



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement

OPERATION OF DIVISION EQUIPMENT

GENERAL ORDER	EFFECTIVE DATE	RESCINDS/AMENDS	APPLICABILITY
33	November 09, 2018	November 30, 2017	All Members

References

33 CFR 175.110, 46 CFR 26.30, and 46 CFR 25.35; S. 322.12, F.S.; IMPP 4.1.11 and 5.3.7; GO 03, 06, 24, 30 and 42; CFA 14.02, 14.08M, 14.09M, 29.01

1 POLICY

- A** It is the policy of the Division 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 Division that all vehicles, vessels, and aircraft 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.

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, vessels, 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall be fueled with at least one-half tank as indicated by fuel gauge and in operating condition to respond to calls to include fuel card and essential emergency equipment.
- F Fuel and Lubricants** – Each member shall use only the manufacturer’s recommended fuel and lubricants in Division vehicles, vessels, 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 Modifications to Division Vehicles and Vessels and/or the Equipment Contained Therein**
- (1) Any modification to a Division vehicle or vessel including the law enforcement equipment contained therein, except as described in (c) below, shall be approved by a Regional Commander or Section Leader.
 - (a) Such modifications may only be approved for officer safety and/or to enhance core mission responsibilities.
 - (b) Some modifications will render the vehicle, vessel, or equipment warranty null and void. Consideration of this shall be made before approval is provided.
 - (c) Minor modifications shall be allowed without Regional Commander/Section Leader approval (e.g. relocating the radio microphone or flashlight mount/charger, placing blackout material on interior lights, etc.).
 - (2) All approved modifications shall be forwarded to the Fleet and Technical Services Section Leader who shall determine if the approved modification should be considered as a standard requirement and incorporated into one or more law enforcement equipment rigging profile.
- J Interior and Exterior Maintenance of Vehicles**
- (1) Vehicles and vessels shall be kept neat and clean inside and out.
 - (2) Vehicles and vessels shall be waxed as needed or as directed by a supervisor.
- K** 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 a Major (or a member of higher rank than a Major) for certain classified assignments.
- L** Confidential or fictitious tags shall only be assigned to Investigators or as authorized by the Division Director.
- M** No personal modifications on Division vehicles or vessels are permitted without proper approval as outlined above in section I. This includes, but is not limited to, decals, stickers, tags, and window tinting.
- N** 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.
- O** 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 assigned to field operations. When the inspection reveals blatant or numerous maintenance issues, inspections shall 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.

3 PROCEDURES

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

- (1) Properly charged fire extinguisher

- (2) Operational flashlight
- (3) First aid/first responder kit and a biohazard kit
 - (a) The first aid/first responder kit and the biohazard kit shall be carried in 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.
 - (b) At a minimum, the first aid kit should contain gloves, a CPR mask, adhesive tape, gauze pads and gauze wrap.
 - (c) If any supplies within the first aid/first responder, or biohazard kit list an expiration date, members shall make certain those supplies are replaced prior to the listed expiration date.
- (4) Personal Protective Equipment as defined in Section 3 (Procedures) of General Order 08, *Communicable Disease Control*
- (5) Area maps and charts
- (6) Jumper cables (boats as needed)
- (7) Reflective safety vest (vehicles only)
- (8) Seat belts and airbags (vehicles only)
- (9) A rubber mat may be placed in the patrol vessel at the request of the member
- (10) Division 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
- (11) 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.
- (12) 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 Fleet and Technical Services Rigging Guideline Manual or as directed by the Division Director.
- (2) Non-operational emergency equipment shall 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 Fleet and Technical Services Rigging Guideline Manual.

D Operation and Maintenance of ATVs, and PWCs

- (1) ATVs and PWCs are specialty equipment, which shall be used to conduct patrol activities and for special details as directed 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) Members with an assigned ATV or PWC are 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 exempted from helmet wear by the Investigations Section Leader or designee.
 - (g) The helmet wear requirement may be waived by the Division Director for specific assignments and details if necessary to meet operational needs.
- (8) Helmets are not required on Division-owned Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) if the vehicle is equipped with a roll cage or similar rollover protection system.

E Operation of Aircraft

- (1) For guidance on the operation of Division 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 shall be maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- (2) Trailer wheel bearings shall be greased regularly (as needed).
- (3) A properly inflated spare tire, and equipment to change trailer tires, shall 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 shall be made to the Operational Support Section Leader at GHQ through the appropriate chain-of-command. The request shall 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 shall 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 Operational Support Section Leader or designee at GHQ to ensure the vehicle is always properly serviced and in a good state of repair.
- (7) The following equipment shall 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 shall have a temperature alarm sensor and fans to ensure maximum air circulation.

- (3) Vehicles shall display sufficient markings to indicate that a canine is present.
- (4) The Canine Manual shall be referred to for additional guidelines.

J Segway Personal Transporter (PT) and T3 Series electric standup vehicle (ESV)

- (1) The Segway PT and the T3 ESV are specialty equipment, which shall be used for certain park patrol assignments, special details or as authorized by a supervisor.
- (2) Only members who received the appropriate training and vehicle orientation are authorized to operate the PT and T3 ESV.
- (3) Members shall wear a bicycle helmet at all times when operating the PT or T3 ESV.

K Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

- (1) The Division will provide U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFD) for all members using vessels.
- (2) A Division approved personal flotation device shall be worn by all members and visitors while onboard a Division vessel 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*).

L Personal Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB)

- (1) The Division shall provide a personal Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) to all sworn members who regularly patrol in a vessel.
 - (a) Once an EPIRB has been issued, it shall be worn while onboard a Division vessel that is underway.
- (2) The EPIRB shall be secured to the sworn members PFD with the included Velcro strap.
 - (a) It is recommended that sworn members secure the EPIRB on their support side.
- (3) Sworn members are authorized to utilize the Division issued personal EPIRB while off-duty, however, in the event the EPIRB is lost or damaged while in use off duty, sworn members shall be responsible for reimbursing the Division for the cost of the EPIRB.

M 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. Ride-alongs for internships shall not take precedence over any other patrol activity and shall be scheduled in a manner that avoids any negative impact on Division needs.
 - (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) Equipment Demonstration and Testing – Equipment vendors may participate in ride-alongs for the purpose of equipment testing and demonstration and for other vendor-related functions.
- (g) The member operating the Division vehicle or vessel 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, and during emergency situations. Commission employees and other (local, state or federal) government employees, including legislators and other elected officials, on official business are not required to complete the General Release.
- (h) The General Release (FWC/DLE-023) is to be completed, submitted to the appropriate supervisor and filed locally in the Region.
- (i) The appropriate Deputy Director may authorize other ride-alongs on a specific case-by-case basis.
- (j) The member shall notify Dispatch of the starting and ending times when a non-member is being transported.

N General Operation

- (1) All members shall 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, vessel, or aircraft for which he or she has not received instruction for safe operation and is not properly licensed.
- (4) A member shall 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 shall 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 shall not be revealed to non-law enforcement personnel unless authorized by a supervisor.

O 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 Division vehicle without headlights except when:
 - (a) 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) Sneak light use on **Limited Access Roadways** is prohibited. Limited access roadways for the purpose of this General Order are, 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 Division 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 including the use of sneak lights.
 - (5) The Fleet and Technical Services Section shall determine the appropriate type of sneak lights for Division vehicles.

P 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 Commission.
- (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, Extra-Duty, and Hire-Back Employment* shall be referred to for appropriate vehicle usage for Off-Duty, Extra-Duty, and Hire-Back employment.

Q Purchase Card (P-Card) Use for Equipment

- (1) The use of the P-Card by non-supervisory personnel, requires prior supervisory approval.
- (2) The P-Card is not to be confused with the State Fuel Card. The P-Card **shall not** 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 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 4.1.17 *State Purchasing Card Program* and the Purchasing Section's Portal Site 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.

R 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.

S Accidents and Equipment Damage

- (1) Members shall adhere to FWC IMPP 5.3.8 *Accidents and Equipment Damage* for information on the reporting of accidents and equipment damage.

4 FORMS

FORM NUMBER	FORM TITLE
FWC/DLE-017	Property Inspection Inventory Report
FWC/DLE-023	General Release