



# Vehicle Use

## 1. PURPOSE

- A. This Policy outlines the use of vehicles for work used on behalf of Teton County Idaho (County).
- B. Operators of County-owned or leased motor vehicles shall always drive safely, legally and courteously, remembering that they are directly responsible for maintaining both County-owned property and public trust.
- C. Employees are expected to operate vehicles safely. It is the policy of the County to provide a safe working environment that protects employees and citizens from injury and property loss. The County considers the use of vehicles part of the working environment. The County is committed to safe, responsible employee driving behavior that reduces the risk of personal injury and property loss.
- D. This policy applies to all employees and County volunteers who regularly operate vehicles on county business. These drivers will be referred to as “employee drivers” and will be reviewed by managers and supervisors to ensure full implementation and compliance.

## 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLES

- A. The County maintains administrative vehicles for use by different employees traveling on official business. These vehicles must be reserved in advance through the County Clerk’s office.
- B. Keys may be picked up from the Clerk’s office just before the vehicle is needed. The keys must be returned to the Clerk’s office immediately after the travel is completed.
- C. If the vehicle has been taken out of the county, it must be returned with a full tank of gas.

## 2. USE

- A. Vehicles owned or leased by the County are to be used only for County functions. Any other type of use must be authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. Personal use of a county vehicle may be a taxable fringe benefit even if the county requires the employee to take the vehicle home (see Taxable Fringe Benefits policy).
- B. Elected Officials and Department Heads are entrusted with the care and keeping of the vehicles and may assign that responsibility to an employee.
- C. Employees who regularly drive their personal vehicles on County business are subject to the requirements of this policy including:
  1. Maintaining auto liability insurance with minimum state limits;
  2. Providing proof of auto liability insurance to the Risk Manager on an annual basis; and
  3. Maintain vehicle in a safe operating condition when driven on County business.

## 3. ASSIGNED OR PERMITTED DRIVERS

- A. Each employee assigned to a County vehicle, or employees who operate a County administrative vehicle, are required to have a valid driver’s license. Employees who drive buses, vans with over 15 passengers, or vehicles with a gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 lbs must have a commercial driver’s license (CDL). Should an employee’s driver’s license expire, be revoked or suspended, the employee shall immediately notify his or her supervisor. The employee’s County vehicle-use privileges will be suspended until the employee’s driver’s license has been fully restored and validated.

- B. The employee assigned or permitted to drive a County vehicle may allow others, as necessary, to operate the vehicle, provided the employee is a passenger and that the other driver has a valid driver's license and is at least 25 years of age.
- C. Every employee assigned or permitted to operate a County vehicle shall be responsible for the following:
  - 1. Proper and safe operation of the vehicle;
  - 2. Completing vehicle safety and defensive driving training as required by the County.
- D. In addition, every Sheriff's Department employee assigned or permitted to operate a County vehicle shall also be responsible for the following:
  - 1. Service and maintain the vehicle in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations; and
  - 2. Maintain vehicle registration, license plates and inspections.

#### **4. DRIVER EVALUATION**

Potential employees may be evaluated and selected based upon their driving ability. In order to evaluate the driving skills of existing and potential employees, management may:

- A. Review past driving performance and work experience through reference checks with previous employers;
- B. Review the employee's Drivers License Record (DLR);
- C. Ensure the employee has a valid driver's license;
- D. Ensure the employee is qualified to operate the type of vehicle he/she will drive; and
- E. Require completion of an annual driver's safety certification course(s)

#### **5. SEATBELT USE**

All drivers and passengers are required to utilize seatbelts as mandated by law. **Exception:** Sworn law enforcement officers may dispense with wearing safety restraints in specific tactical situations or when it reasonably appears that, due to unusual circumstances, wearing a seatbelt would hinder rather than increase safety (Idaho Code 49-673[2][b]).

#### **6. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR**

A county vehicle is county property and an employee assigned to a county vehicle is expected to follow all rules and regulations and display prudent behavior when operating and maintaining their assigned county vehicle. *No pets, smoking, alcohol or illegal drugs are allowed within a county vehicle.*

#### **7. MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICE, CELL PHONE AND COMPUTER USE**

The driver of a County vehicle is prohibited from using a mobile communication device, cell phone or computer of any type while the vehicle is in motion. Drivers must be safely parked before using such equipment. A mobile communication device is defined as "a text messaging device or a wireless, two-way communication device designed to receive and transmit voice or text communication." This does not apply to County work-related two-way radios. **Exceptions:** Sworn law enforcement officers may use mobile communication devices in specific tactical situations. A hands-free device is allowed in passenger vehicles.

#### **8. IMPAIRED DRIVING**

The employee driver must not operate a vehicle when his/her ability to do so is impaired or influenced by alcohol, illegal drugs, other illegal substances, prescribed or over-the-counter medication, illness, fatigue or injury. The employee driver is obligated to report to his/her supervisor any reason that may affect his/her ability to drive safely.

## **9. PROOF OF INSURANCE**

Employee drivers must make sure that the current insurance card is kept in the vehicle at all times.

## **10. ACCIDENT REPORTING**

- A. In the event of an accident, the driver shall call 911 immediately. When possible, first check on the safety and welfare of all persons involved and seek immediate medical attention should it be required for themselves or others. If possible, move the vehicle to a safe location out of the way of traffic.
- B. Driver shall always have a police officer investigate any accident that involves a County vehicle. This will help protect the County from unwarranted claims. Do not discuss fault with, or sign anything from anyone, except from a police officer, a representative from ICRMP, or an authorized representative of Teton County, preferably the Risk Manager.
- C. Driver shall notify his supervisor as soon as possible of the accident and report the extent of the injuries and property damage involved.
- D. If a county employee is involved in an accident while driving a county or personal vehicle for county business, the employee should undergo a blood alcohol test in order to protect the county and the employee.
- E. Driver shall cooperate fully with ICRMP Claims Department in the handling of the claim.

## **11. TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS**

All fines and other criminal penalties due to violations of the law by the driver are the personal responsibility of the driver of any County vehicle. These costs are not reimbursable by Teton County and must be paid promptly by the driver.

## **12. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

- A. If the County vehicle is in need of repairs, the vehicle should be taken to the mechanic of record.
- B. Prior to scheduling major repairs or major maintenance needs, the driver must consult with their supervising Elected Official or Department Head. Major repairs needed as the result of an accident should not be initiated without approval of the County's Risk Manager.

## **13. VEHICLE SAFETY COURSE**

Employees and volunteers who regularly use county-owned equipment/vehicles shall complete at least one safe driver training course every calendar year. This may be an approved course through ICRMP, Idaho Transportation Department or the Idaho State Police. Course completion certification must be submitted to the County Risk Manager by December 31<sup>st</sup> each year.