

Agenda Item Memo

To: Judge Snell and County Commissioners

From: Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Fire Marshal's Office (FMO)

Date: May 20, 2025

Re: Take Home Vehicle Explanation and Justification

From The Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

Dear County Commissioners and Judge Snell,

We are requesting a budget change order/addendum to further enhance our operational efficiency and the effectiveness of our Office of Emergency Management (OEM). OEM has a Duty Officer on call 24 hours per day, every day of the year. This responsibility is rotated weekly among our Emergency Management Specialists. The OEM On-Call Duty Officer Essential Duties include:

1. Monitor of potential threats or impacts to WILCO.
2. Rapidly Respond to Resource Requests
3. Mass Notification

There is often a need to respond directly to a scene to assess the level of threat or degree of impact and communicate that information back to senior officials. This is especially true when we have large wildfires or severe storms. In addition, being on-scene facilitates faster and better coordination and communication when response assets are being anticipated or requested. It is essential they respond quickly to the scene and assess what is needed, including the potential activation of the EOC.

Although the OEM On-Call Duty Officer is required to respond in a county vehicle, the Budget Order 2024/2025 does not list this position in the *Public Safety Personnel (required to commute in the vehicle)*. As a result, the current after hours and weekend procedure is for the Duty Officer to commute to the Emergency Services Operations Center, exchange their POV for a county response vehicle, and respond to the scene. This may add an hour or more to their response time which could have a substantial impact on the county response and recovery.

OEM respectfully requests a Budget Order change to include the OEM On-Call Duty Officer.

From The Fire Marshal's Office (FMO)

Dear County Commissioners and Judge Snell,

I am requesting a budget change order/addendum to further enhance our operational efficiency and effectiveness of our Fire Marshal Special Operations division. I strongly advocate for an addendum/exception to the take-home vehicle policy in the current budget order and future budget orders for all personnel within the Fire Marshal Special Operations division. The reasons for this request are grounded not only in operational necessity but also in our commitment to always ensuring public safety. I also request to allow my Assistant Fire Marshal to be able to take his county assigned vehicle home on weeks that he is "on-call" since he lives just outside of the County boundaries. The Assistant Fire Marshal will continue to meet the requirements for securing the vehicle as stated in the budget order on weeks that he is not on-call.

1. ****Readiness for Emergent Responses****: Having a county vehicle readily accessible at their residence allows our personnel to respond immediately to urgent situations such as fires, arson incidents, explosions, or HazMat calls. The nature of our work demands rapid response capabilities, and any delay could have significant consequences for public safety.
2. ****Operational Efficiency****: Allowing personnel to take their assigned vehicles home will reduce unnecessary mileage and wear on the vehicles. This policy enables personnel to conduct fire inspections in their area and surrounding areas, maximizing the time spent in the field rather than commuting back to the office. As a result, they can complete inspections earlier and remain available for "call outs" in the field working for extended periods, enhancing our overall inspection output.
3. ****Improved Response Times****: Time is of the essence when it comes to emergency response. By eliminating the need for personnel to switch vehicles after hours, we can significantly decrease response times. This direct access to county vehicles means that personnel can head straight to the scene, minimizing delays caused by vehicle transitions and ensuring that first responders on the scene can return to service more quickly.
4. ****All Hands-on Deck****: Our "on-call" schedule does not always reflect the reality of our operations. There are instances where all personnel may be required to respond to a critical incident simultaneously. Having vehicles at their disposal will ensure that all team members can mobilize efficiently, allowing us to address incidents with the full force of our resources.
5. ****Enhancing Community Safety****: By approving our request to the take-home vehicle policy signifies our commitment to community safety and the professionalism of our

operations. It sends a strong message that we are prepared and dedicated to serving our community around the clock.

In conclusion, allowing our Fire Marshal Special Operations personnel to take their assigned vehicles home is a necessary step towards improving our operational effectiveness, enhancing public safety, and ensuring that we are always prepared to respond to emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Summary

From the current Budget Order, we are requesting the modifications of the positions highlighted below.

2. Approved positions for Take Home Vehicles

The following is an all-inclusive list of positions that may be required to respond to emergencies outside of their normal work assignments, and may, with the concurrence of their department head or elected official, take a county vehicle to their residence, within Williamson County, at the end of their shift to allow them to respond as required.

A. Public Safety Personnel (required to commute in the vehicle)

- a) The Sheriff and paid law enforcement as follows: Sheriff's Patrol Deputies, Sheriff's Detectives, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Commanders, Assistant Chiefs and Chief
- b) Each Constable and Deputy Constables
- c) Investigators in the District Attorney and County Attorneys offices
- d) EMS Division Commanders and Operation Commander, preapproval required by EMS Director
- e) The Fire Marshal Special Operations Chief, Asst. Fire Marshal and Special Operations Asst. Chief, **Hazmat Special Operation Captain and Fire Marshal Deputy**
- f) Road and Bridge Director of Field Operations, (12) Senior Foremen and Foreman•
- g) The Senior Director of Emergency Services, Director of Emergency Management and the Deputy Director of Emergency Management

B. On Call Vehicle Rotation Only (note - out of County miles, if approved)

- a) On call Crime Scene Employees
- b) On call Animal Control Employees
- c) Two Facilities Maintenance Employees*
- d) **One Hazmat Special Operations Captain**
- e) Wireless Communications Tower Technician(s)
- f) **On call Emergency Management Employee**

* Positions listed in Section A and B may be taxed on vehicle usage. Please reach out to the Auditor's Office for more information.