

LENAWEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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POLICY#2019-013

**MOTOR VEHICLE USE POLICY**

Date of Adoption: March 9, 1988

Dates of Amendments: July 2007; April 2010

**PURPOSE:** The objective of this County Motor Vehicle Usage Policy is to establish uniform administrative regulations which standardize the procedures and reporting requirements utilized by departments and employees in the use of both County-owned and privately-owned vehicles in the conduct of official County business.

**AUTHORITY:** The Lenawee County Board of Commissioners.

**APPLICATION:** The regulations and procedures outlined in this policy statement are to apply to all County-owned vehicles assigned to individual departments and to all privately-owned vehicles used in the conduct of County business for which reimbursement is requested.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** The authority to assign vehicles, authorize reimbursement for the use of privately-owned vehicles on County business and the administration of this policy shall be the responsibility of elected officials and/or department heads. Vehicle assignment shall be made by the appropriate elected official and/or department head.

**POLICY:**

**General Statement:** The basic guideline of this policy shall be that the use of a County vehicle by an employee or the compensation for the use of a privately-owned vehicle will be only for official County business, and in compliance with the rules and regulations detailed in this policy.

**Assignment of County-Owned Vehicles:** All employees assigned a County-owned vehicle or permitted to drive a County-owned vehicle shall meet specific criteria established for vehicle assignment. The authority to assign vehicles rests with the elected official and/or department head. Vehicles will be assigned on the basis of functional requirements of the employee's position and should not be construed as being a substitute for other compensation or as a fringe benefit. Vehicles are assigned, and certain privileges in their use is granted, only as a means of providing effective management of County functions. Elected officials and/or department heads are to use the following established criteria when assigning vehicles to County employees:

**Special Use Assignment – With Take Home Privileges:** Vehicles are assigned under this classification in order to provide an employee with access to a County-owned vehicle for those employees whose duties and responsibilities require a vehicle be assigned which includes permanent take-home privileges.

Criteria for Assignment and Uses: A vehicle will be assigned to a position on a special use basis when:

- The responsibilities of that position require the routine and regular conduct of County business before or after normal working hours.
- Emergency use on a routine or regular basis will be required before or after normal working hours.
- The responsibilities of the position are such that it is to the convenience of the County to assign a vehicle.
- A demonstrated security risk warrants such assignment to protect County property.
- All employees assigned the use of a vehicle shall submit to a motor vehicle driving status and history check and only those County employees with acceptable driving records will be allowed the use of a vehicle.

Limited Use Assignment: Authorization to drive vehicles under this classification shall apply to those employees whose positions require routine utilization of a vehicle during normal working hours. Take home privileges are not permitted under normal circumstances under limited use assignment.

Criteria for Assignment and Use: Under this classification, authorization to drive County-owned vehicles will be assigned when:

- The nature of the vehicle use is routine, predetermined and predictable.
- The use of a private vehicle would be inappropriate.
- All employees assigned the use of a vehicle shall submit to a motor vehicle driving status and history check and only those County employees with acceptable driving records will be allowed the use of a vehicle.

On Call/Emergency Assignment: Vehicles may be assigned under this classification to those employees who are assigned “on call” duty beyond normal working hours in order to ensure a quick response to emergency or after-hour calls for service.

Criteria for Assignment and Use: Under this classification vehicles will be provided to those employees who periodically are assigned “on call” duty by their department head when:

- A demonstrated need for a County vehicle to ensure a quick response to an emergency or after-hour calls has been verified by the department head.
- Employee is designated to be “on call” for a specific function or purpose.
- Employees assigned the use of a vehicle shall submit to a motor vehicle driving status and history check and only those County employees with acceptable driving records will be allowed the use of a vehicle.

Employees meeting this criteria and “on call” will be allowed to drive the vehicle to and from work. Personal use of the vehicle is strictly prohibited.

Pool Assignment: Pool vehicles are for general use by County employees who do not have a vehicle assigned to their particular position. All County owned vehicles not otherwise assigned will be designated Pool Vehicles. Vehicles so designated may be assigned to a multi-department pool. Use of pool vehicles shall be monitored by the elected officials, department heads, and the Administrator’s Office. Under normal circumstances, take-home privileges are not authorized under pool vehicle use assignments. No pool vehicles are to be driven to or from work under normal circumstances.

**Criteria for Assignment and Use:**

- Employees shall be designated access to pool vehicles when their duties and responsibilities require occasional vehicle use, the nature and timing of which are unpredictable, varied and limited. Pool vehicle use is to be approved by the department head for each utilization.
- Employees designated access and requiring the use of a pool vehicle before 8:00 a.m., will be allowed to pick up the keys for that vehicle by making advance arrangements with the designated elected official and/or department head.
- All pool vehicles are to be returned to the appropriate County parking lot with keys returned to the designated department.
- All employees assigned the use of a pool vehicle shall submit to a motor vehicle driving status and history check and only those County employees with acceptable driving records will be allowed the use of a pool vehicle.

**Regulation for Private Vehicle Use:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Section shall be to provide for vehicle use when the duties and responsibilities of a position require vehicle use and a County-owned vehicle is not available or appropriate.

**Criteria for Assignment and Use:** Employees required to use their privately-owned vehicle to conduct County business shall be advised of that requirement prior to employment. Such employees shall receive mileage reimbursement at the rate approved by the Board of Commissioners.

**Authorization:** Prior approval of the immediate supervisor is required to use a privately-owned vehicle in the conduct of County business for which mileage reimbursement is to be requested. The department head shall be responsible for ensuring that the employee or prospective employee has submitted to a motor vehicle driving status and history check. The department head must approve mileage reimbursement for use of a private vehicle.

**Insurance Considerations:** Employees required to use their use their privately-owned vehicle to conduct County business shall be advised to review their automobile insurance policy to ensure adequate coverage for the vehicle while being used for County business. No employee may use their privately-owned vehicle for County business, nor will the employee be reimbursed for such use, until the employee has read and acknowledged this policy.

**Procedures for Implementation of the Vehicle Use Administration Regulation:**

**General Assignment:** Designation of vehicle assignments will be in accordance with this policy based upon review of recommended vehicle use plans submitted by departments to the County Board of Commissioners.

**Record Maintenance:** The County Administrator's Office shall develop and maintain records sufficient to adequately insure all County vehicles assigned to departments. County departments must periodically submit to the County Administrator's Office information related to the primary use of vehicles and identify vehicles that are authorized to be taken home. Identification of employees authorized to take home vehicles and whether mileage is charged to the employee must also be provided.

Information that would identify law enforcement officers' addresses or would interfere with pending law enforcement investigations may be redacted from any request for such records.

Adequate records of private vehicles used will be maintained on a departmental basis to ensure accountability of public funds.

Motor vehicle driving status and history checks: Periodically, but no less than biennially, each elected official and/or department head shall obtain a driving record for each authorized employee and furnish that record to the County Administrator's Office. This information will be used to determine if an employee will continue authorization to use a County owned or a privately-owned vehicle on County business. If an employee accumulates five (5) or more violations points, the department head shall implement a corrective action plan to improve the employee's driving record and shall take any necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the general public and general interests of the County.

Authorized County Employee: To be eligible for continued authorization the employee must meet the following requirements:

- They are in possession of a valid Michigan or Ohio driver's license that is not suspended or revoked, and is not restricted in such a way as to conflict with duties that require use of their privately-owned vehicle.
- They have a satisfactory driving history with less than Five (5) current violation points. However, department heads may decide on a reduced number of points for the good of the operation of their specific department.
- Any employee whose vehicle operator's license is suspended, revoked or restricted in such a manner as to conflict with their job requirements of operating either a County-owned or privately-owned vehicle, or if an employee acquires five or more points on their license, that employee must immediately report the suspension, revocation or restriction to their department head. The department head shall immediately report the condition to the Administrator's Office.

Any employee who operates a vehicle on County business, while not being in possession of a current and valid Michigan or Ohio driver's license, or fails to report a suspension, revocation or restriction to their department head shall immediately be disallowed from using any County owned vehicle or privately-owned vehicle on County business and shall be disciplined appropriately, up to and including discharge. Department heads shall immediately report such condition to the Administrator's Office.

Prospective County Employee: A prospective County employee who will be required to operate a County owned or a privately-owned vehicle during hours of employment will be deemed employable and authorized to use a vehicle on County business only when they meet the following criteria:

- They are in possession of a valid Michigan or Ohio driver's license that is not suspended or revoked, and is not restricted in such a way as to conflict with duties that require use of their privately-owned vehicle.
- They have satisfactory driving with less than five (5) current violation points. However, department heads may decide on a reduced number of points, for the good of the operation of their specific department.

Reimbursement for Use of Private Vehicles: Upon authorization for use of a private vehicle, employees are required to document actual miles driven and will be reimbursed at the currently established rate. Actual miles will be defined as only those miles driven which are directly related to the official

County business. This definition does not include those miles required to transport employees between home and the primary work destination point.

Processing the Mileage Report for Reimbursement: The employee will complete a Travel Expense Voucher indicating the miles traveled and the amount requested for reimbursement. Upon signing the certificate verifying the accuracy of the mileage claimed, the employee will submit the report to the department head for approval.

The department head, upon approval, will sign the travel expense voucher to verify its accuracy and will forward it to the County Clerk's Accounts Payable Office requesting authorization of payment.

The Accounts Payable Office will authorize, upon receipt of the approved mileage certificate, payment in the amount shown, or if disapproved, return to the department head for further justification.

General Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Vehicle Use By County Employees: The following rules and regulations are established as a supplement to all rules and regulations contained in this and other administrative and personnel policies. The rules and regulations contained herein apply to all County employees who are authorized to use a County owned vehicle or who are compensated for the use of their privately-owned vehicle in the conduct of County business. Any employee in violation of these rules may be disallowed from using any County owned vehicle or privately-owned vehicle on County business and shall be disciplined appropriately, up to and including discharge.

Personal Use of County Vehicles: Under no circumstances will County owned vehicles be used for personal business. The only exception to this general rule is that employees may use a County vehicle for transportation to and from an eating establishment only if a meal period occurs during the employee's normal working hours and the employee, due to a particular vehicle assignment, has no access to a private vehicle.

County Vehicle Use: The Employee Must . . .

- Ensure that the County vehicle is in proper operating condition at all times. Any malfunctions should be reported immediately to the department head.
- Be in such physical condition to assure safe operation of the vehicle and to prevent a hazard to the driving public.
- Inform the immediate supervisor of any condition which presents a safety hazard to either the employee or the general public in the operating of a vehicle.
- Obey all applicable laws and ordinances and use seat belts while operating County owned vehicles or privately-owned vehicles on County business.

New Employees: Authorized Use of County Vehicles Required

If a current employee is assigned a County vehicle as part of his or her job duties and terminates employment, the employee who replaces the terminated employee will only be authorized to use a County vehicle following review and approval by the designated department head and/or County committee.

Private Vehicle Use When Used for County Business: The Employee Must . . .

- Possess a current and valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by the State of Michigan or State of Ohio appropriate for the size and type of vehicle operated.

- Ensure that the vehicle is currently licensed by the State of Michigan or State of Ohio and insured pursuant to State statute.
- Be the owner, lessor or bailee of the vehicle and operator of all mileage for which reimbursement is claimed.
- Have use approved as required by all Sections of this Policy.

Specific Practices Prohibited:

- The operation of a County vehicle or privately-owned vehicle for which mileage reimbursement is claimed while under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which impairs judgement or motor coordination.
- The transportation of alcohol or any controlled substance in a County vehicle or privately-owned vehicle for which mileage reimbursement is claimed, while in the conduct of County business. (This prohibition does not apply to Sheriff and public safety activities where the transportation of such materials is in furtherance of law enforcement duties and responsibilities.)
- The operation of a vehicle, in the conduct of County business, which results in the violation of any traffic regulation.
- The operation of a vehicle in such a manner that could result in property or bodily damage either to the County or the public due to careless or negligent operation of the part of the employee.
- May not smoke or vape any product inside a County vehicle. May not engage in any activity similar to or related to smoking or vaping inside a County vehicle. May not chew tobacco or any similar or related product inside a County vehicle.
- While using a private vehicle for County business with another individual in the vehicle, an employee may not:
  - May not smoke or vape any product
  - May not engage in any activity similar to or related to smoking or vaping
  - May not chew tobacco or any similar or related product

Accident Reporting Requirements:

All accidents involving County vehicles or privately-owned vehicles being used for County business and for which mileage reimbursement is claimed must be reported immediately to the Administrator's Office and the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Any damage to County vehicles, interior or exterior, including scratches and minor dents, must be reported to an employee's supervisor immediately. Continued authorization to use County vehicles is dependent upon responsible and respectful treatment of County resources.

Any violation of the Rules and Regulations contained herein may result in disciplinary action.

Vehicle Markings:

Purpose: To clearly identify County-owned vehicles at all times when in the conduct of County business except for security purposes.

**Criteria for Marking:** All County vehicles, except certain law enforcement vehicles and vehicles identified as appropriate for no markings, are to be marked with County emblems.

**Markings – Type:** All County marked vehicles shall have a standard marking which is visible at night.

**Non-allowed Markings:** No County vehicles shall contain any markings, signs, names or any other visible features not previously approved and necessary to identify the vehicle for its intended purpose. Such non-allowed markings, signs, names or any other visible features shall not appear on the surface of County vehicles including but not limited to side panels, hood, roof, doors, windows, trunk, bumpers, license plates, tires.

**Monitoring Responsibilities:** The responsibility for monitoring the compliance of this Administrative Policy has been assigned to the County Administrator or his/her designee.

**Non-Employees in a County Vehicle:** People who are not employees of the County of Lenawee are strictly prohibited from operating any and all County vehicles.

Use of the Airport courtesy vehicle will be exempt from the requirements of this paragraph upon approval of the Airport Manager or his/her designee.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

Exceptions. Any exceptions or unusual circumstances that are not provided for in this policy must have specific prior approval in writing from the appropriate County standing committee.

**PASSED BY ROLL CALL VOTE** of the Lenawee County Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting held Wednesday, August 14, 2019, in the Old County Courthouse, Adrian, Michigan.



David Stimpson, Chair



Roxann Holloway, County Clerk