

Macon County Vehicle Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes uniform vehicle use practices for all county employees and departments and to ensure safe and efficient use of public property.

Overview

Certain employees in various departments may be required to use/operate county vehicles during work hours. County vehicles are assigned to one or more employees for their primary use during the workday. At the end of the workday, all county vehicles are to be parked in their assigned parking area unless specifically exempt by the Department Director.

Procedure

Overnight Assignment:

Authorized employees may use county vehicles overnight when the best interest of the public is served by providing county employees with safe, dependable transportation for extensive travel during or after working hours, for after-hours response to emergency requests for service, or for an approved, official purpose as determined by the County Manager.

Authorization for use of county vehicles overnight may be granted by the County Manager to specified employees based on the following criteria:

- Employees whose regular duties require frequent use of a county vehicle overnight and whose responsibilities involve emergency response, after hours response, evening and weekend duties, public meetings, or other business activities.
- Employees assigned to stand-by duty who are subject to call or who respond to service requests.
- Employees on temporary overnight assignment by his/her Department Director for emergencies or an approved, official purpose.
- Employees expected to respond when called after hours, unless specifically excused due to authorized leave.

Usage

- County vehicles shall be used for official county business only.

- County vehicles shall not be used for the convenience of the employee with regard to transportation needs or other non-business activities.
- County vehicles may be used to travel to a nearby restaurant for lunch where the cost-benefit in travel time to the work quarters for a personal vehicle would not be in the best interest of the county.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in county vehicles at any time; however, law enforcement personnel may transport lawfully confiscated alcoholic beverages.
- The use of tobacco, in any form, is prohibited in county-owned vehicles.
- Each Department Director shall provide the Garage Supervisor and County Manager a list of county vehicles assigned for overnight use. This list must include the driver's name and driver's license number.
- Employees assigned county-owned vehicles, using vehicles for commuting to and from work, shall comply with the IRS regulation Code section 61a, which is the commuting rule related to fringe benefits. The Department Director shall report the total cost of commuting, per employee, to the Finance Department by December 15 each year. Subject employees will receive an IRS Form 1099.
- County vehicles shall not be driven to an out-of –county residence if used by employee for commuting to and from work.
- The Department Director of each department shall report to the Garage Supervisor the mileage of each county-vehicle on the first day of each month, no later than the 5th day, in order to keep accurate records. The Department Director shall immediately notify the Garage Supervisor and County Manager of any driver changes to assigned vehicles. Failure to report mileage and driver changes may result in revocation of an assigned vehicle.

Driver's Responsibilities

- Employees shall operate county vehicles in a safe and courteous manner.
- Employees shall not exceed the speed limit unless in pursuit or emergency. Seat belts shall be worn by the driver and all passengers at all times during the operation of county vehicles.

- Non-county employees are not allowed to operate or ride in a county-owned vehicle without prior approval from a Department Director. Non-county employees may accompany County employees in County cars when they have a business interest in the travel and if they are covered by workmen's compensation by their employer with approval of the Department Director. Due to insurance limitations and regulations no other passengers are permitted unless operating in an official capacity. **Note:** The Sheriff's Department, Emergency Medical Services Department, and the Emergency Management Department are **exempt** from this when providing emergency assistance to citizens.
- Employees driving county vehicles are required to have a current driver's license as required by North Carolina General Statutes, regardless of whether the employee drives the county vehicle on a regular, temporary or occasional basis.
- Violations, citations, fines, and other actions taken by any police jurisdiction against any employee while driving a county vehicle shall be the responsibility of the employee and may be cause for disciplinary action by the county.
- Driving records shall be evaluated before assignment of a county-owned vehicle or no less than annually based on the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles' standards.
- Throughout the year, the Macon County Safety Officer will randomly select employees to check their driving records.
- Employees shall notify his/her department director of any points incurred on their driver's license for situations including, but not limited to, accidents, speeding tickets, driving under the influence, and driver's license suspensions or revocations. Department Director shall forward the information to the County Manager.
- Employees shall not drive county-owned vehicles if they are using alcoholic beverages or prescription and/or non-prescription drugs which may impair driving ability.
- Employees assigned county-owned vehicles shall take proper care of the interior and exterior appearance and servicing of county-owned vehicles at the scheduled times and/or every 4,000 miles. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Upholding the maintenance requirement is the responsibility of the Department Director.
- The vehicle operator is responsible for routinely checking for proper oil level, water and antifreeze levels, wear on belts and adequate inflation of tires

consistent with specifications in the vehicle manual. The Garage Supervisor will provide training as needed.

Violations

Violations of this policy are considered a misuse of county property. Employees misusing or abusing county-owned vehicles may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Need

Justification:

- County Departments must justify the need for a county-owned vehicle based on whether a vehicle will be used a minimum of 12,000 miles per year. The cost benefit of paying an employee mileage for use of the personal vehicle versus use of a county-owned vehicle must be documented before a county-owned vehicle is considered.
- Evaluation of the ongoing need for county-owned vehicles assigned to a department will be made on an annual basis before bidding new county vehicles.
- The County Board of Commissioners must approve all new vehicle purchases and requests for a vehicle from the surplus list when that vehicle increases the fleet assigned to a department.
- Public Safety and special use vehicles required for a specific job function will be considered based on need, usage, and cost-benefits over the life of the vehicle versus mileage limitations.
- Each Department Director shall send the Garage Supervisor a written request for a vehicle to be classified as “special use.” If the request is granted, the vehicle shall be coded as “special use” in the vehicle maintenance program.
- The County Manager may, at the request of the Garage Supervisor, remove or recall any county-vehicle from a department for one of the following:
 - The vehicle does not meet the minimum mileage requirements, excluding “special use” vehicles.
 - Vehicle abuse, which includes but is not limited to, inadequate care or maintenance and damage to a vehicle caused by disregard or improper use.
 - The termination of an employee or position with an assigned vehicle that will not be replaced within a reasonable time period.

- A Department Director may submit a written request to the Garage Supervisor to justify retention of a vehicle removed or recalled because of underutilization.
- A Department shall turn in the old vehicle before receiving a replacement vehicle to prevent unnecessary growth of the fleet. Any exception to this policy requires approval by the County Board of Commissioners.
- A Department Director shall complete a vehicle change form in the Garage Services Department for action needed such as purchase, sale, disposal, or transfer of vehicle.

Accidents

Macon County shall have an accident review board, comprised of the following individuals, to evaluate all accidents involving a Macon County-owned vehicle. The review board shall assess points based on the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicle's standard.

Accident Review Board:

Co-Chairpersons: Safety Officer
Garage Supervisor

Members:

Sheriff (or Designee)
Human Resources Director
EMS Director
Health Director
Director of Code Enforcement
D.S.S. Director
County Manager (or designee)

- Employees found at fault for an accident in a county-owned vehicle shall receive a written warning and must attend a driving school arranged by the County Safety Officer.
- The accident Review Board maintains the option to recommend dismissal of an employee based on the severity of accident and/or other circumstances.
- Employees shall submit to a post-accident drug test, regardless of fault, when one of the following applies: (Ref. County Drug Policy)
 - A fatality results from the accident.
 - One of the vehicles in the accident receives damage.

- There is an injury demanding medical treatment away from the scene of the accident.
- There is personal injury requiring immediate medical attention or a worker's compensation claim is filed.
- An employee is cited for a moving traffic violation as a result of an accident.
- An employee who has been convicted of causing an accident and/or motor vehicle violation (s) resulting in accumulation of six (6) or more points during a three year period shall not be permitted to drive a county-owned vehicle until the points have been reduced or removed from their driver's history.

Loaner Fleet

- A small fleet of county-owned vehicles will be available at the County Garage on an as needed basis for county business use. A mileage charge, determined by the Finance Director, will be charged to the department using the county-owned vehicle. Employees must fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the garage.
- A Department Director must, complete and sign a request form, before an employee may check out a car from the loaner fleet. The employee must provide the completed form to the County Garage before signing out a county-owned vehicle.

Policy

The Macon County Human Resources Director shall indiscriminately select employees occupying safety sensitive positions and/or the performance of their job duties require driving on a regular basis who operate county-owned vehicles or heavy equipment to undergo random drug testing. The Macon County Human Resources Department shall select employees on a random basis. When notified employee must appear for testing immediately or be subject to termination.

Macon County Department Directors are to acquire and provide to the Safety Officer or Human Resources Director proof of insurance and proof of an active, current driver's license for any employee who receives a reimbursement for personal vehicle mileage. An employee's personal vehicle insurance is the primary coverage in the event an employee has an accident while performing his/her duties as a Macon County Employee. Macon County's insurance policy acts as the secondary coverage once the limits are met under an employee's policy. The Internal Auditor will perform random audits of the county fleet to include, but not limited to, compliance with the county policy, driver assignments, mileage, vehicle condition, maintenance records, justification forms, and compliance with the IRS regulation regarding fringe benefits.

It is the responsibility of the Department Director to administer this County Policy properly in regards to all county vehicles in his or her department. The method for financing the fleet will be an annual decision made by the Finance Director and the Garage Supervisor and taken to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. It is the intention that once vehicles are assigned, they remain with the position based on the justification for the vehicle. If high mileage is an issue, replacement arrangements will be made in advance of the acquisition.

This policy shall be effective July 1, 2008.

Adopted this the 16th day of June, 2008.

C. Jack Horton, Manager
Macon County

Charlie Leatherman, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners