

VEHICLE USAGE POLICY – REVISED NOVEMBER 2003

PURPOSE

The maintenance of a municipal vehicle fleet is necessary to effectively deliver local governmental services is necessary for the City of Camden. This policy will establish comprehensive procedures outlining the authorized usage of municipal vehicles and will be implemented by all departments.

BASIS AND BACKGROUND

The City of Camden maintains a vehicle fleet to assist employees in the performance of their duties and in the timely delivery of local government services. This fleet consists of a wide variety of vehicles and equipment that are utilized in a number of different and unique circumstances. With an estimated replacement value of over ten (10) million dollars, city officials must be diligent and exercise due care to ensure adequate availability of vehicles and the effective use of all municipal vehicles on a consistent basis.

The majority of municipal vehicles are highly visible and often subject to public observation and scrutiny. As a result, criticism is frequently received from the general public concerning improper or unethical use of municipal vehicles. With the adoption of a policy on municipal vehicle use, accountability surrounding vehicles will increase, therefore, placing city officials in a strong position to justify and defend usage of municipal vehicles on a uniform basis.

The classes of vehicles are identified by the city with restrictions imposed on usage.

The Risk Management Office will be responsible for insuring appropriate coverage for operators and passengers during the time that vehicles are used for city business. Additionally, the Risk Manager will recommend to the Business Administrator and the Insurance Commission cost effective measures that mitigate risks to the City of Camden.

The Department Head is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the vehicle usage policy. Professional discretion must be exercised by the Department Heads in the execution of the policy, with written notification to the City Business Administrator when needed. Presented below are detailed procedures for correct utilization of municipal vehicles

CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES

Certain city employees may be extended the privilege of taking municipal vehicles to their residence during non-working hours. This privilege can be offered on an emergency, temporary, or long-term basis, contingent upon the satisfaction of an evaluation criteria for such special usage of municipal vehicles. Factors to be addressed and assessed to establish justification for this special municipal vehicle usage are as follows:

1. Scope of work responsibilities and duties
2. On call status
3. Place of residence
4. Assignment of work responsibilities and duties due to weather conditions
5. Assignment of work duties associated with a particular job or project
6. Planned attendance of an out of town, work related event, meeting, seminar, or sanctioned program.

The Policy of the City of Camden is that it shall maintain three (3) categories of vehicles. These categories are defined by the position and responsibilities of the person to whom the vehicle is issued.

CLASS A:

Description: Vehicles assigned to Directors, Assistant Directors, the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief(s), the Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief along with designated managerial positions.

Authorization: Chief Operating Officer and Mayor.

Restrictions: Permitted for business use and commuting. Incidental stops within a reasonable distance of route to and from work site are permitted. No unofficial passengers are authorized. Restricted to travel within a two hundred (200) mile radius of the City of Camden.

CLASS B:

Description: Vehicles assigned to individuals with 24-hour on-call responsibilities.

Authorization: Business Administrator.

Restrictions: Permitted for business use and commuting. Incidental stops within a reasonable distance of route to and from work site are permitted. No unofficial passengers are authorized. Restricted to travel within a two hundred (200) mile radius of the City of Camden.

CLASS C:

Description: Work vehicles.

Authorization: Department Heads, Managers, Supervisors.

Restrictions: Permitted for work only. Vehicles will be picked up and properly dispatched from the appropriate central facility and returned and end of assignment/day/shift. No unauthorized/non-work related passengers.

Memoranda authorizing individuals authorized under Categories A and B will be forwarded to the Office of the Business Administrator. Individuals authorizing individuals the use for vehicles under Classes A and B are responsible for ensuring that the individual is properly licensed to operate the assigned vehicle under New Jersey State Law.

Additionally, provisions exist for the assignment of vehicles on a temporary and emergency basis.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT

The Department Head may direct assignment of a municipal vehicle during non-working hours for the timely handling of an unforeseeable situation or emergency condition. Written notification to the Business Administrator is not required. An emergency vehicle assignment may be exceed five (5) working days.

TEMPORARY VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT

Assignment of a municipal vehicle during non-working hours on a temporary basis for the proper handling of a short-term event, job or occurrence, may be authorized by the Department Head. The Department Head must provide written notification to the Business Administrator of this temporary assignment prior to extending the privilege. A temporary assignment may not exceed thirty (30) working days.

Annual evaluation of the long-term municipal vehicle assignment shall be performed to determine if acceptable assignment criteria still exist.

Assignment of municipal vehicle during non-working hours, whether on a temporary or long term basis, shall be at the discretion of the Business Administrator.

Violations of this policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action. Any and all disciplinary action taken will be handled consistent with current contractual agreements, departmental corrective action programs, and the New Jersey Department of Personnel regulations.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

City employees must follow and adhere to all applicable motor vehicle and traffic control laws while operating a municipal vehicle.

All City employees who operate municipal vehicles and/or equipment must possess valid licenses, certifications and endorsements issued by the appropriate governmental agency, exercising jurisdiction in this area. Operators of City of Camden vehicles are expected to comply with all operating and licensing requirements.

Individuals whose licenses have been suspended or expired are not to operate City vehicles until their licenses have been restored. Employees whose operator's licenses have been suspended or expired must report this to their immediate supervisor. These individuals will not operate City vehicles until their driver's licenses have been restored. Failure of an employee to inform his supervisor and to operate a City vehicle without a valid license may result in disciplinary action.

No city employee shall operate a municipal vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, chemicals or mind-altering substances.

Any city employee who is under the care of a medical professional and is being administered prescriptions drugs that might hinder the ability of the employee to safely operate a municipal vehicle, shall notify their direct supervisor immediately to determine future action, if needed.

All municipal vehicles shall have affixed state issued municipal government license plates and a city issued decal permanently applied on both sides of the municipal vehicle. Exceptions to this requirement will be permitted based on the following justification:

1. Law enforcement usage
2. Intended usage by administration/management
3. Any other appropriate reason approved by the Business Administrator

All municipal vehicles shall be used in strict adherence with assigned instructions and direction provided by authorized supervisory and management staff.

All instructions shall be consistent with the city's position that all municipal vehicles must be utilized for the delivery of local government services that directly benefit the City of Camden.

Municipal vehicles can be utilized to attend work related events such as meetings, educational seminars, professional conventions and other sanctioned and approved events.

Individual employees will be held personally responsible for any moving motor vehicle violation issued while operating a municipal vehicle. This shall also include any parking summons.

Any city employee involved in a motor vehicle accident, no matter how minor, must report the incident to their direct supervisor immediately and in accordance with established city policy on reporting accidents. This shall include the timely completion and submittal of all necessary documentation generated as a result of the accident.

Procedures regarding motor vehicle accidents involving are included in Annex A.

AUTHORIZED DRIVERS

The City must be assured that all city employees who operate city vehicles have a current Vehicle Operators License valid in the State of New Jersey, appropriate to the type of vehicle employee is responsible for operating

Additionally, the operator of a vehicle will be required to perform certain safety checks on vehicle before it is driven and when assigned a particular vehicle employee is responsible to ensure that it is kept in good repair and operated accordingly.

By requiring written authorization for vehicle use, the city will be able to achieve greater accountability in the use of the vehicle and successfully discipline those who abuse any city vehicles.

To accomplish this the city will required each department/division head to maintain a current listing of eligible vehicle operators, and a list of departmental vehicles with assigned “primary operator/s” of each vehicle. The list is also to include names of those individuals who receive an “auto allowance”. This list shall be submitted to the Business Administrator, who will distribute it to the appropriate individuals (including, Office of Risk Management, Police Department and Fleet Management).

The Business Administrator may, after review of driving records and consultation with the Insurance Commission, remove authorization to operate a City of Camden vehicle from any employee.

IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION:

All agency heads and Directors, along with the Police and Fire Chief will be required to submit a list of authorized drivers and operators license numbers to the Business Administrator. Where appropriate, the list shall include the particular vehicle the individual is assigned to as primary operator.

Any person other than the primary operator who is to operate the vehicle must be authorized to do so by the Business Administrator or his designees, in writing. This written authorization is to include the destination, purpose and approximate duration of

use. Upon return, the written request must be updated with the mileage and the time of return.

The information must be kept on file within the department. It will be subject to audit by the Business Administrator, Fleet Manager, Insurance Commission or their designees.

APPENDIX A: MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT PROCEDURES:

PROCEDURE MANUAL

Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving City-Owned Vehicles.

In the event that an employee is involved in a motor vehicle accident while operating or riding in a City-owned vehicle, the following procedures will apply:

1. Drivers of City-owned vehicles are responsible for the safe operation of those vehicles and complying with this policy.
2. Remember, operators and occupants of City-owned vehicles are obligated to obey all laws pertaining to the operating of motor vehicles and accident reporting requirements.
3. The first priority should be to ensure the safety of all parties who may have been involved in the accident and to summon medical assistance for anyone who might be injured.
4. All accidents will be reported to the appropriate police department (within or without the City of Camden).
5. The operator or crew's supervisor will be contacted as soon as possible. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate departmental incident

reports are completed and that the vehicle is recovered and taken to a repair facility. If possible, photographs of the vehicle should be taken.

6. In the event that a City vehicle strikes an unoccupied vehicle, the above procedures are still in force. Additionally every effort shall be made to contact the owner.
7. Copies of all incident reports and police reports should be provided to the Office of Fleet Management as soon as possible.