

# Presidential state car (United States)

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The **Presidential state car** is the official state car used by the President of the United States. A variety of vehicles have both officially and unofficially been acknowledged as the presidential vehicle. Since the late 1930s, the U.S. government has specially commissioned vehicles for presidential use, often specifying advanced communications equipment, special convenience features, armor plating, and defense countermeasures. American cars are traditionally chosen for the role. The most recent vehicle to be customized as the presidential car is a Chevrolet Kodiak-based, Cadillac-badged limousine often referred to as *Cadillac One* and occasionally as *Limo One* (a reference to the U.S. presidential aircraft, Air Force One) or as *The Beast*.

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## Presidential state car



<b>Manufacturer</b>	General Motors
<b>Production</b>	2009
<b>Model years</b>	2009
<b>Predecessor</b>	2005 Cadillac DTS Presidential State Car

## Current model

The current presidential limousine entered service on January 20, 2009. According to the manufacturer, General Motors, the 2009 presidential limousine, based on the Cadillac DTS, is the first not to carry a specific model name.<sup>[1][2]</sup> The vehicle's outward appearance carries many current Cadillac styling themes, but does not resemble any particular production vehicle. The body itself seems to be a modification of the immediately previous DTS-badged Presidential limousines, but the vehicle's chassis and driveline are sourced from the Chevrolet Kodiak commercial truck.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Many body components are sourced from a variety of Cadillac vehicles; for example, the car uses Cadillac Escalade headlights, side mirrors and door handles. The tail of the car seems to use the taillights and back up lights from the Cadillac STS sedan.<sup>[4]</sup> Although a price tag has not been announced, each limousine is assumed to cost US\$300,000.<sup>[5]</sup>

## General specifications

The Secret Service refers to the heavily armored vehicle as *The Beast*.<sup>[6]</sup> Most details of the car are classified for security reasons. A special night vision system is in a secret location. Special loops replace the stock door handles; agents hold on to them when running alongside the car. Goodyear run-flat tires fit into extra-large wheel wells. The car is sealed against biochemical attacks.<sup>[7]</sup> Kept in the trunk is a blood bank of the President's blood type.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

The car can seat seven people, including the president. The front seats two, and includes a console-mounted communications center. A glass partition divides the front from back. Three rear-facing seats are in the back, with cushions that are able to fold over the partition. The two rear seats are reserved for the president and another passenger; these seats have the ability to recline individually. A folding desk is between the two rear seats. Storage compartments in the interior panels of the car contain communications equipment which is called the Limousine Control Package and is operated by the White House Communication Agency. This is the voice and data device that links the vehicle to the WHCA Roadrunner at the rear of the motorcade allowing command and control (or "C2") functions to be



A side view of the 2009 limousine.



Presidential State Car from the front

performed from the limo. The trunk lid has five antennas.<sup>[1]</sup> The car is driven by a highly trained Secret Service agent who is capable of performing a J-turn. This maneuver, taught at the Secret Service training facility outside Washington D.C., can turn the limo 180 degrees in matter of seconds to escape any trouble. The President's lead protective agent usually sits in the front passenger seat.

On domestic trips, vehicles carrying the president display the American and Presidential Standard flags, which are illuminated by directional flood lights mounted on the hood. When the President performs a state visit to a foreign country, the Presidential Standard is replaced by the foreign country's flag.<sup>[7]</sup> The limousine is airlifted for domestic and international use primarily by a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III.<sup>[10]</sup>

The vehicle fuel efficiency is about 8 miles per US gallon (29 L/100 km; 9.6 mpg-imp).<sup>[11][12][13][14]</sup>

The United States government also operates similarly designed limousines for VIP guests, visiting heads of government, and heads of state.

## Trivia

As of President Obama's 2nd Inauguration day (Monday, January 21st, 2013), "*The Beast*" features a Washington DC license plate number **800 002**. The plate is a **special** in that it is in support of the DC *No Taxation Without Representation* effort. <sup>[15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21]</sup>

## Presidential motorcade



President Obama and Vice President Biden riding inside a presidential limousine during a motorcade.

Since 2001, when the president travels out of town, his motorcade has consisted of about 45 vehicles. While the limousine itself is maintained by the Secret Service, motorcade support vehicles are maintained by the White House Military Office.<sup>[22]</sup> At times, the president travels in the presidential Suburban, one of two Chevrolet Suburbans with the presidential seal on the sides.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Previous presidential limousines

### Early vehicles (1910s–1950)

President William McKinley was the first president to ride in an automobile, but it was not until the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt

that the first government-owned automobile was used, a white Stanley Steamer.<sup>[22]</sup> Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft purchased a White Motor Company Model M Steamer as his official car, and converted the White House stable into an automobile garage.<sup>[23][24]</sup> Taft also ordered a pair of Pierce-Arrows to be used for official state occasions. President Woodrow Wilson also favored cars over horse-drawn carriages,<sup>[22]</sup> and was one of the first chief executives to ride in a Cadillac during a World War I victory parade through the streets of Boston. In 1921, President Warren Harding was the first to ride to his inauguration in a car, a Packard Twin-Six,<sup>[25]</sup> and a lavish 1928 Cadillac town car was used by his successor, President Calvin Coolidge.

In 1938, two Cadillac convertibles dubbed *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* were delivered to the U.S. government. Named after the great ocean liners of the time, the 21.5 ft (6.6 m), 7,660 lb (3,470 kg) vehicles were equipped with a full ammunition arsenal, two way radios, and heavy duty generators. Durable and reliable, the two "Queens" served Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The first car specially built for presidential use was the 1939 Lincoln V12 convertible called the *Sunshine Special*, used by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The limousine was originally equipped with a siren, running lights, a 2-way radio, extra-wide running boards, and grab handles for Secret Service agents. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Secret Service became more concerned about potential assassination attempts against President Roosevelt. The following day, 8 December 1941, a heavily armored 1928 Cadillac 341A Town Sedan, originally belonging to gangster Al Capone, was pressed into use to transport the president to the Capitol to deliver his "Infamy" speech. The car had been confiscated by the Treasury Department following Capone's arrest and stored in an impound lot until its ironic final duty. Roosevelt used the Capone car until his "Sunshine Special" was modified to be bulletproof, with armor plating for the doors, bullet-proof tires, inch-thick windows and storage compartments for sub-machine guns.<sup>[26][27]</sup> The Ford Motor Company leased the car to the office of the president for \$500 a year.<sup>[26]</sup> It remained in use until 1948, and is now on permanent display at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.

The Secret Service would later use custom-bodied 1956, 1976, and 1983 Series 75 Cadillac convertibles as follow-up command cars into the 1990s.

### Age of automobiles (1950–1969)

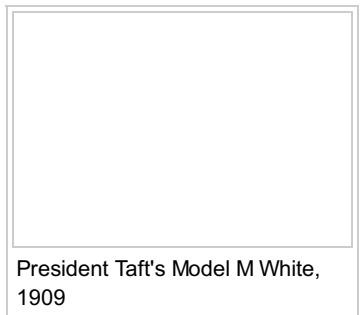
The custom-built 1950 Lincoln Continental limousines were delivered to the White House in 1950 for



The 2009 limousine makes its debut in the 2009 inaugural parade, guarded by Secret Service agents. Behind it are the two backup 2005 limousines previously used by President George W. Bush.



On both domestic and foreign trips, the limousine is transported in a C-17 Globemaster III.



President Taft's Model M White, 1909

Two custom built 1950 Lincoln Cosmopolitan limousines were delivered to the White House in 1950 for use by President Truman. At the suggestion of President Eisenhower one was fitted with a glass roof and was dubbed the "Bubble Top". It was later used by John F. Kennedy<sup>[22]</sup> and once by Lyndon B. Johnson. It was retired in 1965 and is now on permanent display at the Henry Ford Museum. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was known for being fond of automobiles, rode in one of the first Cadillac Eldorados during the 1953 Inauguration Day parade.

President John F. Kennedy's limousine, in which he was assassinated, was a 1961 Lincoln Continental convertible, which also came with a Plexiglas bubble top in the event of inclement weather. The vehicle was custom built by Hess and Eisenhart of Cincinnati, and was known as the SS-100-X. The car was retrofitted with armor plating, a permanent sedan roof, a new interior, an improved air-conditioning system, electronic communications equipment, bulletproof glass, repainted black and cosmetic alterations to remove damage incurred during the assassination, among other changes. The car is on display at the Henry Ford Museum.<sup>[28]</sup>

The Johnson administration used three 1965 Lincoln Continental Executive limousines; two were for presidential use and one for Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (a former president of the Ford Motor Company.) A 1968 stretch Lincoln was used in Washington, D.C. and Austin, Texas, Johnson's hometown. This vehicle is on display at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. The X-100 was modified again in 1967. Later, under President Richard Nixon, the large one-piece glass roof was replaced with a smaller glass area and a hinged roof panel. It remained in service until 1977 and resides in its final configuration at the Henry Ford Museum.

### A symbol of the presidency (1969–present)

The White House ordered a Lincoln Continental limousine through Lehman-Peterson of Chicago, which was delivered in 1969 model year trim. This vehicle also had an added sunroof so that Nixon could stand upright when appearing before parade-goers if desired. It was equipped with several features, such as retractable hand grips and running boards, that were later copied by Hess and Eisenhart. This car is now located at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California. President Nixon's administration ordered two 1972 (but delivered with 1973 front and rear bumpers) Chrysler Imperial LeBaron based armored limos (the last to date *Chrysler* based *White House* limos) constructed by *Hess and Eisenhart* and also ordered a 1972 Lincoln Continental model that was stretched to 22 ft (7 m), outfitted with armor plating, bullet resistant glass and powered by a 460 cubic inch (7.5 liter) V8 engine mated to a C-6 3-speed automatic transmission. This model was also altered a number of times during its history, including replacement of the front fenders and grille, in addition to modification of the rear taillight and reflector assembly to match the updated 1977-1979 models. The Lincoln was used by Presidents Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan; it was the limousine that Reagan was about to enter at the time of his assassination attempt in 1981.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Ironically, the vehicle's armor proved a crucial factor in *causing* Reagan's gunshot wound - the president was not directly hit, he was struck by a bullet that ricocheted off the armored side of the vehicle. The car is on display at the Henry Ford Museum.

In 1983, the Reagan administration received a Cadillac Fleetwood limousine. This limousine was first used in February 1983 for President Ronald Reagan's birthday parade in Dixon, Illinois. This was the last GM car equipped with the Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 3-speed automatic transmission. It resides at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. President George H. W. Bush used a 1989 modified Lincoln Town Car. It had a 460 Cu. in. EFI V-8 out of a Ford F-250 Heavy Duty pickup truck and an E4OD 4 speed automatic transmission. One model is on display at the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas.

A Presidential Series Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham was delivered to the Clinton Administration in 1993. No sunroof or running boards were installed in order to minimize external threats. It included a 454 cubic inch (7.4 liter) Chevrolet V-8 Engine mated to a 4L80E 4 speed automatic transmission, the same used in the 1993 Chevrolet C2500 heavy duty pickup truck. The car is located at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. As of 2009, the 1993 Cadillac Fleetwood at the Clinton Presidential Center is the final presidential vehicle to be placed on public display. Plans call for the Secret Service to use future vehicles for security testing that may result in their destruction.<sup>[29]</sup>

A 2001 Cadillac DeVille limousine was delivered to the Bush administration and was replaced in 2005 by a Cadillac DTS (DeVil Touring Sedan). The 2005 Cadillac DTS limousine is a hand-crafted, custom built, armored version of the stretch Cadillac DTS built on a GM four-wheel drive platform.<sup>[30]</sup> The vehicle was custom built by Centigon (formerly O'Gara, Hess & Eisenhardt).<sup>[30][31]</sup> It was first used on January 20, 2005 during the second inauguration parade of George W. Bush. It now serves as an alternative presidential limousine that is frequently used.



President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon in 1972 seen riding in the state car made by Lincoln and acquired in 1969.

The 1961 state car, a Lincoln Continental convertible seen in this photo with the "bubble top" taken off, was in use when President Kennedy was assassinated, November 22, 1963, in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas.



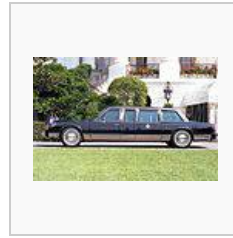
The 1969 Presidential Limousine



The 1972 Presidential Limousine



A 1983 Cadillac Fleetwood used by President Reagan



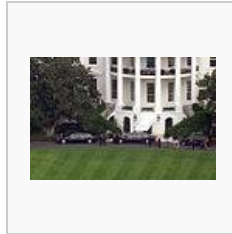
A 1989 Lincoln limousine used by President George H. W. Bush



A 1993 Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham limousine used by President Clinton at his museum.



A 2005 Cadillac limousine used by President George W. Bush



Presidential limousines outside White House in 2009

## See also

- *Ground Force One*
- Bentley State Limousine
- Federal vehicle fleet
- List of official vehicles of the President of the United States
- Official state car
- Popemobile
- Sunshine Special Presidential State Car (United States)
- Air Force One, the US Presidential aircraft
- Marine One, the US Presidential helicopter

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## External links

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