

NEW CASTLE COUNTY
Department of Police

MEMORANDUM

TO: Colonel Rick Gregory
Chief of Police

FROM: Captain E. M. Setting
Commander Records Division

SUBJECT: TAKE HOME CAR JUSTIFICATION

DATE: February 9, 2007

Purpose of report: Provide information about Police Unit Take Home Programs

Background:

A request was made from the Chief of Police to provide information on Police take home units. The following information is based on our own departmental history of using pool vehicles versus take home units. Some the information is based on meetings between administrators and fleet managers and police officers on the advantages of take home units.

Advantages of take home police units:

Most departments that have implemented a take home car program report the useful lifetime of each car has been extended considerably. For instance when this department used strictly pool cars, cars lasted approximately 3 years, we are now using the same cars for approximately nine years.

If we were to switch back to pool cars here are several draw backs that would in turn cost time and money:

1. Each officer would have to drive through traffic from their home to police headquarters for each shift. Upon arrival officers would have to wait for cars to be issued after roll call, extending the amount of time an entire platoon of officers is at H.Q. and not available to the citizens of New Castle County.
2. Each officer would have to locate and inspect their cars for damage from previous shifts; to insure the officer responsible for the damage is identified versus an

officer being disciplined for damage he or she did not cause. This also extends the amount of time an officer must spend at headquarters and would not be available for service to the citizens. If damage is located it must be reported and investigated by a supervisor reducing additional service to the citizens of New Castle County.

3. Each officer would have to transfer all of their equipment, including all WMD equipment, administrative equipment, departmental computer, tactical gear and additional weapons, such as long guns, and SWAT gear if assigned, on each day of each shift.

4. Each officer would be required to drive to their assigned patrol area, through traffic at high-volume traffic times. At times officers will have to drive with emergency equipment to respond to their assigned areas for priority calls, after leaving H.Q., increasing danger for the officer as well as the public. This also decreases service time to the public of New Castle County.

5. At the end of a shift, officers in their assigned areas will have to respond through traffic and return to H.Q., fuel their vehicles, unload their equipment and turn their car in after re-inspecting it for damage or contraband from arrests. This adds additional time to the officer's shift which in many cases means that overtime will be incurred at time and a half pay. If the officer relieving them is late responding to the assigned area this is additional overtime and reduced service.

6. Each platoon has approximately 40 officers, if each officer spends 15 minutes in roll call and adds an additional 45 minutes to their shift to account for travel time, vehicle inspection, equipment transfer and turning the vehicle in we are losing 40 hours per shift of service time. If you extrapolate those 40 hours over three shifts per day and seven days per week, it adds up to approximately 840 hours per week we will not be offering police service. In just one month we will lose approximately 3,360 hours of service time to the public if you were to extrapolate this over a year it equals approximately 40,320 hours of lost service. Of course during summer traffic and longer roll calls these numbers would be even higher.

7. New Castle County Tax-payers would also have to face the increased cost of officers being called in to testify in court. In other words we will have to pay officers overtime to respond to police H.Q., to requisition a vehicle, locate it, inspect it, transfer some safety equipment, then drive through traffic to court, return to police headquarters, re-inspect the vehicle, transfer equipment back to your personal car and turn the car back in at H.Q., all on overtime.

8. The Department of public safety would also have to have additional vehicles on hand for officers on call and court including all certified SWAT Officers, Bomb Technicians and on call Detectives including the public information officer. Which would result in a fleet almost the same size as we have now, except with no assigned officer, which would mean no real accountability and excessive wear and tear.

Justification: At present the following time and money are saved due to each officer having a take-home car:

1. Lieutenants typically hold only one roll-call per shift, and they cancel roll call when traffic is heavy and officers use the portal to review critical police and safety information. In essence, the advanced police technology allows for officers to have an electronic roll call without ever wasting time or fuel to respond to H.Q.

2. Officers who live near or in their assigned patrol area go immediately into service especially during summer traffic.

3. Officers do not have to inspect vehicles or respond to headquarters at the end of their shift due to the technology of our paperless system.

4. Officers do not respond to H.Q. for court and have the ability be on stand-by time versus time and a half.

5. Officers feel responsible for their vehicle and take better care of it which leads to longer life of the vehicle.

6. Officers that are required to be on-call all ready have a vehicle issued for emergency response.

Because we all ready have our fleet assigned there is no start-up cost associated with the program just maintenance and replacement cost.