


MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

General Order

CHAPTER: 032-L		TITLE: Vehicle Operations and Equipment	
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 6, 2014	NO. PAGES: 7	REVIEWED/REVISED: September 15, 2022	
 Sheriff of Monroe County			

I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the safe operation of all Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) vehicles.

II. **DISCUSSION:** This directive will apply to all personnel.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. Monroe County Vehicle Operations

1. Unless specifically agreed otherwise in an applicable collective bargaining agreement, all MCSO vehicle use is at the discretion of the Sheriff and may be revoked or modified at any time.
2. General Prohibitions:
 - a. Under no circumstances will a member be allowed to operate an MCSO vehicle unless they possess a valid Florida driver's license.
 - b. Certified members must have successfully completed, or be enrolled in, Road Patrol FTO training before they will be considered for the use of an MCSO vehicle.
 - c. Under no circumstances will a non-certified member be assigned a marked unit.
 - d. No person shall operate an MCSO vehicle:
 - 1) Within eight hours of consuming an alcoholic beverage, or
 - 2) While under the influence of alcoholic beverages, any chemical substance set forth in FSS 877.111 or any substance controlled under FSS Chapter 893.
3. Member Responsibility
 - a. Members assigned a vehicle are responsible to maintain it in duty-ready status. Duty-ready status means:
 - 1) Maintaining operating fluids at the proper levels at all times
 - 2) Maintaining proper air levels in the tires at all times

- 3) Maintaining an adequate level of fuel at all times
 - 4) Maintaining a clean exterior
 - 5) Maintaining a clean interior, free of food, drink spills, food or drink containers, paper or trash
 - 6) Ensuring routine maintenance is performed per scheduled requirement
 - 7) Ensuring routine or emergency repairs are performed as necessary
- b. Members assigned a vehicle are required to operate the vehicle in accordance with all applicable traffic laws and regulations of the jurisdiction they are in during operation.
 - c. Misuse including, but not limited to, aggressive driving, failing to abide by traffic laws or MCSO vehicle policy and procedures and/or failure to properly care for an MCSO vehicle may result in member's temporary or permanent loss of the use of an MCSO vehicle, including out of county use, pursuant to Section 6.
4. Routine Vehicle Operation
- a. Under normal non-emergency operating conditions, and while responding to routine calls for service, members shall strictly adhere to all traffic laws, and shall drive defensively in a safe and courteous manner.
 - b. Operators of MCSO vehicles shall exercise a greater than ordinary degree of care while backing.
 - c. Seat belts will be worn. If seat belts are not worn, injuries from accident may not be covered by Worker's Compensation.
5. Emergency Vehicle Operation
- a. MCSO members may engage in emergency vehicle operation in accordance with Florida law when responding to an emergency.
 - b. The provisions of this procedure and Florida law do not relieve the operator of an MCSO vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor will such provisions protect the operator of an MCSO vehicle from the consequences of careless disregard for the safety of others.
 - c. MCSO vehicles engaged in emergency operations will utilize all emergency lights. The siren will be used to warn vehicle and pedestrian traffic along the emergency route. Hazard warning lights, the spotlight, headlights, and public address system may be used as additional safety measures during emergency operations.
 - d. When engaged in emergency operations, the operator of an MCSO vehicle shall exercise extreme care. Wearing of seat belts is mandatory at all times for the driver and occupants of the vehicle.
 - e. In accordance with Florida law, MCSO vehicles engaged in emergency operations may:
 - 1) Exceed the maximum speed limit, so long as life or property are not endangered. Speed will be limited by road and weather conditions and the exercise of good judgment.

- 2) Proceed past a stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing or stopping as necessary for safe operation. MCSO vehicles will not enter controlled intersections against the directed flow of traffic at a speed greater than 15 mph and will be sure that cross-traffic flow has yielded in each lane before attempting to cross that lane.
 - 3) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning direction, so long as life or property is not endangered.
 - 4) Disregard regulations governing parking laws under normal circumstances, except that a Sheriff's vehicle shall not block access to a fire hydrant at a fire scene, or in any way obstruct the passage of fire or rescue apparatus.
- f. Sheriff's vehicles shall not be parked in roadways or traffic lanes except when necessary to protect persons.
- 1) Use of Sheriff's vehicles to protect persons shall be signaled by the activation of emergency lights, or other appropriate warning device.
 - 2) When use of Sheriff's vehicles for protection of persons is necessary cones will be placed in the roadway between the MCSO vehicle and approaching traffic as soon as possible.
 - 3) MCSO vehicles will not be used to protect minor accident scenes.
 - 4) MCSO vehicles will be removed from roadways as soon as possible.
- g. Emergency operation of MCSO vehicles will be immediately reported to Communications.
- h. Emergency Response:
1. Sergeants are responsible for directing the type of response a call requires. Before a deputy runs code to a call, that response must be approved by a sergeant or above.
 - 2) No more than two units will respond to any call, unless it is authorized by a sergeant.
 - 3) If a sergeant authorizes more than two units to respond to a call, he or she will specify what level of response. The response must be justified based on the circumstances of the call.
 - 4) All sergeants, on-duty or on the air monitoring the radio, are required to monitor and take supervisory action when necessary to prevent a violation of this policy or loss of life, regardless of the district to which they are assigned.
- i. Members operating MCSO Office vehicles shall immediately terminate emergency operation when it is no longer necessary or when ordered to do so by a superior authority.
6. Out of County Use
- a. Members living outside of Monroe County will be permitted to drive their assigned vehicle to and from their residence for the purpose of reporting to and returning from their duty station under the following conditions:
 - 1) Member is assigned to a duty station/office within District 6 or 7 as a patrol deputy/patrol sergeant, detective/detective sergeant, lieutenant or captain (this does not include court security deputies/sergeants or any member who has not successfully

completed a road patrol field training program) and

- 2) Member's residence is located no further than 30 miles from the Monroe County line as defined below and
 - 3) Except as provided in paragraph (e) below, member pays MCSO \$62.31 per pay period and
 - 4) Member's assigned vehicle will be parked at their residence when out of county.
- b. All other members who chooses to live outside Monroe County and do not meet the criteria in 6(a) will park their assigned vehicle at their assigned duty station and leave it there at the end of each shift.
 - c. MCSO vehicles will not be taken out of Monroe County except on official business.
 - d. MCSO vehicles may not be used for personal business while outside of Monroe County.
 - e. Patrol deputies/sergeants, detectives/detective sergeants who:
 - 1) were employed as members of this bargaining unit with MCSO on or before June 1, 2012 and
 - 2) had a take home car at that time and
 - 3) were living outside of Monroe County on June 1, 2012 and
 - 4) met the requirements of (6)(a)(1-2) above on October 1, 2019are not subject to subparagraph (6)(a)(3), the \$62.31 cost requirement above. If such members fail to meet the criteria described in this subsection in the future, they will not be eligible for this exemption at that time or at any time in the future. These members remain subject to all other provisions of this policy.
 - f. A member to which this policy applies will report any change in address within 10 days of same. Failure to report such a change in address may result in discipline, up to and including termination.
 - g. The distance "30 miles from the Monroe County line" above shall be determined by searching the distance between 99 Morris Avenue, Key Largo, FL 33037, and the member's residence address in Google Maps.

7. Off-duty Use

- a. Members must check in-service with communications and advise their status, projected destination and out-of-service when appropriate.
- b. All members must be properly attired when operating an MCSO vehicle, especially certified members who may be required to take enforcement action at any time.
- c. Non-certified members may not operate a marked unit, except in the case of an emergency. Non-members are not allowed as passengers in marked units, unless for official business.
- d. Non-certified members are permitted to operate unmarked units and civilian passengers

are permitted.

- e. Members assigned a vehicle who reside in Monroe County may use the vehicle in Monroe County for general personal business, such as shopping, within the restrictions described herein.
 - f. Assigned vehicles will not be used for, or to commute to or from, off-duty employment, as defined in Chapter 023 of the General Orders.
 - g. Assigned vehicles may be driven to and from extra-duty details, as defined in Chapter 023 of the General Orders, only if the extra-duty detail has been approved in advance by the District Special Detail Coordinator (DSDC).
 - h. Certified members may not use a marked MCSO vehicle for personal business unless they have successfully completed Road Patrol FTO training.
8. Taxable Usage: certified members who are issued an MCSO vehicle are given a tax exemption for those vehicles if they meet certain criteria.
- a. Marked Units.
 - 1) The marked unit may only be used outside the county on official MCSO business.
 - 2) Should the issued vehicle be utilized outside the county for other than Office business, this may invalidate the exemption for the entire year.
 - b. Unmarked Units: The unmarked unit must meet four requirements to establish the tax exemption.
 - 1) The unmarked unit must be driven by an MCSO member
 - 2) The personal use be must be authorized by the Sheriff
 - 3) The use must be incidental to law enforcement use (i.e. the officer must be available for calls)
 - 4) The use of vehicles for vacation or recreation is not permissible
9. Request to Stop MCSO Members. When directed to stop by another law enforcement officer and/or agency the member shall:
- a. Immediately stop, regardless of assignment
 - b. Clearly identify self and activity unless such declaration would nullify or hinder a criminal investigation
 - c. Provide the stopping officer with requested information or documentation
 - d. When the operator of an MCSO vehicle continues to be detained by a law enforcement officer from another agency, advise communications of the circumstances and request a supervisor to report to the scene of the detention
10. Emergency Escort of Civilian Vehicles: Emergency escort of civilian vehicles is prohibited. Should a civilian request a medical emergency escort, the deputy shall summon an ambulance for treatment and/or transporting of the injured or ill person. MCSO does not escort emergency

vehicles.

11. Emergency Medical Transportation: In an extreme medical emergency, it may become necessary for a deputy to transport the injured or ill person to a treatment facility in an MCSO vehicle. Such transports shall be approved by a supervisor.

12. Spare Units

a. When spare units exist, the respective station commander is responsible for the routine maintenance of that vehicle.

b. When a member uses a spare unit, that member is responsible to return the unit to storage after use in a duty-ready status (i.e. fuel tank full; fluids at the proper level; tires properly inflated; battery, lights etc. are checked and in good working condition). If any necessary repairs are noted, the employee is required to notify the station commander so repairs can be made.

B. Patrol Vehicle Equipment:[CFA 14.08]

1. All patrol cars will be equipped with the following equipment:

- a. Operational emergency lights and siren
- b. A current first-aid kit with basic emergency medical supplies
- c. Two blankets in a suitable container
- d. A properly-charged fire extinguisher
- e. Reflector set, cones and/or flares
- f. A wrecking bar or other extrication device
- g. Jumper cables and/or a portable vehicle jump starter
- h. Personal protective equipment (PPE)/Infectious disease kit
- i. Traffic gloves
- j. An operational flashlight
- k. Finger print kit
- l. 100-foot measuring tape
- m. Traffic vest
- n. Hazmat Book
- o. Statute book

2. All patrol cars used in routine patrol will be conspicuously marked.

3. Deputies shall ensure that supplies are replenished as needed by requesting them from their supervisor. Supervisors shall ensure that deputies are maintaining appropriate amounts of

supplies in their patrol vehicles during monthly inspections. Supervisors shall obtain supplies from the current inventory, requisitions or purchase orders.

4. To ensure safety and consistency, MCSO vehicles will only be repaired or reconfigured by individuals trained and approved to do so. Members shall not install anything in or on, or affix anything to any MCSO vehicle without the prior written approval of the Major of Operations.
5. No member may move, alter, modify or disable any equipment in or on any MCSO vehicle without the prior written approval of the Major of Operations.
6. Members may tint the windows of their assigned unit at their own expense. This shall only be done after:
 - a. Member receives written permission from the Major of Operations or their designee; and
 - b. The tint is legal under all applicable laws; and
 - c. Member understands that vehicles may be reassigned at any time at the sole discretion of the Sheriff or his designee, and paying to tint a vehicle does not provide a member with any expectations of exclusive or continued use of it.

C. Safety Belts: The use of seat belts can have a significant effect in reducing the number of deaths and the severity of injuries sustained in a vehicle crash. Increased seat belt usage at all times among members and strict enforcement of the applicable seat belt and child restraint laws remain the single-most effective thing MCSO can do to save lives and reduce injuries on Monroe County roadways.

1. It is the policy of MCSO that all members will comply with the requirements of F.S.S.316.614-Seat Belt Usage and F.S.S. 316.613-Child Restraints, when applicable, while operating or riding as a passenger at any time in an MCSO vehicle.
2. Any sworn member of this agency shall enforce F.S.S. 316.614-Seat Belt Usage while on-duty.
3. Any sworn member of this agency shall fully enforce F.S.S. 3614.613-Child Seat Restraints with a zero tolerance while on-duty. Pursuant to F.S.S. 316.614(4)(a), it is unlawful to operate a motor vehicle unless each passenger under the age of eighteen (18) is properly restrained by a safety belt or child restraint device pursuant to F.S.S. 316.613. There is no statutory exception for law enforcement officers transporting juvenile offenders.
4. All passengers five years of age or younger shall be transported in a crash tested federally approved child restraint device. Such restraint device must be a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat for children age three years or younger.
5. Any member who transports a child in an approved separate carrier, or an integrated child seat shall ensure the device is properly installed/attached to the vehicle seat, in compliance with the manufacturer's recommendations.



MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

RICHARD A. RAMSAY, SHERIFF

Out of County Take Home Car Payroll Deduction Authorization

I, _____, hereby authorize the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to withhold from my wages, the total amount of \$135.00 per month, which will be withheld at a rate of \$62.31 per pay period, for the purpose of Take Home Car Policy.

I further agree that, this benefit is available to me as long as I remain in a certified law enforcement position that is issued an MCSO police car. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office may withhold the remaining amount owed from my final pay, except to the extent prohibited by federal or state minimum wage law. I represent that this authorization is executed voluntarily and has not been made as a condition of my continued employment.

Employee

Date

Commander

Date

Once approved forward to Finance.

