

**Program Title**

Vehicle Use Policy

Control Number

SC010

Program Date

01/18/2008

Revision Date

06/03/2024

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.

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.

The County Manager, in consultation with Department Heads, including Elected Officials, will determine the make, model and cost of a vehicle prior to purchase. Purchase will take into consideration the vehicle's highest level of efficiency while not inhibiting the use and function for which it is authorized. All vehicles purchased will be the economy/standard model unless a special need is identified. Only pricing up to the current state contract will be approved. No authority is granted to enter into a contract or option to purchase without prior approval by the county manager.

Assignment of County Vehicles

The assignment of County vehicles to employees is based upon job duties. 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, frequent, and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria that will be used in the determination of eligibility for 24-hour vehicle use include:

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- Frequent field responses required after regular working hours;
- Requirement for emergency availability responding from home immediately to a field job duty;
- Emergency or other equipment contained in the vehicle required for a field job duty;
- Best economic interest of the County justifies assignment to the employee.

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

Car Use Benefit

Assigned vehicles are a fringe benefit per IRS regulations. A “car use” fringe will be added to the gross wages of any employees with assigned vehicles for the purpose of taxation.

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 vehicles 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. 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 for Applicants and Current Employees*Two Incidents – Verbal Warning*

Two (2) incidents of moving violations and/or at fault 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 at fault 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 at fault vehicle accidents will result in suspension of driving duties and, if the job description requires driving responsibilities, may result in termination from the position.

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Specific Offenses

Employees charged with one of the following offenses during a seven (7) year record review will not be allowed to operate a County vehicle until the incident is resolved in the court. Conviction or a Prayer For Judgment may result in termination from employment.

- DWI/DUI – alcohol or drugs
- Negligent Homicide, manslaughter, or assault with a vehicle
- 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/Pre Arranged Speed Competition
- 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 be personally responsible for payment of such fines.

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. 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. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for

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disciplinary action. An employee may not operate a County vehicle if their license is suspended or revoked without regard to limited driving privileges.

Accidents

Any motor vehicle accident involving a County vehicle must be reported to law enforcement and a report filed. If possible the employee should take pictures of the scene and other vehicles involved.

The supervisor and/or Department Head should be notified immediately, when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day.

Failure to report an accident will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Appropriate Vehicle Use

Use of County vehicles is restricted to official county business. Official county business is defined as travel on a direct route to and from any function, event or location that is visited as part of the employee's official duties.

The County vehicle may be used during non-duty hours while on overnight work assignments away from the employee's workplace or residence. Use is limited to the immediate vicinity of the assignment area with Department approval.

The employee may use the County vehicle for necessary personal business when the following conditions exist:

- Personal business is in route between location of official county business or in route between home and the workplace.
- Use is "de minimis" in time and value, bound to the limits of reasonableness and to public responsibility.

County vehicles may be driven only by County employees. Exceptions are under the direct approval of the County Manager.

Passengers in County vehicles must be County Employees or others whose presence is justified by official County business. No other occupants, including family members, who are not County employees, may be passengers in any County vehicle.



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Vehicles shall not contain items such as weapons, alcohol for consumption, illegal substances, obscene materials, and other items whose possession would be deemed "Gross Personal Misconduct".

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.

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.

No employee may use a County vehicle for out of state use without advance approval of the County Manager.

Vehicle Maintenance and Inspection

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.

Employees shall not alter or change any operational aspect of a County vehicle. Alterations or changes must be approved by the Department Head.

Employees are expected to keep County vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisors immediately.

No Smoking, vaping, tobacco products, or other electronic delivery systems shall be used in any County vehicles.

Vehicle Operation

Employees assigned to vehicles for commuting purposes are expected to park in safe locations.

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.

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No texting while driving. Calls should be limited and only with the use of hands-free/voice operated devices/technology. Stop and park in a safe area to make outgoing calls. Avoid phone usage while driving in bad weather, congested traffic and other hazardous situations.

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. Exceptions are made for the safety of the animal or general public.

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.

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.

Training

Employees assigned to County vehicles will be given this policy and authorized drivers will participate in annual safe driving operations training.

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
- Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal