



OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

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24-02 Colorado Springs Police Department Vehicle Management and Utilization

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Purpose

The purpose of this audit was to verify the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) vehicle inventory, determine utilization of vehicles, and consider the efficiency and effectiveness of vehicle utilization. This review included evaluation of take-home vehicle utilization against CSPD policy. Additionally, we considered whether centralizing vehicle management within CSPD would benefit the department.

Highlights

We conclude that overall, CSPD vehicle inventory was accurate. Improvements can be made related to vehicle management and utilization. We identified five observations and one opportunity for improvement during our review.

CSPD operated a total fleet of approximately 800 in service vehicles at 14 locations. Vehicles included marked police vehicles for patrol, unmarked vehicles, undercover, administrative units, take-home vehicles, trailers, and utility vehicles used for emergency response purposes. Vehicles were assigned to the following bureaus based on type required to achieve the mission of CSPD: patrol, investigative and special operations, operations support, and executive staff.

CSPD managed fleet acquisition, retirement, utilization, and maintenance functions in coordination with Fleet Management Services.

The audit was conducted in coordination with CSPD personnel and included a physical review of vehicles at all CSPD locations. Interviews were held with personnel to understand procedures and documentation was reviewed to verify compliance with CSPD policy. Vehicle data was analyzed to evaluate effectiveness of utilization. Finally, throughout the entire review process we evaluated the potential benefits of centralization of the fleet as requested by CSPD.

We would like to thank CSPD staff for their assistance and support during this review.

Management Response

Management agreed with our recommendations. CSPD thanks the City Auditor for their review of our vehicle fleet, and for providing recommendations for enhancements. We have already begun work in several of these areas, and will continue to do so throughout 2024.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that damage to vehicles has been reported in the notification system.
2. Conduct review of asset control system to verify vehicles assigned to each division.
3. Review mileage of department vehicles and evaluate options to improve utilization.
4. Evaluate process used for completion of vehicle equipment inspection and inventory forms. Establish a centralized repository for completed forms that is monitored to ensure compliance.
5. Evaluate CSPD policy and enhance oversight responsibilities and a centralized tracking system for take-home vehicles.

Opportunity for Improvement:

1. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis and evaluate options for improved policy compliance.

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Observation 1

During the review of inventory at the patrol divisions, auditors noted that damage to some vehicles was not reported in the records system, per CSPD policy. There does not appear to be a verification process for ensuring damage to vehicles is documented.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

Implement a verification process to ensure damage to vehicles has been reported in the system.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation. CSPD will review and enhance our vehicle damage reporting methods. We will implement any identified changes by 07/01/2024.

Observation 2

We observed instances where vehicles were assigned to officers that were not correctly identified in the system. We also observed instances where vehicle identification information in the system was incorrect.

There was not a process in place to review the accuracy of the information in the asset control system. CSPD does not have an individual dedicated to maintaining the data. Timely updates to the system are critical to ensure data integrity.

All vehicles and police equipment inventory were managed through CSPD's asset control system. Officers requiring use of a vehicle must contact a supervisor, corporal, or subject matter expert to obtain keys and ensure proper check out in the system.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

Implement a process for a periodic review of the system to verify and account for all vehicles assigned to each division.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation. CSPD will review and enhance our vehicle inventory tracking and assignment methods. We will provide updates on this by 07/01/2024.

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Observation 3

Vehicles were not replaced in a uniform and predictable manner. The utilization of the fleet was not regularly reviewed to ensure optimal rotation.

CSPD operates vehicles from model years 2000 to 2023. These vehicles are used in different assignments (patrol, investigations, administrative, etc.) with different levels of use and mileage dependent on operational requirements. In reviewing the total fleet, it appears some older vehicles have less mileage than newer vehicles.

We obtained information from the fleet management system regarding the age and mileage of CSPD vehicles. We also received information from the City Fleet Manager related to criteria for fleet replacement.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation. Prior to the completion of this audit, CSPD independently identified this as an issue and we are implementing a pilot patrol vehicle rotation program in 2024.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

1. Review the use of older/low mileage vehicles to determine effective use. Additionally, consider the need for pool vehicles versus specifically assigning a vehicle to certain CSPD personnel to improve utilization.
2. Consider analysis of CSPD's fleet utilization and provide solutions for effectiveness in alignment with replacement criteria.
3. Consider the benefits of fleet rotation to optimize CSPD's assets.

Observation 4

We did not receive all vehicle inspection forms from any of the divisions. There does not appear to be a standard process for verifying completion of the forms or maintaining the completed forms in a centralized repository.

To confirm compliance to CSPD policy, we requested copies of vehicle equipment inspection and inventory forms from the patrol divisions. The forms included information regarding the condition of the vehicle, its mileage, and equipment in the vehicle.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation. CSPD will assess and update our vehicle inventory process in 2024. We will implement any identified changes by 07/01/2024.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

1. Evaluate the need for oversight to ensure vehicle equipment inspection and inventory forms are complete and conducted bi-annually in accordance with CSPD policy.
2. Establish a centralized repository for all completed forms that is periodically monitored to ensure compliance to policy.

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Observation 5

The take-home vehicle policy did not indicate responsibility for oversight of the take-home vehicle program to ensure proper safeguarding of CSPD assets.

We reviewed required take-home vehicle approval forms for accuracy and compliance to policy. We observed that some forms were incomplete or included inaccurate information and others were not approved by the appropriate level of management, as required by the policy.

Certain CSPD positions and assignments require officers or staff to be available and respond to a variety of situations. This includes after-hours events and those operating in an on-call capacity. To ensure a timely response, these individuals were afforded access to a take-home vehicle.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation. CSPD will review and enhance our take-home vehicle program in 2024. We will provide an update on this in Q1 2025.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

1. Evaluate CSPD policy and enhance oversight responsibilities and a centralized tracking system for take-home vehicles.
2. Review CSPD policy to ensure alignment with procedures. Consider changes to the policy or procedures, as required.
3. Implement a verification process to ensure completeness, accuracy, and validity of take-home vehicle approval forms.

Opportunity 1

Several processes related to fleet management were administered at the division level and there was lack of compliance. Based on our observations noted above, processes should be evaluated and possibly modified to improve compliance to CSPD policy.

During our review we evaluated CSPD's processes and procedures related to fleet management for efficiency and effectiveness.

Management Response

We will assess this opportunity during our work on the recommendations provided in this report. We will provide updates on this in Q1 2025.

Recommendation

CSPD Management should:

Consider conducting a cost-benefit analysis to determine if compliance may be improved through the CSPD centralization of fleet management functions and if changes are appropriate given overall CSPD budget and prioritization.