

SHERIFF OF GARFIELD COUNTY

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GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY / PROCEDURE PATROL

SUBJECT: VEHICLE OPERATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 01, 2024

POLICY:

When responding to emergency or non-emergency calls for service, Garfield County Sheriff's Deputies shall drive with due regard for the safety of the general public and comply with all traffic laws within the scope of their duties.

PURPOSE:

To provide Garfield County Sheriff's Deputies with guidelines for the operation of emergency vehicles for both routine and emergency responses.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Emergency vehicles:** Vehicles assigned to the Garfield County Sheriff's Office that are equipped with authorized emergency equipment which shall include lights and siren in accordance with state law.
- **Emergency Response:** Response to a situation where the immediate presence of a deputy is necessary to protect a person from possible death or serious bodily injury. These situations include, but are not limited to: crimes in progress, alarm calls, medical emergencies, traffic accidents with possible injuries, fights or disturbances of a physical or unknown nature, and catastrophic events.

METHOD:

A Deputy cannot assist someone with a law enforcement need if the Deputy cannot respond to, and arrive, in a safe and timely manner. The *standard of care* as established in CRS 42-4-108(4) states: "The provisions of this section shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regards for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of such driver's reckless disregard for the safety of others." Therefore, *members of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office will always hold the safety of the public as the ultimate goal of any emergency vehicle operation.*

During routine patrol, transport duties, or responding to non-emergency situations, Deputies shall operate emergency vehicles in a lawful manner, obeying all traffic laws.

When responding to emergency situations, Deputies shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. Use of both lights and siren shall be used at all times. When approaching controlled intersections, Deputies shall exercise due regard for approaching traffic and pedestrians and proceed through the intersection only when it is safe to do so. Lawful speed limits and other traffic regulations may be disregarded only if life or property is not endangered. Due regard for public safety and safe vehicle operation will be the determining factor as to the speed of the responding vehicle.

The Dispatch Center will be advised whenever a Deputy is operating in an emergency mode. The Dispatch Center will be advised if the Deputy has to travel through any Municipality in an emergency mode, and the Deputy will request that the Dispatch Center notify the law enforcement agency of that Municipality and advise them of the Deputy's operation.

Out of County Take Home Cars

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office provides Deputies with patrol vehicles so they are able to quickly respond when needed. The benefit of a take home car given by the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is a privilege that benefits both the Sheriff's Office and the citizens, as it can decrease response times in emergency situations and near the hours of shift change. Take home cars are a privilege, not a right.

Deputies that live out of county may take their patrol vehicle home under certain circumstances, to include:

- Deputies must successfully complete the FTO program. Deputies will not be granted permission for a take home vehicle in or out of county until completion of the program.
- Deputies must complete the Garfield County Vehicle Operations training.
- Deputies must annually complete the in-service mandatory driver's training to maintain compliance with POST and per the Garfield County Sheriff's Office policy and procedure.
- Deputies must complete driver's training in satisfactory manner per the driving instructor cadre.
- The Sheriff, or his designee have the ultimate authority on granting a Deputy the privilege of taking home their patrol vehicle.
- Deputies must maintain standards as set for by the Garfield County Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure.
- Deputies will not be able to take home a vehicle more than 40 miles from the Garfield County line. Any distance greater than 40 miles will be need approval from the Sheriff.

Deputies will abide by traffic laws and maintain compliance with the standards set forth in C.R.S. 42-4-108(4). Deputies will report violations to the appropriate jurisdiction via phone if they observe any traffic infractions, or any criminal misdemeanor or felony offense per 16-3-110. Deputies are **not** to proactively engage in traffic enforcement outside of county. The privilege of a take home vehicle may be taken away from any Deputy if deemed necessary by their supervisor. Any action taken by a Deputy out of Garfield County in a patrol vehicle will require immediate notification to the Deputy's immediate supervisor as well as the on shift supervisor.