

Effective Date: January 24, 2013
Revision Date: September 12, 2017

Applies to: All City Employees

CITY VEHICLES

POL-51-200



See Also: BMC Chapter 10.01 State Traffic Laws Adopted

Approved by: City Manager

I. Purpose

To establish rules and regulations for all City of Bethel employees using a motorized vehicle on official City Business.

II. Definitions

City Vehicles – This term refers to all City motorized vehicles and equipment listed below. Policy statements that reference “Vehicle(s)” apply to the operation of any and all of the below sub-categories:

Hauled Utility Service Vehicles – Water and Sewer trucks that require a CDL to operate.

Heavy Equipment – Dump trucks, garbage trucks, graders, tow trucks and other motorized equipment used on public roadways.

Fleet Vehicles – All-terrain vehicles, light duty trucks (pick-ups), passenger vans, and cars owned by the City. Shared as part of the City’s Motor Pool.

Public Safety Vehicles – Those vehicles specifically outfitted for public safety response and outwardly marked in accordance with IRS regulations.

Use of City Vehicles – Based on employee’s job functions, the following Assignment Types may be authorized:

Occasional Use – The employee is authorized to use a shared vehicle out of the Motor Pool to accomplish short-term tasks during business hours. Vehicle keys remain at the sign-out location for these vehicles. Examples include post office, bank, traveling to another location to perform the employee’s assigned work.

Day Use Assignment – The employee is assigned a specific City Vehicle during duty hours for business purposes. A day use vehicle is not generally shared, except by employees that use the same vehicle for the purpose of accomplishing specific tasks for which the vehicle is suited. A day use vehicle is “picked up” when the employee arrives at work and “returned” at the end of the duty day. The keys remain at the sign-out location when the employee is not at work.

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Take-home Vehicle Assignment – The employee is authorized to take a City Vehicle home after their normal duty hours. The assigned vehicle is authorized for commuting to and from the worksite and for responding to City business needs after hours. The vehicle is not authorized for personal use other than as defined in this policy. The employee may not always be assigned the same City Vehicle, as assignments are based on need and availability.

III. General

1. The City shall maintain safe, reliable, and economical transportation as required for City employees to conduct City business.
2. No City employee, under any circumstances, will operate a City Vehicle without written authorization on an approved City Vehicle Privilege Request Form.
3. No City employee, under any circumstances, will operate a City Vehicle on a public roadway without being in possession of a valid Alaska Driver's License with appropriate endorsements.
 - a. Human Resources will be responsible for verifying the current licensure status of each applicant for vehicle privileges using information provided by the applicant;
 - b. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring only approved and appropriately-licensed employees operate City Vehicles.
 - c. City employees will be responsible for immediately notifying Human Resources if their licensure status changes.
4. City Vehicles shall only be used for City-related business unless otherwise authorized in writing by the City Manager in accordance with the appropriate use guidelines.
5. City Vehicles shall be operated in a manner consistent with all safety and legal requirements of the City of Bethel and the State of Alaska.
6. City Vehicles will be appropriately secured and keys will not be left in unsecured vehicles.
7. No City Vehicles will be used to transport stand-alone fuel containers, except in situations where equipment and/or tools must be refueled during an emergency response to maintain operations in support of public safety.
8. Employees shall not, under any circumstances, operated a City Vehicle when any physical or mental impairment causes the employee to be unable to drive safely.
9. Employees shall not smoke or use other tobacco products while operating or seated in a City Vehicle.

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IV. Appropriate Use

1. When the temperature drops below 22 degrees Fahrenheit, each City Vehicle so equipped must be properly connected to an electrical outlet to prevent temperature-related damage. Hauled Utility Service and Public Safety Vehicles, when not in use, should be parked inside as space allows.
2. Whenever temperatures fall to 0 degrees or below for any period of time, take-home vehicles must be plugged in for a minimum of 2 hours prior to starting. The cost for the electricity is the sole responsibility of the employee authorized the take-home vehicle.
3. Under no circumstances may a City Vehicle be driven in the winter without allowing the engine to warm up.
4. City Vehicles should not be allowed to warm-up or idle indoors without appropriate ventilation. Excessive idling should be minimized as it wastes gas and newer-model vehicles do not benefit from extended idle times.
5. Each employee who uses a City Vehicle is responsible for that vehicle being maintained in a clean condition and ensuring that routine maintenance and safety checks on the vehicle are conducted in a timely fashion. Warning lights must immediately be reported to the City's Vehicle and Equipment (V&E) Division of the Public Works Department.
6. Any employee who, without the approval of the V&E Foreman, takes a City Vehicle to be repaired at any location other than V&E, will be personally responsible for any resulting costs.
7. Fuel purchases are limited to the City's designated vendor using a pre-approved process for charging fuel purchases.
8. City Vehicles shall not be used to transport any passengers other than authorized City employees on official City business or persons directly related to the official City business being conducted (i.e. speakers, contractors, etc.) with the following exceptions:
 - a. Transportation of person or persons in the event of an accident or other emergency; OR
 - b. Transportation of person or persons in a marked public safety vehicle in the course of responding to an emergency or other public safety call for service.

V. Damage/Misuse

1. Costs of repairing damage to City Vehicles resulting from willful misconduct or gross negligence by the employee having custody of the vehicle at the time of the damage may be recoverable from the employee at the option of the City.

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2. Any citation or arrests while operating a City Vehicle are the personal responsibility of the employee. Any City employee who receives a citation while operating a City Vehicle shall report the incident immediately to their Department Head. The Department Head will immediately provide written notification to the City Manager, with a copy to the Human Resources Manager.

VI. Personal Use

The City does not generally allow personal use of a City Vehicle with the following exceptions:

1. Commuting between an employee's residence and the individual's primary work location. Such use is restricted to authorized take-home vehicles only and is subject to IRS requirements as specified in this policy.
2. Lunch break (less than 20 minutes) when an employee is operating a City Vehicle and the lunch break is incorporated into the individual's compensated duty time.

VII. Assignment of Vehicle Privileges

1. Department Heads will submit an original City Vehicle Privilege Request Form (Attachment A) to Human Resources for each prospective driver.
 - a. Justification criteria for *Occasional Use* of generally available vehicle includes:
 - i. Duties requiring travel between worksites, offices, and/or local business locations; OR
 - ii. Duties requiring periodic field supervision or attendance at business-related meetings and events hosted at locations other than normal work location.
 - b. Justification criteria for *Day Use Assignment* includes:
 - i. Duties requiring frequent daily travel between work sites and offices; OR
 - ii. Need for frequent use of special equipment or tools that must be pre-positioned in a responding vehicle; OR
 - iii. Vehicle use required for more than on-half of the employee's daily work assignments.
 - c. Justification for *Take-Home Vehicle Assignment* requires:
 - i. Employee must and consistently does respond to after-hours emergencies one or more times per week using a specially-equipped vehicle; OR
 - ii. Employee is being compensated with stand-by pay to respond to after-hour emergencies.

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2. Prospective drivers will obtain a driving history report from the State of Alaska Department of Motor Vehicles using the online request option, using the human resources email address and a City P-card to complete the transaction. The report will be emailed by DMV to Human Resources for review, ensuring the confidentiality of any protected information.
3. Human Resources and the City Manager will approve/deny the request in writing via the City Vehicle Privilege Request Form.
4. Approved drivers will acknowledge in writing the receipt and understanding of this policy each time their vehicle privileges are approved. This acknowledgment is completed as part of the City Vehicle Privilege Request Form.
5. Approvals will expire on June 30 of each year; approvals granted during the months of April through June will be valid until June 30 of the following year. No employee will be authorized to operate a City vehicle for more than 15 months without re-approval.
6. Department Heads must resubmit City Vehicle Privilege Request Form for each employee in sufficient time to allow for continued vehicle operations. Employees will be required to present updated driving history reports from the DMV to Human Resources as part of the re-approval process.

VIII. Take-Home Vehicles

Employees authorized a take-home vehicle have the additional responsibility to:

1. Record, in a written log, any call-outs, to include the physical response address;
2. Notify the employees supervisor any time the take-home vehicle is driven in response to an after-hours response; AND
3. Accept responsibility for complying with IRS Regulations regarding taxable fringe benefits and vehicle use (Section XI IRS Requirements).

IX. Accident Reporting

1. The driver involved in an accident with a City Vehicle, no matter how minor, must immediately notify the Police Department (911) and their supervisor and remain on-scene until emergency responders arrive.
2. The police will complete a police report when damage to another vehicle, the City Vehicle, or property (private or City) occurs. The police will also complete a police report in the event of any injury.
3. The driver, with the supervisor, must complete an Incident Form (Attachment B). The Form must be forwarded to the City Manager, Human Resources and the Finance Director within 24-hours of the occurrence, or on the next business day.

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4. Human Resources will assist the Departments to assure that any discipline or remedial action is consistent with City policy. It will be the Department's responsibility to process any personnel action. Copies of any disciplinary documents will be forwarded to Human Resources for filing in the employee's personnel file.
5. The City's Finance Committee will review on a quarterly basis, any vehicle collision where significant vehicle damage, property damage, or injury has occurred. The committee will identify preventative measures and improved safety actions and provide them to the affected Departments. The Committee will not address disciplinary actions nor does the Committee have the authority to direct the Department to implement operational changes as a result of the Committee's assessment.

X. Post-Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing

Following an accident, the driver's supervisor should immediately notify Human Resources to arrange for post-accident Drug and Alcohol testing. This testing involves a breath alcohol test and a urine specimen, collected at Bethel Family Clinic in response to a referral from Human Resources. The post-accident drug and alcohol test is an administrative response to an accident involving a City Vehicle; any actions taken by law enforcement officials in the course of their duties are separate and apart from the City's administrative response.

1. All Drug and Alcohol tests will be performed to conform with either DOT standards when applicable or as non-DOT testing under the City's authority.
2. If the accident occurs during normal duty hours, the supervisor will escort the driver to Bethel Family Clinic and await the referral. The driver will remain available for testing or may be deemed to have refused to test. The only exceptions to this are:
 - a. The employee required immediate medical care and was transferred to the emergency room via ambulance or the employee's supervisor; the post-accident test will take place as soon as possible after the employee's release.
 - b. The employee was placed into police custody; the post-accident test will take place as soon as possible after the employee's release.
3. If the accident occurs after normal duty hours, the driver must refrain from using alcohol and/or drugs until completing the post-accident test.

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Except in the case of exigent medical needs, an Employee may not refuse or interfere with the testing process. An employee who does not make themselves available or who refuses the test will be deemed to have tested positive.

XI. IRS Requirements

1. The IRS requires that any employee who uses a City take-home vehicle will pay taxes on the personal use of the vehicle.
2. For most City Vehicles, personal use includes at minimum the commuting time to and from work.
3. Employees authorized to use Public Safety Vehicles are exempt from this requirement as long as the federal IRS requirements are met.
 - a. The Public Safety Vehicle must be clearly marked with insignia or words which make it clear that it is a police, fire, or other public safety vehicle. Lights, other equipment, or marking on a license plate are not sufficient to meet the "clearly-marked" definition;
 - b. The Public Safety Vehicle is required to be used for commuting by a police officer or firefighter/EMT who, when not on a regular shift, is on call at all times; AND
 - c. Other than commuting, personal use of the vehicle, outside the limit of the police officer's arrest powers or the obligation of a firefighter to respond to an emergency, is prohibited by City policy.
4. Unmarked public safety vehicles are generally not exempt unless the following conditions are met:
 - a. The driver must be a "law enforcement officer", certified to carry firearms, execute search warrants, and to make arrests;
 - b. The employee's personal use of the vehicle (to include commuting to and from the work location) must be authorized in writing by the City Manager; AND
 - c. The use must be incident to law-enforcement functions, such as being able to report directly from home to an emergency situation or surveillance location.



VEHICLE PRIVILEGES REQUEST FORM

Employee:		Date:
Position:	Department:	
Justification: (Employee must meet all qualifications identified in policy): <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional Daytime Use of Shared Pool <input type="checkbox"/> Assigned Vehicle for Day Use <input type="checkbox"/> Take-Home		
Employee's Residence Address:		
Employee has a scheduled meal break of 20 minutes or more:		YES NO
Requested by:		Date:
Department Head Printed Name/Signature		
HR Review of DMV Driving Record: Cleared Not-Cleared	Initials:	Date:
Approved by:		Date:
City Manager Printed Name/Signature		
VEHICLE PRIVILEGES APPROVED THROUGH (Date):		

I have read and understand the City's Vehicle Policy and hereby request the privileges identified on this form. I understand my responsibilities regarding the use of City-owned vehicles and understand and accept that if approved for take-home privileges, the value of my commuting miles or other non-exempt personal use will be reported to the IRS as a taxable benefit. I further understand that the City may choose, at any time, to rescind my vehicle use privileges pursuant to this policy or as a result of changes in City operations.

Printed Name	Signature	Date
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CITY OF BETHEL INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

THIS REPORT MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED INTO THE FINANCE OFFICE WITHIN ONE (1) BUSINESS DAY

Purpose of Report: Vehicle Collision Property Damage **Workplace Injury***
**submit Workers Comp paperwork to HR*

Involved Employee(s): _____ Department(s): _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____ Date Reported: _____

Reported To: _____ Witness(es): _____

Employee Received Medical Attention: No **Yes** *(If YES, Submit Workers Comp paperwork to HR)*

Date/Time Employee Left Work: _____

Date returned to work: _____

Time Employee's Workday Begins: _____ Regularly Scheduled Days Off: _____

Employee Statement: Describe incident (include physical location, vehicle plate number, photos etc):

What acts, failures to act and/or conditions caused this incident to happen? _____

Were any of the following contributing factors? If yes, please circle:

Equipment	Material	People	Environment
-Selection of	-Selection of	-Selection of	-Plants
-Arrangement	-Placement	-Placement	-Animals
-Use of	-Handling	-Training	-Temperature
-Maintenance	-Processing	-Leadership	-Insects, etc.

What corrective actions have been taken? _____

Involved Employee signature: _____

Supervisor signature: _____

Department Head signature: _____ Date _____

Check this box if additional statements, documents and/or photos are attached