*City Personnel Policy*

# VEHICLE USAGE

POLICY: 400

Council approval: # Pages: 5

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the City to provide vehicles for business use whenever possible, to allow employees to drive for City business, and to reimburse employees for business use of personal vehicles according to the guidelines below.

**APPLICABILITY:**

The provisions of this policy are applicable to all City employees who receive reimbursements or allowances for the use of their personal vehicles in conducting City business; or, who operate City vehicles.

**ADMINISTRATION:**

The Finance Director is responsible for the contents and administration of this policy. The Public Works Operations Director is responsible for the compliance and administration, and purchasing of vehicles contained in this policy.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. **General**. The use of a City-owned vehicle or the receipt of mileage reimbursement or allowances for the use of a personal vehicle will be approved only for necessary travel for official City business. Those who are required to use a personal vehicle in conducting official City business shall receive mileage reimbursements in accordance with this policy. Use of an emergency/Special-use vehicle or assignment of an eight-hour vehicle shall also be in accordance with the provisions of this policy. However, it is understood that certain operational demands may exempt certain operators from some of the provisions of this policy.

2. **Permitted Uses**.

   A. General: Vehicles covered under this policy shall be used for official City business only. Operators of both personal and City-owned vehicles shall observe all traffic regulations. They are also expected to drive the shortest and most direct route between stops.

   B. Lunch Breaks: Only those departments or divisions assigned emergency or special use vehicles, and those assigned vehicles on an eight-hour basis, who

regularly work in the field most of the day may use the vehicle for transportation to and from lunch.

C. Passengers: Only City employees shall drive or ride in City vehicles or private vehicles being used for official City business except that others may ride in such vehicles when such use directly relates to City business.

3. **Qualifications to Operate Vehicle**. Department Heads use all reasonable means for ensuring that all of their employees have a license to operate the type of vehicle being used and that the employee's safety driving record and physical condition justifies the operation of such vehicles. Employees holding jobs designated as requiring regular driving for business must, as a condition of employment, be able to meet the driver approval standards of this policy at all times. For all other jobs, driving is considered only an incidental function of the position. Employees approved to drive on City business are required to inform their supervisor of any changes that may affect either their legal or physical ability to drive or their continued insurability.

4. **Types of Assignment**.

A. Guidelines. Those who regularly need a vehicle in performance of their official City business will use a personal vehicle; or, at the City's option, be assigned an eight-hour vehicle or an emergency/special use vehicle. Although each type of assignment will be determined individually, the following guidelines shall be followed in making these types of assignments.

(1) Personal Vehicle: Reimbursements for the regular use of a personal vehicle on official City business will be approved when this type of arrangement best meets the needs of the City. Normally this type of assignment shall be considered when a vehicle is needed for a limited number of hours each day, and when no City pool-vehicle is available.

(2) Eight-hour Assigned City Vehicle: An eight-hour assignment of a City vehicle may be approved to a specific employee or department when:

(a) It is less expensive to furnish a vehicle than to pay mileage; and,
(b) Necessary funds are included in the department's operating budget; and,
(c) A vehicle other than a passenger vehicle is required; or,
(d) Other factors warrant such an assignment.

(3) Emergency or Special-Use Vehicle: An emergency or special-use vehicle will be approved to the department when:

(a) The department is frequently subject to twenty-four hour emergency calls throughout the year and carries special tools, equipment, supplies, or parts needed to perform emergency work or special duties.
(b) Other circumstances not specifically mentioned herein warrant such an assignment.

5. **Authorization**. Authority to use a City-owned vehicle on an eight-hour basis or emergency or special-use assignment must be received from the Mayor upon recommendation of the appropriate Department Head. The appropriate form to be completed by Department Head is "Request for City Vehicle Assignment" (see Appendix "A" - F400-4). Only those assignments which are first recommended by the Department Head shall be forwarded to the Mayor for review. Assignment requests which are not warranted shall be denied by the Department Head. After each request is approved by the Department Head, it shall be forwarded to the Mayor for final approval or disapproval.

6. **Use of a Personal Vehicle on Official City Business**.

7. In order to receive mileage reimbursements for traveling expenses for official City business in a personal vehicle, it is necessary that accurate, detailed and substantiated mileage records be kept. Documentation shall be approved by the Department Heads and submitted to the Finance Department for reimbursement. The approved mileage reimbursement rate shall be the current rate established by the IRS for business purposes. Reimbursements shall be made on the following basis:

   A. Authorized Reimbursement: A City employee is expected to use good judgment in submitting requests for mileage reimbursements. Reimbursements will be made only for mileage traveled in conducting official City business. Mileage for traveling between home and work and between work and lunch or other personal business does not qualify for reimbursement. Employees shall be expected to use the shortest and most direct routes in the performance of their duties.

   B. Procedure: The Travel & Business Expense Reimbursement Request (see Appendix "A" - F401-1) shall be signed by the employee requesting the reimbursement and submitted to the Department Head for review and payment. Reimbursement requests shall be filed with the Department Head within ten days following the end of the month. Any late filings may not be paid until the following month.

8. **Insurance**. Employees using personal vehicles are required to provide proof of automobile insurance coverage for liability and property damage. The City will not assume responsibility for any physical damage to employees' vehicles.

9. **Responsibility**. Employees assigned City-owned vehicles on an emergency/special-use or eight-hour basis shall assume responsibility for making the vehicle available to the appropriate City garage at appropriate times for servicing and for immediately reporting any mechanical failures or difficulties. It shall be the responsibility of City employees to follow this policy; and if a departmental director sees his/her employees use City vehicles by careless operation or with maintenance neglect, such employees may be subjected to disciplinary action and/or dismissal. Employees authorized to use a City-owned vehicle for commuting or other personal purposes are subject to IRS regulations and when appropriate must submit the necessary records to the Finance Department to facilitate W-2 reporting requirements.

10. **Storage of City-owned Vehicles**. City-owned vehicles assigned on an emergency/special-use basis when driven home shall be parked only on the private property where the assigned operator resides and not on the street unless a waiver is granted by the Department Head. If possible, City vehicles should be parked overnight or on weekends in a garage.

11. **Safety Guidelines**. All individuals operating a vehicle during the performance of their job are expected to observe the following safety guidelines:

    A. Circumstances permitting, the operator of a vehicle has the responsibility to check the safety features of their vehicle prior to commencing operation. The check should include (but is not limited to) all lights and brakes.

    B. No operator of a vehicle shall modify, remove, deactivate or otherwise tamper with the vehicle safety belts, emission control devices, or any part of the vehicle which affects its operation. Safety belts shall be worn in compliance with Iowa state law.

    C. During periods of inclement weather when vehicles cannot be washed regularly, the operator of a vehicle must assure the headlight and taillight lenses are kept clean, insofar as circumstances permit.

    D. No employee shall operate any vehicle which he/she believes to be operationally unsafe.

    E. Regardless of the seriousness of the situation to which the employee is responding, and excepting circumstances that are clearly beyond the employee's control, the operator shall be held accountable for the manner in which he/she operates his/her vehicle.

    F. City vehicles shall be legally parked in such a manner so as to not create an obstacle or hazard to other traffic.

    G. The operator of a City vehicle, upon being made aware of any unsafe condition, shall advise his/her supervisor, who shall refer the vehicle to the City repair shop.

    H. A City vehicle with serious mechanical defects shall be towed, not driven, to the shop.

I. The operator of a vehicle shall exercise careful observation of surrounding conditions before turning or backing the vehicle.

J. A vehicle shall not be left unattended with its engine in operation.

K. The operator must recognize the variable factors of weather, road surface conditions, road contour, and traffic congestion, all of which directly affect the safe operation of any motor vehicle, and shall govern the operation of his/her vehicle in accordance with these factors.

L. In addition to the provisions of this policy, the operation of City vehicles is also governed by the Motor Vehicle Laws of the State of Iowa and City ordinances.

12. **Vehicular Accident Reporting**. In the event of any accident involving a City vehicle or a private vehicle being used on official City business, the vehicle shall be left in exactly the position that it came to rest after the accident. After ensuring that no life is in immediate jeopardy, the employee shall notify their immediate supervisor of the accident. The supervisor shall notify their Department Head, the Risk Manager, and the City Attorney of the accident.

    The employee shall complete all accident reports necessary and shall fully cooperate in the investigation of the accident.

13. **Out-of-Town Travel**. When traveling outside of the immediate area, the means of travel shall be in the best interests of the City. If available, City-owned vehicles should be used for trips that exceed 60 miles round-trip.