

SAMPSON COUNTY VEHICLE FLEET POLICY

PROCEDURE PURPOSE: To provide consistent guidelines for the assignment and use of Sampson County owned vehicles by County employees.

OVERVIEW: In a specified time frame, on a regular basis, or for identified job categories, County owned vehicles will be made available for current employees to use while conducting County business.

PROCEDURES:

Use of County Owned Vehicles

A. Permitted Uses

1. Non Law Enforcement vehicles -- Only Sampson County employees or drivers authorized by the department director may drive or operate County vehicles or equipment.
2. Law Enforcement vehicles are subject to North Carolina General Statute and may only be operated by Justice Officers, as defined in North Carolina General Statute 17E-2(3)(a); that is, one who has taken the oath of office prescribed by statute for peace officers. These vehicles are ones which are clearly marked and equipped for use in transporting, apprehending, or arresting persons charged with violations of the laws of the United States or the laws of this State and unmarked vehicles that have been registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles for confidential license plates.
3. County owned vehicles shall be used for official County business with reasonable consideration for use for meals, etc., while in the course of performing business on behalf of the County.
4. Each County owned vehicle shall display the official County seal. The only exceptions are vehicles assigned to the County Manager and to the Sheriff Department. Any deviation from use of the official seal must be authorized by the County Manager.

B. Driver Requirements

1. Each driver of any County owned vehicle must have a valid North Carolina drivers/operator's license. Should an employee who drives a County owned vehicle be involved in an incident, on or off the job, where their license is suspended or revoked, the employee is obligated to inform their immediate supervisor and the Risk Manager (Finance Officer) within 24 hours of the incident. Failure to inform the County of a suspended or revoked license may result in immediate dismissal.

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2. Driver qualifications are as follows:
 - a. Authorized employee of county.
 - b. Must be at least 21 years of age.
 - c. Must have at least one year of experience in the class of vehicle operated.
 - d. Must meet licensing requirements.
 - e. Will not qualify for a County vehicle if, during the last 36 months, the driver had any of the following experiences:
 - Been convicted of a felony.
 - Been convicted of sale, handling or use of drugs.
 - Has automobile insurances canceled, declined or not renewed
 - Had driver's license suspended or revoked.
 - Been convicted of three or more speeding violations or one or more other serious violations.
 - Been involved in two or more chargeable accidents.
3. County employees who drive vehicles weighing more than 26,000 pounds or a vehicle carrying sixteen (16) or more passengers, must have a valid Commercial Class B license with a passenger endorsement. County employees who drive vehicles with a trailer must have a valid Commercial Class A license if required by law.
4. Employees authorized to drive or assigned a County owned vehicle are subject to an annual review of their motor vehicle driving record with the State of North Carolina. Those employees found to be of a high risk or who have failed to report violations and/or accidents to the County, will have their vehicle privileges revoked, thus; resulting in dismissal for employees in positions where vehicular transportation is deemed an essential job function. See Item F. Motor Vehicle Record Policy
5. Employees are responsible for any vehicle or equipment assigned to them such as reporting unsafe operations or working conditions via a "Vehicle Repair Request" form available in each department (see sample form attached).
6. Employees driving County vehicles are required to obey all traffic laws including obeying the speed limit and employees and passengers are required to wear available personal restraints.
7. A County vehicle is not to be driven while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.

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8. Possession, transportation or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by anyone in the vehicle is not allowed.
9. Personal trailers, including boat and recreational vehicles, are not to be pulled.
10. Sampson County will not pay traffic tickets or parking fines of employees driving County owned vehicles, nor will the County pay if the employee is authorized to use their personal vehicle on County business. Employees found guilty of moving violations may be subject to corrective action.
11. An employee receiving a moving violation while driving a County vehicle has an obligation to immediately (within 24 hours) inform their department director and the Risk Manager (Finance Officer). Fines for moving or parking violations are the personal responsibility of the assigned operator. The County will not condone nor excuse ignorance of traffic citations that result in the court summons being directed to itself as owner of the vehicle.
12. Employees receiving a travel allowance and using a personal car for County business assume liability for bodily injuries or property damage arising out of an accident occurring in connection with operation of his/her personal car. The reimbursement allowance to the employee for the operation of his/her car for County business includes the allowance for the expense of automobile insurance. Such employees are required to have a minimum liability limit of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident/\$50,000 property damage and must provide the Finance Department with a copy of the certificate of such insurance annually.
13. County employees authorized to use their personal vehicles for periodic County business, are reimbursed for mileage at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service.

C. Vehicle Assignment

1. County vehicles are normally assigned to an individual at the start of their work period and are the employee's responsibility until the completion of their assigned work period when the vehicle is returned.
2. A County vehicle may be assigned to an employee who regularly requires vehicular transportation in the performance of his/her assigned duties and requires the use of the vehicle during off duty time for frequent on-call or call in for emergency purposes. The assignment may

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be regular and on-going or for a specific period of time such as weekly on-call duty.

3. During a vacation period or leaves of absence, an employee who is assigned a vehicle on a periodic basis, must turn the vehicle in to their department.

D. Personal Use of County Vehicles

1. No employee may use the vehicle assigned to him/her for personal business except to occasionally complete a personal errand on a direct route home (classified as de minimis personal use under IRS regulations) .
2. County vehicles are not allowed to be driven to an employee's home unless the employee is subject to frequent and/or emergency duty after normal working hours or in specific situations where authorization by the County Manager has been given. Only the following employees will be authorized to drive County vehicles to their homes.

Category I – Classified as emergency or law enforcement vehicles

Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal, and Justice Officers

Category II – Classified as a fringe benefit for commuting purposes and is subject to federal, State income, FICA and Medicare FICA tax on the value of the benefit.

Positions deemed appropriate by the County Manager utilizing, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- distance driven on a daily basis from home to work site,
- employees assigned an “on-call” status either on-going or on a rotating basis,
- frequency of business travel before, during, and after normal work hours,
- efficiency of reporting directly to the work site versus a centralized office location, or
- due to market competitiveness when provided as a perquisite for recruiting purposes

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- E. Accident Procedure -- *NOTE: A card describing "What To Do In Case of An Accident" (see sample form attached) is maintained in the glove box of all County owned vehicles.*

Regardless of the situation, the following procedure **MUST** be followed in the event of an accident while in a County owned vehicle:

1. Immediate notification of the proper law enforcement agency for accident investigation and report.
2. Immediate notification of the employee's supervisor or department director.
3. Notification of the Risk Manager (Finance Officer) within 24 hours of the accident.
4. Prepare a County Vehicle Accident report (see sample form attached). This report along with one copy of the law enforcement report should be submitted to the Risk Manager (Finance Officer).
5. If necessary, an injury report must be completed and submitted to the Risk Manager (Finance Officer) as soon as possible in order to file a workers' compensation claim within 24 hours of the accident.
6. Securing accident repair estimates and approval of actual repair work is the responsibility of the department.

In the event of an accident:

- Do not admit negligence or liability.
- Do not attempt settlement, regardless or how minor.
- Get name, address and phone number of injured person and witness if possible.
- Exchange vehicle identification, county insurance name and policy numbers with the other driver.
- Take a photograph of the scene of the accident if possible.
- Call law enforcement.
- Call rescue if injuries are involved.
- Complete the accident report in your vehicle.
- Turn all information over to your immediate supervisor and the Risk Manager (Finance Officer) within 24 hours.

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7. Post Accident Substance Abuse Testing

An employee involved in the accident or who has engaged in unsafe activity, whether directly or indirectly, may be required to submit a urine specimen, breath sample, and/or saliva sample for testing purpose. If the employee is too seriously injured to provide the specimen or sample, the employee must authorize the County to obtain and review hospital records or other documents that would indicate whether there were any prohibited drugs or alcohol in the employee's system at the time of the accident or unsafe activity."

8. Preventable Accidents

A preventable accident is defined as any accident involving a county vehicle or any vehicle while being used on County business that results in property damage and/or personal injury, and in which the driver in question failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the accident.

1. Classification of preventable accidents

- Following too close
- Driving too fast for conditions
- Failure to observe clearances
- Failure to obey signs
- Improper turns
- Failure to observe signals from other drivers
- Failure to reduce speed
- Improper parking
- Improper passing
- Failure to yield
- Improper backing
- Failure to obey traffic signals or directions
- Exceeding the posted speed limit
- Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI) or similar charges.

F. Motor Vehicle Record Policy

It is a Sampson County policy and requirement for employment that every employee position with driving duties requires a motor vehicle record (MVR) meeting the grading requirements stated below. This MVR policy applies both to drivers of County owned vehicles as well as employees using personal vehicles in the course of County business.

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MVRs will be examined prior to the start of employment and may be examined annually thereafter. Any job offer made to an employee-candidate for a position with driving duties shall be contingent upon an MVR meeting the required standards outlined below.

The standards for MVRs are as follows:

1. All operators must have a valid driver's license for at least three years.
2. No new driver will be hired with a "borderline" or "poor" MVR. MVRs will be graded based on the table below, as minimum requirements.
3. Driving records must remain "acceptable" or "clear" as graded on the table below, for continued employment in the positions with driving duties.

Any exceptions to these guidelines must be referred to the Risk Manager (Finance Officer) for written approval. The auto insurance carrier will be consulted on any/all MVRs not meeting the minimum criteria.

Motor Vehicle Grading Criteria (last three years)

Number of Minor Violations	Number of at-fault accidents			
	0	1	2	3
0	Clear	Acceptable	Borderline	Poor
1	Acceptable	Acceptable	Borderline	Poor
2	Acceptable	Borderline	Poor	Poor
3	Borderline	Poor	Poor	Poor
4	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Any major violation	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor

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<p style="text-align: center;">Minor Violation: Any minor violation other than a major except:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Major Violations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor vehicle equipment, load or size requirement • Improper/failure to display license plate • Failure to sign or display registration • Failure to have driver's license in possession (if valid license exists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving under influence of alcohol/drugs • Failure to stop/report an accident • Reckless driving/speeding contest • Driving while impaired • Making a false accident report • Homicide, manslaughter or assault arising out of use of a vehicle • Driving while license is suspended/revoked • Careless driving • Attempting to elude law enforcement

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Vehicle Accident Report (Attach additional pages as necessary)

Complete those sections that only apply to you. Report should be completed and turned in same day as accident.

I. **EMPLOYEE:** Complete and turn in to supervisor immediately.

1. Name: _____ Department _____

2. Date & Time of Accident: _____

3. Vehicle #: _____

4. Location of Accident (Street, City): _____

5. Number of persons injured and extent of injury: _____

6. Description of accident (State in detail what occurred just before, and at the time of the accident):

7. Describe any unsafe conditions (faulty brakes, lights, etc.) that contributed to the accident:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information stated above is truthful.

Employee Signature

Date

II. **SUPERVISOR:** Complete and turn in to Risk Manager (Finance Officer). Attach a copy of Sheriff Report and/or EMS Report if called.

Current Status of Injured: _____

Extent of damage to vehicle(s) or property: _____

Action taken to prevent future accidents: _____

Disciplinary Action (if any): _____

Signature Supervisor/Department Head

Date

VEHICLE REPAIR REQUEST

Vehicle Number: _____

Driver: _____

Reason For Request:

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Mileage:** _____

Department Head Signature: _____

Routine Maintenance Items Check all that apply

- Needs oil changed
- Inspection sticker has expired
- Tire(s) appear worn or spare tire was used
- Wiper blades appear worn

What To Do In Case of An Accident

1. **Stop at Once!** Check for personal injuries and send for ambulance, if needed. Do not leave the scene, but ask for the assistance of bystanders.
2. **If Fire Or Smoke Is Present,** evacuate vehicle occupants to a safe location. If stalled on a railroad track, evacuate occupants to a safe location away and at a right angle from the tracks.
3. **If Fire, Smoke or Spilled Fuel is Present,** send for the fire department. Do not leave the scene; as a bystander to call the fire department. If possible, use a spill kit to absorb the spill.
4. **Protect the Scene.** Set emergency warning devices to prevent further injury or damage. Secure your vehicle and its contents from theft.
5. **Secure Assistance** of law enforcement whenever possible. Record names and badge numbers.
6. **Record Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers** of all witnesses, injured and driver(s) and their passengers. Record vehicle license numbers.
7. **Do Not Argue!** Make no statement except to the proper authorities. Sign only official law enforcement reports. Do not make statements regarding the operating condition of your vehicle and do not admit fault.
8. **Report The Incident to Your Dispatcher/Supervisor IMMEDIATELY** after first aid has been given, authorities have been notified, the scene has been protected and you are able to do so.
9. **Complete The Vehicle Accident Report** at the scene as thoroughly as possible. Exchange insurance information only with other involved driver(s).
10. **If You Strike An Unattended Vehicle** and cannot locate the owner, leave a note with your name and the County's address and phone number, get the vehicle description, VIN number and license plate number.