

 Office of Mental Health <hr/> Official Policy Manual	Date issued 08/25/23	Supersedes 04/01/07	Page 1 of 2	Section # A-3008
	Section: Administration			
	Directive: Use of Emergency Vehicles			
	Policy Owner: Director, Administrative Support Services Group			

A. Use of Emergency Vehicles

OMH Safety Department Vehicles (Safety Vehicle) must only be operated by authorized OMH Safety personnel who have been trained on the proper use of emergency vehicles, precluding officer trainees and civilians from use. Officers authorized to operate a Safety Vehicle are required to be in uniform when driving a Safety Vehicle at any time for any purpose.

Safety Vehicles shall be outfitted with standard Agency authorized equipment and decals. Any requests for modifications to the OMH standard must be submitted in writing to the Director of Administrative Support Services Group (ASSG) and receive approval prior to any modifications being implemented. Information regarding current OMH standards for Safety Vehicle outfitting/decals may be obtained from OMH Fleet Services.

All operators of Safety Vehicles are required annually to review and acknowledge their understanding of the OMH Vehicle Use Policy, a copy of which can be obtained from ASSG – Fleet Services, or Statewide Learning Management System (SLMS) <https://nyslearn.ny.gov/> or the ASSG SharePoint Site [Transportation and Fleet Management \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

Safety Vehicles must have a weekly check completed by an assigned Safety Officer to ensure vehicle condition is monitored. Any vehicle problems or unsafe conditions should be reported to the Chief Safety Officer or delegate and Fleet Manager.

The Fleet Manager will report unsafe conditions or maintenance problems to ASSG – Fleet Services.

In order to maintain a safe response, Safety Vehicles shall be operated in an emergency response manner only when the situation warrants such response. The only situations warranting such response include life-threatening situations including fires, medical emergencies, assaults, and hostage situations.

In responding to emergencies an Officer will utilize due caution. Discretion will be used in utilizing emergency lights and sirens. Any use of emergency lights, sirens and operation of the emergency vehicle will be done with strict adherence to the Motor Vehicle Laws of the State of New York. Officers will always drive with extreme caution when responding to emergencies.

Red warning lights may be used at the scene of emergencies or hazardous situations to ensure the safety of those responders working at the scene or arriving at the scene. Red lights may also be used to warn others approaching the scene to exercise caution.

It is the policy of OMH that Safety Departments will not initiate or participate in any high-speed pursuits. For the purpose of this policy, a high-speed pursuit is any pursuit of a suspect vehicle or suspect that appears to be dangerous for the conditions present such as climate considerations, pedestrian density rates, lighting conditions, and/or similar elements.

All vehicle accidents and damage must be reported in accordance with the OMH Vehicle Use Policy [Transportation and Fleet Management \(sharepoint.com\)](#). In the event of a motor vehicle accident, it is the driver's responsibility to stop, remain at the scene of the accident, and follow procedures as outlined in the OMH Vehicle Use Policy. There are exceptions for circumstances that would place a patient, staff member, or visitor in danger – the Safety Officer is expected to use reasonable discretion in these types of events to determine if stopping is the safest option for a crisis situation, including a crisis that involves an OMH patient. In these limited circumstances the Safety Officer should notify their Chief or Safety Shift Supervisor as soon as practicable.

For motor vehicle accidents/collisions occurring on OMH grounds, The Office of General Services (OGS) requires the MV-104A be completed by an OMH Peace Officer and submitted to OMH Fleet Services and a copy to NYS Department of Motor Vehicles. OMH's internal 250 Incident Report is not an acceptable substitute form for a motor vehicle accident/collision. OMH Accident Reporting Procedures are located on the ASSG SharePoint site: [Transportation and Fleet Management \(sharepoint.com\)](#).