



City of Santa Clarita
POLICY/PROCEDURE

Number III-21.2	SUBJECT: VEHICLE USE POLICY	
ORIGINAL ISSUE	EFFECTIVE: 03/18/1991	CATEGORY: HUMAN RESOURCES
CURRENT ISSUE	EFFECTIVE: 10/13/2020	SUPERSEDES: III-21.1

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

STANDARD MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

I. PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND ENFORCEMENT

This vehicle policy is intended to establish rules and regulations for all City employees using a vehicle on official City business. This policy shall address both the use of City vehicles and the use of personal vehicles in the performance of official City business. This policy shall also address the procedure to report all collision incidents, damage in operation, or vandalism involving City vehicles (including, but not limited to trailers, mowers, or other drivable equipment), and rented, leased, or privately owned vehicles being used for City Business. Each Department Director shall have primary responsibility for applying this policy within his/her department and will interact with the General Services Manager on all matters regarding the department's City vehicles unless he/she appoints a designee. If a designee is appointed, then this person will interact with the General Services Manager as described above. Any vehicle usage contrary to this policy shall be reported to the appropriate Department Director or designee.

II. MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLE POOL

The City maintains a pool of safe, reliable, and economical vehicles for employees to use in the performance of their duties. The acquisition of vehicles shall be the primary responsibility of the General Services Manager and Purchasing staff. The vehicle pool will be equipped with an optimum number of safe and reliable vehicles to minimize the City's vehicle/equipment capital expenditure, facilitate effective utilization of City vehicles, provide loaner vehicles for out-of-service vehicles, and provide vehicles for temporary use. The Facilities/Fleet Supervisor is primarily responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle pool.

III. TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLE TO AN EMPLOYEE

An employee who wishes to use a City vehicle from the pool for work-related travel shall request, either verbally or in writing, such use to his/her Department Director or designee.

The Department Director or designee will review the request and let the employee know if the request has been approved or denied. If no pool vehicle is available, the employee may take his/her personal vehicle in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

The employee's request should include the following information:

- A. Employee's name, title, and division;
- B. Reason the employee is requesting a City vehicle;
- C. Location(s) the employee intends to drive in the City vehicle;
- D. Length of time the employee requires a City vehicle;
- E. Which vehicle, if more than one is available, the employee wishes to use; and
- F. Names of the other employees who are expected to be in the City vehicle.

IV. REGULAR ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLE TO AN EMPLOYEE

Certain employees who have a business need to have a City vehicle as part of their daily duties shall have a City vehicle assigned to them either (1) during each workday; or (2) around-the-clock, including the right to take the vehicle home and/or keep overnight. Employees who have a vehicle assigned to him/her each workday are not permitted to take the vehicle home and/or keep overnight or to use the vehicle for the performance of any non-work-related tasks.

A. Daily Assignment: The following factors will be considered when determining whether an employee shall have a vehicle assigned to him/her each workday:

1. His/Her duties require daily travel between crews, job sites, and/or offices.
2. His/Her duties include a need for frequent use of bulky tools or equipment that cannot be stored at a job site.
3. His/Her duties include a need for transporting and using material, including, but not limited to asphalt, large bags of powder concrete, and/or fertilizer.
4. His/Her duties require an average of at least 450 miles of travel per month.

B. Around-the-Clock Assignment (Stand-by Duty):

Certain employees may have a City vehicle assigned to them around-the-clock, such as when an employee has been designated to be on stand-by duty by the appropriate Department Director or his/her designee. In this situation, the employee will be assigned a City vehicle to take home and/or keep overnight.

Employees who are required to and consistently do respond to after-hours emergencies one or more times per week, using a specially equipped vehicle, shall have a vehicle assigned during the period of his/her employment with the City. Those employees who have such a need shall be designated by the Department Director or his/her designee.

The designation of a vehicle around-the-clock may be for a limited duration, such as over a weekend.

1. **Personal Use:** An employee assigned a City vehicle around-the-clock is prohibited from using the vehicle for personal matters with the exception of (1) commuting to and from the worksite; and (2) minimal personal use (such as a stop for a personal errand on the way home from work).

V. **PROPER USE OF CITY VEHICLES**

- A. City vehicles shall only be used for City-related business, unless authorized by the City Manager or his/her designee, except as specified above for employees with a vehicle assigned around-the-clock.
- B. Employees who are assigned a City vehicle must perform a visual inspection of the vehicle daily before driving or using the vehicle. A Vehicle Condition Report ("VCR") should be completed daily prior to operating any vehicle with a gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 pounds, or a vehicle towing a trailer with a gross vehicle weight greater than 10,000 pounds, or if the vehicle is equipped with an air brake system. Vehicles that do not meet any of these criteria shall have VCR forms completed at least once per week. The supervisor is responsible for identifying and notifying particular employees who must complete a daily VCR. Any general repair or maintenance needed to the vehicle should be listed on the VCR; vehicles with items that could create safety issues should be immediately brought in for repair or be reported to the Facilities/Fleet Supervisor. Employees must not operate vehicles that are deemed to be unsafe.
- C. Drivers must obey all local, state, and federal traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits, when operating a City vehicle or personal vehicle while performing City business.
- D. Employees must possess and maintain a valid California driver license for the class of vehicle to be operated.
- E. Vehicles shall be operated only by City employees, elected or appointed officials, and persons authorized by City contract. Employees shall not permit non-City employees to drive a City vehicle.
- F. No employee may operate a City vehicle after he/she has ingested any amount of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances (including cannabis), or other substance (including prescription medication) that may hinder the safe operation of a vehicle.
- G. Possession of controlled substances (including cannabis), alcoholic beverages, or any firearms or weapons inside a City vehicle, is strictly prohibited.
- H. Seat belts must be worn at all times. It shall be the responsibility of the driver of the vehicle to ensure that all occupants of the vehicle are wearing seatbelts while the vehicle is in operation.

I. Employees may not use hand-held cellular telephones, Nextels, or other electronic communication devices, such as an Android or iPhone, while operating a City vehicle. Employees may use a cellular telephone or Nextel only if a hands-free device is used.

J. When available, employees shall use a "spotter" when backing the vehicle or to assist the driver when maneuvering the vehicle if his/her vision is obstructed in any way.

K. Employees should be free from distractions while operating a City vehicle to avoid preventable accidents.

L. Smoking or use of any tobacco or nicotine product (including, but not limited to, electronic cigarettes, vapes, and vaporizers) is prohibited inside all City vehicles.

M. All trash and personal items should be removed from City vehicles at the conclusion of each trip.

N. Employees must ensure that all windows are closed, doors are locked, and lights are off, when leaving the City vehicle.

O. Employees shall not modify City vehicles in any way without the express written permission of the Department Director and Facilities/Fleet Supervisor.

P. Employees shall not permit other City employees to drive a City vehicle unless he/she has been authorized to do so.

Q. Employees shall not permit non-City passengers to ride in a City vehicle without authorization from the employee's Department Director or designee. However, employees are authorized to transport non-City passengers without prior Department Director approval in cases of an accident or other emergency.

R. During an emergency, City employees may be required to respond to the disaster with a City vehicle. To prepare for such an event all fuel tanks of vehicles, trucks, and equipment must register at least half a tank of fuel at the end of every shift. In addition, the fuel tanks of all City vehicles should be filled at the end of each week.

S. Employees operating any City vehicle must read, sign, and abide by the City's Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in City Vehicles Policy II-28.

VI. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE FOR CITY BUSINESS

It is the preference of the City that employees use a City vehicle, when available, in the performance of official City business. However, there are circumstances where an employee may use his/her personal vehicle in the performance of official City business.

A. Local Travel: An employee traveling for City business must have approval to use a City vehicle. If no City vehicle is available, the employee may request and receive authorization to use his/her personal vehicle. Employees who use their own personal vehicle for City business must maintain auto liability insurance as required by law.

B. The employee is required to submit a mileage request to his/her Department Director after the travel is completed to receive reimbursement. The City will pay the employee the standard IRS mileage reimbursement for each mile driven in their personal vehicle at the current rate set by the IRS at the time the mileage is actually incurred.

C. Unless otherwise required by law, should an employee be involved in an accident while using their personal vehicle for City business, the employee shall be responsible under his/her auto liability policy.

VII. **MAINTENANCE OF DRIVER LICENSE**

Any employee who drives a vehicle for City business must have in possession at all times a valid California driver license of the proper class for the vehicle being operated in accordance with the California Vehicle Code. All employees are required to notify their Department Director of any changes to the validity of their driver license, even if the change is temporary. Such changes include, but are not limited to, suspension of license, revocation of license, and non-renewed license. Failure to report changes to driver license validity may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, up to and including termination. Supervisors are required to notify the Human Resources Division immediately upon learning of any such changes.

VIII. **CITATIONS WHILE OPERATING CITY VEHICLES**

Any employee who receives a citation (including, but not limited to, traffic, moving, and parking violations) while operating a City vehicle shall immediately report the citation to his/her direct Supervisor. The Supervisor shall give written notification of the citation to the Department Director, the Risk Administrator, and the Human Resources Manager. The expense for citations will be paid by the operator unless (1) it is the direct result of negligence by the City in furnishing a vehicle designed for but not properly equipped or maintained for use on a public roadway; or (2) the City is required by law to pay for the citation.

IX. **VEHICLE INCIDENT DEFINITION AND PROCEDURE FOR DRIVERS**

A. **Definitions:**

1. **Incident:** An event that may be unplanned, but is not necessarily unintentional or unexpected. The term incident is generally used when discussing driving safety and various degrees and types of automotive incidents.
2. **Vehicle Incident:** Any vehicle collision, injury, or property damage involving a DMV registered vehicle, including trailers or other equipment must be reported by employees.
3. **Business Hours/Days:** Typical hours of the day in which business is conducted, business days include Monday – Friday, excludes holidays and weekends.

All incidents that involve the following must be investigated and reported:

1. Injury to a person as a result of vehicular collision.

2. Damage to a personal vehicle while on City business.
3. City vehicle or equipment contact with another vehicle, object, property, (including City property or facilities), or person, whether the vehicle was being operated or was parked.
4. Vandalism and damage occurred whether the vehicle was being operated or was parked.

B. Procedure for Drivers: If the incident involves a City owned vehicle the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. Call 911 to obtain any medical attention if necessary.
2. Contact the local Sheriff's office immediately to respond and prepare a police report.
3. Notify Risk Management with your name, location, and other pertinent information.
4. Exchange information with the other vehicle operator involved or property owner (if applicable). Obtain Driver's License and registration information, insurance company information, and contact numbers. Obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all passengers and witnesses. Refer to the insurance and registration information in the glove box of all City Vehicles and equipment.
5. Notify your Supervisor/Manager of the incident immediately.
6. Complete and submit the INCIDENT REPORT (Attachment A) within 24 business hours of the incident regardless of the extent of the damage or the location of the incident. If the damage or injury occurs on the weekend or after hours, the report must be filed at the start of business on the next business day.
7. All vehicles or equipment involved in an incident must be taken to Vehicle Maintenance within 24 business hours for a Safety Inspection. The employee who was driving or the employee's Supervisor shall submit a copy of the Incident Report to the Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor. Damage in operation may include, but is not limited to, damage resulting from improper operation of the vehicle and equipment, misuse, vandalism, or not following safe driving and operation habits while performing work tasks.
8. Any cost of repairing damage to a City vehicle that resulted from willful misconduct or gross negligence by the employee having custody of the vehicle may be recoverable by the City from the employee and may result in disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination.

Risk Management and Vehicle Maintenance will maintain information and records regarding incidents for vehicle safety inspections, repairs and potential cost recovery.

C. Additional Considerations for Drivers: When involved in a vehicle incident involving a third party:

1. Be courteous.
2. Do not discuss any conditions or defects of the automobile or equipment.
3. Do not express opinion or make any statement to anyone about the incident except to law enforcement and City representatives.
4. Do not admit or deny fault for the incident to anyone.

D. Post Incident Supervisor Review: All incidents will undergo a Post Incident Supervisor Review (Attachment B) to determine the cause and preventability of the incident and to identify corrective action (e.g., required attendance at a training program, driver safety program, or disciplinary actions, etc.). The Department Director/Division Manager and the Supervisor shall ensure the proper corrective actions have been identified, initiated, and completed by the employee involved in the incident.

E. Responsibilities:

1. Employee:
 - a) Safely operate all vehicles and equipment at all times.
 - b) Report all incidents immediately to his/her Supervisor and Risk Management in which he/she is involved while operating a City vehicle and/or equipment.
 - c) Complete the Incident Report within 24 business hours.
2. Supervisor:
 - a) Report all vehicle incidents to Department Director, Division Manager, Risk Management, and Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor immediately.
 - b) Complete a Post Incident Supervisor Review, which includes investigating and discussing the incident with the employee, and forward the report to Manager and Department Director for signature within 24 business hours.
3. Division Manager:
 - a) Contact Human Resources to discuss appropriate corrective action (i.e. training or discipline). The City may impose discipline at any level that is appropriate for the employee's action up to and including termination.
 - b) Document completion of corrective action.
 - c) Take appropriate disciplinary action within 30 working days of notification of the preventable incident or as soon as practical.
 - d) Implement education, awareness, and other action for preventable vehicle incidents per policy.
4. Risk Management:
 - a) Determine if incident was preventable.
 - b) Schedule on an annual basis, or as needed, Driver's Safety Training.

c) Maintain information and records regarding incidents and potential cost recovery.

5. Vehicle Maintenance:

a) Obtain and/or provide cost of repair to Risk Management.

b) Ensure vehicle is repaired.

c) Maintain information and records of incidents for vehicle safety inspections, repairs and potential cost recovery.

X. **REPORTING VEHICLE MAINTENANCE CONCERNS**

Employees are required to report any potential mechanical, electrical, or other maintenance-related concerns about a City vehicle using the Vehicle Condition Report (VCR).

XI. **PROOF OF INSURANCE REQUIRED**

All employees who operate their personal vehicle in the performance of City business are required to possess and present proof of minimum insurance as required by California law. Employees must present a valid California driver license to the Human Resources Division prior to operating a City vehicle. Proof of current insurance, including policy renewals, must be provided by an employee to Risk Management in order to be eligible for mileage reimbursement.

XII. **INCIDENTAL EXPENSES**

Employees shall be reimbursed for all incidental expenses incurred while traveling on City business, including, but not limited to, parking and toll fees. This reimbursement shall be in addition to any mileage or flat rate reimbursement to which the employee is entitled.

XIII. **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

XIV. **EXCEPTIONS**

There are no exceptions to this policy without the express authorization of the City Manager.

XV. **AUTHORITY**

By the authority of the City Manager.



Kenneth W. Striplin
City Manager