

22 Vehicle Use Policy and Procedures

This policy applies to all City employees except for police department employees.

Vehicle Use

The term “vehicle” includes, but is not limited to, cars, trucks, vans, and equipment that can be driven.

Only employees 18 years old or older, who have a valid driver license, have met the driver eligibility criteria (below), and have received supervisor permission, may drive a vehicle for official City business. City employees who need transportation during their normal workday for official city business should use a vehicle assigned to their department or one available from the pool of vehicles owned by the City unless excepted by the “using personal vehicles for City business” section below.

Authorized passengers shall:

- Only ride in a City vehicle if the passenger is associated with a specific work-related purpose.
- Only ride in a seat with a seatbelt; they may not ride in the bed or the trunk.
- Be other City employees, employees of contracted temporary help agencies, other governmental officials, agents contracted with the City, or participants in City sponsored programs.
- Be required to provide parental consent prior to the trip if the passenger is a minor; minors cannot ride alone in a City vehicle with only one employee.

Unauthorized passengers may be transported in a City vehicle in cases of emergencies.

No animals are allowed in City vehicles except service dogs.

Employees should not use City vehicles for personal business. Some examples of personal business include shopping, providing transportation for family members, or any other form of recreation. However, employees may use City vehicles for non-business purposes during breaks (including lunch breaks) during the normal course of the business day. This use should be minimal, reasonable, and appropriate for the situation and is subject to review for abuse by the driver’s department director.

City vehicles must be returned overnight, except as follows:

1. For each night when attendance at an out-of-town meeting or event requires travel before or after normal working hours and returning the vehicle each night is infeasible.
2. When Public Works employees who participate in the On-Call program use the on-call vehicle during their assigned week.
3. Under unusual or emergency conditions as determined by the department director (or other department manager), Human Resources, or the City Manager.

Driver Eligibility

All employees are required to provide a complete Driver’s Abstract from the Department of Licensing as part of the hiring process. Human Resources will evaluate the Driver’s Abstract to provide supervisors with the employee’s driving eligibility rating using the Abstract Driving Record Review Process and Screening Criteria.

The City may require driving eligibility as a condition of employment. The City has the right to obtain a motor vehicle report at any time for current employees.

Employees must possess and maintain a valid Washington State driver's license before, and always while driving a vehicle for official City business. Newly hired employees must obtain approval from their supervisor to drive a City vehicle for official City business.

Employees are not permitted, under any circumstances, to drive a vehicle for official City business when any physical or mental impairment causes the employee to be unable to drive safely. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, circumstances in which the employee is temporarily unable to operate a vehicle safely or legally because of injury, illness, or medication. Employees are required to immediately inform their supervisor of any changes in circumstances that may affect either their legal, physical, or mental ability to drive or their continued insurability.

Any employee whose driver's license is expired, suspended, or revoked must immediately report it to their department director and must not drive a City vehicle. The employee can obtain and submit a copy of their Occupational/Restricted Driver's License (ORL) if one has been obtained. An employee with a revoked, expired, or suspended license who continues to operate a City vehicle or who fails to inform their supervisor of any changes in circumstance that may affect their legal, physical, or mental ability to drive, or their continued insurability may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Insurance coverage will be provided through the City to employees who are operating city vehicles and machinery on behalf of the City. Eligibility for driving a vehicle for official City business can be revoked by the City.

Operating Rules

While driving for official City business employees must always have their valid driver's license in their possession, must always wear a seatbelt and drive in accordance with the laws of Washington State.

Employees should perform a basic safety inspection of the vehicle before and after use (check tires, brakes, lights, mirrors, etc.). If there are any malfunctions, inform the Fleet Mechanic so it may be repaired as quickly as possible. Vehicle fluid spills should be reported to supervisors immediately, so that spill response procedures can be implemented.

Employees driving a vehicle over 26,000 pounds must have the proper Commercial Driver's License endorsements. Spotters should be used when backing up large vehicles.

When finished using a City vehicle, employees should fill the tank with gasoline if the tank goes below one-quarter of the tank, completely clean out the vehicle, and make sure the vehicle vacuumed and washed if needed.

If an employee receives a moving violation, driving infraction, or fine while driving a City vehicle or while driving for official City business, they are responsible for the fine.

Supervisors will make sure that City vehicles have current insurance cards, first aid kits, and fire extinguishers.

The City prohibits employees from operating a vehicle for official City business while using, consuming, or under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or prescription medications and over the counter medications that may affect their ability to drive.

Accident Reporting

Each driver is responsible to immediately report to their supervisor and department director if there is an accident involving the City vehicle. Employees who fail to do so will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Employees shall follow the process below and complete the applicable forms:

1. Contact 911 if the accident involves another vehicle or pedestrian.
2. Contact your immediate supervisor.
3. Record all details of the incident including names, time, exact location (take pictures if possible), witness names, phone numbers, license plate and third-party insurance information.
4. Fill out an Incident Report Form and forward it to your supervisor within 24 hours.
5. Do not admit liability or discuss the incident with anyone other than your supervisor or authorized personnel.
6. CDL holders must comply with all requirements of the City's Drug and Alcohol Policy for DOT-Regulated Employees

The supervisor or department director will take a detailed report from the driver and investigate the accident and coordinate any necessary repairs to the vehicle with the Support Services Manager and Fleet Mechanic.

Using Personal Vehicles for City Business

City-owned vehicles should be used for all official city business. If a City vehicle is not available or would create a hardship to use, an employee may use their personal vehicle upon obtaining approval from their department director. If a personal vehicle is used for authorized City business, the employee's personal insurance is primary and the City's insurance is excess. A request for mileage reimbursement, based on IRS business standards, may be submitted. See the Travel Expense Policy for reimbursement guidelines.