

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

#6

APRIL 2008

SUBJECT: Use of City Vehicles

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidelines which, when followed, will ensure that employees are operating vehicles owned or leased by the City (“City vehicle”) in accordance with City policy and exclusively for City business. Exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis directly through the City Manager’s Office.

II. APPLICABILITY:

All City employees, except sworn public safety personnel, who drive City vehicles to perform their jobs. Public Safety personnel should refer to their departmental policies. Public safety policies shall be reviewed and approved by the City Manager or his designee.

III. GENERAL:

The assignment of a City vehicle is made solely in the interest of improving the City’s ability to provide services. The assignment of vehicles is made on the basis of need and does not confer to the assignee any special status or consideration.

IV. GUIDELINES:

The following list of major examples is for general guidance only and should not be considered as an attempt to cover all circumstances or conditions of use:

Authorized Use:

- A. To conduct any legitimate City business that should be facilitated by the use of a vehicle.
- B. For long term routine transportation to and from the work site and residence when employee will be required to perform City business during non-regular work hours. This use requires the written approval of the City Manager, or his/her designee, and proper notification to the Department of Finance for non-taxed income purposes.

- C. For transportation between the work site and other City work locations, in the conduct of City business. It shall have been previously determined that the accomplishment of such activities is substantially improved by such an arrangement.
- D. To and from area dining establishments during the employee's regular working hours, only when working away from an employee's normal workstation and only if it is more feasible to the City for the employee to dine while away from his/her normal workstation. Employees who normally work in the field, such as meter readers, inspectors, assessors, etc., may use City vehicle for transportation to a dining establishment within a reasonable proximity of the working area.
- E. Occasional transportation to and from an employee's residence, if employee is not performing City business during non-regular work hours, as authorized by the employee's department director or City Manager.

Unauthorized Use:

- A. City vehicles may not, on a regular basis, remain overnight in another City. Departments Heads may authorize temporary exemptions as necessary.
- B. No alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances or drug paraphernalia may be transported in a City vehicle.
- C. To conduct any personal business or transport any other person to or from places to conduct personal business.
- D. Use of all tobacco products in City vehicles and equipment is prohibited.
- E. To pick up or discharge any person not employed by the City of Portsmouth without previous authorization by the appropriate Department Head.
- F. To pull or push any other vehicle (public or private), except as determined by police in accordance with their departmental policy.

V. TAX LIABILITY:

It is the responsibility of the Department Head to inform City Payroll of any employee who has a vehicle assigned to them on a full-time basis. Finance will determine the taxable status of take home vehicles in accordance with IRS Publication 15-B, "Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits". The Finance/Payroll Department will then work with the employee regarding the tax liability.

VI. DRIVER/OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS:

- A. When operating a City owned or leased vehicle, an employee is required to have an appropriate valid driver's license issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia as required by his/her job description for positions requiring a valid Virginia driver's license. The Department of Human Resource Management shall obtain, at the time of application, a copy of the applicant's driving record from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Discretion shall be used not to hire "at risk" employees.
- B. Annually, safety sensitive employees shall have a copy of their driving record obtained from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Positions requiring a Virginia Commercial Driver's License shall have their records checked routinely on a rotating basis and shall not be less than twice per year. Driving records shall be obtained and processed by the Department of General Services in accordance with City policy and procedure. Unsatisfactory driving records shall be reported immediately to the employee's Department Head who shall consult with Human Resource Management as appropriate.
- C. Employees authorized to take vehicles home shall take direct routes to and from their residence and are not authorized to conduct personal business.

VII. DRIVE HOME VEHICLE POLICY:

- A. No employee shall drive a City vehicle to and from his/her place of residence, unless authorized under Section IV of this policy. The authorization given by a supervisor for usage will be written and granted only for a pending emergency. City vehicles shall not be a condition of employment. It is every employee's responsibility to provide his/her own means of transportation for reporting to and from work. At the end of the normal workday, all City vehicles and equipment shall remain at designated City parking facilities. Employees that are on an established rotating "on call" schedule and are called regularly to perform emergency repairs after normal working hours may drive the assigned City vehicle to his/her residence. This exemption only applies to the employee who is actually scheduled to be "on call". Other employees who are subject to be called after normal working hours, but are not on an established rotating "on call" schedule and are not regularly called to perform emergency duties after normal working hours, are not permitted to drive City vehicles home. In the best interest of the City, on occasion a department head may authorize an employee to drive a City vehicle to his/her residence during adverse weather or other emergency situations. Employees of the Police and Fire Departments are required to comply with their departmental policy on drive home vehicles as established and approved by the City Manager or designee.
- B. Employees who are authorized to drive vehicles home on a regular basis will leave their vehicle with their department or Vehicle Services when that employee will be absent from work for an extended period of time.

VIII. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES FOR CITY BUSINESS:

City employees may occasionally find it necessary to use his/her personal vehicle to conduct City business. On such occasions, the following procedures shall apply and be adhered to:

- A. The use of a personal vehicle for City business must have prior approval by his/her department head. Employees should seek the availability of Motor Pool City vehicles prior to Department Heads granting approval for use of personal vehicles.
- B. The City of Portsmouth assumes no liability to employees for personal vehicles and its operators or occupants while the personal vehicles are in use for City business.
- C. Employees approved to operate a personal vehicle for City business may be eligible for reimbursement at the current mileage reimbursement rate established and approved by the Department of Finance. Exclusion from reimbursement shall be for employees who elect to drive their personal vehicle while conducting City business.

IX. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING AND PROCEDURES:

The following procedures apply to all accidents involving City vehicles, both in and out of the City limits:

- A. The police shall be summoned to the scene of every accident. If the accident occurs within the City of Portsmouth, the police shall contact the Manager of Vehicle Services immediately. Employees involved in an accident outside of the City limits shall contact the police department within the jurisdiction where the accident occurred and shall follow procedures set forth in Safety Policy #1.
- B. It is the sole discretion of the Manager of Vehicle Services or designee whether to respond to each accident. The Manager of Vehicle Services, upon responding to an accident, shall make a determination as to the disposition of the vehicle from the accident scene.
- C. The employee shall notify his/her immediate supervisor of the accident as soon as possible.
- D. The Police Department shall complete an accident report for all accidents. The accident reports shall be forwarded to the Manager of Vehicle Services, the department head of the employee involved in the accident and the Department of Risk Management.
- E. The employee involved in the accident shall complete all necessary accident report forms.

- F. The employee's supervisor shall complete all necessary supervisory accident and insurance reports. All reports shall be sent to the Manager of Vehicle Services, the employee's department head and the Department of Risk Management by the next working day.
- G. The employee shall obtain the name, address, insurance company and insurance policy number of the driver of the other vehicle(s) involved. The employee shall also note the make, year and license number of any other vehicle(s) involved.
- H. The employee shall remain with the vehicle until the vehicle has been removed or the investigating officer releases the vehicle.
- I. Any employee involved in an accident as defined in Safety Policy #1 (Auto Safety Procedures) will be drug/alcohol tested as outlined in Administrative Policy #2 (Alcohol, Illegal Drugs and Other Controlled Substance Screening).
- J. All auto accidents shall be reported to the Auto Safety Review Committee according to Safety Policy #1.

X. USE OF MOTOR POOL CARS:

Upon approval of the Department Head, City vehicles may be reserved by employees for the purpose of conducting City business.

- A. When a passenger vehicle is required, contact the Department of General Services (757-393-8120, ext. 6299) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. For vans, contact the City Garage (757-393-5155) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- B. When an employee operates a City vehicle on a long distance trip, they are required to maintain a travel report to include gas and any repairs. Their department may issue a credit card to the employee for long distance trips.
- C. The employee must operate the City Vehicle in a direct route to and from the place of business as reasonably possible. If City employees do not take a reasonably direct route, they will not be deemed to be operating the vehicle on City business and will be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. Any City employee requesting a motor pool vehicle must possess a valid Virginia Driver's License and be listed on a preapproved form provided by their Department Head. Employees listed will be subject to having their driving records checked through the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles on a routine basis.