



SAFETY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Vehicle Use Policy

Risk Division

Date: September 13, 1989

July 01, 2016

Revisions (2)

1.0 Purpose

Vehicle accidents can be costly in terms of human injury, lost working time, vehicle repair, and higher insurance premiums. The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for use of City of Hickory owned, leased, and/or rented vehicles of all types and sizes, in order to promote the safety of city employees and the public.

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all City of Hickory Employees who:

- Are authorized to operate city-owned/leased/rented vehicles
- Are in consideration for promotion or transfer into positions requiring the operation of City owned/leased/rented vehicles

All Applicants to positions requiring the operation of city-owned/leased/rented vehicles

Exception

The City of Hickory Police Department is subject to a separate policy.

The City of Hickory Fire Department is subject to a separate policy.

3.0 Policy Statement

It is the policy of City of Hickory that certain positions require employee access to city-owned, leased and/or rented vehicles. Assignments may be made during the work shift, on a 24 hour on-call basis, on a temporary and time-limited basis, or on a permanent assignment.

Department Heads are responsible for implementing and administering this policy and for maintaining the records required by this policy or special reports requested by the City Manager

City vehicles are available to staff for travel to professional conferences and meetings. A pre-approved travel form must be filled out, approved, and must be on file.

City vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use. City vehicles should be viewed as belonging to the citizens of City of Hickory and are assigned solely for purposes consistent with providing services to those citizens.

4.0 Assignment of City Owned Vehicles

The assignment of city vehicles to employees is based upon job description. Department Heads who have city vehicles available for this purpose may assign such vehicles in a manner consistent with departmental workload and employee function.

The assignment of vehicles for 24 hour use will be made in writing by the Department Head subject to the City Manager's approval, and will only be considered for employees who require a vehicle for the ordinary and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria that will be used in the determination of eligibility for 24-hour vehicle use include:

- Officially designated on-call status
- Requirement for frequent emergency availability
- Emergency or other equipment contained in the vehicle
- No City facility is available for garaging in a safe and convenient location
- Best economic interest of the City justifies assignment to the employee

The City Manager and/or the Department Head, with notification to the City Manager, may rescind the assignment of vehicles at any time.

5.0 Motor Vehicle Records

The City's Risk Manager, Human Resources Department, and Departments Heads will obtain driving records from the North Carolina DMV Traffic Records program for the purpose of monitoring the current driving records of all city employees when their job descriptions include the operation of city owned vehicles. This will include all MVR notifications, not limited to the use of city vehicle or while on city business.

For applicants or current employees considered for promotion or transfer, a three (3) year driving record will be reviewed prior to assignment to the position.

5.1 Criteria

All traffic offenses including infractions received within a three (3) year period, determined at point of MVR review, will be considered in determining a driver's eligibility to operate city vehicles.

5.2 Incident Risk

Two Incidents – Verbal Warning

Two (2) incidents of moving violations and/or preventable at fault vehicle accidents within one calendar year, will require verbal warning from their Department Head regarding their driving record status

5.3 Unacceptable Risk

Three Incidents – Written Warning

Three (3) incidents of moving violations and/or preventable at fault accidents within one calendar year, will require a written warning from the Department Head and will be encouraged to attend a recognized defensive driving course on their own time at their own expense

Four Incidents

Four (4) or more incidents of moving violations and/or preventable at fault vehicle accidents within one calendar year, will result in suspension of driving duties and, if the job description requires driving responsibilities, may result in disciplinary action up to, and including dismissal.

Specific Offenses

Employees charged with one of the following offenses will be restricted from operating a city vehicle until the incident is resolved in the court. Conviction may result in disciplinary action up to, and including dismissal.

- DWI/DUI – alcohol or drugs
- Negligent Homicide, manslaughter, or assault with a vehicle
- Operating a vehicle during a period of suspension or revocation
- Driving with no operator's license
- Operating a vehicle for the commission of a felony
- Operating a vehicle without permission (stolen vehicle)
- Permitting an unlicensed driver to drive
- Reckless Driving
- Misdemeanor or felony motor vehicle charge(s)
- Racing
- Passing a stopped school bus
- Attempting to elude a law enforcement officer
- Failure to stop and report an accident

5.4 Driver Requirements

Employees who operate city vehicles must have a valid North Carolina motor vehicle license issued by the state, and be considered an insurable risk by the city's automobile liability insurance carrier.

Employees driving city vehicles shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.

Employees who incur parking or other fines in city vehicles will generally be personally responsible for payment of such fines unless the payment of such fines by the city is approved by the Department Head or City Manager.

Employees who are issued citations for any offense while using a city vehicle must notify their supervisor and Department Head immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action.

An employee who is assigned a city vehicle and who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license, whether in his or her personal vehicle or in a city vehicle, must notify his or her supervisor and Department Head immediately when practicable; but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day. Failure to provide such notice will be grounds for disciplinary action. An employee may not operate a city vehicle if their license is suspended or revoked.

Any motor vehicle accident involving a city vehicle must be reported to the supervisor, City of Hickory's Risk Manager, and Department Head immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours or the start of the next business day. Failure to report an accident will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- a. Accident/Injury reports shall be completed and forwarded to the immediate Supervisor/Department Head within the same time period as stated above.

6.0 Drivers of Commercial Motor Vehicles

In addition to the safety requirements outlined in this policy, employees whose job involves driving commercial motor vehicles must meet specific safety requirements. These additional requirements include the following:

Employees in jobs requiring a commercial driver's license must notify their supervisors as soon as possible after being involved in an accident or being charged with any traffic offense other than parking violations. These notice requirements apply whether the accident or traffic offense occurs on or off duty.

Supervisors are responsible for annually requesting from the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles a copy of the driving record of employees responsible for operating a commercial motor vehicle. Driving records are kept confidential.

Commercial drivers must immediately notify their supervisors if their license is revoked or suspended or if, for any other reason, they become disqualified to operate a commercial motor vehicle—for example, a disqualifying medical condition.

7.0 General Rules

7.1 Appropriate Use

- 2) Except as otherwise noted, use of city vehicles is restricted to official city business. Official city business is defined as travel to and from any function, event or location that is viewed as part of the employee's official duties.
- 3) Assignments are not permanent. When priorities or circumstances have changed, vehicles should be reassigned. It is the responsibility of the department heads to review, determine, and justify the need for assigned vehicles within their respective departments at least annually.
- 4) The city vehicle may be used during non-duty hours on overnight assignments away from the employee's workplace or residence.
- 5) The employee may use the city vehicle for necessary personal business when the following conditions exist:
 - a. Personal business is in route between location of official city business or in route between home and the workplace
 - b. Use is minimal in time and value, bound to the limits of reasonableness and to public responsibility
- 6) City vehicles should be driven over the most economically, direct route taking into account exceptions due to safety needs, road conditions and traffic considerations.
- 7) City vehicles may be driven only by city employees. Exceptions are under the direct approval of the Department Head and/or City Manager.
- 8) Passengers in city vehicles must be city employees or others whose presence is justified by official city events. No hitchhikers or family members, who are not themselves city employees, may be passengers in any city owned vehicle.
- 9) Vehicles shall not contain items such as weapons, alcohol for consumption, non-prescribed drugs, obscene materials, and other items whose possession would be deemed "Gross Personal Misconduct".
- 10) Employees may not operate city vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs or other medications, such as over the counter medications that may interfere with effective and safe operation.
- 11) When traveling on City business, Employees need to refer to and adhere to all information in the City of Hickory Travel Policy.
- 12) A copy of each department's vehicle assignment list is to be filed with the personnel department annually in January or upon request of the City Manager.

7.2 Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance

- 1) City vehicles are open to inspection, inside and out, at all times by City Authorities including the employee's Supervisor, Department Head, Human Resources Manager, Risk Manager, City Manager and/or a designee of the City Manager.
- 2) Authorized drivers are expected to inspect their vehicles daily, prior to operation. This inspection will consist of at least a visual inspection to ensure that there are no obvious

conditions needing repair. No vehicle shall be operated with a defective safety device or damage which could contribute to or cause injury or accident.

- 3) Employees shall not alter or change any operational aspect of a city vehicle. Alterations or changes must be approved by the Department Head.
- 4) Employees are expected to keep city vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisors immediately.
- 5) **No Tobacco or vaped Nicotine use in any city vehicle.**

7.3 Vehicle Operation

- 1) Employees assigned to vehicles for commuting purposes are expected to park in safe locations.
- 2) Seat belts, shoulder harnesses and other appropriate restraint systems shall be used by both the driver and passengers of city vehicles. Failure to do so constitutes a misuse of a city vehicle.
- 3) Animals may not be transported in a city Vehicle, with the exception of service animals accompanying official passengers or animals transported by Animal Control personnel. Exception is made for the safety of the animal or general public.
- 4) **Exception**
Police K-9 Officers: The City of Hickory Police Department is subject to a separate policy.
- 5) Vehicles should contain only those items designed for use with the vehicle, items installed by the city or items assigned by the city for transportation on the vehicle. Personal items in city vehicles shall be prohibited except for items of clothing, items of general purpose use such as purses, wallets, cell phones, and office related items.
- 6) Cell Phones usage should be limited. Outgoing calls should only be made while stopped or parked. Incoming calls should be kept to a minimum. Keep conversations brief and offer to return calls once stopped or parked. Do not use cell phones while driving in bad weather, congested traffic, or any other hazardous situation.
- 7) Any form of texting with a cell phone or PDA while operating a city vehicle is prohibited under this policy. Texting and the checking of emails shall only be done while legally stopped or parked in a designated safe area (i.e. parking lot, driveway).

7.4 Cost Reimbursement

For reimbursement of expenses incurred while driving a city vehicle or an employee's private vehicle to and from City business, the employee submits a Travel/Training Expense Request Form according to instructions on the form to the department head for approval.

A City vehicle must be used for approved travel. If a City vehicle is not available, a personal vehicle may be used and mileage will be reimbursed at the current federal rate. Employees must obtain pre-approval from the department head when using a personal vehicle for city business.

Expenses eligible for reimbursement are tolls, parking fees, gasoline (if needed during trip), and mileage (if personal vehicle used).

The use of a city vehicle to commute to and from work is taxable as income as to its fair market value. Per IRS Regulation 1.61-21(f) Taxation of Fringe Benefits, all City of Hickory employees who drive a City vehicle to and from work are taxed on a monthly basis for the vehicle use. A monthly fee is added to the taxable benefit of the employee's check with the first check of each month.

Mileage reimbursement – Mileage reimbursement is to be submit to the Accounting Division on a monthly basis.

Exception

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8.0 Review

All accidents will be reviewed by the City's Risk Manager. Such review may result in a recommendation to the department head for disciplinary action of the employee, if such accident was a result of a violation of the safety policy.

8.1 Training

Employees assigned to city vehicles will be given a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a confirmation of receipt.

Authorized drivers will participate in annual training. This training will include:

- Review of Vehicle Use Policy
- Safe (Defensive) Driving Strategies
- Vehicle Accident Reporting Procedures
- Vehicle Inspection Procedures

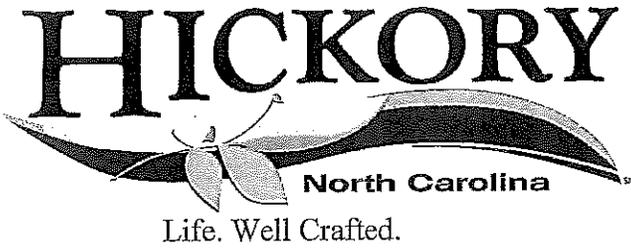
8.2 Policy Violations

Failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy as specified, or misuse of a city vehicle may result in:

- Denial to the Employee of further use of vehicles
- Reimbursement by the Employee to the City for any damage or cost
- Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal

9.0 Appendix

9.1 Vehicle Use Policy Acknowledgment



SAFETY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

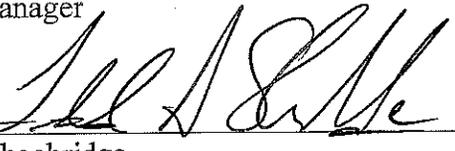
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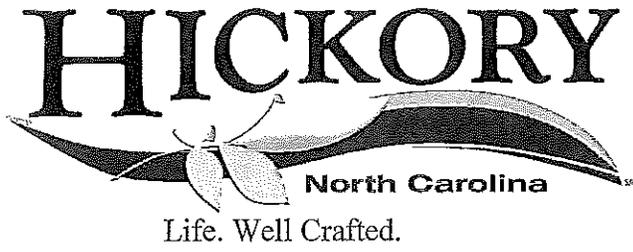
Mick Berry
City Manager

6 / 10 2016
Date



Todd Shoebridge
Risk Manager

6 / 7 /2016
Date



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9.1 Appendix

Vehicle Use Policy Acknowledgment

I acknowledge receipt and review of the City of Hickory Vehicle Use Policy.

I have been allowed to ask questions and I fully understand my responsibilities under this policy.

In addition, I understand and agree that I must not operate any city owned vehicles without a valid motor vehicle driver license.

I further understand that violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Print Name (Employee)

Signature

Date

Signature
Supervisor/Department Head

Date