public Works, the member will complete a vehicle work order explaining the service or repair, and forward it to the mechanic.
- (e) All weapons shall be removed from any vehicle left for maintenance.
- (f) Supervisors shall make, at a minimum, monthly inspections of vehicles assigned to members under their command to ensure the vehicles are being maintained in accordance with this policy.

#### **703.6 UNMARKED VEHICLES**

Unmarked vehicles are assigned to various divisions and their use is restricted to the respective division and the assigned member, unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.

[For additional procedure on ROUTINE OPERATION-UNMARKED/SOFT-MARKED Vehicles click here.](#)

#### **703.7 DAMAGE, ABUSE AND MISUSE**

When any department vehicle is involved in a traffic accident or otherwise incurs damage, the involved member shall promptly notify a supervisor. The appropriate report shall be filed (see the Traffic Accidents Policy).

Damage to any department vehicle that was not caused by a traffic accident shall be immediately reported during the shift in which the damage was discovered and documented in the appropriate report, which shall be forwarded to the Watch Commander. An administrative investigation should be initiated to determine if there has been any vehicle abuse or misuse.

#### **703.8 TOLL ROAD USAGE**

Law enforcement vehicles are not routinely exempt from incurring toll road charges.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

To avoid unnecessary toll road charges, all members operating department vehicles on a toll road shall adhere to the following:

- (a) Members operating department vehicles for any reason other than in response to an emergency shall pay the appropriate toll charge or utilize the appropriate toll way transponder. Members may submit a request for reimbursement from the Municipality for any toll fees incurred in the course of official business.
- (b) Members passing through a toll plaza or booth during a response to an emergency shall notify, in writing, the appropriate Deputy Chief of Police within five working days explaining the circumstances.

#### **703.9 ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE**

When operating any department vehicle while off-duty, members may dress in a manner appropriate for their intended activity. Whenever in view of or in contact with the public, attire and appearance, regardless of the activity, should be suitable to reflect positively upon the Department.