

DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA



DEKALB COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

AUDIT REPORT

**POLICE SERVICES
VEHICLE USAGE**

**PREPARED BY
FINANCE- INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**



Finance Department
Internal Audit

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 19, 2015
TO: James W. Conroy, Interim Chief of Police
FROM: Cornelia Louis, Deputy Director of Finance-Internal Audit
SUBJECT: DeKalb Police Department-Police Services
Re: Vehicle Usage

**Interim Chief
Executive Officer**

Lee May

**Board of
Commissioners**

District 1
Nancy Jester

District 2
Jeff Rader

District 3
Larry Johnson

District 4
Sharon Barnes Sutton

District 5
Mereda Davis Johnson

District 6
Kathie Gannon

District 7
Stan Watson

Attached is a summary report prepared by Internal Audit on a possible violation of Vehicle Usage policies. The issues raised in the report were discussed with you during the Exit Conference on November 19, 2015.

As is customary, we do not include the auditee's comments in our report. However, you may consider sending your comments or response directly to Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from DeKalb Police Department staff during the course of this review. If you have any questions about the audit or this report, please feel free to contact me at 404-371-2639.

Sincerely,

Cornelia Louis

cc: Board of Commissioners (BOC)
Zachary Williams, Chief Operating Officer/Executive Assistant
Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Financial Director
Dr. Cedric L. Alexander, Deputy Chief Operating Officer of Public Safety
Claudette Leak, Assistant to the COO

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**DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE USAGE
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GENERAL INFORMATION

The DeKalb County Police Department (DKPD) has a Take-Home Vehicle Program (program) that allows sworn personnel in an enforcement function to take home assigned vehicles. Vehicles may be marked, unmarked, or undercover police vehicles, which may be seized vehicles used for police activities.

The purpose of the program is “increasing officer visibility in the community and assisting the department in using resources to best promote efficiency in the public safety goals. The increased officer visibility will provide a deterrent to crime and offers a sense of security to residents and visitors in the county.” (*General Order DKPD-G 2015-7*)

For sworn personnel to be eligible for a take-home vehicle, they must meet minimum requirements. Among these are:

1. Be a sworn police officer.
2. Live within 35 miles of the County line.
3. Receive at least a 3.0 on their last performance evaluation.

In general, vehicles must be operated in a safe, responsible, and legal manner. “Assigned vehicles are the responsibility of the officer including any cleaning and routine tasks. All maintenance and repairs will only be scheduled and completed through DeKalb Fleet Management. Officers may not utilize their vehicles for personal benefit, but may use the vehicles for all official business.” (*General Order DKPD-G 2015-7*)

The exception to the personal benefit rule is that personnel who are on primary or secondary call “will be allowed to use the vehicle for the limited purposes such as jaunts, dinners, errands, etc.” (*DKPD Procedure Manual*)

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Internal Audit received an anonymous complaint about a Police Department Lieutenant. The complainant alleged that the Lieutenant:

1. has three seized vehicles assigned to him and they are the most luxurious vehicles,
2. has used an assigned vehicle for personal travel, and
3. has used subordinates to perform personal chores.

The purpose of our review was to ensure there was no violation of the program or personnel code.

We reviewed Police Department vehicle assignment and usage records, Take-Home Vehicle Assignment General Order, and pertinent Police Department policies and procedures. In addition, we interviewed Police Department and Fleet Management personnel.

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

1. Multiple Vehicles Assigned

As of July 2015, according to the DKPD Vehicle Assignment Schedule, there were 554 vehicles assigned to Police personnel. There was only one vehicle, a 2012 Mercedes, listed as assigned to the Lieutenant. In addition to the Vehicle Assignment Schedule listing, a superior of the Lieutenant verified the vehicle assignment.

2. Vehicle Usage

Due to the Lieutenant's position and assigned duties, he is on call 24/7 and allowed to use his assigned vehicle for personal uses. Therefore, the exception to the policy for personal use of assigned vehicles when an officer is "on primary or secondary call" is applicable.

3. Inappropriate Use of Authority

Actions taken by the Lieutenant regarding his subordinates were discussed with a superior of the Lieutenant. It was noted that the actions did not violate the code of conduct for superiors' interactions with subordinates.

CONCLUSION

Based on evidence reviewed, we find the complaints were unsubstantiated, except for comments stated below.

COMMENTS

Although the Lieutenant did not violate the County code as it relates to authority over subordinates, subordinates or other observers could easily consider his actions an abuse of authority. In our opinion, officers should always exemplify professional leadership.



DeKalb County Police Department
Office of the Chief of Police

Interim Chief James W. Conroy

1960 W. Exchange Place

Tucker, GA 30084

(770) 724-7440

December 2, 2015

Gwen Brown-Patterson
Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director
DeKalb County, Georgia
Decatur, GA 30030

Dear CFO Brown-Patterson:

I am writing this letter in response to the internal audit report on the possible violation of Vehicle Usage policies written on November 19, 2015. Per the findings listed in the report, the lieutenant was not in violation of any of the policies mentioned (multiple vehicles assigned, vehicle usage, and inappropriate use of authority). He was assigned one vehicle and this assignment was verified by a superior of the lieutenant. The lieutenant's usage of said assigned vehicle was within policy due to the application of the primary or secondary on-call policy; the lieutenant is on call 24/7. Finally, the lieutenant's actions were deemed acceptable under the code of conduct for superiors' interactions with subordinates. As the report indicated, the complaints were unsubstantiated, with a note stating that officers should always exemplify professional leadership.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J.W. Conroy", is positioned below the text "Thank you for your attention to this matter".

Interim Chief JW Conroy
DeKalb County Police Department
DeKalb County, Georgia

JWC/cd