

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
Initiated:	Fleet Administration	Effective Date:	05/23/2022
Approved:		Revision Date:	03/20/23
Subject:	Vehicle Use		Page 1

Vehicle Use

1. Purpose

- A. The Vehicle Usage Policy was created to establish guidelines for Fleet Management and the use of Hernando County owned or leased vehicles. All County employees and other individuals that use county vehicles are subject to this policy.
- B. The County considers the use of County vehicles as part of the working environment. It is the policy of Hernando County that County vehicles will be used exclusively for carrying out County functions. Accordingly, County vehicles will be used by employees for the purpose of performing public duties, or other essential functions, unless otherwise specified in this policy. County vehicles are not to be used for personal purposes. All county vehicles will remain on County premises when they are not being used for business purposes, unless otherwise addressed through the provisions of this policy and approved by the County Administrator.

2. Employee Use of County Owned or leased Vehicles

- A. The operation of County vehicles is limited to Hernando County employees, approved county volunteers, or authorized agents. All drivers must comply with the following:
 - 1. Comply with all related County vehicle policies as they exist, or as they may be amended.
 - 2. Possess a valid Driver's License for the appropriate class of the vehicle being operated (not expired, suspended, disqualified, revoked, classed as a learner's permit, or restricted for business purposes only) and be insurable by the County's automobile insurance carrier.
 - 3. Operators with a suspended, revoked, or restricted driver's license are prohibited from operating county vehicles under any circumstances.
 - 4. Only operate vehicles for which they have the proper class license. This includes any type of Commercial Driver's License (CDL), as required by applicable regulations.
 - 5. All County vehicles must always have the vehicle registration and insurance carrier card in the vehicle.
 - 6. All vehicle occupants must always wear seat belts.
 - 7. Operate all vehicles in a safe manner and comply with all State and local traffic regulations, including safety restraint laws for drivers and authorized passengers, toll authorities, and

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
Initiated:	Fleet Administration	Effective Date:	05/23/2022
Approved:		Revision Date:	
Subject:	Maintenance	Page 2	

refraining from littering from the vehicle.

8. If any employee receives a citation while operating a county vehicle, they must comply with the requirements imposed by the issuing legal authority. The driver must notify their immediate supervisor of the citation and any penalty assessed towards the employee's license.
9. Employees must pay, without reimbursement, all fines or fees for parking citations or traffic violations that are incurred while operating a city-owned vehicle.
10. Drivers are expected to observe all traffic regulations and are expected to operate the vehicle in a safe manner.
11. Drivers and authorized passengers shall not smoke or use tobacco products in any county vehicle or equipment.
12. Drivers shall not text or eat while driving.
13. Employees will not operate the vehicle in such a way as to cause public criticism or nuisance. This includes not leaving the vehicle running or sitting in a roadway/blocking traffic while not in use.
14. Alcoholic beverages may not be carried or transported in any County vehicle in any fashion. Employees are prohibited from operating any county vehicle after consumption of alcohol. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
15. When cargo, materials, or tools are being transported, the vehicle operator is responsible for assuring that all items are properly secured.
16. All employees will perform a "walk-around" of the vehicle to see if there are any visible problems prior to it being driven each day. A vehicle/equipment driver checklist shall be filled out and given to direct supervisor for review at a minimum of once a week (previously stated daily).
17. At a minimum of once a day, the employee shall check to make certain that all vehicle safety equipment including headlights, turn signals, brake lights, and windshield wipers are functioning properly.
18. Any vehicle damage beyond normal wear and tear, including defects affecting the safe operation of the vehicle must be documented and reported to the employee's supervisor.

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
Initiated:	Fleet Administration	Effective Date:	05/23/2022
Approved:		Revision Date:	
Subject:	Maintenance	Page 3	

19. Comply with any preventative maintenance programs.
20. Vehicles and equipment should be kept clean, free of dirt, grim and salt inside and out.
21. Small to medium duty vehicles may be taken to a car wash utilizing the county purchase card for a regular clean, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.
 - a. Heavy duty vehicles and equipment may be taken to the City of Brooksville Truck wash on Main Street, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.
22. Possession of any weapon, including a firearm, while in a county owned, leased, or rented vehicle while performing county business is prohibited unless the employee possesses a valid license to carry a concealed weapon issued under section 790.06, *Florida Statutes* or Florida approved reciprocal state. This prohibition shall not apply to anyone legally certified to carry weapons in the performance of their lawful duty or those employees who meet the private vehicle storage requirements of Section 790.251, *Florida Statutes*.
23. Employees must immediately notify, but in no case less than the next work shift, the Supervisor, Department Head, and Human Resource Department of the following: 1) loss of driving privilege and 2) arrest involving County vehicles.

3. Authorized Passengers

- A. Persons who are not employees or volunteers of the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners or authorized agencies will not be permitted to ride in County vehicles unless the employee (driver) obtains approval from their department head.
 1. The Chairman must approve the County Administrator or County Attorney's request for unauthorized passengers.
 2. The only exceptions shall be in the case of a recognized emergency or when essential to, or associated with, the performance of official responsibilities.
 3. Passengers who are not county employees may be required to sign a waiver of liability form before riding in a county vehicle.
 4. No person shall be allowed to ride on running boards, fenders, hoods, tailgates, beds, or other locations on a vehicle not designed or approved by the vehicle manufacturer for

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
Initiated:	Fleet Administration	Effective Date:	05/23/2022
Approved:		Revision Date:	
Subject:	Maintenance	Page 4	

passenger seating or in violation of State and Federal laws.

4. Insurance

- A. The County provides liability coverage for all city-owned and leased vehicles. The following conditions as established by the liability insurance carrier must also be met by employees authorized to drive:
 1. An Employee authorized to operate a motor vehicle shall comply with the liability insurance carrier's guidelines.
 2. An Employee may not have more than two (2) moving violations and one (1) or more at-fault accidents in the prior three (3) years.
 3. An Employee may not have three (3) or more moving violations in the past three (3) years.
 4. An Employee may not have two (2) or more at-fault accidents in the past three (3) years.
 5. An Employee may not have a major violation which resulted in their license being suspended or revoked.

5. Accidents

- A. Accidents involving County vehicles shall be handled and reported in compliance with applicable Hernando County policies and procedures. (See Hernando County Employee Handbook Policies and Procedures Manual, May 25, 2021, or as amended).

6. Take-Home County Vehicles

- A. Use of a take-home vehicle is a financial benefit to the employee, not a right. Abuse of this benefit will not be tolerated.
- B. The use of take-home vehicles is limited to pre-approved compelling work-related business needs. Upon written justification through the departmental chain of command, Department Directors must submit a recommendation to the County Administrator or designee for review and authorization.
- C. Take-home vehicles are limited to employees that reside within the County except in rare needs-based situations as approved by the County Administrator.
- D. It is the responsibility of the employee(s) to review all aspects of the Vehicle Usage Policy and

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
Initiated:	Fleet Administration	Effective Date:	05/23/2022
Approved:		Revision Date:	
Subject:	Maintenance	Page 5	

Hernando County Employee Policies and Procedures prior to requesting or accepting such approval to utilize a take-home County vehicle.

- E. Unattended take home vehicles shall always be legally parked and locked, except in emergency circumstances. Employees shall not leave sensitive information or public documents (other than reference material) in the vehicle while off duty.
- F. The operations of a take home vehicle to and from work does not constitute work time and the employee is considered off the clock until they arrive at a bona-fide work assignment. An exception would be emergency vehicles that are responding directly to emergency incident or after-hours response to perform duties as assigned by the department.
- G. Workers' compensation benefits are not generally available for employees traveling to or from work with a take-home vehicle. *Florida Statute* 440.092 states, "An injury suffered while going to or coming from work is not an injury arising out of and in the course of employment whether or not the employer provided transportation if such means of transportation was available for the exclusive personal use by the employee, unless the employee was engaged in a special errand or mission for the employer".

7. Revocation of Take-Home Vehicle Authorization

- A. The County has sole discretion as to the approval, modification, and revocation of take-home vehicles. Examples of reasons for revocation, include but are not limited to:
 - a. It is no longer in the department or County's best interest to continue the take-home vehicle use; or
 - b. Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy or other County policies; or
 - c. A change in job assignment, duties, or responsibilities such that a take home vehicle is no longer justified; or
 - d. If the employee has (2) accidents in a county vehicle within an eighteen-month period and found to be at fault/avoidable; or
 - e. If it is in the best interest of the County to suspend privileges pending an investigation or revoke authorization, due to any driving violations or tickets; or
 - f. As determined by the County's Insurance carrier; or

	Hernando County Fleet Management Standard Operating Guidelines		
Division:	Administration	Issue Number:	730
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Approved:		Revision Date:	
Subject:	Maintenance	Page 6	

g. As a result of disciplinary action.

8. Taxation of Fringe Benefit Income

- A. The Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986, as amended from time to time, provides for the taxation of fringe benefits, particularly provisions relating to the taxation and record keeping of employer-related vehicles.
- B. The County is required to include the value of an employee's personal or commuting use of a county vehicle on the employee's W-2 form, as taxable income, to make appropriate withholdings.
- C. When an employee is permitted or authorized to use a county vehicle for commuting purposes, the employee's personal use will be valued pursuant to current IRS Regulations. (Please see auto allowance policy for further information).

9. No Idling Allowed

- A. When drivers arrive at job sites, they should turn off their vehicles as soon as possible to eliminate idling time and reduce excess use of fuel.
- B. Vehicles should not be restarted until passengers are ready to depart or the work is ready to resume.
- C. Exceptions include conditions that would compromise passenger safety or work requirements, such as:
 - 1. Extreme weather that will affect the health of the employees
 - 2. Idling in traffic
 - 3. The job requires the truck to be running a Power-Take-Off (PTO)
 - 4. Fire and Rescue Apparatus operating at emergency scenes or training assignments
 - 5. Public Safety vehicles required to maintain minimum levels of climate control for human or animal health, or temperature sensitive medications.
- D. Limit idling time during early morning warm-up to 1-3 minutes in warm weather and 3-5 minutes in cold weather (40 degrees and below).
- E. All service delivery vehicles should turn off their engines while making deliveries to a facility.

Approved as to Form
and Legal Sufficiency