

Vehicle Operation & Response

Administrative Vehicle Use

Supersedes: 11-23-08
Effective: 01-13-12

Administrative Vehicles

For the purposes of this policy, all unmarked Boston EMS vehicles available for use by administrative personnel are referred to as 'Administrative Vehicles'.

Requirements for Use

Non-uniform staff must provide a copy of their valid driver's license to the Professional Standards Division and sign an "Administrative Vehicle Use Agreement" prior to operating any department vehicle. Each employee authorized to drive an Administrative Vehicle will be approved for specific vehicles, depending on work area and type of vehicle required.

All department employees are required to operate vehicles in a safe and lawful manner in accordance with Massachusetts or other applicable traffic laws. Employees are required to carry a current and valid Massachusetts motor vehicle operator's license whenever operating a department vehicle. An employee whose job duties require a valid driver's license shall notify Professional Standards whenever the employee's license is expired, suspended, or revoked. Only full time employees of Boston EMS are permitted to operate Department vehicles (interns, consultants, temporary employees may not operate a department vehicle). The use of tobacco products or transport of alcohol in a department vehicle is prohibited.

Purpose of Use

Boston EMS vehicles are to be driven for the purpose of department business only. Personal use of vehicles is strictly prohibited. Further, the use of department vehicles for personal gain, such as delivering goods or services, is also prohibited. Employees shall not drive any Administrative Vehicle to their place of residence to be parked overnight unless he/she receives approval from the Chief of Department or designee.

Vehicle Operation

Administrative Vehicles are not considered emergency response units; all drivers and passengers shall adhere to posted traffic regulations, restrictions, proper road etiquette and seat belt laws. Department members not in compliance will be subject to all fines and penalties associated with any infractions of the vehicle and traffic laws. No more than the legal maximum capacity of passengers shall be transported at any one time in any vehicle

Massachusetts law prohibits unnecessary idling of vehicles for more than 5 minutes (MGL CH. 90 Sect 16A). In addition to causing pollutants to enter the atmosphere, prolonged vehicle idling wastes fuel and causes increased wear on the engine. Department vehicles should not idle unnecessarily.

Seat and Shoulder Belts

All department members, passengers, and observers riding in a vehicle shall wear fastened seat and shoulder belts while the vehicle is in motion. It shall be the responsibility of the vehicle operator to ensure that all passengers are properly secured prior to moving the vehicle. Children under the age of twelve (12) should not be transported in the front seat of an administrative vehicle equipped with a passenger side airbag. Children under the age of twelve should be properly secured in the rear seats of vehicles. When appropriate, children should be transported in a child safety seat.

Use of Electronic Devices While Driving

Cellular telephones, personal digital assistants (PDA), and other portable electronic devices have become commonplace tools within our society and serve as a valuable resource. However, their use must not interfere with employee safety. In accordance with the Massachusetts Safe Driving Law, vehicle operators cannot use any mobile telephone or handheld device capable of accessing the Internet to write, send, or read an electronic message including text messages, emails, and instant messages or to access the Internet while operating a vehicle. The law applies even if the vehicle is stopped in traffic. If cellular phone communication is necessary for a work-related purpose while operating a department vehicle and cannot be reasonably delayed until the vehicle is parked, the passenger should handle the call. In the case of a department member working alone and stopping the vehicle is not practical, the work-related phone call should be as brief as possible and the user should utilize a “hands-free” device if available. Department members are prohibited from using a cellular phone for personal use when operating a department vehicle.

Parking

Vehicles should be parked, when not in use, in their designated parking areas. Whenever possible, vehicles stored at EMS Headquarters will be parked in the lowest level of the parking garage, closest to the building entrance.

Within the City of Boston, drivers of department vehicles are not required to deposit a fee in a parking meter. Operators may park department vehicles in spaces that are posted “Commercial Loading Zones” or spaces posted as “Reserved for City Vehicles Only”. Commercial parking is available in various locations throughout the City. Parking “Reserved for City Vehicles Only” is located on portions of several streets in downtown Boston including: Court, Devonshire, Water, Hawley, and Kilby Street. Drivers are prohibited from parking a department vehicle in a manner that may cause a “Public Safety Violation” unless on scene at a designated medical or other similar emergency.

Drivers are prohibited from:

- Double parking
- Parking in No Stopping/No Standing zones
- Parking within twenty feet of an intersection
- Parking in a bus stop
- Parking within a pedestrian crosswalk
- Parking less than ten feet from a fire lane
- Parking on a sidewalk
- Parking in a handicap zone or blocking a handicap ramp
- Parking next to a fire hydrant
- Parking in a space designated on for HP/V Plate Parking

Drivers must comply with the parking regulations of any municipality in which they drive. Any driver who receives a parking ticket or causes a department vehicle to be towed because he/she has caused a “Public Safety Violation” will be responsible for all payments related to the infraction. The Professional Standards Division should be notified immediately after a department vehicle has been ticketed or towed.

Fuel

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure there is sufficient fuel each time the vehicle is operated, with more than one-half of a tank of fuel remaining for the next user.

City of Boston fuel sites should be used whenever possible. Public self-service dispensers may be used when the City sites are not available. The most cost-effective vendor should be used. Pay out of pocket, keep a copy of the receipt and submit it to the Budget Director for reimbursement.



The closest fuel site to Boston EMS Headquarters is located at the DPW Central Maintenance facility at 400 Frontage Road. Take Albany Street north toward the I-90 connector, go under the freeway staying in the right-most lane, proceeding directly across the street into the drive way. Ensure you have pulled up next to the appropriate fuel type. Before turning off the vehicle, capture the current odometer reading. Go to the center console between the pumps and gently touch the FOB to the reader and then enter the odometer

reading (mileage) as prompted, next select the appropriate pump number and press enter. At this point you may turn the handle on the pump and begin fueling the vehicle.

Vehicle Collision

A “collision” occurs when any part of a department vehicle comes in contact with another vehicle, pedestrian, animal, or property resulting in property damage and / or injury. Incidental “bumper to bumper” contact while parallel parking is not considered a “collision” unless it results in property damage or injury.

Whenever a department vehicle is involved in a collision, the operator should bring the vehicle to a stop and position it in the safest possible place near the point of contact. Department members should assess any hazards created by the collision and create and maintain a safety zone to protect personnel and property from further injury or damage by activating hazard and/or warning lights as appropriate.

If the vehicles are in a hazardous location or blocking traffic, it may be appropriate to move to the side of the road or a side street for safety. Department members should then assess for the presence of any injuries. **Whenever a department vehicle is involved in a collision Boston EMS Dispatch Operations (617-343-1400) must be notified immediately. If the accident is significant, there is an injury or injuries and/or a traffic hazard exists, call 9-1-1.** The initial report should include the location and brief description of the incident, extent of any injuries, and what other resources are needed. Lastly, if all other needs are being met, department members should identify potential witnesses and preserve evidence at the collision site. The Dispatch Operations Center will make additional notifications as required by other policies and procedures, including requesting the Boston Police Identification / Photography Unit and / or Accident Investigation Unit for collisions involving personal injury.

Exchanging Operator / Contact Information

Department operators should cooperate fully with all involved parties and exchange any required information, including all motor vehicle operator’s license information and department vehicle registration information. Department members should not engage or question others as to the validity of their operator’s license, motor vehicle registration, or the legal operation of their motor vehicle. Any suspected discrepancies in these areas should be brought to the attention of the first arriving police officer. A copy of all required forms should be in the glove compartment of each vehicle and may also be obtained from a Field Supervisor by contacting Dispatch Operations (617-343-1400).

Documentation

Whenever a department member has a motor vehicle collision involving a department vehicle, the operator must complete a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Operator’s Report of Motor Vehicle Accident Form and a Boston EMS Vehicle Collision Report. Additionally, any department member that witnessed the incident must fill out or co-sign a Boston EMS Vehicle Collision Report.

Reporters will be given reasonable time to complete required documentation. All documentation must be completed and hand delivered to a Field Supervisor immediately following the collision or to Professional Standards by the following

business day. Hand-written documents must be legible, all fields completed (using the abbreviation “n/a”, for any information Not Available or Not Applicable at the time the report is completed), and must be signed and correctly dated.

Incident Review / Driving Restriction

The department recognizes that being involved in a motor vehicle collision, no matter how minor, can be a stressful event. Whenever an operator of a department motor vehicle is involved in a collision, they are to refrain from driving a department vehicle for the remainder of that day, whenever possible.

Whenever a department motor vehicle is involved in a collision serious enough that it results in a personal injury or inoperability of either vehicle requiring a tow from the scene, the operator of the department vehicle will have their driving privileges restricted to the extent possible until the incident can be reviewed by Professional Standards.

Vehicle Maintenance

All department vehicles, unless approved by the Fleet Services Division, are serviced and repaired at the Fleet Maintenance Division’s maintenance facility on Shirley Street. In the case of an emergency or vehicle breakdown beyond the City limits, Fleet Maintenance may authorize other options. Drivers are responsible for the appearance, interior and exterior cleanliness, and general condition of the vehicle.

Alterations or Modifications

Employees shall not alter, add or remove equipment from any Boston EMS vehicle or affix any signs or political stickers without written permission from the Chief of Department or designee.

Travel Outside of Massachusetts

Except under unusual circumstances, department vehicles may not be driven outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts without prior approval from the Chief of Department or Superintendent-in-Chief, who will then seek approval from the BPHC Legal Counsel’s Office and notify appropriate programs/personnel.

Employee Agreement

This document is a compilation of multiple department policies. It is the responsibility of each department member to be familiar with and abide by all department policies that

pertain to them; any change in relevant department policies shall supersede any language within this document.

By signing this agreement, the employee attests that he/she understands and meets all requirements for Administrative Vehicle use and will abide by all rules set forth.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Program/Division

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

Chief of Department (or SIC) Signature

Date