

TEHAMA COUNTY VEHICLE USE POLICY

1. Purpose

The safe, responsible, and efficient use of vehicles is vital to the operation of County government. In recognition of these considerations, this policy has been developed listing the requirements and procedures for the responsible operation of County-owned, privately-owned, and rental vehicles by County employees and volunteers during the conduct of County business. Vehicle accidents pose a significant threat to public and personal safety. They also constitute a significant liability risk to the County. This policy is intended to supplement the Tehama County Travel Policy and all applicable provisions of the County Code. In the event that this policy is in conflict with another applicable county or department policy, the more restrictive policy shall prevail.

2. Definitions

- A. Vehicle accident: An event resulting in damage to a vehicle or possible injury to another, including employees.
- B. Authorized Volunteer: Any volunteer providing service to Tehama County who has been registered with the Personnel Office and is authorized by the Department Head or designee, to volunteer to drive a County Vehicle, Rental Vehicle, or a private vehicle on County business. (Does not include contracted third party vendors. Vendors are required to provide their own insurance.)
- C. Traffic Violation: Any citation of the Vehicle Code other than parking violations.
- D. County Vehicle: All vehicles, no matter the funding source utilized to procure the vehicle, for which the County, and its dependent special districts (e.g., Air Pollution Control District, Flood Control and Water Conservation District, etc.), holds the vehicle title.
- E. Rental Vehicle: Any vehicle rented through the County's regular purchasing procedures as approved by the Department Head or his/her designee.
- F. Private Vehicle: Any vehicle that does not meet the definition of a County Vehicle or Rental Vehicle.
- G. Employee: A County employee or authorized volunteer (as defined above).

3. Policy

- A. County Vehicles and Rental Vehicles shall only be used for official County business with approval of the Department Head or designee. (Official County business may include incidental personal travel within the route of County business if approved by Department Head or his/her designee.)

- B. Uses of County equipment shall only be for official County business.

4. Driver Qualifications

- A. In order to be authorized to operate a vehicle on County business, the driver, whether a County employee or an authorized volunteer, must possess a valid California Driver's License for the vehicle being operated and meet the driver criteria outlined in this Section.
- B. Employees who operate County vehicles shall maintain a valid driver's license and report traffic citations or vehicle accidents which occur while on County business.
- C. Either prior to or after being selected by Tehama County for a position, an applicant shall be subject to a Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) review. Applicants or employees who do not meet the requirements of this policy may be disqualified from County employment.
- D. The driving record of all employees will be reviewed at least annually through the DMV Pull Program as further described in Section 8 of this Policy.
- E. Employees who otherwise fail to comply with the provisions of this Section, may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

5. Take-Home Vehicles

- A. An employee may take home a County Vehicle or Rental Vehicle under either of the following circumstances:
 - 1. Temporary Take Home Vehicle. The employee, with the advance approval of the employee's Department Head or designee, uses a County Vehicle or Rental Vehicle to commute to and/or from work on infrequent, occasional situations (such as when an employee is returning from an officially authorized trip after working hours or leaving before work hours), as temporarily assigned by Department Head or designee; or
 - 2. Long-Term Take Home Vehicle. Justification for long-term take home vehicle assignment shall be based on one of the following:
 - a. The employee is required to participate regularly in official county business after normal business hours.
 - b. The employee must respond to emergencies which require immediate response and attention during off duty hours for the protection of persons or property. Such emergencies must require immediate travel to the emergency scene.
 - c. The employee is working on one or more special assignments, such as a

criminal or civil investigation, requiring continuous availability of a county vehicle.

- B. The take-home vehicle may not be used for personal purposes, other than for commuting within the County to and/or from work or de minimis personal use (such as a stop for a personal errand on the way between a business delivery and the employee's home);
- C. The Department Head or designee shall determine after consultation with the Risk Manager and CAO, those employees that are required to take home County Vehicles or Rental Vehicles for County business purposes as described in Section 5(A)(2) above. Except when emergency work is required, this approval must be obtained in writing in advance from the Department Head or designee. This list will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors annually.
- D. When an employee is required to take a County vehicle home for County business purposes as described in Section 5(A)(2) above, the employee may be subject to Internal Revenue Service rules concerning additional taxable compensation. Employees shall submit any logs or reports necessary to comply with IRS rules.
- E. All County owned vehicles shall not be taken out of the County without prior Department Head or designee approval.

6. Private Vehicles

- A. The use of private vehicles for official County business shall be authorized when such use is determined by the Department Head or designee, to be in the best interest of the County.
- B. Employees receiving an automobile allowance shall use their private vehicle for travel within Tehama County. Such employees may use a County vehicle only when (1) travelling outside of the County on County business; (2) transporting another passenger as defined in Section 9A or 9B while on County business
- C. License/Insurance
 - 1. Any employee authorized by the Department Head or his/her designee, to use a private vehicle for official County business shall have:
 - a. A valid California driver's license.
 - b. Sufficient public liability and property damage insurance which meet the requirements of the financial responsibility laws of the State of California. Prior to initiating travel in a private vehicle, the employee shall provide current proof of insurance to their department head or designee. This proof shall be maintained within the department. The employee should be aware that

his/her insurance coverage will be **primary** in the event of a vehicle accident to the fullest extent permitted by law (including without limitation the provisions of California Insurance Code §557.5, applicable to peace officers and firefighters).

2. Unless otherwise required by law, the cost of damage and/or wear and tear to a private vehicle used on County business is the responsibility of the employee and is considered by the County in the mileage rate paid to the employee.

D. Mileage Claims

1. Only those employees authorized by their Department Head or designee may submit claims for mileage reimbursement. All claims shall be submitted not later than 60 days following the date of travel.
2. Only those miles traveled in the performance of official County business may be claimed for reimbursement.
3. Miles driven to and from an employee's home and the assigned regular work location are not eligible for reimbursement.
4. Miles driven during the work day which vary from a direct route from one county business location to another are considered not eligible personal miles.
5. Employees who occasionally report to different work locations shall claim only the mileage that is greater than their normal commute to their assigned work location.
6. Authorized travel on County business in a private vehicle shall be reimbursed at the mileage reimbursement rate as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The mileage reimbursement rate represents full reimbursement for expenses incurred by a County employee (e.g., fuel, normal wear and tear, insurance, etc.) during the use of a private vehicle in the conduct of County business.
7. Employees receiving an automobile allowance are eligible for mileage reimbursement only when travelling outside of the County on County business. When eligible, such employees' reimbursement shall be calculated using the 727 Oak Street, Red Bluff address.

E. Private Vehicle Requirements

In order to help ensure that all County business is conducted in a safe and prudent manner, a private vehicle while being used for official County business, shall be considered an official County Vehicle and subject to the following rule:

1. The vehicle shall be safe to operate and shall be currently maintained in sound

mechanical condition adequate to provide transportation in accordance with state law.

7. Rental Vehicles

A vehicle may be rented for an employee, with the approval of the Department Head or designee, through the County's regular purchasing process. County employees are to accept the Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) and Additional Liability Insurance (ALI) supplemental insurance products offered by the rental car agency.

8. Pull Program

To help ensure the safety of County employees and the public, the driving records of all County employees who operate a vehicle on County business will be reviewed by the Personnel Office at least annually through the California Department of Motor Vehicles Employer Pull Notice Program ("DMV Pull"). The Personnel Director will contact the respective Department Head regarding the notice. The Department Head will address the employee as appropriate.

9. Passengers

- A. County vehicles used in the course of County business shall be used to transport only those passengers who are on official County business or persons directly involved in County services (e.g., clients, speakers, fellow conference members, other public agency employees who are ride-sharing, a governmental volunteer, or a member of a non-profit organization.).
- B. Passengers may travel in a private vehicle used in the course of County business with a County employee to local, regional, or state meetings, events, and trainings, only if no additional cost is incurred and no County employee is displaced from travel.
- C. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the carrying of any person or persons in case of an emergency.

10. Driver's Responsibilities

- A. The driver of a County vehicle used on County business must be satisfied that the vehicle is in safe operating condition. All mechanical defects of a County vehicle shall be reported to the Department Head or designee. Mechanical defects in rental vehicles should immediately be reported to the rental agency in accordance with their policies.
- B. Employees who operate a County vehicle shall complete a mileage log to report vehicle usage.
- C. The driver must operate the vehicle in a safe, reasonable manner.
- D. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the driver and all passengers are provided with and utilize seat belts and other safety equipment as required by state law.

- E. Use of tobacco or nicotine in any form, electronic cigarettes, cigars, pipes, hookah or vaping is prohibited in County Vehicles or Rental Vehicles.
- F. Employees are prohibited from driving on County business after consumption of any alcohol, illicit drugs or any substance that may impair the ability to operate vehicles or equipment.
- G. Vehicles used for County business are to be locked and vehicle keys removed at all times when the vehicle is unattended.
- H. Employees who operate vehicles on County business shall immediately report any of the following events to their department head or designee:
 1. Any traffic citation issued to the employee, while operating a vehicle on County business;
 2. Vehicle accidents involving the employee while operating a vehicle on County business;
 3. The theft, break in, or vandalism of the vehicle or County items in the vehicle and any damage incurred due to break ins;
 4. Suspension, revocation, or expiration of the employee's California Driver's License;
- I. Defensive Driver Training
All employees who are required to operate a vehicle for County business are required to complete, on County time and at County expense, a defensive driving training approved by Risk Management and pre-authorized by their Department Head or his/her designee. This training will be required once every two years. Department Head shall maintain proof of course completion.
- J. Pull Program
All employees shall execute any forms necessary to allow the employee's participation in the DMV Pull Program.
- K. Vehicle Damage
Any employee responsible for damage to County Vehicles, other than normal wear and tear, resulting from willful abuse, misconduct, multiple collisions, or use of the vehicle outside the course and scope of employment or County business may be subject to discipline.
- L. Traffic and Parking Citations
Traffic citations issued to an employee while using a vehicle on County-related business, other than those citations due to equipment violations or to over-length and over-width of vehicles, are the sole responsibility of the employee or authorized volunteer. Parking citations issued

while utilizing a vehicle for County-related business, are the sole responsibility of the employee who parked the vehicle. If the employee cannot be identified, then the department to which the vehicle was assigned shall be responsible.

M. Equipment and Property in County Vehicles

1. No employee shall install or cause to be installed in or on a County Vehicle any article of personal property without prior written approval of the Department Head or designee.
2. The County is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of personal items left in vehicle.

N. Nothing herein shall prohibit the use of County Vehicles by non-employees in case of an emergency.

11. Vehicle accident / Incident Reporting

Employees involved in a vehicle accident or incident while on County-related business shall:

A. Immediately or as soon as practicable complete a vehicle accident report on the forms provided by the County. (Forms and instructions are in all County Vehicles, or may be obtained from Risk Management.) The completed forms are then submitted to the Department Head and Risk Management for further processing.

If the driver is injured and unable to complete the report, either the Department Head or designee or Risk Management will complete the forms. Any vehicle accident involving injury to any person or damage to property shall be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency and an investigation requested.

B. The driver must **NOT** admit fault, nor discuss the vehicle accident with anyone except law enforcement officers, the driver's Department Head or designee, Risk Management, County Counsel, or their own private insurance provider.

C. Employees involved in a vehicle accident or incident shall obtain the name, address, telephone number, driver's license number, insurance carrier, policy number, and vehicle license number of the other party involved in the vehicle accident. If safely possible, take or obtain photographs of the damage to show all vehicles involved and the scene of the vehicle accident to show skid marks, location of debris, and location of road signs applying to traffic at the scene. These photographs should accompany the incident report.

12. Fuel Card/CalCard

- A. Fuel cards are available to purchase fuel for county vehicles. Where use of the fuel card or card-lock station is not practicable, the Department Head or designee may authorize the employee to pay the fuel expense themselves and request reimbursement, or may authorize the employee to use CalCard or petty cash, subject to all of the provisions of this policy. County fuel cards or CalCard shall not be used to purchase fuel for private vehicles under any circumstances.
- B. Except for use in purchasing other items that may be needed on an emergency basis to maintain the safe operation of the vehicle (i.e., tire repairs, radiator, belts, necessary hoses, etc.), fuel cards and CalCard shall be used only for required purchases of gasoline and oil for County Vehicles. When emergency out-of-town repairs are required, the employee should request the mechanic to place all old or damaged parts being replaced in the trunk of the vehicle so they can be returned to the Department for inspection.
- C. The purchase of items which are not for the sole purpose of safe vehicle operation is prohibited.
- D. Employees shall immediately report the loss or theft of any Fuel Card.

13. Reasonable Accommodation

Exceptions to the provisions of this policy may be made as necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities. Such accommodations shall be determined on a case-by-case basis through the County's existing Interactive Process (IAP) administered through the Personnel Office.