



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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Director

Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Policy & Procedure Title:	County Vehicle Usage		
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DHS Division/Unit of Origin:	DHS Risk Management		
Policy Contact – Employee Name, Title and DHS Division: Edgar Soto, DHS Risk Manager, DHS Risk Management			
Contact Phone Number (s):	(323) 890-8650		
Distribution: DHS-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If not DHS-wide, other distribution:		

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to disseminate Department of Health Services' position pertaining to the use of County vehicles.

POLICY:

County vehicles leased or owned; with the exception of home-assigned County vehicles as indicated; are to be used only for conducting County business. Any employee violating this provision will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Department of Health Services (DHS) shall designate a County Vehicle Coordinator charged with the responsibility of maintaining an accurate central DHS vehicle fleet inventory, including acquisition date, and compilation of departmental mileage data on County vehicle usage.

Each DHS program/facility or hospital with at least one County vehicle must designate a Vehicle Coordinator to facilitate the collection of the *County Vehicle Mileage and Safety Check Logs* (Attachment I) and ensure the *County Vehicle Mileage and Safety Check Logs* (vehicle trip logs) are completed correctly. The program/facility Vehicle Coordinator will also be responsible for ensuring the proper maintenance and repair of County vehicles, accuracy of vehicle fleet inventory at the facility, and timely submission of vehicle accident reports.

Drivers of County vehicles shall report all accidents/incidents involving County vehicles. Failure by the employee to report an accident/incident may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge or termination from employment. If the County vehicle is not used in the course and scope of County business, it may result in personal liability on the part of the employee.

The mission of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services is to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.

Revision/Review Dates: 07/01/2008 01/01/2009

Department Head/Designee Approval: Signature on File

An employee **charged** with a crime (including traffic violations, if position requires driving on County business) shall report being charged with such crime to DHS Human Resources Performance Management Unit (PMU) within **72 hours of being charged**. An employee **convicted** of a crime (including traffic violations, if position requires driving on County business) shall report the conviction to PMU within 24 hours of the conviction. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action, including discharge or termination from employment. PMU will review the charges/conviction to determine if a job nexus exists. All information received by DHS Human Resources will only be released on a “need-to-know” basis as required to determine a job nexus.

GUIDELINES:

Responsibilities

DHS County Vehicle Coordinator responsibility:

- Generates a department-wide annual vehicle usage report and inventory summarizing information from the vehicle trip logs for distribution to each facility/program manager. The report will monitor the usage of County vehicles and to assist management in evaluating the useful life of County vehicles.
- Reviews and audits facility/program vehicle trip logs and County vehicle inventory lists.

Facility/Program Vehicle Coordinator responsibility:

- Collects monthly vehicle trip logs, compiles data and prepares quarterly reports to the DHS County Vehicle Coordinator by the 5th business day of each month. Keeps the monthly vehicle trip logs on-file as the DHS County Vehicle Coordinator audits and quality assures recordkeeping.
- Ensures the County vehicle is properly serviced at the correct preventive maintenance intervals.
- Keeps track of the vehicle fleet inventory at the facility and is aware of the location of each vehicle at all times. All County vehicles added/removed from the fleet shall be reported to the DHS County Vehicle Coordinator.
- [Reviews vehicle Preventive Maintenance and repair estimates and invoices to ensure that the charges are appropriate. Maintains records of all invoices for auditing purposes.](#)
- Collects and maintains *County Vehicle Use Authorization* forms (Attachment II).
- Verifies employee's driver license (check out) and verifies vehicle trip logs are completed and accurate (check in).
- Ensure employees who have home-assigned County vehicles follow the Auditor-Controller's *Handbook for the Reporting of the Personal Use of County-Provided Vehicles* as referenced in the **County Fiscal Manual**, Section 13.15.0.

Usage Limitations

County vehicles are not intended for personal use or for transporting unauthorized passengers, including family members, except as may occur on an incidental basis or with a business justification. Further, no employee shall make a County vehicle available to an immediate family member, except in the case of a medical emergency (Government Code § 50084.5).

Duplicate vehicle keys are not to be made except by the owner department as backup/spare.

County vehicles may be used for one-day trips to nearby counties upon approval by the facility/program director or designee pursuant to DHS Policy 307, "Vehicles Traveling to Nearby Counties" and as provided in Sections 5.40.120, 5.40.310, 5.40.320 of the Los Angeles County Code. The vehicle may not be kept overnight, on weekends, or holidays at the employee's residence, except by special authorization, and may not be used for personal use.

With the exception of Home-Assigned County Vehicles, defined below, County vehicles should not be used to supplement, whether in whole or in part, the regular commute between an employee's residence and work location. A business justification is required for any employee to be allowed to drive a County vehicle to or from an alternate worksite close to the employee's residence, as part of the employee's regular commute to or from work.

License Requirements

Employees who drive a County vehicle must possess a valid California driver license pursuant to State law and DHS Policy 704, "Licensure, Certification, Registration, and Permit of Workforce Members." The facility/program Vehicle Coordinator must verify the employee's driver license classification and ensure it is appropriate for the identified vehicle prior to allowing him/her use of the County vehicle.

Driver licenses for all employees driving on County business must be validated annually during the Performance Evaluation (PE) process. The supervisor/manager must visually inspect the employee's driver license and acknowledge it is current and valid by noting the expiration date on the annual PE HS-1025, "*Agreement of Understanding*" form. A copy of the driver license is not required.

COUNTY VEHICLES CATEGORIES, CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

Pool Vehicles

- Pool Vehicles are generally garaged at County facilities and used by more than one County employee on a regular basis to conduct a variety of County business. These are mainly for the purpose of transporting employees and typically do not have specialty equipment installed.

- Pool Vehicles may include regular passenger vehicles, mini-vans, vans, off-road vehicles and buses.
- Pool Vehicles may not be assigned to the same employee for more than ten (10) consecutive business days, without written justification and approval by the Department Head or Chief Deputy.

Field-Use Vehicles

- Field-Use Vehicles are generally garaged at County facilities and normally have specialized non-portable equipment or instruments installed, or are built or modified to carry special materials, to perform a specific job function for the Department. Some field-use vehicles may be assigned based on a high volume of field work required for a specific position and may not have specialized equipment. These vehicles may be assigned to a specific individual, but are garaged at County/government facilities, designated by the Department Head or Chief Deputy.

Home-Assigned County Vehicles

- Department Heads may approve the issuance of County vehicles consistent with this Policy. The granting of County vehicles should be based on individual business justifications, and not be determined solely on the hierarchy or seniority with the Department.
- Home-Assigned County Vehicles, which are passenger vehicles, are assigned to specific employees and are typically garaged at employee's residence overnight.
- Each DHS program/facility with employees with Home-Assigned County Vehicles shall comply with procedures stated in the Auditor-Controller's Handbook for the Reporting of the Personal Use of County-Provided Vehicles as referenced in the **County Fiscal Manual**, Section 13.15.0.

PROCEDURES:

I. Acquisition of a County Vehicle

Please note: Repairs to a vehicle damaged while on loan to an employee of a department/facility/program other than the owner department/facility/program become the responsibility of the employee's department/facility/program.

A. Pool Vehicles – Internal Services Department (ISD) loaner – Employee must:

1. Complete the *County Vehicle Use Authorization* form (Attachment II) and submit it to the program/facility manager or designee for approval.
2. Submit form to ISD along with any other required documents.

3. Maintain a vehicle trip log while using the loaned vehicle.
4. After returning the vehicle to ISD, submit the return receipt and vehicle trip log to the facility/program Vehicle Coordinator by the 1st business day of the following month or as soon as possible.

B. Field-Use Vehicles – Garaged at the facility/program locations – Employee must:

1. Sign a check-out log and show a valid driver license appropriate for the vehicle class.
2. Sign a check-in log upon the return of the vehicle and complete a vehicle trip log (Attachment I) for use of the vehicle.
3. Submit completed vehicle trip log (Attachment I) to the facility/program Vehicle Coordinator and provide a copy to the direct supervisor or County designee upon return of vehicle. The Vehicle Coordinator will verify the submitted vehicle trip log to ensure it is accurate and complete.

C. Home-Assigned County Vehicles

Department Heads may approve the issuance of County vehicles consistent with this Policy. The granting of County vehicles should be based on individual business justifications, and not be determined solely on the hierarchy or seniority with the Department.

The issuance of Home-Assigned Vehicles should adhere to the following criteria:

1. Annual usage of such vehicle to conduct County business is expected to exceed 5,000 miles per calendar year (excluding commute mileage between the employee's residence and reporting location), OR
2. The employee needs special non-portable equipment/instrument or material to perform primary emergency response duties and such equipment/instrument or material cannot be conveniently carried in the employee's personal vehicle, OR
3. The employee's assignment involves frequent activities conducted during non-business hours at various locations throughout the County, OR
4. Other department-specific written justification authorized by the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, Operations Cluster, (213) 974-1186.

Each employee should sign a *Home-Assigned County Vehicle Agreement Form* (Attachment III) prepared by the department, acknowledging that he/she has read, understood, and will comply with all County and departmental vehicle usage policies.

Each employee should submit a signed *Home-Assigned County Vehicle Certification Form* (Attachment IV) containing the justification of vehicle issuance by March 31st of each year, and the form shall subsequently be approved by Department Head, to obtain renewal authorization for continued use of such vehicle. Exceptions to this requirement for public safety or confidentiality purposes must be justified in a Departmental Vehicle Policy.

An employee's personal use of a County-provided vehicle is considered a taxable fringe benefit under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS Publication 15-B Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits). Please refer to the Auditor-Controller's *Handbook for the Reporting of the Personal Use of County-Provided Vehicles* as referenced in the **County Fiscal Manual**, Section 13.15.0 for further information.

Safety Guidelines

Employees who drive a County vehicle must obey all traffic laws in accordance with the California Vehicle Code and any other applicable laws pertaining to the operation of a motor vehicle. Employees who drive a County vehicle are financially responsible for any moving and non-moving violations received while driving such vehicle.

Employee must perform a safety check prior to operating the County vehicle.

All occupants of a County vehicle are required to use seatbelts and other available safety restraints.

County vehicles are designated as "non-smoking vehicles".

County vehicle interior and exterior are to be maintained in a clean condition. Trash and other clutter must be removed from the vehicle upon return to the facility where the vehicle was obtained.

County vehicle must bear appropriate approved County and departmental logos, safely surrendered baby law sticker, and "How Am I Driving?" sticker. If any of the logos/stickers are damaged or missing, the driver must notify the facility/program Vehicle Coordinator. Only approved logos/stickers may be affixed to the County vehicle.

Per State law, drivers are prohibited from talking on cellular telephones while driving unless the driver is at least eighteen (18) years old and is using a hands-free device. Drivers are further prohibited from writing, sending or reading text-based communications such as text messages, instant messages, or electronic mail (e-mail) using an electronic wireless device (e.g., cellular

telephone/smartphone) while operating a motor vehicle. An employee who violates these provisions of law may be subject to disciplinary action in addition to any penalties imposed by state or local agencies. It is recommended that employees operating a County vehicle not talk on a cellular telephone (even with hands-free device) or use a wireless device while driving, but should pull over to a safe location or parking lot to conduct a telephone conversation.

An employee found to be in violation of the state laws regarding use of cellular telephones and other electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle will be financially responsible for any citations received for those violations.

Recordkeeping Requirements

The type of vehicle and usage (e.g., pool vs. home-garaged vehicles) will determine recordkeeping requirements. Logs should be retained consistent with Board-approved records retention schedules. In accordance with this policy, all vehicle records, logs and reports are to be retained for a minimum of four (4) years.

Vehicle Maintenance

If the vehicle is being serviced, the service receipt must be given to the facility/program Vehicle Coordinator for submission with the vehicle trip logs.

Fueling Options

Fuel cards used to purchase fuel for County vehicles are only to be used by the employee for the County vehicle in which it is assigned and only for fuel purchases. Fuel cards are not to be used for personal reasons. Misuse of a fuel card will result in disciplinary action which may include discharge.

Fuel for County vehicles may also be obtained through ISD's fueling stations or garages with prior authorization from the employee's manager.

ISD's *Request to Add Fuel Focus User to the Automated Fuel Management Information System (AFMIS) form* is available through each program/facility Vehicle Coordinator.

Reporting Vehicle Accidents and Incidents While Driving a County Vehicle

It is the employee's responsibility to report vehicle accidents or incidents immediately.

A. Employee Responsibility

1. Utilize the vehicle accident reporting packet located in the vehicle's glove compartment.

2. Provide information on the *Evidence of Financial Responsibility* form to the other party. Do not admit fault, liability, or discuss the circumstances of the accident with anyone other than an investigating officer.
3. Within 24 hours of the accident, contact Carl Warren and Company, the County's claim administrator, by telephone at (818) 247-2206. Inform them of the accident/ incident and notify DHS Risk Management at (323) 890-8482.
4. If the accident causes a fatality or serious injury, call 9-1-1 and request the jurisdictional law enforcement agency to complete an investigation of the accident. A copy of the investigation report is to be given to the employee's supervisor.
5. Complete and submit the *County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident* (Attachment V) form to his/her supervisor within three (3) business days of the accident.
6. If the accident causes damages to the property of any one person of \$750 or more, or causes bodily injury or death to any person, the employee must file a CA Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) *Report of Traffic Accident Occurring in California (SR-1)* form and submit it to the DMV within 10 days of the accident. Failure to submit the report may affect the employee's driver license or registration renewal. Neither the County nor Carl Warren and Company can file the form on behalf of the driver.
7. Report in writing to his/her supervisor every citation for a moving or non-moving violation involving a County vehicle within one business day of receipt with a copy of the citation.

C. Supervisor Responsibility

1. Review the completed *County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident*. Forward the report to DHS Risk Management* within two (2) business days of the accident.
2. Notify the County's claims administrator, Carl Warren and Company, whether or not the employee involved in the accident was driving in the course and scope of County business or employment.
3. If employee has an injury or wishes to be seen by a physician, follow procedures for reporting and providing managed care for an employee's injury or illness.
4. Upon receiving the law enforcement traffic collision report regarding the accident, forward a copy to DHS Risk Management*.

5. Consider Vehicle Accident Review Committee's decisions and employee's County driving record when evaluating job performance and in appraising his/her promotability to another driving position and/or continuing driving privileges and duties.

*DHS Risk Management
Claims & Operations Unit
5555 Ferguson Drive, Ste. 200-01
Commerce, CA 90022

REFERENCES/AUTHORITY:

Los Angeles County Code Sections 2.126.040(B), 2.81.035, 5.40.120, 5.40.310, 5.40.300, 5.40.320, 5.40.460, and 5.40.465

DHS Policies 307, 703.1, 704.1, and 862.02

County of Los Angeles Fiscal Manual Sections 13.14.0 and 13.15.0

California Vehicle Code Sections 12500, 12810.3, 21052, 23123-23124, 27315

Memo, County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department, Dave Lambertson to Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, "Rental of ISD Motor Pool Vehicles," 6/14/04

Memo, County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office, William T Fujioka to All Department Heads, "Implementation of County Vehicle Policy, 10/6/10

Chief Executive Office, County Vehicle Policy, CEO 1