

## CLEVELAND COUNTY FLEET POLICY

### Section I General Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide you with a summary of the administrative requirements, policies, and standard operating procedures regarding the use of Cleveland County vehicles and related equipment.

In order to be assigned or operate any Cleveland County motorized vehicle, each employee must read and sign the Cleveland County Fleet Policy Employee Acknowledgement which states they have read and understand all policy and guidance herein (copy of form found at end of Fleet Policy)

**A. Vehicle Assignment:** A County vehicle may be assigned to an employee who regularly requires vehicular transportation in the performance of his assigned duties and requires the use of the vehicle during off duty time for regular on-call purposes. The assignment may be of a permanent nature or for a specified time period, such as a day or week of on-call duty. During vacation periods or leaves of absences over two weeks, an employee who is assigned a vehicle will leave the vehicle, keys, and any other necessary equipment with the department.

Several vehicles are available for official use by County officials and staff. To schedule use of a vehicle assigned to the Finance & Purchasing Department, call 704-484-4838. Other departments with vehicles available for use by their employees include Cooperative Extension, Social Services and the Health Department.

County vehicles should be used for County business whenever they are available. In rare occasions, if no County vehicles are available, the Department Head may authorize the employee to use their personal vehicle for county business. These employees will be reimbursed for mileage at the current rate established in the Cleveland County Travel Policy. Personal vehicles are not covered by County Liability Insurance in any way while being used for County business. The Department Head should ensure that the employee has appropriate private insurance on their vehicle that is in compliance with State requirements.

Employees may not use County vehicles for personal business. When the vehicle is not being used for County business purposes, it is to be kept on the premises of Cleveland County except when specifically exempted by a Department Head and allowed within the parameters of these instructions. In any circumstance, when an employee is on leave for two weeks or more, the employee's assigned County vehicle must be kept on County property. No County vehicle will be allowed to be driven to an employee's home for commuting purposes unless the employee is subject to frequent and emergency duty after normal working hours. County-owned vehicles shall not be left on non-residential streets or highways overnight unless it's necessary due to mechanical failure or emergency.

## **B. Driver Regulations**

- Each driver of any County owned vehicle must have a valid operator's license and proper type for the necessary vehicle.
- Prior to acceptance for employment with the County in a position that would necessitate the operation of a motor vehicle in the course of performing the assigned duties of that position, a prospective employee's motor vehicle operators record may be requested from the State Department of Motor Vehicles. If the record indicates a failure to meet the minimum standard established by this policy or if the overall driving record reveals a pattern of convictions and their ability to safely operate a County vehicle or piece of heavy equipment is questionable and employment is incumbent upon the ability to operate a vehicle, the prospective employee may be denied employment.
- Potential Drivers must not have been convicted of impaired driving within the preceding five (5) years from the date of inquiry or have more than one (1) conviction throughout the course of employment;
- Potential Drivers must not have been convicted of a traffic offense that resulted in suspension or revocation of driving privileges within the preceding five (5) years from the date of inquiry or be convicted anytime throughout the course of employment;
- Potential Drivers must not have had three (3) or more suspensions or revocations of driving privileges, regardless of the date of occurrence or basis for the suspension or revocation;
- Department heads are responsible for verifying:
  - Adequate Driver History Report (From HR if necessary)
  - Driver has a valid driver license
  - Personal vehicle has valid Liability Insurance if used for County Business. A copy of the vehicles current liability insurance policy should be collected by Department Head or Supervisor and updated annually.
- Employee's Responsibility: All County employees authorized to operate County owned and/or privately owned motor vehicles while conducting official business shall immediately report any conviction of a traffic violation, and any charge or conviction of a DUI, to their immediate supervisor. A traffic violation is defined as any action which may affect an employee's eligibility under the minimum qualifications listed above. Examples include, driving while impaired, actions resulting in a suspended or revoked license, accident in which the employee is at fault, and/or any violation resulting in points against the employee's driving record. The supervisor shall report the same to the Department Head within receipt of the notice. Failure to comply with this provision shall be considered willful violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Persons not employed by the County may accompany County employees when they have an interest in the purpose of the trip; however, non-employees require department head approval before driving.
- All drivers and riders in County vehicles are required to obey all moving and non-moving traffic laws including wearing seat belts in compliance with seat belt laws.
  - Cleveland County will not pay traffic tickets or parking fines of employees driving County owned vehicles, nor will the County pay traffic tickets or

parking fines if the employee is authorized to use their personal vehicle on County business.

- Fuel for County vehicles should be obtained at the joint County/City of Shelby fuel pumps located at 435 West Grover Street. Out of Town fuel purchases should be made using the commercial fuel cards. Employees should not use personal funds to fuel County vehicles.
- NCGS 20-39.1(a)(2) requires identification be “painted or affixed on [the vehicle’s] side a circle not less than eight inches in diameter showing a replica of the seal of the County” for all County-owned vehicles with a permanent license plate. Certain vehicles, such as those with a confidential plate, have specific exemption authority and should not be identified as a County vehicle. Vehicles assigned to the Sheriff’s Office, EMS Department, and Solid Waste Code Enforcement Officers are professionally painted identifying them as County vehicles. All other County-owned vehicles with a permanent license plate are required to have a 12” County decal sticker on both front doors of the vehicle.
- When a department determines that a vehicle is no longer needed or needs to be replaced, complete the “Equipment Disposition/ Deletion/ Transfer Form” located on the County Wiki under Finance Department. Then, send the form, registration, license plate, and all keys to the equipment to the Finance & Purchasing Department. The County Manager will determine whether to sell the equipment or transfer to another department.
- Under no circumstances may a County employee operate a County-owned vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating beverages or illegal drugs.
- Beginning January 1, 2010, smoking is not permitted in County vehicles.
- Each department must supply fire suppression equipment in vehicles assigned to their department.
- Personal property left in the vehicles will not be the responsibility of the County.

### **C. Vehicle Maintenance**

- 1. Out-of-Town Repairs:** Each Department Head should use discretion with respect to out of town repair costs. As with other travel-related expenditures, the County may reimburse you for money spent to repair County vehicles while out of town. County credit cards are an option for such expenses with approval from Department Head.
- 2. Maintenance/ Repairs:** Departments are required to provide preventive maintenance for their vehicle, as follows:
  - Manage prevention maintenance according to the owner’s manual.
  - Check assigned vehicles to ensure proper oil level, water, antifreeze, battery, and inflation of tires. This service should be performed by the driver weekly.
  - Routine maintenance should be handled by the vendor under contract with the County. Call the Purchasing Specialist at 704-484-4840 to determine the current vendor.

- State law requires all motor vehicles to be inspected for safety annually. The assigned department shall verify that the annual inspection occurs timely. All general County vehicles (excluding vehicles operated in the departments of Sheriff, EMS, and Emergency Management) should seek annual inspections through the maintenance staff at the County Landfill.
- Standardize vehicle selection where possible and when possible, choose four-cylinder vehicles or other vehicle with low operating costs.
- Follow the guidelines in the County's Fleet Policy and related procedures.

**D. Cleanliness:** Departments and individuals with the assigned vehicles are responsible for keeping their assigned vehicles clean. Cleaning and washing of County vehicles should be performed at least once a quarter, and more often as needed, absent any restrictions on the use of water. The public perception and image of the County are often conveyed by the cleanliness and condition of the vehicle.

**E. Vehicle Accident Reporting:** As of 7/1/2015 Cleveland County is self-funded for all Property and Liability insurance which includes Comprehensive and Collision Liability on all County owned vehicles. The County has formed a five person executive review panel that is designed to review every automobile accident claim that is incurred by Cleveland County. This panel will act as a task force going forward and will meet monthly to review all claims that were incurred that month. Each claim over \$500 will be reviewed in detail and if the Cleveland County employee that was operating the vehicle, or any employee that was directly involved in the accident report, is deemed in a 5-0 consensus that the accident was both *avoidable* and *negligent* then the employee will be fined \$150 per occurrence that will be administered through a payroll deduction. *Avoidable* is defined as an opportunity to prevent the incident. *Negligence* shall be defined as failure to use reasonable care which results in injury to person, property, or both. Reasonable care is defined as the type of care rendered by an ordinary person in similar circumstances. Any incident that is deemed by the review panel as avoidable and negligent may be subject to further discipline that could result in separation or removal of driving privileges. The five person review panel will submit all findings and stipends to the departmental safety committee for further review. All employees involved in an accident in which damages exceed \$500 will be required to pass a drug screening.

If you are involved in an accident while operating a County vehicle, follow these procedures below for all accidents regardless of the damage:

- Stop and notify law enforcement and medical personnel if necessary.
- Identify yourself and exchange contact and insurance information with the other party. Since the County is self-funded, the contact for the county insurance will be the Finance & Purchasing Department, call 704-484-4840.
- Share contact and insurance information with law enforcement.
- Report the accident to your supervisor as quickly as possible.
- The Supervisor or Department Head should notify the Human Resources Department immediately upon knowledge of an accident involving an employee working in a Safety/Security sensitive position. This notification is required, if applicable, based on the County Personnel Ordinance (see Section F below for more information).

- If there were any personal injuries, complete the applicable sections of the Accident Incident Investigation Report (i.e. claim form) immediately. Submit this completed form to the Human Resources Department.
- If any property was damaged, complete (legibly) the appropriate sections of an Accident Incident Investigation Report form. It is the Department's responsibility to submit at least two estimates for repairs to damages within 72 hours of accident. Send both the Accident Incident Investigation Report form and the estimates, along with a copy of the law enforcement agency report, to the Finance & Purchasing Department within 72 hours of accident.
- You should retain one copy of the completed forms for your records. Failure to file the proper reports can result in loss of the privilege to drive a County vehicle, suspension, demotion, or dismissal.

The County's forms referenced above can be found on the County's Wiki, under Human Resources Department.

**F. Post-Accident Testing:** All county employees are required to undergo and pass a drug test, at the county's expense, on any occasion in which they are involved in a vehicular accident while operating a county vehicle or performing county business while using a private vehicle when:

- a citation or ticket is issued indicating that the employee is at fault;
- the property damage exceeds five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to any vehicle involved in the accident, regardless of ownership; or
- there is any type of injury to anyone, regardless of fault.

The employee/supervisor should immediately contact Human Resources to determine where they should report for testing based on time of day/night and weekday/weekend. The employee must undergo the drug test within eight (8) hours of the time of the accident in order for the test to accurately measure for any illegal or controlled prescription drugs.

**G. Miscellaneous:** Finance & Purchasing Department will:

- Notify current employees when selling a vehicle.
- Share with Department Heads, or their designee, information concerning fuel usage among vehicles assigned to the department.

Cleveland County Fleet Policy

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Cleveland County Fleet Policy. I understand that failure to comply with the policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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Employee Signature

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Date

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Employee Name (Print)