

Bargaining Unit employees should review their appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) to determine if this procedure applies to them. In case of a conflict between the applicable CBA and these procedures, the provision in the CBA controls.

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Motor Vehicle/Equipment Operation Procedure

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for the use of all County-owned vehicles, and other vehicles when used by a County employee to perform their job.

SCOPE: All County employees shall follow this procedure for the assignment and utilization of vehicles.

Procedure:

1. Definitions

- a. *Authorized Employees* - henceforth referred to as "Employee", the designated County Employee -operator of the County vehicle conducting County business.
- b. *County-Owned Vehicle/Equipment* - any vehicle or motorized equipment owned by Alachua County. All County-owned vehicles shall display a yellow County tag and be clearly marked, with the County seal, assigned department, and a vehicle number. Exceptions for some vehicles assigned to sensitive jobs to not be marked will require written approval from the County Manager or Constitutional Officer.
- c. *Other Vehicles/Equipment* -Non-County owned vehicles or motorized equipment (personal and rental) used by an employee to conduct County business.
- d. *County Business* - any authorized work or activity performed by a County employee conducting business for Alachua County.
- e. *"De minimus" personal use* - infrequent and limited travel between work stops during the workday. Limited travel is travel that is of such a short distance that accounting for it is unreasonable. All policy restrictions still apply.
- f. *Assigned Vehicle* - A County-owned automobile or truck designated for the use of an individual employee in the normal performance of their duties but not authorized for take-home use.

- g. Take-Home Vehicle* - A County-owned vehicle designated for use by an individual employee in the normal performance of their duties including the commute from home to work. (Refer to Take Home Vehicle procedures).
- h. Valid license* - A current driver's license which has not been suspended for any purpose and does not carry either a Code C - Business Purposes or Code D - Employment purposes Restriction.
- i. Moving Traffic Infraction* - A moving traffic infraction is any traffic offense that occurs while a vehicle is in motion. Moving traffic infractions cover a wide range of offenses, and can be simple infractions or felonies, depending on the offense and the circumstances, such as DUI (driving under the influence). For the purposes of this procedure this only applies to the driver of the vehicle.

2. Use of Vehicles

Only employees working within the scope and purpose of County business will use County vehicles. County-owned vehicles are not assigned for, nor shall they be used for, the convenience of the employee with regard to personal transportation needs or other non-County-related business.

- a. Only employees are permitted to operate County vehicles.
- b. Passengers in County vehicles must be engaged in County business. Persons not involved in County business will not be permitted to ride in County vehicles. Transporting family members is not permitted. Exceptions may be granted by the Board for the Administrating Officials and the Administrating Officials may grant an exception for other County staff in special situations.
- c. County owned vehicle usage shall comply with the Fuel Conservation Policy, as adopted by Fleet Management.
- d. No employee shall be permitted to have a firearm in their possession while riding in or operating a County vehicle, unless expressly authorized in writing by the Administrating Official.

3. Use of employee owned vehicles to conduct County business.

Employees who use another vehicle to conduct County business are expected to;

- a. Maintain the appropriate insurance per state statute; and
- b. Keep the vehicle in good repair; and

- c. Employee must report all accidents that occur while conducting County business to their supervisor immediately.

4. Responsibilities

- a. Department Directors or applicable Constitutional Officers shall ensure:
 - i. Vehicle operators must maintain, and keep in their possession during all times they are operating the vehicles, a valid Florida Driver's License with an appropriate endorsement and class designation for the class of vehicle they are assigned to operate.
 - ii. Should a prospective employee have a valid out-of-state license when employed, they shall obtain a valid Florida driver's license within 14 calendar days of employment, if required to operate a County vehicle. Under no circumstances shall a County employee, whose license has been cancelled, revoked, suspended, or expired, operate a vehicle on County business.

The vehicle operator is responsible to ensure that County-owned vehicles are maintained in accordance with the Fleet Management Comprehensive Plan.

- b. Employees shall ensure they:
 - i. Possess and maintain a valid Florida Driver's License for the class of vehicle they are assigned to operate.
 - ii. Notify their supervisor and Risk Management, on the next business day, of any changes in their driver's license to include but not limited to; class operator, restrictions, permits, revocation or suspension and moving traffic infractions received while operating a County-Owned vehicle or personal vehicle and assume responsibility for any citation or moving violations while operating a County-Owned Vehicle.
 - iii. Comply with all Federal, State and local laws relative to the operation of a County Owned Vehicle.
 - iv. Complete a walk around inspection at the beginning and end of each shift of the vehicle they are assigned to that day. Employees should check the vehicle body condition for damage including broken lights, mirrors or windows, inspect tire and wheels for proper inflation and condition, test exterior lights and blinkers and any other items required by department procedure. They should immediately report any damage to the supervisor and Risk Management.

Employees are expected to keep vehicles orderly, clean and in good repair. Each vehicle shall be cleaned out at the end of each shift, removing trash and personal items. All items in the vehicle should be properly secured to avoid becoming a projectile during an accident.

- v. Report all on-duty accidents or incidents immediately to the supervisor and Risk Management. Failing to report accidents immediately may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. It is the obligation of the Employee operating the vehicle to notify the supervisor and Risk Management. If the Employee is incapacitated, it shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to advise Risk Management immediately upon receipt of notice of the incident.
- vi. Do not drive while under the influence of alcohol, prescription medicines that warn against operating a vehicle, sleepiness, or illegal drugs. Alcoholic beverages or any illegal drugs are not permitted in County vehicles at any time.
- vii. Do not use, or allow the use of, tobacco products in a County Owned Vehicle.
- viii. Seat belt use is mandatory in County-Owned or personal vehicles used for County business when vehicle is being operated. This applies to both the driver and all passengers in seating locations equipped with seat belts.
- ix. In accordance with Florida law, do not engage in distracted driving such as: using hand held electronic or communication devices while operating the vehicle. The use of vehicle mounted radios and hands free (Bluetooth) devices is allowed, but not encouraged. There will be no use of a keyboard associated with a telephone or computer by the driver while the vehicle is in motion. Employees cannot engage in any other activity which would take their attention from the safe operation of the vehicle while they are operating the vehicle. Employees operating emergency response vehicles who are required to communicate with other emergency vehicles and dispatch while responding to, or dealing with, an emergency call are exempted from the restriction.

5. Backing/Maneuvering Vehicles

These procedures apply to all $\frac{3}{4}$ ton or larger vehicles while backing or when maneuvering in close proximity to other vehicles, people, buildings or other obstructions.

- a. If another employee is available:

The driver shall have that person act as a spotter. The spotter must get out of the vehicle and be positioned so they can see any other vehicles, people, buildings or other obstructions that would make it unsafe to move the vehicle. The driver is responsible for positioning the spotter and should not move the vehicle until they are positive that the intended pathway is clear. It may be necessary to stop the operation and reposition the spotter if the situation dictates (i.e. such as having to back up and then move forward around any obstruction in the front.)

- b. If no other employee is available:

The driver shall perform a walk-around inspection, paying specific attention to the intended path of travel. The driver must immediately complete the backing/maneuvering following the walk around inspection. If something should prevent the driver from completing the backing maneuvering operation immediately, another walk-around inspection is required.

6. Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) requirements prior to driving a County Owned Vehicle:

- a. Employment applicants whose duties will include driving County-Owned Vehicle, will have their Motor Vehicle Record reviewed prior to employment. If, in the past 24-month period, the applicants Motor Vehicle Record has more than three (3) moving traffic infractions or three (3) or more at fault motor vehicle accidents (or combination of both and /or a conviction/pending charge for driving under the influence), or is in violation of any standard mandated by Federal or State Law or Regulation, the applicant will be disqualified from consideration for the position. No new employee shall be permitted to operate a County Owned Vehicle until this record check has been performed and are otherwise cleared by Risk Management.
- b. Employees whose duties include driving a County-Owned Vehicle will have their Motor Vehicle Record reviewed, at a minimum, annually. Departments with employees whose duties include driving a County-Owned Vehicle will send a list of these employees to Risk Management by January 1, each year.
- i. Any Employee whose Motor Vehicle Record shows more than three (3) moving traffic infractions, in a 24-month period, will be considered an **“unacceptable”** driving record. This Employee will lose their privilege to operate County-Owned Vehicles until such a time that their record falls back into the **“acceptable”** range.
- ii. Risk Management can also deem an Employee’s driving record as **“unacceptable”** if a driver contributed to or caused three (3) or more motor vehicle accidents in a 24-month period (both on duty and off-duty). This Employee will lose their privilege to drive County-owned

vehicles until such time that their record falls back into the “**acceptable**” range. The Administrating Official or designee can review the findings of the case and will have the final authority to reinstate an Employee’s driving privileges.

- iii. The point of reference for computing motor vehicle infractions or accidents will be the earliest conviction date or accident date. Once an Employee’s record has been deemed “**unacceptable**” and then falls back into the “**acceptable**” range they may apply through their Department Director to have driving privileges reinstated. The Administrating Official will have the final authority to reinstate an Employee’s driving privileges.
- c. Any Employee who has been arrested/convicted of “Driving under the Influence” will lose their privilege to drive County-owned vehicles until such a time that they have met all of the requirements of the court and have a fully unrestricted license except as outlined in subparagraph d.
 - d. Imposition of a Business Purposes or Employment Purposes license restriction in accordance with state statute of two years from the date of arrest. In the case of an individual who has been placed under such a restriction for the first time, who has an otherwise acceptable driving record and for whom driving is an essential requirement of the job, the individual Department Director may request that the Administrating Official allow the Employee to operate a vehicle within the course and scope of their employment with such restrictions and conditions as may be appropriate in the view of the Administrating Official based upon the circumstances surrounding the imposition of the restrictions.
 - e. Any Employee who receives one of the following major violations will lose their privilege to operate County-Owned Vehicles for a minimum of 12 months. Once the 12 month period has passed they may apply through their Department Director to have driving privileges reinstated. The Administrating Official will have the final authority to reinstate an Employee’s driving privileges. These violations are:
 1. Failure to stop/report an accident;
 2. Reckless driving/speed contest;
 3. Driving while under the influence/impaired;
 4. Making a false accident report;
 5. Homicide, manslaughter or assault arising from the use of a vehicle;
 6. Driving while license is suspended/revoked;
 7. Attempting to elude a police officer; and

8. Leaving the scene of an accident.

- f. Any Employee whose duties include driving a County-Owned Vehicle and loses their privilege to drive such vehicle could face disciplinary action that may include demotion or termination of employment.
- g. The Risk Manager is responsible to establish a formalized accident review process.

7. Take-Home Vehicle

- a. Take-home vehicles are authorized annually on a case-by-case basis by the Administrating Official.
- b. The Risk Manager, Fleet Manager and Finance Director are responsible for establishing a formalized process for recommending the assignment of a take-home vehicle to an Employee for the Administrating Official's approval. Take-home vehicles must serve a public purpose which may include:
 - i. Emergency vehicles with specialized equipment needed to protect life and property;
 - ii. Economic benefit allowing Employees to perform job duties when not reporting directly to their primary office/work-site location. These Employees typically neither report to a set office/work-site at the beginning of a day nor return to a set office/worksites at the end of a workday.
 - iii. Take-home vehicle benefits shall comply with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines for employer provided vehicles.
 - iv. Employees authorized use of take-home vehicles will operate such vehicles in accordance with the scope and purpose of County business identified in the Take Home Vehicle Procedure.

8. Cost of Vehicle Accidents

- a. Damage to County or third party vehicles or bodily injury to a third party (provided that such damage or bodily injury is the result of the county's negligence) that is under \$1,000 will be paid out of the affected Departments Budget.
- b. Damage to County or third party vehicles or bodily injury to a third party (provided that such damage or bodily injury is the result of the county's negligence) that is over \$1,000 will be paid from the 501 liability fund. Risk Management will receive reimbursement from the affected Department as follows:
 - i. Risk Management will submit a Inter Departmental Invoice (IDI) for the following amounts:

1. A minimum of \$2,000 or actual costs of the damages up to a maximum amount of \$5,000.
2. Risk Management will be responsible for seeking reimbursement for damages or subrogation for Worker's Compensation expenses from liable third parties,



County Manager



County Attorney