



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Brian Manley, Interim Police Chief
Jennifer Walls, Interim Fleet Office

Date: July 28, 2017

Subject: Ford Explorers and Ford Utility Interceptors

Staff from the Fleet Services Department and the Austin Police Department continue to monitor the carbon monoxide situation with our Ford Explorers and Utility Interceptor vehicles and are working to identify solutions, but the number and severity of cases has reached a critical mass. The safety of our police officers and staff is our chief concern. With that in mind, beginning tomorrow, Saturday June 28, we will begin removing from service all Ford Explorers and Utility Interceptors used by the City of Austin. Ford Utility Interceptors used as frontline patrol vehicles will be exchanged for other vehicles throughout the weekend. We anticipate this exchange will be complete by the end of the day on Monday, July 31.

Currently, with the growing number of cases and the ongoing safety concerns we consider it the most prudent action to take these vehicles out of service. APD and Fleet have already identified the number of cars required for APD to continue normal operations. The Austin Police Department utilizes 397 of these vehicles for frontline operations. To maintain normal staffing levels, we will be pulling cars from across our operations and from our reserve fleet. We have identified 206 vehicles we can use that are ready to be redeployed to front line operations immediately. Under normal operations most police officers are alone in their vehicle. Once the Ford Utility Interceptors are removed from service, most vehicles will have two officers in one car.

Additionally, departments other than APD that utilize Ford Explorers will have their vehicles removed from service. Fleet Services staff have contacted each department that has a Ford Explorer in their fleet and are working to identify substitute vehicles that will meet their needs.

Since, we were made aware of this situation back in March, we have removed 73 vehicles from service due to carbon monoxide concerns. Almost all of the concerns have been triggered by the carbon monoxide detectors installed in the cars. The Austin Police Department has had 18 officers who have been tested

and had elevated levels of carbon monoxide. APD has three officers that are on “no-duty” status as a result of possible carbon monoxide exposure. These officers remain at home and are receiving treatment. We are working with Human Resources and our third party worker’s compensation provider to deliver comprehensive case management to all those affected.

Currently, the City has 446 Ford Explorers and Utility Interceptors in the fleet; 397 are assigned to the Austin Police Department and 49 are assigned to other City departments. Some of the vehicles are being sent to Ford dealerships to have repairs done to them in accordance with a technical service bulletin that has been issued by Ford.

The investigation into this problem is still ongoing. Yesterday, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced they are expanding their investigation into the 2011-2017 year model Ford Explorers and Utility Interceptors. The agency and Ford continue to evaluate the vehicles that have had problems and are continuing to make inroads in finding a solution that will make these vehicles safe to drive. NHTSA and Ford have been working with our staff this week to evaluate the vehicles that have had problems. This process has included test driving the vehicles, extensive examinations of key vehicle components, testing of the exhaust system, and extensive carbon monoxide monitoring in the vehicles.. Until we are satisfied that this problem can be resolved by repairs, these vehicles will remain out of service.

Cc: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
Mark Washington, Assistant City Manager
Ken Casaday, Austin Police Association President