



## Police Commissioner's Special Order

Number: SO 26-4

Date: 2/10/26

Post/Mention: Indefinite

**SUBJECT: RULE 103A, POLICE OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO DEPARTMENT  
MOTOR VEHICLES REVISED**

Effective immediately, **Rule 103A, Police Officers Assigned to Department Motor Vehicles**, is hereby revised and reissued superseding all previous rules, special orders, memos and directives on this subject.

Rule 103A is being revised to codify current practices and to address relevant standards of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

Specifically, Section 6 now includes the following sentence:

*Patrol vehicles should be equipped with police caution tape. If caution tape is missing, officers should see to its replacement.*

Michael A. Cox  
Police Commissioner

**Rule 103A, Police Officers Assigned to Department Motor Vehicles**

This rule is issued to establish the responsibilities and duties of Police Officers assigned to department motor vehicles.

**Sec. 1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:** A police officer assigned to duty in a department motor vehicle shall adhere to the rules prescribed for such service and shall be subject to all other rules and regulations prescribed for Police Officers insofar as they are not in conflict with the specific rules which apply to duty in a department motor vehicle.

**Sec. 2 A POLICE OFFICER ASSIGNED TO DUTY IN A DEPARTMENT MOTOR VEHICLE:** Shall operate only the vehicle to which they have been assigned except in an emergency or on the order of a Superior Officer.

**Sec. 3** Shall operate that vehicle only if they have a valid license to operate that class of motor vehicle issued by the Massachusetts Registrar of Motor Vehicles and has been certified to operate that class of motor vehicle by the Department.

**Sec. 4** Shall, unless otherwise directed, report to their District or Unit at the time prescribed where the vehicle to which they are assigned will be turned over to them.

**Sec. 5** Shall report to their Duty Supervisor, immediately, if the vehicle, which has been assigned to them, is otherwise assigned, or if it is unfit for use.

**Sec. 6** Shall when designated as operator make a thorough examination of the vehicle assigned to him/her and its equipment, before starting out on patrol and shall record the complete result of this inspection on the prescribed Department form used for that purpose which shall be submitted, forthwith to their Patrol Supervisor.

**NOTE:** If possible, try to make the inspection in the presence of the officer from whom you took the vehicle. NEVER TAKE OVER A POLICE VEHICLE FOR WHICH YOU WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE, UNTIL YOU MAKE A THOROUGH INSPECTION OF IT AT THE TIME.

Be sure that the spare tire is properly inflated, if it is not, HAVE IT REPAIRED AT ONCE. Officers are not expected to make repairs to cars; it is their duty to drive the car CAREFULLY and to KEEP IT CLEAN both inside and out. Officers are required to change flat tires when they occur; and then bring them to the shop at once and have them repaired. Do not run on tires that are not up to correct pressure.

Avoid striking curbstones or going over objects, as the low-pressure tires are more easily damaged, especially the sidewalls. In many instances, the front end is thrown out of alignment when the front wheels strike a curbstone resulting in a rather costly repair to the vehicle.

Patrol vehicles should be equipped with police caution tape. If caution tape is missing, officers should see to its replacement.

**Sec. 7** Shall, when designated as the operator, be responsible for the necessary cleanliness of the vehicle to which they are assigned and shall ensure that it is sufficiently supplied with fuel and lubricating oil and that the requisite amount of air is in the tires.

**Sec. 8** Shall be held responsible for failure to report any damage to the vehicle entrusted to his/her care and for any assigned department property or equipment missing from such vehicle when such damage or missing property or equipment should have been clearly discoverable by the inspection required at the beginning of his/her tour of duty.

**Sec. 9** Shall operate the vehicle at a moderate rate of speed and in such manner as will enable them to observe any conditions or occurrences in his/her assigned area, which may require police attention.

**Sec. 10** Shall either write their report in the vehicle or go into the station as determined by the supervisor.

**Sec. 11** Shall have the radio receiver of their vehicle in operation at all times during their tour of duty. They shall respond immediately to the Operations Division when their particular unit is called and shall strictly adhere to current communication procedures as outlined in Section 8 of Rule 103, Police Officer.

**Sec. 12** Shall not, except in case of an emergency or other proper performance of duty, permit any person, other than an officer of rank, to ride in the vehicle to which they are assigned except as ordered by the Police Commissioner's designee(s) or authorized by the Operations Division or the Bureau of Field Services.

**Sec. 13** Shall not, at any time during their tour of duty, leave their vehicle unattended except in an emergency or when authorized to do so. Vehicle should be secured.

**Sec. 14** Shall follow Rule 301 Pursuit Driving for pursuit situations.

**Sec. 15** Shall drive their vehicle to a destination by the most direct route and the speed of the vehicle at all times shall be regulated with due regard for the safety of the public. When responding to requests for assistance or service under emergency driving conditions shall follow strictly the provisions of Rule 302 Emergency Driving.

**Sec. 16** Shall transport sick or injured persons in their vehicle only under emergency conditions when an ambulance is unavailable and such use must be sanctioned by a Superior Officer or the Operations Division as authorized by Rule 203, Handling of Accident Victims and Emergency Medical Cases.

**Sec. 17** Shall not tamper in any way with the vehicle or radio equipment. Officers shall not make unnecessary broadcasts nor interfere in any way with the regular police radio broadcasts. They shall notify the Operations Division immediately of any defect in the operation of the radio. If unable to transmit this information they shall immediately inform their Duty Supervisor of the condition and be guided by the supervisor's directions.

**Sec. 18** Shall notify the Operations Division immediately if they are sent from their assigned area on orders not transmitted by Operations Division.

**Sec. 19** Who is the first to arrive at the scene of an emergency shall as soon as is practicable notify the Operations Division of the nature of the emergency and be guided by the instructions they receive until relieved.

**NOTE:** The first vehicle arriving at the scene will be used as the communication vehicle, whether from Headquarters or some other Unit, and shall remain in constant radio contact with the Operations Division giving complete detailed reports of conditions at the scene. Officers assigned to vehicles will use good judgment so that only vehicles assigned to the emergency by Operations Division will converge at the scene of a crime when it seems obvious that the perpetrators have fled. All operators of vehicles shall be alert for radio broadcasts from vehicles at the crime scene and make every effort to apprehend vehicles and/or suspects persons in the area.

**Sec. 20** When designated an operator, shall at the conclusion of their tour of duty deliver to the relieving Supervisor the keys to the vehicle that was assigned to them.

**Sec. 21 RADIO PATROL CARS:** Used for patrol duty in a police district, shall patrol the district except as may be otherwise directed by the Area or District Commander or the Operations Division.

**Sec. 22 PATROL WAGONS:** Are to be used for proper police purposes only and it shall be the responsibility of police officers assigned to patrol wagons to ensure that this rule is not violated. Generally, these purposes are the transportation of prisoners and property lawfully coming into the possession of the police and the movement of police personnel in the necessary performance of duty. Any other use of a department wagon must be authorized by a Superior Officer or the Operations Division.

**Sec. 23** A patrol wagon will at all times be manned by two officers in uniform, one assigned as the operator and the other as the observer, to be so designated by the Duty Supervisor, except as may be otherwise ordered by the Area or District Commander.

**Sec. 24** A police officer assigned as operator of a patrol wagon should not use this vehicle for conveying persons from one hospital to another or from a hospital to the home of a patient except in the interest of public safety with the authorization of the Operations Division.

**Sec. 25** A police officer assigned to patrol wagon duty shall render all necessary assistance to officers in securing prisoners and the observer will be held strictly responsible for the safe custody of prisoners and property placed in his/her charge for conveyance in a patrol wagon.

**Sec. 26** A police officer assigned as observer of a patrol wagon shall, whenever assigned or permitted by the Operations Division or a Superior Officer to transport a sick or injured person, ride in the rear compartment of the wagon with the person being conveyed.

**Sec. 27** When property or prisoners are being transported in a patrol wagon it shall be the responsibility of the observer to ensure that the rear doors of the wagon are securely fastened.

**Sec. 28** Whenever practicable, the observer shall ascertain the name of the arresting officer and the charge to be lodged against each prisoner placed in their wagon.

**Sec. 29 MOTORCYCLES:** Police officers assigned to Motorcycle Duty shall ride abreast in pairs unless authorized by the Operations Division or the officers' Commanding Officer or designee.

Michael A. Cox  
Police Commissioner

NOTES:

Rule 103A was revised on September 29, 2023 via Special Order 23-41.

Rule 103C AMENDED by Special Order 96-4, January 9, 1996, POLICE OFFICER AS A RANK: References in Rule 103C to the rank of Patrol Officer amended to read as Police Officer.

This rule was issued on May 31, 1979 to establish the responsibilities and duties of Police Officers assigned to department motor vehicles. It replaced Rule 25, 28, and 29, Patrolmen, Radio Patrol Cars; Motorcycles; Patrol Wagons and Ambulances of the 1950 Manual of the Department.