

## **SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES**

STANDARD NO(S):

NYSLEAP 42.4

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REFER TO:

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### I. OBJECTIVE:

To identify and establish procedures for the use of certain vehicles, other than marked patrol or assigned Administration and CID vehicles which are necessary to support various components of the SCSO.

### II. POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the SCSO to acquire, maintain, and provide special purpose vehicles for use by various components of the SCSO in support and enhance the efforts of those components having a need for such vehicles and to establish guidelines and responsibilities for the safe operation of such vehicles during routine, urgent, or emergency operation.

Emergency operation of SCSO vehicles is authorized **only** when the member is responding to an emergency call or is in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator (See “**Vehicle Pursuits**”), this manual. Under no circumstances shall the officer be relieved of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons; nor shall one’s use of emergency procedures protect one from any consequences arising from a reckless disregard for the safety of others. It is incumbent upon all officers operating SCSO vehicles to be familiar with the provisions of Section 1104 of the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law captioned “Authorized Emergency Vehicles”.

### III. DETAILS:

- A. For purposes of this directive, vehicles in use by the SCSO which have been Designated “special purpose vehicles” are boats, personal watercraft (jet ski), canine (K-9) vehicles, corrections transport vans, vehicles that are occasionally used in the conduct of undercover operations and all terrain 4x4 utility vehicles.

**B. Routine and Urgent Operation-** Under normal non-emergency operating conditions and while responding to routine calls for service, including those calls characterized as “urgent”, officers operating SCSO vehicles may use emergency equipment. Officers will adhere strictly to all traffic and navigation laws and will operate the vehicle in a safe, courteous, and defensive manner. In responding to urgent calls, officers will avoid unnecessary delay.

**C. Emergency Operation and Response-** Vehicle operation of this type requires the use of emergency lights and when necessary the siren. An officer operating a vehicle in an emergency or in pursuit may:

1. Exceed the posted speed limit; however, officers shall take into consideration factors such as weather, road or water, and traffic conditions in determining a safe speed for travel.
2. Proceed through a red light or stop sign after slowing or stopping as may be necessary for safe operation. Under no circumstances should an operator enter an intersection unless sure that the cross traffic has yielded.
3. Disregard traffic or navigation regulations governing direction or movement or turning in specified locations when necessary, but with due notice and consideration for the safety of other persons and property. Under no circumstances shall an officer pursue a violator the wrong way on an interstate highway or other divided roadway.
4. Park, moor, or stand irrespective of the provisions of state statutes, or of county or local ordinances.
5. Disregard the regulations governing the parking of vehicles under ordinary circumstances to the extent necessary to effect a valid law enforcement purpose; except that an operator shall not block access to a fire hydrant at a fire scene or in any way obstruct the passage of an ambulance, fire apparatus, or emergency medical services vehicle.
6. Special purpose vehicles will operate under the procedures outlined in “**Vehicle Operation**”, this manual, regarding pursuits.

**D. SCSO Boats & Personal Watercraft (Jet Ski)-**

1. SCSO boats and jet skis are used to patrol all navigable and certain recreational waters in and around the jurisdiction of the SCSO. Their purpose is to provide support for the patrol function promoting the safe operation of all vessels using the waters of Seneca County; to deter and apprehend violators of the Navigation Law; and, to supplement the Road Patrol Division and any Underwater Search & Recovery Unit, as needed.

2. Routine operations include the seasonal patrols of all navigable waterways in Seneca County. Weather conditions may necessitate varying or adding shifts to adjust for lake usage. The Road Patrol Lieutenant supervises the operation of the Navigation Unit and keeps abreast of special events, such as regattas, fishing derbies, and the like to provide adequate coverage. During the periods of primary usage (summer months), this officer shall generate and send through the chain of command for posting, a schedule of operations, which will show personnel and boat assignments.
3. Requests for the services of the marine patrol shall be made through the duty Sergeant with the approval of the Road Patrol Lieutenant.
4. Officers having duty on marine patrol shall advise the E-911 Center of their status and location, thus allowing the shift Sergeant to be aware of the availability of this resource.
5. Authorization of the Sheriff, or a designee, is required prior to the use of any SCSO boat or jet ski outside of Seneca County for any reason.
6. Training for the operators of an SCSO boat or jet ski shall be in accordance with current regulations and directives issued by the Office of New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the State agency having authority for promulgation of laws, rules and directives governing the operation of vessels in the State of New York. All members operating any SCSO boat or jet ski must have attended a NYS Certified Boater Safety Course.
7. A selected member of the SCSO Navigation Unit will be responsible for the condition and maintenance of the boats and jet skis; however, every officer on duty and operating an SCSO boat or jet ski will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the boat or jet ski is being operated in a safe manner.
8. SCSO boats are equipped with a two-way police radio, light bar providing emergency search and signal lights, as well as a siren. In addition, each boat and jet ski carries that equipment required by state and federal regulations for boats and personal watercraft, which may include, but is not limited to, approved personal flotation devices, fire extinguisher, flares, anchor, docking lines, binoculars, and any other equipment necessary to accomplish a specific operation.

#### **E. Undercover Vehicles-**

1. Undercover vehicles are used to ensure that a sensitive operation can remain inconspicuous and not readily recognized as one being conducted by the SCSO.
2. The use of undercover vehicles shall be limited to those investigations requiring that the law enforcement interest not be divulged, since to do otherwise would either jeopardize the success of the endeavor or would endanger the safety of persons engaged therein. Investigations falling into this category could be those of an illegal drug operation or any requiring the use of discreet surveillance, photography, or video recording.
3. SCSO officers receiving the approval of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Supervisor, Sheriff, Under Sheriff or Chief Deputy may use undercover vehicles, but restricted to the purposes mentioned above.
4. The CID Supervisor shall ensure that any SCSO officer having need of an undercover vehicle is briefed on any limitations on its use.
5. No special training or qualification is needed for the operation of an undercover vehicle.
6. The CID Supervisor shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the undercover vehicles; however, each and every officer who operates or occupies such vehicle shall be responsible for its condition and to ensure its safe operation during use.
7. No equipment is to be kept in or on an undercover vehicle unless such equipment is necessary to support that particular undercover operation.
8. No undercover vehicle will be used in any vehicle pursuits.

#### **F. K-9 Vehicles-**

1. The SCSO has two high center of gravity vehicles (HCOGV) equipped specifically for the canine (K-9) operations. HCOGV, by design are more prone to roll-over accidents than conventional passenger vehicles. As such, the operators of such HCOGV must be aware of the vehicle's limitations in handling and maneuverability.

2. These vehicles are equipped with all of the required equipment normally found in SCSO marked patrol vehicles. See (“**Patrol Car Equipment**”), this manual. SCSO K-9 vehicles are also equipped with kennels, food and water dishes, training aids, muzzles, leads, bite sleeves, and a canine first aid kit. SCSO K-9 vehicles are conspicuously marked and identified as a vehicle that contains a working police canine.
3. Operators of SCSO K-9 vehicles will not normally transport civilians or prisoners in the custody of the SCSO. In the event that transportation is required, the SCSO K-9 will be secured in the kennel or will be muzzled.
4. Operators of SCSO K-9 vehicles are required to abide by all of the provisions of “**Vehicle Operation**”, this manual. The assigned operators of the SCSO K-9 vehicles are responsible for the condition and maintenance as outlined in the SCSO Assigned Vehicle Maintenance Preventative Maintenance Program.

#### **G. Corrections Inmate Transport Vehicles-**

1. The SCSO has five (5) high center of gravity vehicles (HCOGV), equipped specifically for Corrections Inmate Transportation operations. HCOGV, by design are more prone to roll-over accidents than conventional passenger vehicles. As such, the operators of such HCOGV must be aware of the vehicle’s limitations in handling and maneuverability.
2. SCSO Corrections Division inmate transport vehicles used exclusively for the transportation of inmates committed to the custody of the Sheriff. These vehicles are clearly marked and identified as an SCSO vehicle and are used to transport prisoners or detainees from Federal, State and/or Local law enforcement agencies to the Seneca County Correctional Facility. In addition, SCSO Corrections transport vehicles are used to transport inmates committed to the Correctional Facility to and from various Federal, State and Local Courts, Prisons, Correctional Facilities, Hospitals, or any other location for dental or medical purposes.
3. SCSO Corrections Transport Vehicles are equipped with a passenger separator (cage) to protect the operator from the inmates being transported therein, a two-way police radio which enables Corrections staff to have immediate communication with any Local or State communications center, as well as emergency flares, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, blanket and blood borne pathogen response kit.

4. SCSO Corrections Transport Vehicle Operators are not authorized to engage in the enforcement of any traffic related violations or become involved in any vehicle pursuits. Operators of Corrections Transport Vehicles are required to abide by all of the provisions of “**Vehicle Operation and Inmate Transports**”, this manual.
5. The SCSO Corrections Division has a designated member who is responsible to ensure that all components of the SCSO Assigned Vehicle Preventative Maintenance Program are complied with.

#### **H. High Center of Gravity Vehicle Training-**

1. All SCSO Law Enforcement and Corrections Division transport officers who operate a HCOGV will receive training designed to make the operator aware of the HCOGV’s performance and handling limitations.

#### **I. All Terrain 4 x 4 Off Road Utility Vehicle-**

1. The SCSO has one all terrain 4x4 off road utility vehicle available for deployment in a variety of operations, including, but, not limited to:
  - Off road search for missing persons.
  - Shuttle personnel and equipment to off road crime scenes or incident scenes.
  - Marijuana eradication details.
  - Special events and details.
2. Authorization for deployment of this vehicle will emanate from the Uniform Road Patrol Lieutenant, who will weigh the benefits of such deployment to the mission of a particular incident or event.
3. The vehicle will not be deployed outside of Seneca County without the express approval of the Chief Deputy, Under Sheriff or Sheriff.
4. At the conclusion of the deployment of this vehicle the operator will ensure the vehicle is properly fueled.