DAVIS POLICE DEPARTMENT
PLAINCLOTHES & UNMARKED VEHICLE
OPERATIONS
Policy and Procedure 2.36-B

DEPARTMENT MANUAL

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Plainclothes Operations
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Undercover Operations

I. POLICY

The quick and effective recognition of plainclothes or undercover officers is important for the safety of the officer, any other responding officers, and to the public.

II. PROCEDURE

A. General Procedures

1. As a general rule, plainclothes or undercover officers must always assume they will not be identifiable or recognized by other responding officers or the public as a police officer, especially in a critical incident or when outside agencies may also be responding.

2. Plainclothes or undercover officers must always announce their response to, or presence at, an incident by radioing Dispatch of their response, the fact that they are not in uniform, and by providing a general description of themselves and their vehicle.

3. Absent an imminent risk of injury to themselves or others, plainclothes or undercover officers shall wear approved marked/identifiable class A - D uniforms when taking enforcement action or when present at a crime or incident scene. Marked/identifiable means the word “POLICE” is readily visible and either a class A - D uniform is worn or the outermost garment has regular Davis PD shoulder patches and a properly displayed badge.

4. If there is an imminent risk of injury to themselves or others, and whenever feasible, when taking enforcement action in plainclothes, officers shall wear/display their badge or department-issued identification card so that it is readily visible or so that is worn immediately adjacent to their firearm. If feasible, the badge or identification shall be displayed to a person if the police officer draws or exhibits a firearm. Police officers shall be prepared to immediately display their official photo identification upon request and shall honor those requests when the request is reasonable and the police officer’s safety has been ensured.

5. Due to the possibility that plainclothes or undercover officers are often not recognized by other officers, they shall obey all orders given to them by other officers—including orders to disarm themselves, place their hands in the air, or assuming other non-threatening positions.

6. A fully uniformed (Class A - C) police officer driving a marked patrol car shall be present when executing any search warrant. All police officers participating in the execution of a search warrant shall wear an approved Class A - D uniform.
B. Use of Unmarked Vehicles

1. Red Light Required

Vehicles used for regular plainclothes assignments (e.g., Investigations and Administration) shall be equipped with a forward facing red light that shall be used when taking enforcement action.

Officers shall not engage in enforcement action in an unmarked vehicle without a forward facing red light unless there is an imminent risk of injury to themselves or others.

2. Identification.

Police officers using unmarked police vehicles shall carry their police identification cards on their person to verify their identity, unless the officer is engaged in undercover operations and it would jeopardize the police officers’ safety or the integrity of an investigation. Otherwise, police officers shall be prepared to display their official identification upon request. Police officers shall honor those requests when the request is reasonable and the police officer’s safety has been ensured. If the police officer does not carry official identification, the officer shall not engage in enforcement action unless there is an immediate risk of injury or death to themselves or others.

3. Uniforms.

Police officers using unmarked police vehicles to perform regular patrol duties shall wear a standard Class A - C uniform.

Police officers assigned to other duties that may include or require traffic or people stops shall wear a Class A – D uniform.

C. Vehicle Stops and Pursuits

1. Stopping suspected violators while operating an unmarked police vehicle.

a. Police officers stopping suspected violators shall attempt to choose the safest available location for the police officer and the motorist, consistent with the need for prompt action.

b. Police officers shall take into consideration the road and weather conditions, terrain, lighting, traffic and the nature of the violation. The police officer shall also attempt to choose a location that will afford both the driver and the police officer a sense of safety.

2. Use of audible and visual signals required while operating an unmarked police vehicle.

A solid red light shall be used when making enforcement stops. The purpose of this provision is to help identify the unmarked car as an official police vehicle.

3. Unmarked police vehicle pursuits.

Subject to the provisions of PP 2.00-A, Emergency Vehicle Operations, police officers engaged in a pursuit using an unmarked police vehicle shall relinquish their role as the primary and secondary pursuit vehicles and permit police officers in marked police vehicles to assume the role of the pursuit vehicles when that assistance is available.
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