

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Law Enforcement**

**Part 451 Use of Vehicles**

**Chapter 1 National Wildlife Refuge System LE Vehicle Standardization and Marking 451 FW 1**

**1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter establishes policy for the marking and equipping requirements for National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Law Enforcement (LE) vehicles.

**1.2 What is the scope of this chapter?** This chapter applies to:

A. Passenger motor vehicles that Federal Wildlife Officers (FWO) use while conducting LE duties in the NWRS, and

B. Other vehicles designated specifically for FWOs to use.

**1.3 What is the authority for this chapter?** The authority for this chapter is 446 DM 12, Law Enforcement Equipment and Vehicles.

**1.4 What are the categories of NWRS LE vehicles?** We have three categories of vehicles:

**A. Class A - Standard marked patrol vehicle:** This is a vehicle we mark using the approved standards and equipment to promote a safe and effective working environment.

**B. Class B - Unmarked patrol vehicle:** Unmarked vehicles are available to Federal Wildlife Zone Officers, Supervisory FWOs, and Regional LE Chiefs. For an FWO to use an unmarked vehicle, he/she must demonstrate the need and obtain his/her supervisor's endorsement, concurrence of the respective Zone Officer, and final approval of the Regional LE Chief.

**C. Class C - Special Services (Special Operations Response Team (SORT), covert, other):** These are vehicles of any color, type, and configuration that are used on a limited basis for successful completion of an assigned mission.

**1.5 Who is responsible for the NWRS LE vehicle program?**

A. The **Director** is responsible for overseeing all Service LE programs.

B. The **Chief- NWRS** is responsible for the overall management of the NWRS LE program.

C. **Regional Directors** are responsible for supervising the Regional Chiefs, NWRS.

D. **Regional Chiefs, NWRS; Regional LE Chiefs; and Refuge Managers** ensure that the LE vehicle fleets for which they are responsible meet vehicle marking and equipment requirements.

E. **Federal Wildlife Zone Officers** provide field oversight to promote compliance with LE vehicle marking and equipment requirements.

F. The **Law Enforcement Vehicle Team (LEVT)** is comprised of Regional representatives, led by a Headquarters LE specialist, and overseen by the Deputy Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement. The members of the LEVT must communicate twice annually to address LE vehicle issues.

**1.6 What type of vehicles does the Service use as standard refuge LE vehicles?** The standard vehicle used for refuge LE must:

A. Be a factory-certified police pursuit sedan, mid- or full-sized sport utility vehicle (SUV), or 4X4 crew cab (4-door) or extended cab pickup truck or SUV. The Chief – NWRS annually approves and disseminates an authorized vehicle list that the LEVT generates. The approved vehicle list can be found on the [LE Vehicle Standards](#) intranet site.

B. Have heavy duty components for electrical, cooling, and suspension systems.

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**1.7 Why does the Service have standards for NWRS LE vehicle appearance and equipment?**

**A.** To be consistent with the industry standards of State and local natural resource LE organizations, we require vehicles to be dark-toned in color and have standardized markings. This helps the public to recognize the marked LE vehicle as a natural resource LE officer at any refuge throughout the NWRS.

**B.** Except those vehicles used primarily for investigations, surveillance, or administrative purposes, LE vehicles must be properly and clearly identifiable.

**C.** To ensure officers effectively and safely operate LE patrol vehicles across the Service, the vehicles must be equipped with standardized emergency equipment and be consistently maintained and free of obvious exterior damage.

**D.** To maintain consistency and standardization, all standard LE vehicle markings must be obtained through a Service-approved vendor. Reflective and magnetic markings are not authorized.

**1.8 What are the standards for appearance and equipment?**

**A. Class A** (standard marked) vehicles must:

**(1)** Be factory dark grey.

**(2)** Display a non-reflective, full color 4-inch Service logo on the top of the front door to the rear of the forward door seam under the side mirror.

**(3)** Display a non-reflective, full color 15-inch FWO badge centered on the front doors above the bumper strip of both front doors.

**(4)** Display non-reflective words "FEDERAL WILDLIFE OFFICER" centered on the upper part of the rear quarter panels, and centered across the tailgate/rear door of any SUV in 2 ¼ -inch, "badge gold" letters (Helvetica medium font).

**(5)** Display U.S. Government plates.

**B. Class B** (unmarked) vehicles must:

**(1)** Be factory dark grey, dark green, brown, or black.

**(2)** Display U.S. Government plates or State plates in accordance with 320 FW 4.

**C. Class C** (special services (other)) vehicles may be any color, type, and configuration, as needed, to successfully complete the mission. The equipment listed in section 1.9A is optional for Class C vehicles.

**D.** The following additional markings are optional:

**(1)** The assigned officer's "unit number" in 2-inch badge gold lettering in front of the Service insignia on the top of the front quarter panel near the door seam, and on the tailgate.

**(2)** Reflective decals of the assigned officer's "unit number" on top of the vehicle's roof for aerial recognition.

**(3)** In addition to the standard Class A marking requirements, K9 handlers' vehicles may display the words "CAUTION K9 UNIT," in two lines with non-reflective, 2 ¼ -inch (Helvetica medium font) "badge gold" letters centered on the rear doors of the vehicle, and on the upper left side of the tailgate/rear doors.

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The word "CAUTION" must be in line with the rear door handles, with "K9 UNIT" spaced below and centered on the word "CAUTION." The K9's name may be displayed in 1 ½-inch "badge gold" script lettering centered just below the rear door window. Rear windows must be dark tinted. If a K9 handler uses a pickup truck equipped with a camper shell, it should be treated the same as an SUV.

**1.9 What equipment must refuge LE vehicles carry?**

**A.** All refuge LE vehicles must carry:

- (1)** Visual and audible warning devices that comply with the emergency vehicle standards of the State where the vehicle is normally operated or kept. Emergency lighting must be visible for 360 degrees.
- (2)** Fixed gun locks/mounts or gun vaults to carry Service-issued long guns.
- (3)** Radio system that allows the officer to communicate with other FWOs and local LE agencies, both to provide and request assistance.
- (4)** Basic emergency repair kit, including flares, jumper cables, and reflective/lighted markers.
- (5)** Hands-free cell phone device, when the location allows the officer to commonly use a cell phone (i.e., there is cell phone service).
- (6)** Light cut-off switch (brake, reverse, turn signal, parking lights, dash lights, etc.).
- (7)** Two mounted, rechargeable flashlights.
- (8)** Spotlight, mounted or handheld.
- (9)** Fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- (10)** Within 5 years of the date this policy is published, an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

**B.** Watercraft must meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements for equipment (see 241 FW 1).

**C.** Officers may add equipment to meet the needs of their particular patrol area. For example, we recommend the following equipment in some situations:

- (1)** Prisoner transport barrier.
- (2)** Mobile video/audio recording devices.
- (3)** Traffic radar devices.
- (4)** GPS or navigation devices.
- (5)** Locking storage vault to secure equipment.
- (6)** Laptop computer mount.
- (7)** Tires suitable for the environmental conditions.
- (8)** Other specialized equipment necessary to meet the operational or safety considerations at the station or complex.

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**1.10 Who may use marked refuge LE vehicles?**

- A. With limited exceptions, only commissioned FWOs may use refuge LE vehicles.
- B. Supervisors, in coordination with the FWO, may approve exceptions on a case-by-case basis, allowing other Service employees to operate refuge LE vehicles. These exceptions should be made only for authorized maintenance personnel and for training purposes.
- C. If someone other than an FWO is operating a marked LE vehicle, the vehicle should be identified as "out of service" (see 446 DM 12) and all firearms must be removed.

**1.11 What are the requirements for other refuge LE vehicles designated specifically for LE and used for high visibility patrol (e.g., All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), watercraft, and snow machines)?**

- A. FWO supervisors must ensure that ATVs, watercraft, snow machines, and other types of vehicles used for high visibility LE operations are appropriately equipped and clearly identifiable as refuge LE vehicles/watercraft.
- B. These refuge LE vehicles/watercraft must be marked using the same standards as for Class A (standard marked) vehicles to the extent feasible. Because these vehicles/watercraft vary in size and configuration, markings may be adjusted proportionately.

**1.12 What are the replacement standards for refuge LE vehicles?** We must replace Class A and B refuge LE vehicles at least every 5 years or 75,000 miles, whichever comes first (see 320 FW 2 for minimum replacement requirements).

**1.13 When do LE personnel have to implement the requirements in this chapter?** Except for the color requirement, all vehicles dedicated to refuge LE must conform to this policy immediately after it is signed. Current refuge LE vehicles may remain white in color until they are replaced.

/sgd/ Rowan W. Gould  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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