

**Program Title**

Vehicle Use Policy

Control Number

RM002

Program Date

01/18/2008

Revision Date

12/18/2014

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for use of Scotland County owned, leased, and/or rented vehicles of all types and sizes, in order to promote the safety of our Employees and the Public.

Scope

All Scotland County Employees who:

- Are authorized to operate County owned/leased/rented vehicles
- Are in consideration for promotion or transfer into positions requiring the operation of County owned/leased/rented vehicles

All Applicants to positions requiring the operation of County owned/leased/rented vehicles

Exception

The Scotland County Sheriff's Department is subject to a separate policy.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Scotland County that certain positions require employee access to county-owned, leased and/or rented vehicles. Assignments may be made during the work shift, on a 24 hour on-call basis, on a temporary and time-limited basis, or on a permanent assignment.

County vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use. County vehicles should be viewed as belonging to the citizens of Scotland County and are assigned solely for purposes consistent with providing services to those citizens.

Assignment of County Vehicles

The assignment of County vehicles to employees is based upon job description. Department Heads who have County vehicles available for this purpose may assign such vehicles in a manner consistent with departmental workload and employee function.

The assignment of vehicles for 24 hour use will be made in writing by the Department Head subject to the County Manager's approval, and will only be considered for employees who require a vehicle for the ordinary and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria that will be used in the determination of eligibility for 24-hour vehicle use include:

- Officially designated on-call status
- Requirement for frequent emergency availability
- Emergency or other equipment contained in the vehicle
- No County facility is available for garaging in a safe and convenient location
- Best economic interest of the County justifies assignment to the employee

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The County Manager or the Department Head, with notification to the County Manager, may rescind the assignment of vehicles at any time.

Motor Vehicle Records

On an annual basis, the County will obtain from the Department of Motor Vehicles, or authorized vendor for DMV records, the three (3) year driving record of every driver of County vehicles to determine his or her ability to drive safely. This will include all MVR not limited to the use of County vehicle or while on County business.

For Applicants or current Employees considered for promotion or transfer, a three (3) year driving record will be reviewed prior to assignment to the position.

Criteria

All traffic offenses including infractions received within a three (3) year period, determined at point of MVR review, will be considered in determining a driver’s eligibility to operate County vehicles.

Acceptable Risk

Two Incidents – Verbal Warning

Two (2) incidents of moving violations and/or preventable vehicle accidents will require verbal warning from their Department Head regarding their driving record status

Three Incidents – Written Warning

Three (3) incidents of moving violations and/or preventable accidents will require a written warning from the Department Head and encouraged to attend a recognized defensive driving course on their own time at their own expense

Unacceptable Risk

Four Incidents

Four (4) or more incidents of moving violations and/or preventable vehicle accidents will result in suspension of driving duties and, if the job description requires driving responsibilities, may result in termination from the position.

Specific Offenses

Employees charged with one of the following offenses will be restricted from operating a County vehicle until the incident is resolved in the court. Conviction may result in termination from employment.

- DWI/DUI – alcohol or drugs
- Negligent Homicide, manslaughter, or assault with a vehicle



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- Operating a vehicle during a period of suspension or revocation
- Operating a vehicle for the commission of a felony
- Operating a vehicle without permission
- Permitting an unlicensed driver to drive
- Reckless Driving
- Hit and Run
- Racing
- Passing a stopped school bus
- Attempting to elude a law enforcement officer
- Failure to stop and report an accident

Driver Requirements

Employees who operate County vehicles must have a valid motor vehicle license issued by the state of their current residence and be considered an insurable risk by the County's automobile liability insurance carrier.

Employees driving County vehicles shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.

Employees who incur parking or other fines in County vehicles will generally be personally responsible for payment of such fines unless the payment of such fines by the County is approved by the County Manager.

Employees who are issued citations for any offense while using a County vehicle must notify their supervisor and Department Head immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day, whichever is later. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action.

An employee who is assigned a County vehicle and who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license, whether in his or her personal vehicle or in a County vehicle, must notify his or her supervisor and Department Head immediately when practicable; but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day, whichever is later. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action. An employee may not operate a County vehicle if their license is suspended or revoked without regard to limited driving privileges.

Any motor vehicle accident involving a County vehicle must be reported to the supervisor and Department Head immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day, whichever is later. Failure to report an accident will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

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General Rules**Appropriate Use**

- 1) Except as otherwise noted, use of County vehicles is restricted to official county business. Official county business is defined as travel to and from any function, event or location that is visited as part of the employee's official duties.
- 2) The County vehicle may be used during non-duty hours on overnight assignments away from the employee's workplace or residence. Use is limited to the immediate vicinity of the assignment area with Department approval.
- 3) The employee may use the County vehicle for necessary personal business when the following conditions exist:
 - a. Personal business is in route between location of official county business or in route between home and the workplace
 - b. Use is "de minimis" in time and value, bound to the limits of reasonableness and to public responsibility
- 4) County vehicles should be driven over the most economically, direct route taking into account exceptions due to safety needs, road conditions and traffic considerations.
- 5) County vehicles may be driven only by County employees. Exceptions are under the direct approval of the County Manager.
- 6) Passengers in County vehicles must be County Employees or others whose presence is justified by official County business. No hitchhikers or family members, who are not themselves County employees, may be passengers in any County vehicle. Under special circumstances requiring a temporary and/or onetime deviation from this prohibition, an employee may request permission from the employee's Department Head or the County Manager to allow the employee's family member to be a passenger in the vehicle. Any special circumstance requiring a recurring deviation from this policy must be requested by written justification and receive advance written authority from the County Manager.
- 7) Vehicles shall not contain items such as weapons, alcohol for consumption, non-prescribed drugs, obscene materials, and other items whose possession would be deemed "Gross Personal Misconduct".
- 8) Employees may not operate County vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs or other medications, such as over the counter medications that may interfere with effective and safe operation.
- 9) No employee may use a County vehicle for out of state use without advance approval of the County Manager.

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Vehicle Use Policy

Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance

- 1) County vehicles are open to inspection, inside and out, at all times by County Authorities including the employee's Supervisor, Department Head, Human Resources Manager, Risk Manager, County Manager and/or a designee of the County Manager. Random inspections shall be conducted by these authorized personnel and may be assisted by Law Enforcement. No expectation of privacy exists except for items expressly permitted.
- 2) Authorized drivers are expected to inspect their vehicles daily, prior to operation. This inspection will consist of at least a visual inspection to ensure that there are no obvious conditions needing repair. No vehicle shall be operated with a defective safety device or damage which could contribute to or cause injury or accident.
- 3) Employees shall not alter or change any operational aspect of a County vehicle. Alterations or changes must be approved by the Department Head.
- 4) Employees are expected to keep County vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisors immediately.
- 5) No Smoking in any County vehicles.

Vehicle Operation

- 1) Employees assigned to vehicles for commuting purposes are expected to park in safe locations.
- 2) Seat belts, shoulder harnesses and other appropriate restraint systems must be used by both the driver and passengers of County vehicles. Failure to do so constitutes a misuse of a County vehicle.
- 3) Animals may not be transported in a County Vehicle, with the exception of service animals accompanying official passengers or animals transported by Animal Control personnel. Exception is made for the safety of the animal or general public.
- 4) County vehicles may be equipped with a GPS monitoring device. Any employee who tampers with the device, who attempts to prevent the device from functioning properly, or who attempts to affect the accuracy of the information collected, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The employee responsible for the County vehicle is equally accountable for preventing others from tampering with the device.
- 5) Vehicles should contain only those items designed for use with the vehicle, items installed by the County or items assigned by the County for transportation on the vehicle. Personal items in County vehicles shall be prohibited except for items of clothing, items of general purpose use such as purses, wallets, cell phones, and office related items.

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- 6) Cell Phones usage should be limited. Outgoing calls should only be made while stopped or parked. Incoming calls should be kept to a minimum. Keep conversations brief and offer to return calls once stopped or parked. Do not use cell phones while driving in bad weather, congested traffic, or any other hazardous situation.

Motor Vehicle Accidents**Review**

All accidents will be reviewed by the Safety Team. Such review may result in a recommendation to the department head for disciplinary action of the employee, if such accident was a result of a violation of the safety policy.

Training

Employees assigned to County vehicles will be given a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a confirmation of receipt.

Authorized drivers will participate in annual training. This training will include:

- Review of this Vehicle Use Policy
- Safe (Defensive) Driving Strategies
- Vehicle Accident Reporting procedures
- Vehicle Inspection Procedures

Policy Violations

Failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy as specified, or misuse of a County vehicle may result in:

- Denial to the Employee of further use of vehicles
- Reimbursement by the Employee to the County for any damage or cost
- Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal

Reference

Vehicle Use Policy Acknowledgment: Appendix A

Scotland County Sheriff's Office: Use of County Vehicles, policy #06-03