

# Use of County Owned Vehicles Policy

## Section 1. Background and Purpose

It is the policy of Camden County to provide employee access to county-owned vehicles. This policy works in conjunction with the Camden County Personnel Policy, Article VI. Conditions of Employment, Section 8. Use of County Time, Equipment, Supplies and Vehicles as found on the county's website at: [www.camdencountync.gov](http://www.camdencountync.gov) on the Human Resources page.

It is the policy of Camden County to utilize the county vehicles to provide safe transportation and decrease costs and expenses related to travel for county purposes. Priority for vehicle usage will be out of town workshops and local meetings, in respective order. **If any employee chooses not to use a county vehicle when it is available, travel will not be reimbursed.**

This policy establishes a clear directive on when vehicles are to be utilized by staff and the procedure which will be used in this process.

## Section 2. Scope

This policy covers all county employees, whether or not they are probationary, permanent, or temporary employees of the county.

## Section 3. Policy

This policy and procedure shall be followed for all county owned vehicles.

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

## Section 4. 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.

### Sheriff Staff

Sheriff staff shall be assigned personal vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Because these positions require twenty-four (24) hour coverage, staff is allowed to drive their vehicles home at night in case of emergency situations. Use of these vehicles is addressed by their operating procedure (Policy # 2.10).

### Public Works Staff

Public Works staff shall be assigned vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Vehicles will remain in the parking lot at the end of the day unless the employee is required to attend overnight or out of town meetings with the exception of the Public Works Manager.

### Building Inspections Staff

Building Inspections staff shall be assigned vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Vehicles will remain in the parking lot at the end of the day unless the employee is required to attend overnight or out of town meetings.

### Soil and Water Staff

Soil and Water Staff shall be assigned vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Vehicles will remain in the parking lot at the end of the day unless the employee is required to attend overnight or out of town meetings.

### Social Services Staff

Social Services Staff shall be assigned vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Vehicles will remain in the parking lot at the end of the day unless the employee is required to attend overnight or out of town meetings.

### Senior Center Staff

Senior Center Staff shall be assigned vehicles to be used for county travel throughout the day as deemed necessary for the purpose of fulfilling their job duties. Vehicles will remain in the parking lot at the end of the day unless the employee is required to attend overnight or out of town meetings.

### General Staff

All other staff have access to a pool of vehicles for incidental travel and for meetings and trainings as well as overnight travel. These vehicles must be reserved and signed out for use.

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## Section 5. Procedure for Procuring Use of Pool Vehicles

Vehicle usage will be scheduled as far in advance as possible. Scheduling will include approximate time of occupancy.

All pool vehicles will be signed out through the Permit Planning Clerk located in the Planning Department. A requesting party may ask for special consideration to use his/her personal vehicle for travel for long distance travel and be reimbursed if approved by the County Manager.

A clip board with the mileage log is kept for each vehicle and must be maintained in the vehicle when in use. The clip board, along with the key & gas card for the vehicle, shall be returned to the Permit Planning Clerk in the Planning Department at the end of each use. Beginning and ending mileage along with purpose shall be documented. Employee will be responsible for returning the clip board, key & gas card at the end of the trip.

A notation must be made on the log regarding the program that should be charged for the travel being provided.

Smoking is not permitted in agency vehicles.

All trash must be removed from the vehicle after usage.

Texting while driving is prohibited. Employees should wait until they are in a safe place to pull off of the road to text. Utilize best professional judgment when making or receiving calls.

It is the responsibility of the employee using the vehicle to check the fuel level at the end of their usage. If the fuel registers less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full per tank, employee will be responsible for securing fuel for the vehicle.

Using the fuel card for personal use will result in disciplinary action leading up to or including termination.

Please inform the Maintenance Department if vehicle needs servicing (i.e. oil change, inspection, tires) and let them also know if the vehicle needs washing and vacuuming.

Situations may occur in which the County Manager or his/her designee assigns a vehicle to someone other than an employee who had previously requested a vehicle. This will be done on a case by case situation.

## Section 6. Maintenance and Upkeep of Vehicles

Maintenance department keeps a maintenance log for all General and Senior Center Vehicles. Each vehicle has reminder dates on the dash that show when the vehicle is due an oil change or inspection. Assigned vehicles to individuals in a department are responsible for maintaining their own maintenance logs and maintenance on the vehicles.

If a pool vehicle has other issues that may appear, the driver of the pool vehicle must personally contact the Maintenance Department regarding the issue that needs to be addressed. They are also to place a note on the individual travel log assigned to the vehicle for record keeping.

## Section 7. Fuel Maintenance

It is the responsibility of each driver to make sure the fuel gauge is checked after use of the vehicle. If the vehicle fuel gauge registers at  $\frac{3}{4}$  tank or below, the driver is responsible for making sure the vehicle is filled up, using the fuel card issued to that car.

## Section 8. Authorization to Drive & Driving Record

All employees will have a Motor Vehicle Background Check completed prior to employment.

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.

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On at least an annual basis, the county will request a copy of all employees driver's license and may obtain from the Department of Motor Vehicles, or authorized vendor for DMV records, the driving record of every driver of county vehicles to determine his/her ability to drive safely.

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 the 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.

Any motor vehicle accident while operating a county vehicle must be reported to your Supervisor and the Human Resources office immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day, whichever is later.

All accidents can be reviewed by the Safety Committee (recommendations submitted to the County Manager). 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 county's safety policy.

A violation of an applicable traffic parking regulation, ordinance, and law may be grounds for loss of County vehicle privileges.

For employees whose job responsibilities require that they possess an active, valid driver's license, a suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license may result in termination from employment.

## **Section 9. General Rules Defining Appropriate Use of County Owned Vehicles**

Except as otherwise noted, use of county-owned 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.

The county vehicle may be used during non-duty hours on overnight assignments away from the employee's workplace or residence when other forms of transportation are not available. 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:

- The employee is in route between locations visited for official county business or when in route between home and the workplace; and;
- The use is "de minimus" in time and value. Personal use is bound to the limits of reasonableness and to public responsibility.

County vehicles should be driven over the most economically, direct route taking into account exceptions due to safety needs, road conditions and traffic considerations.

## **Section 10. General Rules Governing Use of County Owned Vehicles**

County vehicles should be driven only by County employees. However, nonemployees may drive County vehicles, 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 (non-county employees must fill out a form in order to be in the vehicle). No hitchhikers may be passengers in any county vehicle. Any special circumstances requiring deviation from this policy must be requested by written justification and receive advance written authority from the County Manager.

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All areas of county-owned vehicles, inside and out, are open to inspection at all times by County Authority, including the employee's supervisor, Department Head, the Human Resources Director, the County Manager or a designee of the County Manager. Random inspections shall be conducted by these authorized personnel who may also be assisted by Law Enforcement. No expectation of privacy exists except for items expressly permitted.

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 used such as purses, wallets, cell phones, and office related items.

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."

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

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

Seatbelts, 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.

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.

No employee may use a County vehicle for out of state use without advanced approval of the Department Head and the County Manager.

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

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 may be made for the safety of the animal or the general public.

County vehicles may be equipped with a GPS monitoring device. This device provides data on the physical location of the vehicle as a function of time. 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.

## Section 11. Misuse of County Vehicles and Policy Violations

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

- Denial to the employee for further use of vehicles;
- Reimbursement by the employee to the County for any resultant damage or cost; and/or
- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## Section 12. Special Circumstances

This policy is intended to provide a basic framework governing the use of County vehicles, and as such, cannot contain procedures governing every situation that might arise. Employees seeking clarification of or an exemption from the provisions of this policy should contact Human Resources who will provide such clarification and with County Manager approval may authorize exceptions to the policy under mitigating circumstances.

Additional clarification may be procured through the office of the County Manager and/or the County Attorney.

**Forms:** Certain forms may be used to track the use of vehicles.