

**Alexander County Government
Motor Vehicles and Mobile Equipment Policy**

**MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOBILE EQUIPMENT POLICY
WRITTEN PROGRAM INCLUDING TRAINING GUIDELINES**

**APPROVED: 6/16/08
EFFECTIVE: 7/1/08**

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Motor Vehicles and Mobile Equipment Policy**

MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOBILE EQUIPMENT POLICY

Conducting County business requires that employees operate County-owned or leased vehicles (cars, vans, pickups, emergency vehicles, etc.) and/or use their personally owned vehicles on County business. From a safety standpoint, motor vehicle use creates some of the greatest risks for serious injury and property damage. Motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of loss. Accidents result in injuries to employees, injuries to the public, and extensive property damage.

There are many considerations in controlling the risks associated with the operation of motor vehicles. While public entities have many specialized fleet exposures (such as emergency vehicles, law enforcement vehicles, and sanitary landfill trucks), the same basic principals are fundamental to the safety of any motor vehicle operations:

- Senior management commitment and employee involvement
- Vehicle selection, maintenance, and inspection
- Driver selection procedures
- Driver training and communications
- Safe driving habits / safe vehicle operation

The following program is designed to give guidance in developing controls related to these fundamental requirements. The program will need to address these issues and go beyond them to address specialized operations, such as law enforcement and emergency vehicle operations.

MOTOR VEHICLE POLICY

Employees will be responsible for ensuring safe operation by notifying their Department Head or designee regarding maintenance and, when required, inspection of the vehicle as detailed in this policy. Employees must not operate an unsafe vehicle or operate a vehicle in an unsafe manner.

I. Motor Vehicle Policy ---- Maintenance

- A. All vehicles must be properly maintained in conformity with the vehicle manufacturer's suggested schedule. No employee is to operate a vehicle that is not in safe operating condition. For assigned automobiles, the assignee is responsible for proper maintenance. For other vehicles, the safety coordinator is responsible for scheduling maintenance of each individual vehicle. The person(s) responsible will see that the maintenance schedule is followed and see that other needed repairs are made in a timely manner. The Garage will keep a file documenting all maintenance and repair records.

II. Motor Vehicle Policy --- Driver Selection

- A. County vehicles are to be operated only by employees authorized by management to do so. County vehicles ARE NOT TO BE OPERATED BY OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS OR NON-EMPLOYEES with the exception of first responders.
- B. No employee is allowed to operate a County vehicle unless properly licensed to do so. Operating a County vehicle with an expired or revoked driver's

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license is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- C. The designated Safety Coordinator is to photocopy and review the driver's license of every employee who is authorized to operate a County vehicle. Any problems identified are to be passed on to the Human Resources Director for further review.
- D. At a minimum, the Human Resources Director, under the direction of the County Manager, is to be advised of any record showing the following and a decision will be made as to whether or not to allow the employee to continue to operate a County vehicle or personal vehicle on County time: Exception: DSS, ROD, Health, Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water, Board of Elections, and Sheriff's Office employees shall report incident to the highest level of authority or board.
 - 1. Suspension, revocation, or expiration of license.
 - 2. Driving while intoxicated (DWI), reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident, hit and run, vehicular homicide or assault, participating in an unlawful speed contest, or eluding or attempting to elude a Law Enforcement Official.
 - 3. Any other traffic violations **EXCLUDING** non-moving traffic violations such as, but not limited to: expired inspection sticker, expired license plate, warning tickets, parking tickets, improper equipment, etc.
 - 4. The reporting of charges/convictions as outlined in the Criminal Background Check Policy and Procedures must be followed in conjunction with this motor vehicle policy.
- E. Careful driver selection is the key to overall fleet safety. No new employee is to be allowed to drive a County vehicle until the employee has completed the normal application procedure, references have been checked, possession of a valid driver's license has been verified (photocopy in personnel file), and a criminal background check to include a motor vehicle record check has been obtained and approved by Human Resources.

No applicant or employee in a safety sensitive position may be hired or authorized to operate a County vehicle whose driving record shows the following during the preceding 24 months: This list is not all inclusive.

- * Two or more moving violation convictions.
- * Two or more chargeable accidents.
- * A combination of two or more moving violations and chargeable accidents.
- * Any Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident, hit and run, vehicular homicide or assault, participating in an unlawful speed contest, or eluding or attempting to elude a Law Enforcement Official.

III. Motor Vehicle Policy – Vehicle Use

- A. Careful driving habits will reduce the chances of an accident more than any other factor. Drivers are to abide by all traffic regulations, laws and ordinances while driving for the County. The Safety Committee or

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Coordinator will periodically provide appropriate fleet safety information to County vehicle drivers.

- B. Seat belts shall be worn when driving or riding in any vehicle or in a personal vehicle on County business. The full restraining system provided for the seating positions must be worn properly. Both the lap and shoulder belt must be properly worn even if the position is equipped with an automatic shoulder belt or air bag. Placing the shoulder belt behind the back or under the arm is not allowed. Exceptions to seat belt rule:
 - 1. Vehicles not required to be equipped with belts. Generally, these are cars made before 1968 and light trucks and vans made before 1972.
 - 2. Drivers of noncommercial motor vehicles with a professionally certified medical condition or mental phobia preventing use (doctor's certification is required).
 - 3. EMS caregivers shall be exempt during the medical care of a passenger. As soon as the patient is stabilized, all parties must be properly secured in seat belts.

In the interest of safety, employees are encouraged to always use seat belts, whether or not they are on County business.

- C. Each Department Head that is responsible for department vehicle(s) is responsible for maintaining the following information in the glove box of each County owned vehicle:
 - 1. Vehicle accident report forms and reporting procedures.
 - 2. Mileage travel log to be submitted to designee by the 5th day of each month for prior month.
 - 3. Insurance Policy Card.
 - 4. Vehicle registration information.
 - 5. Vehicle maintenance checklist forms to be submitted to designee by 5th day of each month for prior month.
- D. Drivers will not drive after having consumed alcohol and/or drugs, including legal drugs that may impair their ability to operate a motor vehicle. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in County vehicles at any time; however, law enforcement personnel may transport lawfully confiscated alcoholic beverages.
- E. For those employees who operate County vehicles, fleet safety must be included in their performance appraisals. Fleet safety must also be addressed in the performance appraisals of all management personnel that supervise employees who drive County owned vehicles and/or drive on County time with personal vehicle.
- F. County vehicles shall be used for official County business only. Only those employees authorized by the County Manager shall have the ability to use County owned vehicles to travel to and from work. The Sheriff shall have the authority to authorize vehicles to be used to travel to and from work for Sheriff's Deputies and Detectives.
- G. The use of tobacco, in any form, is prohibited in County-owned vehicles.

IV. Motor Vehicle Policy – General Safety Rules

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- A. The following safety procedures apply to the operation of all County vehicles:
1. Employees are required to complete a weekly safety check on any vehicles they are assigned to drive. Vehicle safety checks include:
 - windshield wipers and washer fluid
 - directional signals
 - power steering fluid level
 - anti-freeze/coolant level
 - brakes and brake fluid
 - lights
 - check tire pressure and tread
 - horn
 - motor oil level
 - valid inspection sticker
 - valid tag
 - interior and exterior appearance
 - 4,000 mile maintenance
 2. Test brakes by putting the vehicle in gear and applying brakes to bring the vehicle to a stop.
 3. Adjust the seat, inside and outside mirrors, and steering wheel tilt for safe driving before putting the vehicle into gear.
 4. Employee assigned to 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.
 5. Upholding the maintenance requirements are the responsibility of the Department Head.
 6. Checklists should be submitted to Safety Coordinator for each vehicle on the 5th day of each month for prior month.
- B. **Emergency vehicles:** The fact that an employee is operating an emergency vehicle does not absolve him or her from civil or criminal liability for the consequences of reckless driving. The driver must be in the position to satisfy a jury that reasonable care and prudence was used in operating emergency

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vehicles. Even though emergency equipment has warning devices, the drivers are expected to **PROCEED WITH ALL CAUTION.**

1. Never take drugs or strong medication before operating a vehicle. Remember that drugs, illness, or extreme fatigue may affect your ability to judge distance, speed, and driving conditions.
2. All persons who drive or ride in County vehicles are to wear the installed seat belts at all times. Exception for EMS related to patient care.
3. Supervisors are responsible for insuring that all of their employees are utilizing the installed seat belts.
4. Persons may not be transported in any vehicle unless safe and secure seating is provided for each person.
5. Parking vehicles:
 - Except when working conditions require otherwise, parked vehicles must have the motor stopped, key removed and emergency brakes set, and be left in gear or in park - depending on the type of transmission.
 - If parked on a downgrade, turn front wheels towards the curb. If parked on an upgrade, turn front wheels away from the curb.
 - Vehicles are not to be parked on the wrong side of the street facing traffic except in cases of emergency.
 - When trucks or vehicles must be stopped on streets or highways, adequate warning signals must be used.
 - Use a flagman if traffic warrants.
 - Do not use turn signals as a parking warning.
 - Before pulling away from the curb, look to see that no vehicles are approaching from either direction and signal your intention.
 - When backing a vehicle, be sure the way is clear. Get out of the vehicle when necessary and inspect the area you will be backing into. Back up slowly. Sound horn while backing when necessary. If there is another employee along, he or she should get out and direct the backing.
 - Emergency personnel shall operate County vehicles with due regard to the public.
6. Never leave the vehicle with the engine running. It is illegal, as well as an unsafe practice to leave any vehicle unattended with the motor running. Always remove the keys from the ignition.
7. Drivers must be particularly alert while driving near children.
8. Stay within posted speed limits. Slow down when conditions warrant.

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9. Do not assume the right-of-way. Use defensive driving and yield when necessary, even if you legally have the right of way. "Don't Be Pushy - Yield or Stop."
10. Keep a safe distance behind other vehicles and avoid tailgating. Do not allow others to tailgate. Slow down, pull over to the side, and let the tailgater pass.
11. Signal intentions at least 100 feet in advance, including change in lanes and turns. Avoid sudden braking.
12. Turn on low beam headlights during dark periods of the day, such as rainstorms or fog. Turn headlights on 1/2 hour before sunset until 1/2 hour after sunrise when driving at night. Parking lights designate a vehicle is parked – do not drive with only parking lights.
13. Filling Tanks:
 1. Shut off the engine.
 2. Do not smoke near gasoline pumps.
 3. Keep the nozzle against the edge of the filler pipe.
 4. To avoid spilling gasoline, do not fill the tank too fast or too full.

V. Motor Vehicle Policy Accident Reporting

- A. In the event of an accident involving County owned vehicles, the following procedures apply:
 1. Drivers are to report **any incident** involving a County vehicle or **any incident** involving use of their personal vehicle for County business to their Department Head, Supervisor, or Human Resources immediately. Any incident involving the use of a car or other vehicle while working, whether or not it results in any injury to any person or damage to any vehicle or property, and regardless of who is at fault, must be reported immediately. The Supervisor is to report the accident in writing to Human Resources within 24 hours.
 2. Accidents occurring after normal 8-5 business hours shall be reported by Supervisor via telephone # 1-888-883-9568.
 3. All employees involved in any motor vehicle accident, regardless of an actual injury or not and whether a driver or passenger, must immediately be drug and alcohol tested.
 4. The reporting of injury procedures as outlined in the Alexander County Personnel Policy, Article IX-Worker's Compensation must be followed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 5. Render first aid if qualified to do so and arrange for medical help if necessary.
 6. Notify Law Enforcement Officials immediately. The vehicle should not be moved until authorized by the Investigating Officer. If the accident does not result in a personal injury, operable vehicles may be moved to the shoulder of the street or highway pending investigation.

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7. No passenger should leave the scene of the accident unless seeking temporary assistance or remaining at the scene would place the passenger or others at significant risk of an injury.

VI. Training Guidelines

- A. New hires in a safety sensitive position or those hired who are required to drive as an essential function of their job will be required to attend a County approved defensive driving course within the first year of their employment. Certifications within a two-year period prior to beginning work with Alexander County may be acceptable with the appropriate documentation and approved by Human Resources.
- B. Recertification driver training classes will be held every five years for all positions requiring driving as an essential function of the job. Exception: Law Enforcement and EMS personnel who drive emergency traffic will be certified yearly.
- C. County personnel involved in an on-the-job accident will be required to attend the next available driver training class.

VII. Fuel Conservation and Record Keeping

Below are the County's guidelines pertaining to fuel conservation and record keeping.

- A. While each vehicle reaches its optimal fuel economy at a different speed (or range of speeds), gas mileage usually decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. As a rule of thumb, you can assume that each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph is equivalent to paying an additional \$0.20 per gallon for gas. Observing the speed limit is also safer.
- B. Avoid maintaining unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy items. An extra 100 lbs. in your vehicle could reduce miles per gallon by up to 2%.
- C. Avoid excessive idling. Idling gets 0 miles per gallon. Cars with larger engines typically waste more gas at idle than do cars with smaller engines. If the vehicle is left running for more than 30 seconds, turn it off.
- D. Use cruise control on highways to help maintain a constant speed, and in most cases, will save gas.
- E. Use overdrive gears. When using overdrive gears, the car engine speed goes down. This saves gas and reduces engine wear.
- F. Plan and combine trips. Combining errands into one trip saves time and money. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer multi-purpose trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm. Trip planning ensures that traveling is done when the engine is warmed-up and efficient. With a little planning, you can avoid retracing your route and reduce the distance you travel as well. You'll not only save fuel, but also reduce wear and tear on the vehicle.

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- G. Accelerate slowly when starting from a dead stop. Don't push the pedal down more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total foot travel.
- H. Log books will be maintained in all County vehicles. Information such as driver, time, date, mileage, and destination/job will be recorded daily for trips taken in all County owned vehicles. Remember that vehicles are for County business and are not to be used to run personal errands such as paying bills, going to the bank, etc. Log books to be submitted to Safety Coordinator by the 5th day of each month for prior month.

VIII. Discipline and Penalties

- A. Violations, citations, fines, and other actions taken by any police jurisdiction against any employee while driving a County vehicle or on County business shall be the responsibility of the employee and may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- B. Failure to comply with guidelines set forth in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- C. Should disciplinary action arise out of and in the course of employment, the disciplinary action procedures as outlined in the Alexander County Personnel policy Article X – Discipline and Dismissal for Just Cause shall be followed. Exception: DSS and Health Department shall follow Office of State Personnel's disciplinary procedures and Sheriff's Office to comply with Sheriff's Standards.
- D. Any employee involved in a motor vehicle accident while on County time will be required to attend the next available defensive driving course whether the employee is at fault or not.

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MOTOR VEHICLE WEEKLY SAFETY CHECKLIST

Vehicle Make & Model: _____ V.I.N.#: _____

Date of Inspection: _____ Inspected By: _____

- _____ Windshield washers and wipers
- _____ Directional signals
- _____ Power steering
- _____ Fluid reservoir
- _____ Brakes and brake fluid
- _____ Hydraulic systems
- _____ Clutch
- _____ Lights
- _____ Tires
- _____ Horn
- _____ Motor oil
- _____ Inspection sticker current
- _____ Tag current
- _____ Interior and exterior appearance acceptable
- _____ Check for 4,000 mile maintenance

Comments:

***** SUBMIT CHECKLIST TO HUMAN RESOURCES ON THE 5TH DAY OF EACH MONTH*****

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Garage Vehicle Service Work Order

DEPARTMENT

MAKE/MODEL/YEAR

DATE OF SERVICE

VIN NUMBER

MILEAGE

NEXT SERVICE DUE

SERVICES COMPLETED

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGE OIL/FILTER ____ QUARTS | <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE WIPERS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE FUEL FILTER | <input type="checkbox"/> ROTATE TIRES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE AIR FILTER | <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE TIRES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK ALL FLUIDS | <input type="checkbox"/> REPAIR TIRE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK BELTS / HOSES | <input type="checkbox"/> VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SERVICE BRAKES | <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE BATTERY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACE BRAKES | <input type="checkbox"/> 4,000 MILE MAINTENANCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SEE BELOW) | |

Comments: _____

Requested By: _____

Date: _____

Completed By: _____

Date: _____