


**FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
GENERAL ORDERS**

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**1
POLICY**

- A** It is the policy of the FWC Division of Law Enforcement to ensure members are properly equipped to accomplish Division responsibilities, and to ensure that Division vehicles, vessels, and aircraft are properly maintained.
- B** It is the policy of the FWC Division of Law Enforcement that all vehicles, owned, leased or rented, and operated by members in the performance of their duties shall be used only for official business or as otherwise authorized by this General Order.
- C** Division vehicles, vessels and aircraft shall only be used to accomplish the Commission's mission and other authorized state business.

**2
RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A** All members who operate Division vehicles or vessels are responsible for their safe operation.
- B** Except as specifically authorized in this General Order, vehicles, watercraft and aircraft shall be operated in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
- C** Members shall use occupant safety restraining devices in all Commission vehicles that have occupant restraint devices installed.
 - (1)** The operator of a Division vehicle that has installed occupant restraint devices will require all passengers to use the vehicle's occupant restraint devices.
 - (2)** Members shall not modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle's safety belts or occupant restraint systems.
 - (3)** Inoperative restraint systems will be immediately reported to a supervisor.
- D** Supervisory approval is required prior to Division vessels being left in the water.

- (1) If Division vessels are kept in the water they should be equipped with at least two batteries and two functioning bilge pumps with automatic switches.
 - (2) Division vessels not painted with bottom paint will be pulled on a weekly basis and cleaned. Division vessels equipped with bottom paint shall be pulled and cleaned as required to prevent excessive growth.
- E Equipment Readiness** – Each member shall ensure that after use, equipment will be fueled and in operating condition to respond to calls.
- F Fuel and Lubricants** – Each member shall use only the manufacturer's recommended fuel and lubricants in Division vehicles, watercraft, and aircraft.
- G Equipment Repairs** – A member shall coordinate with the appropriate supervisor to determine and verify the need, location and method of payment concerning all repairs to equipment.
- H Preventative Maintenance** – Members are responsible for the condition and maintenance of all assigned equipment according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- I Interior and Exterior Maintenance of Vehicles**
- (1) Vehicles and watercraft should be kept neat and clean inside and out.
 - (2) Vehicles and watercraft shall be waxed as needed or as directed by a supervisor.
- J** The state (FWC) license plate assigned to an unmarked vehicle with a confidential tag shall be kept in the trunk of the vehicle. An exception to this requirement may be approved by GHQ for certain classified assignments.
- K** Confidential or fictitious tags will only be assigned to Investigators or as authorized by the Division Director.
- L** All members assigned Commission vehicles and vessels shall submit the logs to the Region/ Section no later than the 5th calendar day of each month.
- M** The Property Inspection and Inventory Report (FWC/DLE-017) shall be completed at least once per year by the appropriate supervisor for all sworn members. When the inspection reveals blatant or numerous maintenance issues, inspections should be completed at the supervisor's discretion until all issues have been addressed and corrected. Additional inspections and inventories may be conducted as deemed necessary by the appropriate supervisor.
- N** State toll cards and E-Pass transponders shall be used for official purposes only and shall not be used for personal business or transit to and from off-duty jobs except for OPS hire-back extra-duty employment.

3 PROCEDURES

A Required Equipment for Vehicles and Vessels (excluding ATVs and PWCs)

- (1) Serviceable fire extinguisher
- (2) Operational flashlight
- (3) First aid or first responder kit and a biohazard kit
 - (a) The first aid/ first responder kit and the biohazard kit shall be carried on the vehicle or vessel being operated by the member. The kits may be moved back and forth between assigned vehicles and vessels if the operating member is assigned only one set of kits
- (4) Area maps and charts
- (5) Jumper cables (boats as needed)
- (6) Reflective safety vest (vehicles only)

- (7) Seat belts and airbags (vehicles only)
- (8) A rubber mat may be placed in the patrol vessel at the request of the member
- (9) FWC vessels shall meet the following standards for equipment:
 - (a) Life preservers and other life-saving equipment in accordance with 33 CFR 175
 - (b) All vessels shall be equipped with one U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved PFD for each person on board. The PFD issued to the member may be counted in this number and equipped with a strobe light and/ or chemical light stick
 - (c) All vessels shall be equipped with a USCG approved Type IV PFD (Throw Cushion or Throw Ring)
 - (d) Visual distress signals in accordance with 33 CFR 175.110
 - (e) Fire extinguisher equipment in accordance with 46 CFR 25.30
 - (f) Backfire flame control for applicable vessels in accordance with 46 CFR 25.35
 - (g) Muffler on airboats
- (10) All Division vessels of 30' and above shall be equipped with an Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).
 - (a) Vessels routinely working beyond 9 miles from shore shall also be equipped with an EPIRB.
 - (b) Regional Commanders may opt to out-fit vessels of less than 30' based on patrol responsibilities and personnel requests.
- (11) Refer to General Order 30, *Offshore Patrol Vessel Operations* for Offshore Patrol Vessel standards.

B Operational Emergency Warning Light(s), Division Radio and Siren

- (1) Approved light(s), P.A. systems, and radios shall be placed in accordance with the FWC Field Services Rigging Guideline Manual or as directed by the Division Director.
- (2) No unauthorized equipment or personal modifications on patrol vehicles are permitted. This includes decals, stickers, tags, window tinting and installed equipment, unless required by law, authorized by the Division or as outlined in the FWC Field Services Rigging Guideline Manual.
- (3) Non-operational emergency equipment will be immediately reported to a supervisor and repaired promptly.

C Required Equipment for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Personal Water Craft (PWCs)

- (1) Equipment as required by federal and state law and in accordance with the FWC Field Services Rigging Guideline Manual.

D Operation and Maintenance of ATVs and PWCs

- (1) ATVs and PWCs are specialty equipment, which will be used for special details or as authorized by a supervisor.
- (2) Members who operate ATVs and PWCs shall be familiar with and trained in the specialized operating characteristics of the equipment.
- (3) The member who is assigned the ATV or PWC is responsible for the proper storage, transport, and periodic and scheduled maintenance as outlined in the owner's manual and this General Order.
- (4) If the ATV or PWC is not equipped with a radio then the member operating the equipment shall be in possession of, and using, a functioning handheld or head-set radio.

- (5) PWCs should not be operated at night except in emergency situations or as approved by a supervisor.
- (6) Any added accessories or equipment to ATVs or PWCs shall be of low profile and shall be approved by the immediate supervisor.
- (7) Division-issued helmets, correctly fitted and worn as designed, must be used when operating an ATV.
 - (a) Division-issued helmets must have U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) approval.
 - (b) All new helmets purchased shall be silver or black and may feature an approved FWC logo decal and/ or badge decal.
 - (c) All new helmets purchased shall be either modular helmets (flip-face helmets), half helmets or $\frac{3}{4}$ helmets. Shatterproof eye protection (goggles or face mask) must be worn with half or $\frac{3}{4}$ helmets.
 - (d) "Skull cap" helmets are prohibited.
 - (e) Members working in plain clothes may receive supervisory exemption from wearing the silver or black Division-issued helmet but must wear a DOT-approved helmet.
 - (f) Members working in a covert capacity may be exempt from helmet wear by the Special Operations Coordination Section Leader or designee.

E Operation of Aircraft

- (1) For guidance on the operation of FWC Division of Law Enforcement aircraft refer to General Order 24, *Division Aircraft*.

F Operation and Maintenance of Airboats

- (1) Members shall adhere to the Division's Airboat Manual and all operators shall be checked off via the Airboat Manual.
- (2) The Training Section shall coordinate the required training for airboat operation and maintain such records.
- (3) The Airboat Manual shall be issued to all approved operators.
- (4) All airboat occupants should wear ear and eye protection.
- (5) Members should use a functioning audio equipment headset when operating an airboat.
- (6) Airboats shall be maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

G Operation and Maintenance of Trailers

- (1) Trailers and tires will be maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- (2) Trailer wheel bearings will be greased regularly (as needed).
- (3) A properly inflated spare tire, and equipment to change trailer tires, will be readily available.
- (4) Freshwater rinsing shall be completed after saltwater immersion.
- (5) Trailer lights, proper size ball, trailer coupling, and safety chains/cables shall be checked, fully operational, and connected prior to towing the trailer.
- (6) Boats placed on trailers shall be properly secured by the winch, bow safety chain/cable and stern strap(s).
- (7) Other equipment placed on trailers shall be properly secured to the trailer prior to towing.

H Mobile Command Trailer

- (1) This trailer serves as a mobile command and control post and is equipped to provide

communications capabilities between Division personnel and other emergency response agencies during natural and man-made disasters, and during special events of a magnitude that would severely tax local communications capabilities.

- (2) The Mobile Command Trailer shall be properly maintained in operational condition ready to respond to all requests for service.
- (3) Requests for the assignment of the mobile command trailer will be made to the Special Operations Coordination Section Leader at GHQ through the appropriate chain-of-command. The request will indicate the reason(s) the vehicle is needed, length of time needed (when known), the location of the disaster or event, and the agency requesting FWC assistance (if applicable).
- (4) The Mobile Command Trailer will be staffed during the assignment by authorized members of the Division. The detail commander may authorize personnel from other agencies to staff the vehicle in conjunction with FWC personnel.
- (5) Members towing the Mobile Command Trailer must possess a Florida Driver License with the proper endorsement and must be trained in all procedures involving the operation and setup of the Trailer.
- (6) It is the responsibility of the Special Operations Coordination Section Leader at GHQ to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced and in a good state of repair.
- (7) The following equipment will be maintained in the Mobile Command Trailer:
 - (a) Equipment as outlined in Section 3 (Procedures), Subsection A, *Required Equipment for Vehicles and Vessels* above.
 - (b) Emergency phone numbers and radio frequencies for other emergency service providers in the detail area.
 - (c) Tools that may be necessary.
 - (d) Administrative supplies necessary for incident command duties.
 - (e) Other equipment deemed necessary by communications or supervisory personnel.

I Canine (K-9) Vehicles

- (1) Canine vehicles are used by the Division to transport canines on routine patrol and to scenes where the use of a FWC Division of Law Enforcement canine is needed.
- (2) Vehicles will have a temperature alarm sensor and fans to ensure maximum air circulation.
- (3) Vehicles will display sufficient markings to indicate that a canine is present.
- (4) The Canine Manual shall be referred to for additional guidelines.

J Personal Flotation Devices

- (1) The Division will provide U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices for all members using watercraft.
- (2) A Division approved personal flotation device shall be worn by all members and visitors while onboard a Division watercraft that is underway.
- (3) A sworn supervisor may authorize members not to wear a personal flotation device for plain-clothes details. Members and visitors are not required to wear a personal flotation device while below deck or inside the cabin of a Division-designated Offshore Patrol Vessel (General Order 30, *Offshore Patrol Vessel Operations*).

K Vehicle and Vessel Ride-Alongs

- (1) Ride-alongs with a sworn member are permissible for the following reasons and with the following restrictions:

- (a) Commission Interns – As needed for the internship program and with sworn supervisory approval.
- (b) Recruitment Orientation – One ride-along providing the citizen is 18 years of age or older, has an employment application on file, a criminal records check has been conducted and on file with application, and has obtained prior approval by a sworn supervisor. Recruiters may provide up to 3 ride-alongs provided the citizen is 18 years or older and supervisory approval has been obtained.
- (c) Cooperative Endeavors – Landowners and managers, government personnel, informants, witnesses, environmental groups, and media representatives.
- (d) Non-Jurisdictional Sworn or Military Personnel – Law enforcement officers or military personnel from another jurisdiction, state or country may ride as a visitor with supervisory approval.
- (e) Short duration public assistance transportation does not require supervisory approval but does require that the sworn member notify dispatch with the starting and ending time and mileage.
- (f) The member operating the Division vehicle or watercraft is responsible for ensuring that the General Release (FWC/DLE-023) has been executed prior to and for each person riding, except for short public assistance transportation, prisoner transport, emergency situations, sworn officers from other agencies and all Commission employees.
- (g) The General Release (FWC/DLE-023) is to be completed, submitted to the appropriate supervisor and filed locally in the Region.
- (h) The appropriate Deputy Director may authorize other ride-alongs on a specific case-by-case basis.
- (i) The sworn member shall notify Dispatch of the starting and ending times when a non-member is being transported.

L General Operation

- (1) All members will operate their assigned vehicles and vessels with due regard for safety and in compliance with all laws regulating the operation of emergency vehicles and vessels whether in an emergency situation or on routine patrol. Refer to General Order 03, *Pursuits and Emergency Response*, and Florida Statutes for additional information as it relates to pursuits.
- (2) A law enforcement officer of another agency may, when necessary, operate a Commission unit.
- (3) No member shall operate any commission vehicle, watercraft, or aircraft for which he or she has not received instruction for safe operation and is not properly licensed.
- (4) A member will not knowingly operate, or allow to be operated, equipment lacking properly functioning primary steering, lighting, or braking equipment except in cases of emergency. This does not apply to a Division mechanic working on Division equipment.
- (5) If equipped, the anti-theft device on law enforcement vehicles will be activated when the driver leaves the vehicle unattended with the engine running or keys in the ignition to provide power to the emergency equipment or radio. The location of the control switch or any other information will not be revealed to non-law enforcement personnel unless authorized by a supervisor.

M Lights-Out and Night Operations

- (1) Patrol vehicles and vessels may be operated without displaying lights when:
 - (a) Operation without lights is necessary in the performance of the sworn member's law enforcement duties.
 - (b) The sworn member adheres to Florida Statutes, and the guidelines in this General Order.

- (c) A sworn member must continuously balance the potential danger to life and property created by lights-out operation. In making the decision to operate in a lights-out mode the following factors shall be considered:
 - 1. The sworn member has attended and successfully completed the required lights-out operation training.
 - 2. Environmental factors determine it is safe to do so.
 - 3. The condition, performance and the capabilities of the equipment allow doing so.
 - 4. The member is familiar with the area.
 - 5. A member may disengage the vehicles brake lights, taillights, tag lights and backup lights utilizing approved and installed cut out switches when it can be done safely.
- (2) A member shall not operate a vehicle without headlights:
 - (a) Except when operating a vehicle at 15 mph or less and using a Division approved sneak light and;
 - (b) Only after advising communications of the location and duration of lights-out operations.
 - (c) On **Limited Access Roadways**. Limited access roadways for the purpose of this General Order means, a street or highway especially designed for through traffic and for which access to and from is limited to designated interchanges. Examples include Interstate Highways, Expressways, or the Florida Turnpike.
- (3) A member shall not operate a vessel without lights except when it is necessary to provide concealment for a specific incident or detail.
- (4) The Training Section shall ensure that all regional sworn members are trained in night operations to include training in the use of sneak lights.
- (5) The Field Services Section shall determine the appropriate type of sneak lights for Division vehicles.

N Authorized Use of Division Patrol Vehicles

- (1) Division patrol vehicles are to be used to conduct authorized state business including, but not limited to conducting patrol, investigations, inspections, attending training, court proceedings, and other assignments as authorized by sworn supervision.
- (2) Incidental use of Division patrol vehicles is permitted by sworn members only when such use does not create an appreciable divergence from the most direct or practical route to an official or authorized destination. Sworn members assigned Class C vehicles and members on travel status may use their assigned vehicles during normal duty hours to and from lunch or meal breaks and other incidental travel. Members in travel status may use the vehicle for incidental travel for meals and entertainment. If in a marked vehicle the member, must be in uniform or have a Division approved jacket available in case of emergency. If in an unmarked vehicle, members shall wear appropriate attire. Members shall not park the vehicle at establishments which may bring discredit or embarrassment to the agency.
- (3) General Order 42, *Health and Fitness*, shall be referred to for appropriate vehicle usage to encourage sworn members to maintain an acceptable fitness level to perform law enforcement duties.
- (4) General Order 06, *Off-Duty and Extra-Duty Employment*, shall be referred to for appropriate vehicle usage for dual employment.

O Purchase Card (P-Card) Use for Equipment

- (1) The use of the P-Card by non-supervisory personnel, require prior supervisory approval.
- (2) The P-Card is not to be confused with the State Fuel Card. The P-Card **must not** to be used

for the purchase of gas. Oil may be purchased on the P-Card if required for the maintenance of a vehicle or vessel during a service visit.

- (a) Bulk purchases of fuel and oil require a Direct Order (D.O. or Purchase Order).
- (3) Members shall use only P-Cards to pay for maintenance services and repairs to vehicles and vessels. Patrol vehicles and vessels include all forms of boats as well as ATVs, buggies and trailers.
- (4) The use of the P-Card by non-supervisory personnel shall not include the purchase of cleaning, waxing supplies, or equipment such as winches, jacks, life jackets, boat brushes, boat hooks, etc. These type purchases must be made by a P-Card trained lieutenant or by other approved methods.
- (5) Members with special duty assignments, such as Investigator 2's, K-9 officers and Recruiters, may be authorized by the Regional Commander to use their P-Card outside these restrictions.
- (6) Refer to FWC IMPP 4.1.11 *State Purchasing Card Program* and the Purchasing Section's website at <http://portal.fwc.state.fl.us/doi/offices/ofb/accounting/default.aspx> for additional information relating to the use of purchasing cards.
- (7) If members are in doubt, they shall contact the Regional Purchasing Director **prior** to making any purchase.

P Purchase Card (P-Card) Use for Travel

- (1) Travel-related purchases that are allowable with the purchasing card include:
 - (a) Air Fare.
 - (b) Car Rental.
 - (c) Train Fare.
 - (d) Hotels/Motels – Room expense only for single occupancy rate or multiple rate if sharing with other members in travel status.
 - (e) Parking.
 - (f) Taxi.
- (2) Travel-related purchases that are NOT allowable with the purchase card include:
 - (a) Personal telephone calls.
 - (b) Food or beverages.
 - (c) Movies.
 - (d) Room Service.
 - (e) Tips/portage.
 - (f) Gas.
- (3) Refer to FWC IMPP 4.1.11 *State Purchasing Card Program* for additional information relating to the use of purchasing cards.

Q Accidents and Equipment Damage

- (1) Members shall adhere to FWC IMPP 5.3.7 *Accidents and Equipment Damage* for information on the reporting of accidents and equipment damage.

4
FORMS

FWC/DLE-017

Property Inspection and Inventory Report

FWC/DLE-023

General Release