

**TOWN OF SWANSBORO  
POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY NO. 3a  
POLICE VEHICLE USAGE**

**A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to specify those circumstances and conditions in which police officers are allowed to drive a Town-owned vehicle to and from their home.

**B. Background**

This policy acknowledges that there are circumstances in which Police Department operations and the protection of public safety may be more productive or responsive if certain supervisors or officers are permitted to drive a Town-owned vehicle to- and from their residence. These circumstances or conditions may include situations in which a supervisor is "on call", in which a supervisor or officer may need to be prepared to respond to an emergency with special equipment (such as a crime scene kit), or in which there are cost savings if an officer or supervisor can drive directly from his or her home to court, a training assignment, investigative responsibilities, or other assignments.

This policy also recognizes that "take home" use of vehicles involves extra fuel, maintenance, and capital expenses, as well as the potential for unauthorized use of vehicles and for additional exposure of town property to accidents and damage, and therefore attempts to insure that the use of take home vehicles is limited to use that is operationally justifiable and cost effective

**C. Limitation of Policy**

This policy is only intended to define the circumstances in which take-home use of a police vehicle is permitted for operational purposes. This policy does not address or attempt to address the question of whether take-home or commuting use of a marked or unmarked police vehicle may constitute taxable income under the provisions of state or federal law or Internal Service regulations, as they may exist or change from time to time. If the Town's finance director or auditors determine that any take home or commuting use of a vehicle constitutes taxable income, the appropriate records and reports of income shall be generated in the same manner as any other earned or miscellaneous income.

**D. Use Criteria**

A police supervisor or officer may be permitted to drive a Town police vehicle to- and from his or her residence in the following circumstances:

1. Police Chief. The police chief, who is considered to be on 24-hour call and who must frequently respond to public safety emergencies outside regular working hours, is permitted to use a take-home vehicle.
2. Patrol Supervisor. The principal supervisor of patrol officers, who is considered to be on 24-hour call, who is considered second-in-command to the police chief, and who must frequently return to work after hours to provide supervision and guidance to patrol officers, is permitted to use a take-home vehicle.

3. Investigator. A detective or other officer temporarily assigned investigative duties may be permitted to use a take-home vehicle, due to the irregularity of investigative schedules, after-hours call-outs to crime scenes, and the need to travel directly to investigative scenes or evidence-gathering work directly from his or her residence.

4. Other Circumstances. A police officer (including a supervisor) may be permitted to use a take-home vehicle in the following additional circumstances:

(a) The officer is scheduled to report, on his or her next work day, to court, training, a conference, or other police duty, and the location of the event or duty would make it more time efficient and cost-effective for the officer to drive directly from the officer's residence to the assignment.

(b) The officer is on specific standby or recall duty due to an emergency event that is anticipated or is in progress.

(c) Short-term circumstances arise in which the police chief determines that operational effectiveness, public safety, or cost management create a need to ask an officer to temporarily utilize a take-home vehicle.

(d) A full-time officer lives within the town limits or within a distance of 20 miles from the Police Department.

#### **E. Conditions of Use**

All take-home use of a Town vehicle by police officers and supervisors is subject to the following conditions:

1. Distance. Take home use of a vehicle, except in specific instances when taking a vehicle home would reduce the total mileage that would otherwise be driven, is limited a distance of 20 miles from the town limits of the Town of Swansboro.

2. Route. Take-home use of a vehicle is, except for calls to perform police business, limited to traveling directly from the Police Department to home without detour for other purposes.

3. Use. Except when transport of another person or persons is required for police business, no other person – other than the officer or officers to whom a vehicle is assigned - shall be transported in a police vehicle, and no non-police use shall be made of the vehicle.

4. Safety and Property Protection. Any officer permitted take-home use of a vehicle shall operate the vehicle safely at all times and shall keep the vehicle parked in a safe and secure location at his or her residence.

5. Nature of Permission. Take-home use of a vehicle is a privilege and an operational need, not a right, and may be suspended by the employee's supervisor. Take-home use of a vehicle is also subject to the availability of a suitable vehicle and related resources (such as fuel).

#### **F. Administration**

The police chief shall faithfully and correctly administer the provisions of this policy and shall keep appropriate records to document the reasons for take-home vehicle assignments. The town manager shall generally monitor the observance of the policy, may review the records of take-home vehicle assignments, and shall report any issues of non-compliance to the Town Board.

Adopted Sept 29, 2008