

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY TAKE-HOME VEHICLE USE**

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*County of Santa Barbara On-Line Policies & Procedures Manual*  
*Administration of Vehicle Fleet*

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**Policy**

It is the County's policy to provide its employees with essential transportation that is safe, reliable and economical. A motor pool will be established with an optimum number of appropriate vehicles. Long-term assignment of motor pool vehicles to departments or individuals will be made when properly justified.

**Responsibility**

**County Administrator**

The County Administrator will authorize the acquisition of all the new vehicles purchased by the county.

**General Services Director**

The General Serviced Director is assigned primary responsibility for providing transportation to County employees. The Director will establish and manage county garages and will provide the following transportation-related services:

- Purchase and disposal of County vehicles
- Motor Pool operation and maintenance
- Maintenance of vehicles on approved long-term assignments and
- County fueling sites and /or commercial fueling arrangements.

**Department Heads**

All Department heads are responsible for determining and budgeting for the transportation requirements of their departments, and for utilizing the most efficient transportation means available.

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Where long-term assignments of vehicles are justified and approved by the County Administrator, department heads will ensure efficient utilization and prompt return to the County garages for scheduled maintenance.

Where County owned vehicles are stored at residential non-county owned locations Department heads are responsible to report the location of storage of these vehicles to the Director of General Services.

## Procedures

### Vehicle Acquisitions and Replacements of Assigned and Pool Vehicles

1. Acquisition Process:
  - a. An automated application will be used to facilitate vehicle acquisitions.
  - b. The General Service Director will recommend additions to or deletions from the vehicle inventory to the County Administrator,
  - c. Department heads will advise the County Administrator of additional requirements for consideration in the annual budget.
  - d. Authorization for the acquisition of replacement vehicles will be done during the budget cycle. Except for replacements due to accident or catastrophic mechanical failure, vehicles requested outside of the budget cycle will be deemed to be new vehicle acquisition, and as such will be subject to additional analysis prior to authorization,
  - e. Departments requesting additional staff that will require an assigned vehicle to accomplish tasks should request funding for the additional vehicle(s) through the budget process and prior to the staff being hired.
2. Criteria for the Purchase and Replacement of County Vehicles
  - a. Ongoing utilization of an average of at least 1,000 miles per month.
  - b. The need for specialized vehicles to perform specific functions on a regular basis,
  - c. The need to transport specialized equipment not easily transferred between vehicles, d. Lack of an appropriate pool vehicle in a reasonably proximate location to the user.
3. Criteria for Reallocation of Assigned vehicles
  - a. The County Administrator shall from time to time review the need for continuing assignment of vehicles. When none of the above

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Criteria no longer apply, assignments will be terminated and the vehicles returned to General Services for disposition.

- b. Department heads may terminate assignments and initiate the return of Vehicles to General Services when they are no longer required to carry out the functions of their departments. (See Policy on Ownership of ISF Equipment and Associated Depreciation for more information.)
- c. The Director of General Services or his deputy will recommend to the County Administrator how best to reallocate the assigned vehicle to another fleet customer.

### **Maintenance of Records and Residential Storage**

1. The General Services Director will maintain information on the storage location, designated use, purchase criteria and the responsible line supervisor of each vehicle under its control.
2. The General Services Director will ensure that all County Vehicles are properly maintained and replaced on a timely basis.
3. Regular and on going residential storage on County owned vehicles by employees of the County are strongly discouraged. Assigned vehicles may be stored overnight at private residences only upon approval of the department head, based on the existence of the certain conditions.
4. Residential Storage Criteria
  - a. The need to utilize a specially equipped vehicle to respond to an average to six or more after-hour emergency calls per month,
  - b. The need to report directly to the field or depart very late from the field at least four days per week,
  - c. Exceptions as approved by the County Administrator
5. The address of storage and responsible Supervisor for all residentially stored vehicles shall be reported to the Director or General Services on an on going basis whenever the storage location changes.
6. Residential storage shall not be authorized for the sole purpose of providing transportation to and from work for an employee.
7. Vehicles should not be left on street overnight. Safe, off-street parking shall be used whenever possible.
8. Occasional residential storage necessitated by an early morning departure on County Business may also be authorized by the department head.
9. Residential storage of a vehicle is considered a taxable fringe benefit by the IRS. See policy and procedures section VI-5 for more information. Consult with the Auditor-Controller regarding current rates and procedures.
10. The County Administrator shall from time to time review the necessity for and cost effectiveness of home storage authorizations approved by the department heads.

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**Maintenance of Vehicles**

1. It is the responsibility of the department heads to ensure all vehicles assigned to their department are returned to the County garages for scheduled preventive maintenance.
2. Maintenance-due mileage is posted on the vehicle door or dash, and must be observed to ensure safe, reliable transportation at minimum cost. Drivers should contact the garage to schedule a maintenance appointment as the vehicle approaches the mileage established for service.
  - i. Failure to comply with maintenance turn-in procedures may result in termination of assignment.
  - ii. Departments will be notified when maintenance is complete and the vehicle is ready for pick up.
3. The need for repairs above and beyond the standard vehicle maintenance program should be reported to the County garage immediately and an appointment for service scheduled.
4. Loaners will be provided, if necessary, while vehicles are in the garage for service.
  - i. Departments will be billed for actual miles traveled in the loaner at the per mile rate for that type of vehicle.
  - ii. Failure to exchange the loaner for the regular assigned vehicle when notified by the garage that the service is complete may result in an additional charge to the department.
  - iii. The additional charge will consist of a pro rated share of the monthly fixed rate associated with the loaner, based on the excess number of days the loaner was used.
5. Motor pool vehicles receive exterior washes every two weeks and interior cleaning as often as possible.
6. Assigned vehicles may be washed twice monthly at commercial locations under contract of that service (see latest memo or contact General Services/Vehicle Operations for locations). One of the two washes per month may include interior cleaning.
7. Patrol Vehicles may receive interior/exterior cleaning once per week.
8. General Services/Vehicle Operations does not pay for waxing or detailing of county vehicles.

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**Policy**

County employees should use County vehicles for all official automotive travel and every reasonable effort should be made to do so for safety and liability coverage. County departmental heads, assistant departmental heads, Board members and Board assistants are permitted to use a private vehicle in order to reduce the number of vehicles owned and maintained by the County. Use of private vehicles by other employees should be on an exception basis only due to emergency, unavailability of County cars, and in special circumstances approved by the department head.

Certain circumstances as detailed below, may involve personal expense for employees utilizing County vehicles.

**Responsibility**

Employees are responsible for exercising care when operating a County owned vehicle.

**Procedure**

**DAY USE MOTOR POOLS**

Employees who require the occasional use of a vehicle in connection with their work may obtain one from a Day Use Motor Pool. Completion of a Motor Pool Requisition, including driver's license number and certification that a valid License in the employee's possession, along with complete and accurate departmental billing information, is required at the time of check-out.

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During a normal working day, vehicles may be checked out and returned at County Motor Pools on a first-come basis. Dispatchers will also accept advance reservations, which are recommended but not required.

Overnight or extended trip use of out-of-county travel requires advance reservations through the dispatcher.

To ensure maximum utilization (and minimum cost) employees should not check out vehicles until actually required. They will return vehicles to Motor Pool immediately upon completion of need. Shared vehicles will be used whenever feasible.

### **Traffic Violations and other Fines and Penalties**

Fines and Penalties levied for violation of state, County or city laws and ordinances for which the driver is responsible shall be paid by the driver.

### **Accidents**

All accidents are to be reported to the local law enforcement agency or California Highway Patrol immediately, and a County Accident report form is to be completed and submitted to General Services/Risk Management no later than the next working day. If no accident report form is in the vehicle glove box, contact Risk Management or Vehicle Operations to obtain one.

### **For County Business Only**

A vehicle owned or maintained for the use of service of the County shall not be used for any purpose other than county business by a County official or employee. All passengers in County vehicles must also be engaged in the conduct of official business. Volunteers, interns, and other non-employees may be authorized by the department head to utilize County vehicles on an occasional basis to conduct County business by issuing a requisition for pool car use after first determining that the individual has a valid California driver's license.

### **Drivers License**

Any driver of a County vehicle must be in possession of the proper valid California driver's license.

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#### **Observe Traffic Rules**

Employees on County business will observe all traffic rules, regulations, and courtesies at all times. Fines or penalties levied for violations for which the driver is directly responsible shall be paid by the driver.

#### **Report Violations**

Employees are to immediately report to their department head any and all violations of the Motor Vehicle Code that occur when operating a County vehicle or a personal vehicle on County business. The department head will then report the violation to General Services Administration. Reports shall be made on all violations and infractions, including those related to the vehicle (repairs required), whether or not a citation was issued by a law enforcement agency. Conversely, General Service Administration will inform department heads of any vehicle abuse or violation involving their employees.

#### **Seat Belts**

It is state law that all drivers and passengers utilize belts.

#### **Abuse of Vehicles**

County Vehicles, other than those specified for such purposes, shall not push stalled vehicles, be driven off-road, or be used in a manner that may damage the vehicle.

#### **Personal Liability**

Employees may be held personally liable for damage to County equipment, in addition to other penalties that may be assessed, if through negligence or in the course of illegal activities, damage occurs to a County Vehicle.

Employees may be held personally liable when they are outside of the course and scope of their employment and cause damage to other persons or property while driving a County Vehicle.

#### **Eating/Smoking in Vehicle**

Eating, drinking and smoking is prohibited in Motor Pool and Assigned vehicles in order to minimize interior wear and tear, maximize vehicle life and comply with the County's smoking policies.

#### **Personal Property in Vehicle**

of personal property to a County vehicles, such as radios, decals, The attachment bumper stickers, Ect... is prohibited.

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#### **Vehicle Keys**

Keys will not be left in unattended vehicles, even when parked in secured areas.

#### **Commuting**

With the exception of vehicles permanently assigned to certain designated "standby status" employees (see below), policy is that County owned vehicles not be used for travel to and from work.

- Residential storage of County vehicles may be authorized only for those employees whose duties require them to be on a 24 hour "standby status" (e.g., Sheriff, Fire Chief, Emergency services personal).
- Employees who, in the normal course of their duties, do not report to a fixed location daily, (e.g., those employees who report directly to a work site away from their regular office location) may also be authorized, with their department head's permission, to keep a County vehicle overnight.
- For those vehicles authorized for residential storage, (except those in a "standby status"), total mileage, total business mileage, and total personal (including commute) mileage must be reported to the Auditor-Controller disbursement division monthly, for inclusion, where appropriate, in the employee's taxable income computation.

#### **Use of Fueling Facilities**

Department shall include information in their new employee orientations regarding safe and proper use of County fuel facilities, including the policies and procedures set fourth here. All departmental employees who drive County vehicles should from time to time be reminded of the necessary for fuel facility safety.

Employees who have questions or require assistance in operating the County's fuel facilities should contact the garage staff at the site during regular business hours for information or instruction.

Employees who observe damage, problems or anything unusual when using County fuel facilities must immediately notify either garage personnel on-site or, if after regular hours, phone the emergency number posted at the facility. In either case, detailed information should be provided regarding the location and nature of the problem.

Employees who cause damage to County fuel facilities must immediately notify either garage personnel on-site or phone the emergency number posted at the facility. Detailed information must be provided regarding the location and nature of the problem. Damage may be underground or otherwise not immediately apparent.



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A report shall be made whenever the possibility of damage exists. When damage occurs a County Accident Report form (GSD/RM-56) must be completed and filed with Risk Management.

In the case of unreported damage to County fuel facilities, Vehicle Operations will utilize data stored in the automated fuel system to determine responsibility for the incident.

Once responsibility for damage has been determined, the employee's department head will be notified in writing of the incident. Billing for reimbursement of repair/replacement costs will be accomplished by the addition of a miscellaneous charge to the vehicle journal voucher processed following receipt of all related invoices.

When appropriate, Vehicle Operations will advise the concerned regulatory agency(ies) of the incident and the name and department of the employee responsible.