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| **Vehicle Use Policy** | Related Policies: | |
| *It is the policy of the Town of Castleton that certain positions require employee access to municipal vehicles, either during a work shift or on a 24 hour on-call basis. Town vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use. Town vehicles should be viewed as belonging to citizens of Castleton and are assigned for the sole purposes consistent with providing services to those citizens* | | |
| Applicable Vermont Statutes: | | |
| CALEA Standard: | | |
| Date Implemented: 04/27/2015  modified in 3/29/24 | | Review Date: 3/29/2024 |

1. **Purpose**
2. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines under which town vehicles will be authorized to town personnel and the guidelines under which town vehicles may be used. These vehicles are maintained, owned, and insured by the Town of Castleton for the purpose of usage by police department employees to conduct their duties in an official manner.
3. Allowing take-home vehicle privileges is to promote and enhance public safety with the Town of Castleton through the increased presence of police vehicles and decreased response times for those officers called out for emergency situations especially between the hours of 0200 to 0600 hours during the off-duty hours of operation. This can expedite response in the event of active emergencies.
4. The Chief of Police is responsible for implementing and adherence of this policy. An assigned police officer may be designated to ensure their respected departments are monitoring and are in compliance with this policy. The provisions of this policy apply to all town government employees or specific elected officials. Employees whose employment is regulated by collective bargaining agreements and/or contracts are subject only to those provisions not specifically regulated by such agreement.
5. **Assignment**
6. The assignment of municipal vehicles during work time is based on job description. The Chief of Police may assign such vehicles in a manner consistent with departmental workload and employee function. All use, maintenance record keeping procedures and documentation, shall be adhered to. The assignment of vehicles may be changed or rescinded at any time by the Chief of Police.
7. The assignment of vehicles will be considered for employees who require a vehicle for the ordinary and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria which will be used in the determination of eligibility for the 24-hour vehicle use include:
8. Officially designated on-call status
9. Requirement for frequent emergency availability.
10. Issuance of communication devices.
11. Emergency or other equipment contained in the vehicle.
12. No town facility is available for garaging in a safe location.
13. **Rules Governing Use:**
14. Municipal vehicles must have municipal red registration plates and/or Town insignia representation on the vehicle and may only be used for municipal business.
15. Municipal vehicles will not be used to transport passengers who are not directly or indirectly related to municipal or police departmental business.
16. Vehicles should contain only the items and equipment for which the vehicle is designed. The town shall not be liable for the loss of personal property unless the property is used for municipal business (department issued gear, tools, etc.)
17. Employees are expected to keep the departmental vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisor immediately.
18. All employees are required to wear a seat belt at all times in any Town of Castleton owned vehicle, if that vehicle is equipped with said seat belt.
19. Smoking in town owned vehicles is prohibited.
20. Employees shall not operate Town of Castleton vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs that would interfere with safe and coordinated driving.
21. Employees who operate any municipal vehicle shall have a valid and appropriate motor vehicle license issued by the state of their residency.
22. Employees driving any vehicle owned by the Town of Castleton shall obey all applicable traffic laws, parking regulations, ordinances, and any other traffic laws.
23. Employees who incur parking or other fines in municipal vehicles will be responsible for payment of such fines unless the Town Manager authorizes payment by the town for said violation.
24. Employees who are arrested for a motor vehicle offense for which punishment includes suspension or revocation of a motor vehicle license must notify his or her immediate supervisor or in writing within 24 hours.
25. Conviction for such offense may be grounds for loss of municipal vehicle privileges and/or further disciplinary action.
26. Employees who operate the vehicles during a shift or other training event must fill the gas tanks at the end of their duty shift. No exceptions.
27. **Vehicle take-home use**
28. The town of Castleton Police Department’s vehicle take-home usage is a privilege extended to authorized, designated personnel of the police department. Before an employee is authorized or eligible to participate in the vehicle take home usage, he/she must meet the following criteria but limited to:
29. The member shall have successfully completed the Level 2 or Level 3 (including field training), completion of the probationary period with the Castleton Police Department and be in good standing with the department.
30. The member resides within a 15-mile radius from the nearest Castleton town limit using the shortest, most economical and reasonable route.
31. Members that reside out of state are not eligible for take home vehicles unless exigent circumstances such as times of severe public safety incidents (i.e. social unrest, and/or regional emergencies).
32. Members that park the department’s vehicle unattended shall always be kept locked and with keys removed at all times, unless at an active scene where the vehicle is in operation but locked.

1. Those personnel as authorized by the Chief of Police.
2. **Guidelines for Usage:** The use of a take-home vehicle shall be limited to transportation to and from:
3. Police Department facilities to report for regular duty;
4. Court;
5. Department approved activities (parades, traffic control or contractual assignments);
6. Approved police training;
7. On call status.
8. **Responsibilities of Assigned Officers** - using take-home vehicle off-duty, Officers will:
9. Conduct themselves in a manner which reflects favorably on the department and their position as a police officer;
10. Wear clothing that is appropriate for representing the Department and conducting police business;
11. Be armed with an issued weapon or an approved off-duty weapon, carry handcuffs, badge and Department I.D.;
12. Monitor police radio traffic; and
13. Maintain cleanliness and re-fuel the vehicle;
14. Report any damage to the vehicle in a timely manner.
15. Off-duty officers in a take-home vehicle becomes aware of a call for service (outside the Town of Castleton) to which his/her immediate response may result in a the prevention of a crime or the apprehension of a suspect, motor vehicle crash, advise the State or local dispatch of their proximity to the incident, respond. Provide assistance until jurisdictional agencies secure the scene. Advise the Chief of Police of the incident within a timely manner.
16. Off-duty officers in take-home vehicles should not make traffic stops for minor infractions outside the Town of Castleton unless the severity of the infraction and the hazard posed places a significant risk to the public.
17. The Chief of Police can assign a second officer for on call purposes to respond in pairs to domestic disturbances, active burglaries, motor vehicle accidents with significant injuries, or other serious emergencies.

Note: Failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of Town vehicle privileges, suspension, and/or termination of Town services. The Chief of Police may amend or add changes to this policy as requested or needed for statuary updates and change in services.