



HUNTERSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

1.43 Personally Assigned Cruiser (PAC) Program

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Approved: Cleveland L. Spruill
Chief of Police

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A. POLICY/PURPOSE

1. It is the policy of the Huntersville Police Department to assign sworn officers individual police cruisers (marked or unmarked) when the available police fleet of vehicles allows for such assignments. The individual assignment of police cruisers to law enforcement officers provides an array of benefits to the community, the department, and the officer. These benefits include:

A. Community Safety-

- 1) Enhanced Officer Visibility and Sense of Community Safety– The agency benefits from having an increase in police/officer visibility, as marked police cruisers create an impression of heightened police presence, reducing opportunistic criminal activity;
- 2) Increase Trained Officers Availability – Police radios must be on while the police cruiser is in use and this results in more trained police officers observing and reporting policing issues;
- 3) Increases the Back Up Potential for Officers On Duty – officers in marked cruisers are more apt to check the welfare of a fellow officer if he/she passes an officer taking enforcement action;

B. Effectiveness/ Efficiency-

- 1) Increases Levels of Enforcement – officers driving personal police cruisers commuting to and from work and observing serious motor vehicle violations and criminal activity are obligated to take enforcement action;
- 2) The Longevity of the Vehicle is Extended – the department generally replaces vehicles every six to seven years due to enhanced vehicle upkeep by officers, instead of two to three years of shared cruisers; cruisers with one assigned operator tend to have preventative maintenance performed at appropriate times;
- 3) Time Efficiency – time is not wasted picking up a cruiser before a shift or waiting for a cruiser to become available from the previous watch; equipment is in one place and officers do not have to move it from cruiser to cruiser each shift; and

C. Officer Benefit-

- 1) Recruiting/Retention Tool – Personal police cruisers are a positive recruiting and retention mechanism in a competitive market;
 - 2) Greater Availability of Cruisers During Emergencies/Unusual Occurrences and Reduced Response Times for Recalls to Active Duty – The officer does not have to go to a station to get a cruiser prior to responding and can respond directly to the scene;
 - 3) Performance Incentive – offering newer vehicles to top performers. The PAC Program can be used to reward officers based upon outstanding work performance.
2. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use, operation and maintenance of Huntersville Police Department police fleet vehicles for both on and off-duty assignments and use in relation to the Personally Assigned Cruiser (PAC) Program, sometimes referred to as the “One Officer – One Car Program”.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. Employee – Any sworn employee, non-sworn employee, or volunteer for the Huntersville Police Department with a valid NC driver’s license.
2. HPD Vehicle – Any vehicle, marked or unmarked, that is owned or leased by the Town of Huntersville and assigned to the Department for official use.
3. Personal Police Cruiser – Any HPD cruiser, marked or unmarked, that is assigned to an individual employee for official use on a 24-hour per day basis.

C. PERSONALLY ASSIGNED CRUISER (PAC) PROGRAM

1. All sworn officers who have successfully completed the agency’s field training program will be eligible for the assignment of a Personally Assigned Cruiser (PAC). These assignments are at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police and may be suspended if there is an insufficient number of vehicles available to meet the needs of the Department. Personally Assigned Vehicles will be used for the primary purpose of official job duties and responsibilities during approved work hours, as well as commuting to and from work and the officer’s primary residence.
2. All sworn officers issued a Personally Assigned Cruiser (PAC) will be authorized take home privileges primarily for the purpose of after hours recall to crime/incident scenes, recall to critical incidents requiring immediate response and to promote greater visibility and police presence throughout the Town and adjacent areas consistent with the following guidelines:
 - (a) The sworn officer’s primary residence must be located:
 - (1) Within the Town limits or within the Huntersville Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction or;
 - (2) For Executive Command Officers holding the rank of Captain or above, and for officers assigned to positions deemed operationally necessary by the Chief of Police, the distance shall be no greater than 20 miles from the outermost Town limits. These positions include:
 - a) Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT);
 - b) Canine Officers;
 - c) Crash Re-constructionists;
 - d) Animal Control Technician;
 - e) Sworn Staff assigned to the Investigations Bureau (CID, CRD, and VICE)
 - (3) For all other officers the distance shall be no greater than 12 miles from the outermost Town limits.

- (4) Officers with authorized take-home privileges that were granted prior to November 14, 2011 and exceed the above requirements are authorized to continue these take home privileges. This exception will be revoked when the officer moves from their current location or if they are reassigned out of their current position. The officer may then apply for a take-home vehicle in and will be bound by the conditions of existing policy.
 - (5) Under unique and unusual circumstances, the Chief of Police retains the discretion to grant approval for sworn personnel at greater distances than listed above, after consultation with the Town Manager
3. Police cruisers will not be individually assigned to an officer until they have successfully completed field training status and such assignment is subject to cruiser availability. Such assignment will not take precedence over operational needs of the Department.
 4. The provisions of take home privileges may be extended to non-sworn field operational personnel who may respond to calls outside regular business hours, but this must be approved in writing by the Chief of Police.
 5. All personally assigned cruisers will be approved in writing by the Chief of Police. The Personnel, Training and Fleet Division Commander will maintain an active list of all personally assigned cruiser assignments and will update the list as necessary.
 6. For those PAC Program assignments not approved for take home privileges off duty parking of the cruiser remotely and/or at the Department will be approved by the respective Bureau Commander and must meet the requirements of the Chief of Police.
 7. Any mileage standard stated in this written directive refers to the actual straight line distance from the officer's primary residence to the outermost Town limits.
 8. The Chief of Police has discretion and final decision making authority in any instances regarding take home privileges for an officer assigned to any special assignment (undercover investigation) or special job related circumstances.

D. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR TAKE HOME VEHICLES

1. Officers who wish to be assigned a take home vehicle must submit a completed Take Home Vehicle Request Form (see **Addendum A**) through their Chain of Command to the Chief of Police. The Bureau Commander will review the request, will personally verify that the request meets the agency requirements for take home privileges and will make a recommendation to the Chief of Police on whether to approve or deny the request. Once the Chief of Police approves or denies the request, the request will be forwarded to the Personnel, Training and Fleet Division Commander who will maintain the original copy, and forward a copy to the requesting officer through his/her Chain of Command.
2. Requests for take home vehicles are not considered approved and no officer is authorized to take the vehicle home until they receive a copy of the Take Home Vehicle Request form signed by the Chief of Police.
3. Take Home Vehicle approvals are specific to the address for which the request is made. Approved requests are immediately revoked upon any change of address, either temporary or permanent. Officers must submit a new request form for any change of address.

E. PERSONALLY ASSIGNED CRUISER (PAC) PROGRAM USE OUTSIDE REGULAR WORK HOURS

1. Personally Assigned Cruisers (PAC) may be driven at times other than during regular scheduled duty hours only under the circumstances listed below. In all cases, an officer's operation and use of the assigned police vehicle must conform to same departmental directives applicable to on-duty officers, except as noted otherwise in this Directive. This includes but is not limited to:
 - (a) To and from the Police Department or other designated reporting station for regularly scheduled duty. Off duty officers must travel to and from their primary residence to the other approved locations via the most direct route, except as approved otherwise by the Chief of Police or designee.
 - (b) To and from department authorized meetings, conferences, special assignments and training classes. In the event that more than one officer is attending or assigned to the same function at a location outside the Town, efforts should be made to car pool to the destination. Only officers living within the Town and ETJ limits may use their assigned cruiser to travel to and from the Huntersville Family Fitness and Aquatics Center (HFFA) and Huntersville Police Department for physical training during non-duty hours.
 - (c) Officers without take home privileges may take their assigned cruiser home the night prior to an out of Town training assignment/special assignment, if such actions results in cost savings/benefits to the Department and has the prior approval of the respective Bureau Commander.
 - (d) To and from court proceedings where the officer is attending in an official capacity for the Police Department.
 - (e) To and from an authorized service facility for the purpose of maintenance and repair of the police vehicle within the Town of Huntersville or at another facility approved by the Chief of Police, and under the guidelines approved by the Chief of Police.
 - (f) To and from recalls to active duty by the police department for emergencies or other official reasons;
 - (g) To, from and during off duty secondary employment when the secondary employment has the prior approval of the Chief of Police. Continuous operation of the vehicle throughout the secondary employment assignment is normally limited to circumstances where the police vehicle is needed to control traffic in the interest of public safety and/or to reduce the need for on-duty units to transport prisoners. A police vehicle may not be used for purposes of actual continuous patrols for a private employer without the specific approval of the Chief of Police and there may be additional charges for such services.
 - (h) To perform other activities necessary in the performance of the member's scope of employment that have the specific approval of the Chief of Police or his designee and that are consistent with prevailing law and the policies of the Town of Huntersville.
2. Officers operating an agency police cruiser outside of their regular duty assignment must be properly attired (comply with agency grooming standards) for that particular assignment. "Properly attired" means that officers must be dressed in a manner that reflects positively on the Huntersville Police Department and would not prohibit them from performing police services should the need arise. Officers must keep in mind that when the public sees a marked police cruiser, they have the expectation that the marked cruiser is an on-duty police officer and capable of providing assistance. This does not mean that officers must be in uniform when traveling to and from training, meetings, off duty secondary employment etc., but officers must be properly attired "and able to perform police services" if necessary.

3. Officers operating a police cruiser outside of their regular duty assignment must always carry their assigned Huntersville Police Department identification card, Police Badge, Police Radio and assigned/authorized handgun.
4. Officers operating police cruisers while off-duty shall maintain proper radio communications in accordance with departmental directives.
5. In the event that an off-duty officer operating a police cruiser encounters an incident or situation that logically requires police intervention, the officer will stop and render appropriate assistance. No off-duty officer operating a marked police vehicle will ignore any call for emergency assistance or fail to render reasonable police services. When initiating or responding to a police situation while off-duty, officers shall notify the Communications Center by proper radio procedure. Under normal circumstances, situations requiring more than brief on-scene action will be turned over to and handled by on-duty personnel. Officers operating personally assigned unmarked cruisers will respond to and render assistance in accordance to the agency protocol on use of unmarked cruisers when off-duty.
6. Officers with take-home privileges should park their assigned vehicle in a conspicuous location that will maximize its crime deterrent value, preferably a residential driveway or parking area at the officer's primary residence. When possible, the location should be well lighted and visible to both the officer's family and neighbors. Unattended vehicles of off-duty officers must be lawfully parked and remain locked. Officers will not presume any special privileges with a police vehicle while off-duty.
7. Officers must comply with Department Directive 4.09 Transporting Civilians in regards to non-police employees riding in personally assigned cruisers.

F. GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. The Bureau Commanders shall be authorized to limit PAC privileges or effect the temporary reassignment of police vehicles as necessary to achieve a police purpose. If cruisers are temporarily reassigned, the commander authorizing the reassignment shall ensure that the cruiser and all personal equipment is returned to the officer when reassigned. Reassignment of a cruiser for disciplinary reasons will require the specific approval of the Chief of Police.
2. Personnel suspended from duty for disciplinary reasons will be required to turn in their assigned PAC cruiser to their supervisor until they return to regular duty status unless otherwise directed by the Chief of Police. Officers on Administrative Leave or other restricted status are not authorized to perform any enforcement action, thus are not authorized to operate their assigned police cruisers.
3. The Bureau Commanders may require an officer to park their assigned cruiser at the Police Department or other authorized location during periods of extended leave. As a precautionary measure against theft or property damage, the officer may be required to remove equipment that is not permanently affixed to the cruiser.
4. Under no circumstances will any weapons, mobile computers, police badges/credentials, or portable radios be left in the passenger area of the cruiser while the officer is off duty. The only exception will be duty shotguns or carbines when properly secured in the locking mount installed by the Department.
5. Officers/Employees are to ensure that their assigned cruisers are adequately fueled to respond to calls for service at all times. Generally, all cruisers should maintain at least a half tank of fuel at all times.
6. Employees operating the Personal Police Cruiser will not visit any location that may reflect negatively on the department or result in public criticism. A Personally Assigned Cruiser may not be used for recreation, vacation purposes, and/or unreasonable/disruptive personal business.

7. Officers with take home vehicle privileges under this directive must report any change to their primary residence, whether temporary or permanent, to their respective Bureau Commander in advance of, or simultaneously with the move to the new residence. Any change of address immediately nullifies previously approved take home vehicle requests and the officer is not authorized to take the vehicle home until they have submitted a Take Home Vehicle Request form for the new residence and received approval from the Chief of the Police.
8. No officer may install, attach or affix any supplemental device, tags, equipment, stickers, signs, ribbons, emblems or other materials to a police cruiser or its associated equipment without the prior approval of the Chief of Police or designee. No officer shall modify any police equipment assigned to or associated with their assigned Huntersville Police Department cruiser.
9. The individual assignment of a personally assigned cruiser is a privilege and not an automatic fringe benefit or employment right. This privilege may be subject to restriction, suspension, or revocation by the Chief of Police or his designee at any time.

G. ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONAL POLICE CRUISERS

1. The assignment of Personally Assigned Cruisers within the limits of this directive remain at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police.
2. When the agency receives new police cruisers/vehicles to place into initial service the respective Bureau Commander(s) will meet with the Police Lieutenants of all affected divisions and discuss the initial assignment of new cruisers/vehicles and consider the following factors, (not in rank order) in such decisions:
 - (a) The work performance or meritorious work of the individual officers/employees;
 - (b) The individual officer's records in terms of vehicle inspections and history of at-fault crashes;
 - (c) The disciplinary history of the officer(s);
 - (d) The number of sustained internal affairs/citizen complaints of the officers for the last three years;
 - (e) Agency operational issues; and
 - (f) Seniority of the officer(s).
4. The Bureau Commanders and Police Lieutenants will meet to review potential new cruiser assignments and attempt to gain consensus on such assignments. If consensus cannot be reached the Chief of Police shall make the final decisions on the assignment of new cruiser.
5. Police Lieutenants may recommend to their Bureau Commander the suspension of take home privileges for an officer who demonstrates poor work performance and the Bureau Commanders have authority to implement such action.

By Order of:



Cleveland L. Spruill, Chief of Police



HUNTERSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

TAKE HOME VEHICLE REQUEST FORM

- New Request
 Change of Address

Officer: _____ HP#: _____ Date of Hire: _____

Residence Address: _____

I, _____, understand that my personally assigned cruiser is a privilege, not a right, and that this privilege may be revoked at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police. I further understand that if I change residences (permanently or temporarily) this request for a take home vehicle is immediately revoked and my take home privileges may only be reinstated after a new request is submitted and approved.

Officer Signature: _____ Date: _____

POLICE SERGEANT REVIEW/APPROVAL

Police Sergeant Signature: _____	Date: _____
I recommend: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Comments (required if disapproval recommended): _____	

POLICE LIEUTENANT REVIEW/APPROVAL

Police Lieutenant Signature: _____	Date: _____
I recommend: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Comments (required if disapproval recommended): _____	

POLICE CAPTAIN REVIEW/APPROVAL

Police Captain Signature: _____	Date: _____
I recommend: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Comments (required if disapproval recommended): _____	

POLICE MAJOR REVIEW/APPROVAL

Police Major Signature: _____	Date: _____
I recommend: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Comments (required if disapproval recommended): _____	

CHIEF OF POLICE REVIEW/APPROVAL

Chief of Police Signature: _____	Date: _____
I recommend: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Comments (required if disapproval recommended): _____	