DUBLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**SECTION: M-011 OFF-ROAD VEHICLES**

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 **N/A**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use of “Off-Road” vehicles used as department patrol vehicles.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy is applicable to all department personnel.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

The term "off-road vehicle” means any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain and not intended for use predominantly on public roads. (O.C.G.A. 40-7-3)

***Note: In this chapter, “Off-Road Vehicle” will be referred to as “UTV”***

Operator: Any person who drives or is in physical control of the vehicle. Operators must be trained in the operation of department UTVs as directed by the Chief of Police.

 **IV. BACKGROUND**

UTVs have operational parameters that can provide mobility and accessibility not available in standard patrol vehicles or foot patrols.

**V. OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS**

A. UTV patrol is an extension of the patrol function and is to be utilized in a manner that promotes community-oriented policing. It may be used to patrol areas inaccessible by motor vehicles, such as parks and wooded areas, as well as populated areas such as apartment complexes, shopping/business areas, and neighborhoods. UTV patrol may also be used to operate in high crime areas or those locations requiring constant but mobile attention, such as sporting events, parades, festivals, or other special events. In addition, UTV patrol may be utilized for criminal searches, search and rescue missions, critical/hazardous incidents, etc.

B. Assignment to UTV patrol:

 1. For special events/duties, UTV patrol will be assigned as necessary by Department Administrators or Commanders.

C. UTV Patrol Objectives – the objectives for UTV patrol include, but are not limited to:

1. 1. Provide business/shopping area patrol for crime suppression and prevention;
2. 2. Provide residential patrol for crime suppression and prevention;
3. 3. Patrol areas inaccessible to vehicles;
4. 4. Encourage closer community contact, interaction, coordination, and integration into the department’s community-oriented policing philosophy;
5. 5. Provide an alternate means of police service delivery to the community;

6. Provide high visibility of police presence in given areas and situations.

D. UTV Patrol / Procedures.

1. Officers assigned to UTV patrol will perform their basic patrol duties, with certain exceptions as provided in this policy. As such the UTV patrol can be both an enforcement tool and an effective method of reflecting a philosophy of community-oriented policing.

2. Officers assigned to UTV patrol may operate on any roadway in the city but must use due care on roadways where the speed limit is 45mph or higher. *It is recommended that operators avoid such roadways if possible.*

3. UTVs should not normally be utilized for conducting traffic stops. While traffic stops may be made using the ATV, the operator must first consider the nature of the offense, the roadway involved, and current traffic conditions. Operators may perform stops for minor offenses on roadways where the speed limit is 35mph or less.

*NOTE: Under no circumstances will an operator attempt to stop serious traffic offenders (excessive speeding, reckless driving, DUI, etc.). If intervention is required, the operator will request assistance.*

4. Specific procedures and exceptions:

 a. If an operator must leave a UTV unattended, he/she shall secure the UTV.

b. **UTVs will not be involved in “Code 3” response or motor vehicle pursuits.**

c. UTVs will not be used for the transportation of subjects/offenders/arrestees.

d. At no time should a UTV be driven at speeds greater than 50mph.

~~e~~. UTVs will be operated in accordance with all rules of the road.

*While in the performance of law enforcement duties, UTVs will be operated in accordance with OCGA 40-6-6, 40-8-91.1, and any other applicable codes.*

E. UTV Equipment – UTVs used by the department for law enforcement purposes will be equipped, at a minimum, with:

* Emergency equipment, including blue lights, siren, and radio.
* Headlights, taillights/brake lights, and turn signals
* Fire extinguisher

Problems with UTV equipment should be brought to the attention of the Operations Officer.

F. Operator Training –

1. Prior to operating a department UTV, officers must be trained in the operation of department UTVs in a manner as prescribed by the Chief of Police. Untrained officers will not be allowed to operate department UTVs.

2. While there are no minimum qualifications required, officers who desire to be trained should have prior experience with UTVs. Potential operators must be extremely safety conscious, have the ability to control a UTV, pay attention to detail, and understand the risks associated with operating a UTV.

G. Operator Procedures –

1. Pre-Ride Procedures – each operator will be knowledgeable of department UTVs and the safety procedures associated with them. Prior to UTV patrol, the operator must perform a pre-ride inspection of the UTV:

* Tires and wheels (air pressure, condition, lug nuts, etc.)
* Controls (location, operation, throttle, brakes, shifter)
* Lights and electrics (Ignition switch, engine stop, lights)
* Oil and Fuel (levels)

Problems noted will be reported to the Operations Officer. The UTV will not be operated if any condition exists which could damage the vehicle or affect the safe operation of the unit.

Operators will “tread lightly” at all times when operating department UTVs. This means that the operator must be aware of his/her surroundings at all times, including the environment. The UTV is an off-road vehicle; even equipped with street tires it is still designed for off-road use and will not react as a patrol vehicle does on the road. Things like speed, handling, and steering/turning is different and takes practice.

***Non-professional operation of the UTV and “horseplay” will not be tolerated, and may result in disciplinary action.***

2. Post-Ride Procedures – upon completion of UTV patrol, the operator will re-fuel the vehicle and wash/clean it as necessary. The UTV will be secured as currently prescribed or in accordance with supervisor instructions.

H. Uniforms and Appearance: Operators will wear the appropriate uniform while on patrol. Special uniforms or attire may be authorized for special events.

**VI. MAINTENANCE -** Routine maintenance of department UTVs will be conducted by qualified individuals or as prescribed by the Chief of Police. Repairs, if necessary, will be accomplished by authorized service centers or as prescribed by the Chief of Police. Operators will not attempt to service or repair UTV problems but will notify the Operations Officer.