



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

No. 28-01

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION

EFFECTIVE DATE:

7/1/96

TITLE

Assignment and Use of Fire and Rescue Support Vehicles

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Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Policy

ASSIGNMENT AND USE OF FIRE AND RESCUE SUPPORT VEHICLES

Issued by: Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-4B(e)

Effective Date: July 1, 1996

SUMMARY:

County-funded support vehicles are assigned to fire and rescue Corporations to assist in their administrative and daily operations and to facilitate the prompt response of volunteer command officers to emergency incidents. Both the Department of Fire and Rescue Services and the fire and rescue corporations maintain a fleet of vehicles to support the delivery of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services, and to ensure the availability of appropriate vehicles and staff for immediate response to emergencies.

DEADLINES:

Montgomery County Fire Board Comment: April 20, 1996

Fire and Rescue Corporations Comment: April 20, 1996

Dept. of Fire and Rescue Services Comment: April 20, 1996

ADDRESS:

Send all comments pertaining to the proposed policy to George Giebel, Chairman, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission, 12th Floor, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850

STAFF:

For additional information, you may phone Beth Feldman, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, 217-2461

BACKGROUND:

The unique nature of providing emergency services requires that appropriate support vehicles and staff be available for immediate response. The use of these vehicles, whether owned by the County, owned by a Corporation and maintained with County tax funds, or owned and maintained solely by the Corporation, must also be consistent with the nature of the services provided. The appropriate distribution, assignment, use, and accountability for the vehicles must comply with the policies of the Fire and Rescue Commission.



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Sec. 1. **Purpose:** To establish a policy for the purchase, assignment and use of all fire and rescue support vehicles to transport uniformed and non-uniformed fire and rescue personnel and to enable them to efficiently perform job-related duties.

Sec. 2. **Applicability.** This policy applies to all fire and rescue personnel who drive or operate County- or Corporation-owned fire, rescue, and emergency medical services vehicles assigned either to an independent fire or rescue Corporation, or to the Department of Fire and Rescue Services.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

- a. **Agency.** The Fire Rescue Commission, an independent fire or rescue Corporation, or the Department of Fire and Rescue Services.
- b. **Agency-assigned support vehicle.** A vehicle assigned to a designated employee or agency for regular duty hour use and official fire/rescue service or government business purposes.
- c. **Agency-assigned emergency support vehicle.** A vehicle assigned by an agency to a designated individual whose service assignment requires maintaining around-the-clock emergency radio and/or telephone communications contact. This vehicle must be officially designated and equipped for emergency response and registered in the State of Maryland as an emergency vehicle.
- d. **Competitive Bid Process.** The process by which potential vendors are provided with written specifications or a description of the goods or services to be procured so they can prepare written bids for the Corporations to review.
- e. **Corporation.** A fire or rescue Corporation established in the County, authorized to provide firefighting, rescue, or emergency medical services.
- f. **Department.** The Department of Fire and Rescue Services.
- g. **Personnel.** All members of the fire and rescue service, including DFRS employees and Corporation members and employees.



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- h. **Support vehicle.** A passenger vehicle or other vehicle, marked or unmarked, assigned to an agency and used by authorized personnel for official fire and rescue services business.

Sec. 4. **Policy.** The Fire and Rescue Commission is authorized by Montgomery County Code Sec. 21-4B(e) to establish policies for the appropriate distribution, assignment, use, and accountability of three separately-funded resources for **support vehicles** and emergency support vehicles. These vehicles may be owned by the County, owned by a **Corporation** and maintained with tax funds, or owned and maintained solely by an independent **Corporation** with non-tax funds.

The approving **agency** may set more restrictive vehicle policies than those adopted by the Fire and Rescue Commission.

Sec. 5. **Procedures.**

- a. **VEHICLE ASSIGNMENTS AND REPLACEMENT.** **Corporation**-assigned **support vehicle** complements should include a vehicle for daily administrative and operational activities (e.g., a utility vehicle), one vehicle assigned to the chief (usually an automobile), and one duty vehicle for use by the on-duty volunteer command officer. Additional **support vehicles** may be assigned to a **Corporation** based on its specific needs, e.g., a mechanic's vehicle for each **Corporation** with a Commission-approved, civilian staffed vehicle maintenance shop; an additional administrative vehicle for **Corporations** with three or more stations; and an additional **support vehicle** for each Commission-authorized specialty service (boat tenders, paramedic chase cars, etc.). **Department support vehicles** must be assigned in accordance with established Fire and Rescue Commission and/or **Department** policies.
1. Requests for **agency-assigned support vehicles** or **assigned emergency support vehicles** which are maintained by tax funds must be made through **Department** division heads or bureau chiefs, or the **Corporation** department head to the **Department** director, or Fire and Rescue Commission Chair, as appropriate.



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2. The **Corporation** must purchase tax-funded **support vehicles** through a **competitive bid process** with at least three written bids being obtained, if possible. If three written bids cannot be obtained, or there is sufficient justification for sole source procurement, this should be documented by the **Corporation** chief or president and become part of the purchase record. These vehicles will be titled to Montgomery County.
3. The Commission will establish a single level of tax funding that will provide for the purchase of a passenger-type vehicle, e.g., an automobile, carryall, pickup truck, van, etc. The **Corporation** may select the style of **support vehicle** it wishes to purchase as a replacement within that level of funding. Any additional costs incurred with the purchase of a **support vehicle** will be paid with non-tax funds.
4. The **Corporations** will coordinate with the **Department** to obtain new vehicle title, registration, and insurance. Vehicles purchased with tax funds (508 funded vehicles excluded) must be titled and registered to Montgomery County.
5. Generally, County-provided, **Corporation**-assigned **support vehicles** will be considered for replacement when mileage reaches 80,000 miles, in conjunction with an evaluation of the vehicle's general condition performed by the **Department's** Technical Resources Section, at the request of the **Corporation** (usually as part of the budget process).
6. **Corporation**-purchased **support vehicles** that replace County-provided **support vehicles** will be insured, operated, maintained, and radio-equipped with County tax funding, only with the Commission's approval. Such approval is required before purchase.
7. **Corporation**-purchased **support vehicles** that are in addition to the County-provided **support vehicle** fleet must be insured, operated, maintained, and radio-equipped at the **Corporation's** expense, without the use of tax funds.



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b. VEHICLE USE

1. Emergency vehicle operators using **assigned emergency support vehicles** must be available to respond to incidents in a timely and responsible manner.
2. Use of all tax-funded and tax-supported vehicles is subject to the conditions below.
 - A. Local daily official business travel use is authorized anywhere within the Washington, D.C./Baltimore SMSA.
 - B. Non-local travel is authorized within the State for **personnel** acting as official representatives at meetings, conventions, or association functions. Any other non-local travel must be authorized by the Chair of the Fire and Rescue Commission, the **Department** Director or **Corporation** authorities, for their respective **personnel**.
 - C. **Personnel** may use **agency-assigned support vehicles** and/or **assigned emergency support vehicles** when traveling to and from duty assignments within Montgomery County, if approved by their **Corporation** or the **Department**.
 - D. The use of **vehicles** outside of Montgomery County for travel to and from duty assignments must be approved by the **Corporation** president or chief, and by the Chair of the Fire and Rescue Commission or the **Department** Director.

c. VEHICLE OPERATORS

1. Operators of emergency response vehicles who are certified in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Commission's *Emergency Vehicle Driver Training/Certification Policy* and the *Integrated Emergency Command Structure* may operate vehicles in an emergency response mode.
2. All occupants must wear seat belts when the vehicle is in motion.



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3. Operators of any fire and rescue service vehicle should stop and assist any citizen who either appears to need or requests assistance. **Personnel** should take precautions to assure their personal safety in such situations.
4. Vehicle operators must wear appropriate attire to project a favorable image for the fire and rescue service.
5. **Personnel** must not use **agency** vehicles owned by Montgomery County Government or maintained in whole or in part with County tax funds while they are engaged in political activities that are not part of their official duties.
6. **Personnel** must not operate any vehicle if they have used or ingested any substance that may impair their ability to drive.

Sec. 6. **Responsibility.** All **personnel** must follow established procedures for the assignment and use of fire and rescue **support vehicles**.

- a. The Fire Rescue Commission will administer this policy for **Corporation** requests.
- b. The **Department** Director will administer this policy for **Department** requests.
- c. The **Corporation** department head will administer this policy for **Corporation**-funded vehicles.
- d. The Fire and Rescue Commission, **Department** Director, or **Corporation** department head must review requests for vehicle use and may:
 1. deny the request;
 2. approve the use of a vehicle from the County's motor pool;
 3. assign an **agency-assigned support vehicle**; or
 4. assign an **assigned emergency support vehicle**.
- e. The Fire and Rescue Commission must provide fair and equitable oversight for the application of this policy.



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Sec. 7. **Enforcement.** Failure to follow this policy may subject personnel or **Corporations** to an administrative review and/or disciplinary action by the Fire and Rescue Commission, the **Department** Director, or the **Corporation** department head, as appropriate.

The Fire and Rescue Commission, **Department** Director, or **Corporation** department head may also discipline, suspend, or revoke vehicle use privileges for cause, or at their sole discretion, for their respective staff and vehicles.

Sec. 8. **Effective Date.** This policy is effective on July 1, 1996.

Attest:

George Giebel, Chair
Fire and Rescue Commission

Date

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