



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL		
CHAPTER 103	VEHICLE OPERATION	
	Effective: 05/08/2025	Commissioner Approval: 
	Authorities: AO 85 ; AS 44.69.010 ; AS 44.68.040 ; 49CFR	
	Applicability: ALL DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES	
	Special Instructions:	

103.100 INTRODUCTION

The department policy establishes requirements for operating a state vehicle or vehicle for state business.

103.300 GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. *Vehicles to be used only for State business.* An employee may not use or permit the use of a State-owned, leased, or rented vehicle except in the conduct of State business except as provided for under the specific provisions of 103.320 (AS 44.68.010). A department employee who violates the above provision will be subject to disciplinary procedures that may result in dismissal from State employment.

B. *Use in hunting or fishing prohibited.* Refer to OPM Chapter 124.370 for provisions prohibiting the use of department vehicles for hunting or fishing.

C. *Security of State vehicles and contents.* Employees shall take reasonable precautions (such as removing keys, securing contents, and locking doors) to prevent theft or vandalism of vehicles and contents.

1. All items of value that are not an integral, attached part of the vehicle, and any that may be damaged by environmental conditions shall be removed and stored in a secure location prior to leaving any State vehicle parked for an extended period.
2. Weapons of any kind should never be left in vehicles parked for extended periods and must be removed to secure storage.

D. *Smoking prohibited in State vehicles.* Employees or their passengers are prohibited from smoking in State owned, leased, or rented vehicles.

103.310 VEHICLE OPERATIONS

A. *Operation to be prudent and lawful.* Employees shall operate motorized equipment in a careful and prudent manner, and shall obey all laws and departmental orders pertaining to such operations, unless specifically exempted. They shall operate their vehicles in a manner that demonstrates consideration for their own safety and the safety of others that may be using the roadway.

B. *Seat belt use required.* All occupants must wear seat belts if available while in any department owned, leased, or operated vehicle. It is the responsibility of the vehicle operator to assure compliance with this provision.

C. *Headlights to be used at all times.* Employees shall use headlights at all times when operating motor vehicles. [REDACTED]

D. *Carrying civilians limited.* Except during the normal course of duty, no civilian, other than a department employee or person participating in a department related activity, may be transported in a department operated vehicle unless specifically authorized by the operator's Commander or designee.

E. *Actions before operation.* Every operator of a department owned, leased, or operated vehicle is responsible to check for proper operation of lights, brakes, horn, windshield wipers, and tires before operation. Officers, prior to operation, also shall thoroughly inspect vehicles for contraband items and assure that equipment provided, such as a police radio, shotgun, first aid kit, or spare ammunition, is present and operational.

F. *First Responders.* When directed by a DPS member, a first responder may operate DPS vehicles for a specific purpose.

G. *Restrictions on civilian operators of marked vehicles.* Non-commissioned personnel may not operate a marked vehicle unless:

1. a state of emergency exists;
2. it is required during maintenance; or
3. a civilian employee is specifically directed to do so through authority of their office. The vehicles shall be marked as out of service prior to a civilian operating the marked vehicles.

H. *Pushing or pulling vehicles.* Department vehicles equipped with factory or DOT/PF installed push bumpers may be used to move another vehicle when the location of the vehicle to be moved constitutes a significant hazard to life or property. This provision does not preclude department vehicles not equipped specifically for pushing or pulling another vehicle from doing so where emergency circumstances constituting an immediate hazard to life exist.

1. No vehicle may be moved by a department vehicle unless there is a suitable person available to steer or otherwise control the vehicle that is being moved.
2. It is the responsibility of the operator of the department vehicle to ensure that movement of a vehicle can be accomplished without endangering others and that unnecessary property damage does not occur.
3. The distance that the vehicle may be moved shall be no greater than necessary to eliminate the hazard.

I. ***Use of warning lights while stopped.*** When stopped on or along a roadway, emergency strobe lights, rotating beacons, or warning flashers must be activated as appropriate to warn other traffic that may be present.



K. ***Idling of Vehicles.*** All DPS vehicles will idle only as necessary to perform the duties of the employee's position and/or the essential functions of the equipment.

1. DPS vehicles shall not idle unoccupied for periods of time that are longer than what is necessary to make the vehicle prepared for an emergency response.
 - a) "Prepared for emergency response" consists of utilizing defrosting and heating equipment to make the vehicle safe to operate. Unattended vehicles may be started occasionally to maintain readiness if the employee needs to spend hour(s) at a location for administrative purposes such as writing reports, public appearances, or attending meetings.
 - b) Exemptions for extended idling may include: K9 Vehicles, on a call for service, or conducting traffic control.
2. Minimizing the excessive and unnecessary idling of vehicles will be the responsibility of the Detachment Commander.
3. In cold weather months where idling will occur more often, consult with local DOT light-duty shop to possibly shorten engine service intervals.

103.320 PERSONAL USE OF ASSIGNED STATE VEHICLE

A. ***Assigned Department Vehicle for Personal Use.*** The fundamental purpose of the "Personal Use" program is to provide the community with substantially expanded police availability:

1. Increased police presence. Off-duty officers in marked units contribute to police omnipresence.
2. Quicker response time. More units, randomly located, give potentially shorter response times to emergency situations, to include requested back-up by on-duty Troopers.
3. Better police access. Should a citizen need non-emergency services, an off-

duty officer can more quickly assess the services sought and link that person with the appropriate facilities.

4. Participation in the use of an assigned department vehicles for personal off-duty use is voluntary.

B. *Duties of the Department.* The Department's duties in the program include:

1. Administering the program by making vehicle assignments, providing policy guidance, and similar duties.
2. Department vehicle assignments will be based upon proper fleet management principles. A recruit will not be allowed to take their vehicle home until they have completed their Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP).
3. Furnishing gasoline, oil, maintenance, and insurance for the vehicles.

C. *Duties of the Assigned Personnel.* State troopers and deputy fire marshals assigned a vehicle shall:

1. Comply with directed administrative tasks, including:
 - a. Participating in any assigned program or equipment evaluations.
 - b. Ensuring maintenance schedules are met.
 - c. Operators shall ensure vehicle fluids are maintained at proper levels (i.e., oil, coolant, power steering, brake, and transmission fluids).
 - d. Operators are to make sure they arrange their assigned vehicle maintenance service as required.
2. Operate the vehicle in compliance with all laws, Department OPM and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Proper use of seat belts for all occupants.
 - b. Remaining within the assigned duty station geographical area when off duty.
3. Conform to the following general requirements:
 - a. Not allow any non-employees to operate the vehicle.
 - b. Ensure the vehicle is clean, both inside and out. Employees are responsible for searching and clearing the interior of their vehicles to ensure there are no items which could aid the person's escape, cause

CHAPTER 103 VEHICLE OPERATION

- harm to others, or are contraband or illegal to possess.
- c. Vehicles shall be locked during all unattended periods.
 - d. Vehicles shall never be operated in such a fashion, nor taken to such a location, as to bring embarrassment or discredit to the Department. Although non-police personnel may accompany officers as passengers when the vehicle is operated off duty, that officer is responsible for the appearance and conduct of those passengers
 - e. Vehicles shall not be operated after consumption of any amount of alcohol and/or mind-altering substances. Operators shall not be under the influence or to the lesser degree have alcohol on their breath.
 - f. No juvenile will be left unattended in any police vehicle.
 - g. Installation of child car seats or booster seats in the vehicle is prohibited.
- 4. Monitor the dispatch radio at all times. Vehicles without installed radios will instead monitor their portable handheld radios.
 - 5. Employees while using their vehicles for personal use shall be armed in accordance with FPM 100.200. In addition to this, employees shall have the following equipment readily accessible in their passenger compartment: restraint device, intermediate use of force tool (OC, Taser) and a ballistic vest.
 - 6. Respond for police services when appropriate.
 - a. Discharge all non-police personnel prior to responding to any potentially dangerous situations.
 - b. Take appropriate action on any police service situation. This can range from calling an on-duty unit to full police action by the off-duty employee.
 - c. Any paperwork generated shall be turned in to the Department as expeditiously as possible.
 - 7. Personal use vehicles will not be used for outside employment or to transport large household goods, furniture, personal refuse, construction material, or similar large items. The transport of personal items will be limited to generally smaller items which normally fit into a vehicle trunk. Prudent judgment of the operator is expected.
 - 8. The personal use of a Department vehicle is a privilege and violations or

CHAPTER 103 VEHICLE OPERATION

misuse of this policy can result in the personal use of the vehicle being revoked by the officer's chain of command. Allegations of misuse will be handled through the Department's Investigations and Disciplinary Procedures, OPM Chapter 111. Out of policy use could also result in personal federal tax liability for the employee.

D. Use in Compliance of Ethics Act. Troopers and deputy fire marshals will use Department vehicles in compliance with the Ethics Act, specifically AS 39.52.120. Employees are prohibited from using Department vehicles for any personal gain or benefit.

E. Use in hunting or fishing prohibited. Refer to OPM Chapter 124.370 for provisions prohibiting the use of department vehicles for hunting or fishing.

F. Security of State vehicles and contents. Employees shall take reasonable precautions (such as removing keys, securing contents, and locking doors) to prevent theft or vandalism of vehicles and contents.

1. All items of value that are not an integral, attached part of the vehicle, and any that may be damaged by environmental conditions shall be removed and stored in a secure location prior to leaving any State vehicle parked for an extended period.
2. Weapons of any kind should never be left in vehicles parked for extended periods and must be removed to secure storage.

G. Smoking / Vaping prohibited in State vehicles. Employees or their passengers are prohibited from smoking or using tobacco in any form while in State owned, leased, or rented vehicles.

103.330 OFF ROAD OPERATIONS

A. Operation to comply with instructions and rules. Employees shall operate motorized equipment in compliance with and manufacturer's instructions, and shall obey all laws and all department policies pertaining to such operations, including but not limited to 103.310 above. See 101.350 F for limitations on personal use of equipment.

B. Operation to be safe and lawful. Off road vehicles will be operated in a safe, prudent, and lawful manner.

C. Employees to wear helmets while operating off-road vehicles. Except as provided in 103.330 D, any department employee operating an off road vehicle in the performance of their duties will wear an appropriate helmet designed to protect the wearer from head injuries associated with vehicle accidents.

Troopers shall wear helmets with "Trooper" and badge decals. All others shall wear plain helmets. Helmets may be obtained through the DPS Supply office, or the employee may, at their own expense, purchase their own helmet.

D. *Exemptions to helmet use.* Employees are exempted from the requirement to wear helmets when operating off road vehicles under the following circumstances:

1. Existing weather conditions are such that the issued helmets do not allow for adequate protection from cold weather injuries. In these cases, appropriate cold weather head protection may be worn in place of or in addition to the helmet.

103.340 USE OF DEPARTMENT PLANES, BOATS, AND VESSELS

No employee shall use department planes, boats, or vessels except for the conduct of official business or in connection with an official function. No employee is to utilize any department aircraft, boat, or vessel to obtain personal advantage or profit.

103.350 TRANSPORTATION OF PERSONNEL IN DEPARTMENT AIRCRAFT, BOATS, AND VESSELS

No personnel are to be transported in any department aircraft, boat, or vessel unless they are traveling for an official purpose relating to the department's business. Division Directors may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis for the transport of civilian personnel in connection with department activities.

103.360 USE OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

Employees shall wear a personal flotation device (PFD) whenever they are operating open watercraft such as skiffs and jet skis and anytime they are on deck on vessels with enclosed cabins. Other passengers shall wear PFDs when traveling on watercrafts identified above. PFDs include float coats; mustang suits, inflatable PFDs, and any other USCG approved PFD.

103.370 COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

A. *Compliance with Federal Regulations.* Employees who are required to obtain and hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) as a condition of continued employment will comply with U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, regulations detailed in 49 CFR.

B. *Drug and Alcohol Testing.* Employees who are required to obtain and hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) are subject to drug and alcohol testing.

C. *Notification of penalties for prohibited conduct.* Federal regulations require that affected employees be notified of their employer's policy on appropriate disciplinary actions when such employees engage in drug or alcohol related prohibited conduct. Employees who engage in prohibited conduct under federal regulations will be disciplined according to the table of offenses and disciplinary actions included as an attachment to this chapter. Such conduct may also subject employees to additional progressive discipline for violations of rules elsewhere in the OPM or for related violations of law.

CHAPTER 103 VEHICLE OPERATION

103.900 DEFINITIONS

Accident – (as used in Penalties Document below) Any accident in which there has been a fatality; or where the driver receives a moving traffic citation arising from an accident in which an injury, of any party, was treated away from the scene or where one or more vehicles were towed from the scene.

Vehicle – A motor vehicle that can be licensed to operate on the highways of the State. This includes cars, trucks, buses, vans, motor homes, motorcycles, etc. but excludes snow machines, three and four wheelers, and other vehicles not designed for operation on highways.

Marked vehicle – A vehicle with permanently installed visible markings identifying the vehicle as operated by an Alaska State Trooper, Alaska Wildlife Trooper, State Fire Marshal, or Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory.

Off road vehicles – Includes motorcycles, snow machines, four and three wheelers, track vehicles, and other such unenclosed vehicles designed for off road use.

RESOURCES

[Penalties for Prohibited Conduct by Employees Required to Hold Commercial Driver's License](#)