



Title: *Vehicle Use Policy*

I. General Policy

This policy is intended to provide a basic framework governing the use of City vehicles, and, as such, cannot contain procedures governing every situation that might arise. As with your personal vehicle, driving is a privilege and not a right. *Where departments have more stringent procedures they will take precedence over this policy.* The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Set Guidelines for Official Uses of City vehicles
2. Establish Criteria for Types of Vehicle Assignments
3. Cover "Best Practices" for Vehicle Operators
4. Discuss Maintenance and Care of City vehicles

Employees seeking clarification or exemption from the provisions of this policy should contact their Department Head or Human Resources who will provide such clarification. Only the City Manager may authorize exceptions to the policy.

II. Scope

This administrative rule, upon approval of the City Manager, shall be applicable to all employees and departments regardless of type and size of vehicles. This procedure shall remain in effect until such time that it is altered, modified, or rescinded by the City Manager. City Council members are encouraged to use this policy and follow procedures outlined in this policy.

III. Official Use

City vehicles shall only be used for official City business. Official City business is defined as performance of job or operational requirements or travel related to an employee's official duties. The employee may use a City vehicle for necessary personal business when the following conditions exist:

1. The employee is in route between locations for official City business or when in route between home and the workplace for take home vehicles and;
2. The use is "de minimus" in time and value. Personal use is bound to limits of reasonableness and public responsibility.

City vehicles should be driven over the most economically, direct route taking into account exceptions due to safety needs, road considerations, vehicle capabilities, and traffic considerations.

IV. Assignment of City Vehicles

A) Daily / Temporary Vehicle

The departments who have City vehicles may assign employees vehicles for daily or temporary use for the purpose of conducting City business. Only City employees who have received permission from their supervisor shall drive City vehicles. Departments shall assign such vehicles in a manner consistent with operational requirements and workload.

B) Standby Vehicle

Those employees on call, or who expect to be called back to work, or who return to work before the next regular workday may temporarily take vehicles home. In no circumstances shall commuting be allowed on a regular basis except as authorized by the Take Home Vehicle section outlined below.

C) Take Home Vehicle Criteria

An employee who is assigned a take home vehicle may drive the vehicle to and from his/her home only when one of the following conditions exists:

1. Employee is a law enforcement officer performing duties related to public safety. Law enforcement personnel should also consult their general orders manual for rules and regulations that are not addressed in this policy.
2. Employee is on 24-hour call as part of his/her work duties and the vehicle is essential for those duties.
3. Employee needs a vehicle after the completion of the regular workday to complete City business on the same day or before his/her usual work hours.
4. City vehicles should be used whenever possible for any authorized travel. Requests for vehicles for travel should be made to the Department Head at least one (1) week in advance of anticipated need, if possible. The vehicle shall be returned immediately upon completion of a trip. The driver should clean the interior of the vehicle and notify Public Works of any malfunction or repairs needed. The employee should consult the City's Travel policy for a listing of reimbursable expenses.
5. By virtue of his/her position, employee has been approved and authorized by the City Manager.

Take home vehicle assignments will be made in writing by the Department Head and approved by the City Manager. The Department Head in their request shall address the rationale for the request and how the request met the criteria listed above. The City Manager or the Department Head may rescind the assignment of take home vehicles at any time.

This authorization is only for employees who live within a 25 mile radius from their work location in Henderson, Buncombe, Rutherford, Transylvania, and Polk counties. Authorization is not granted for the portion of South Carolina that falls in the 25 mile radius for take home vehicles.

When an employee assigned a City take home vehicle takes a vacation or is on extended sick leave, the Department Head or City Manager shall determine whether or not that vehicle shall remain on City property during the absence. This is to insure the safety and security of the vehicle, and to make it available to other employees during that time.

V. Best Practice Guidelines

The following are some specific “Best Practices” that will be exercised by operators of City vehicles:

A) Motor Vehicle Laws and Ordinances

It is the responsibility of the driver to observe all State motor vehicle laws and ordinances. Employees who receive a citation for any violation are responsible for paying the cost of the citation issued. Abuse of motor vehicle laws and ordinances may result in denial of operating privileges and disciplinary action up to and including termination.

B) License and Insurance

All employees operating City of Hendersonville vehicles will have a valid driver’s license in their possession during employment hours. Employees are required to report to their supervisor immediately any moving citation they receive that will affect their ability to operate a vehicle. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

For employees whose job responsibilities require that they possess an active, valid driver’s license, a suspension or revocation of the license will be grounds for termination.

Liability insurance is provided for all drivers of City-owned vehicles. Worker's Compensation, third party insurance, and/or City provided insurance should cover medical expenses incurred by any City of Hendersonville employee while operating a City-owned vehicle and conducting official City business. In each City vehicle there is an insurance card in the glove box that summarizes the current coverage's in force. If this card is missing contact the Public Works department for a replacement.

C) Housekeeping within Vehicles

Vehicle compartments will be kept clear of materials that could constitute a safety hazard in the operation of the vehicle. Unsecured tools, loose debris or other items that could contribute to an accident or blowout of the vehicle (e.g. trash) will be removed or dealt with immediately.

D) Alcoholic Beverages, Drugs, Weapons and Obscene Material

Under no circumstances will a City employee operate a City vehicle under the influence of intoxicating beverages, drugs, substances, or transport (except in performance of law enforcement duties) these items in a City owned vehicle.

Vehicles shall not contain items such as weapons (except law enforcement), alcohol for consumption, non-prescribed drugs, obscene material, and other items whose possession will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

E) Passenger Rules

Vehicles that are used to transport personnel, regardless of the distance, will be equipped with seating as supplied by the manufacturer. All passengers (including driver) shall wear seat belts when the vehicle is in motion. No employee or passenger will ride in the standing position or outside the seating area. The only exception to this rule will be sanitation workers on garbage trucks. Hitch-hikers are not allowed in any City-owned vehicle.

Persons who are not City Employees are not allowed to ride in City vehicles unless the employee has approval of the City Manager. Family members may travel with City Employees to various training opportunities with the Department Head approval.

Special circumstances requiring a temporary or recurring deviation from this policy must be requested by written justification by the employee in advance and approved by the City Manager.

F) Smoking in City Vehicles

Smoking in City vehicles is prohibited. This change will take effect August 4, 2011. The City has programs to aid employees who decide to quit. For more information contact Human Resources.

G) Fuel Conservation – Unnecessary Idling

As part of these guidelines, employees should also eliminate unnecessary vehicle idling. This is to reduce overall fuel consumption and equipment wear as well as, help the environment. This practice shall apply to all City-owned gasoline or diesel-powered vehicles and equipment.

Except as listed in the Exemptions section, no City operated vehicle shall be permitted to idle for prolonged periods of time. City vehicles must be turned off when engaged in the following activities:

- Loading or unloading (unless engine is required to load or unload)
- When unattended (no vehicle shall be left running while unattended)
- When parked (vehicles are not permitted to idle while parked to operate heating or air conditioning unless exempted below). In general, once a vehicle becomes stationary (longer than 2 minutes), the engine is to be turned-off unless one of the exemptions below apply.

Exemptions

City vehicles may idle for the following reasons:

- When idling in traffic
- To operate PTO driven equipment
- To operate electrical equipment on emergency and traffic control/safety vehicles
- To build air pressure for vehicles with air brakes
- To complete portions of the Pre-Ops checklist that require engine operation
- To cool interior for K-9 units
- During emergency situations
- Extreme cold weather conditions
 1. To defrost windshields
 2. To warm up diesel engines (3 – 5 minutes)
 3. Crew / passenger comfort (5 minutes)

VI. Maintenance and Care of Vehicles

Drivers shall routinely check their assigned vehicles to ensure proper inflation of tires, lights and signals, checking and maintaining all fluid levels, scheduling services on vehicles, and any other general items. Drivers should also note any malfunctions and report them to their supervisor immediately so these items can be serviced at the City's Motor Pool.

The Motor Pool is responsible for establishing a preventative maintenance schedule and disseminating this information to the departments with City vehicles. If maintenance is not performed on schedule, the Motor Pool will notify the department of the required preventative maintenance. The Motor Pool places a service sticker on each vehicle's windshield for the vehicles next service date. Lack of preventative maintenance on assigned vehicles may result in the vehicle assignment being terminated.

Employees shall not alter or change any operational aspect of a City vehicle. The employee should receive clearance from their Department Head and the Motor Pool staff before any auxiliary equipment is added to any vehicle. The only exception is items such as Motorola radio equipment.

City vehicles may be equipped with a GPS monitoring device. This device provides data on the physical location of the vehicle. Any employee who tampers with the device from functioning properly, or who attempts to affect the accuracy of the information collected, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The driver of the vehicle is equally accountable for preventing others from tampering with the device.

State law requires that all motor vehicles be inspected annually for safety. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the vehicle has a valid inspection sticker. If the sticker is out of date the driver should contact the Motor Pool.

VII. Accident Reporting

All accidents involving a City vehicle or other property damage, regardless of the amount of damage, must be immediately reported to the employee's / driver's Department Head or Supervisor. The Department Head or Supervisor should contact the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation.

The Department representative shall submit accidents / property damage reports to the Public Works Department within 24 hours of the accident unless circumstances require otherwise. Failure to report an accident is grounds for disciplinary action.

Positions Authorized to Take Home Vehicles – Effective September 1, 2011

A. Police Department:

Police Chief	1
Police Captain	3
Police Lieutenant	4
Sergeants/ Detectives / Police Officers	27
Reserve Lieutenant	1
Parking Enforcement	1

B. Fire Department:

Fire Chief	1
Fire Marshal	1

C. Public Works:

Public Works Director	1
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D. Water Sewer:

Water / Sewer Director	1
Water / Sewer Standby	2

E. Zoning:

Zoning Administrator	1
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VIII. Required Training

Each supervisor shall review this policy with each employee on an annual basis or more frequently, if necessary.

IX. Misuse of City Vehicles / Equipment and Policy Violations

Failure to follow the rules and provisions of this policy, as specified above, or misuse of a vehicle may result in:

- 1) Denial to the employee of further use of vehicles / equipment;
- 2) Reimbursement by the employee to the City for any resultant damage or cost; and/or
- 3) Disciplinary action, up and including termination.

This policy is being instituted by City Management in accordance with Article I Section 8. Departmental Rules and Regulations is a supplement to the Personnel Policy of the City of Hendersonville.



W. Bowman Ferguson, City Manager



Date