

## Vehicle Assignment and Use Criteria Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a complete and standardized policy for the assignment and use of Rockdale County Board of Commissioners owned and titled vehicles and use of personal vehicles to conduct County business, and to minimize the expenditures associated with the use of motor vehicles to the greatest extent possible. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring the County to provide a vehicle for an employee if the Chairperson or the department director determines that a vehicle is not essential for job performance.

### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to Rockdale County Board of Commissioners employees regarding vehicle assignment and usage in the provision of services to the County's citizens, except as otherwise indicated in this policy. This policy applies to all motorized and non-motorized passenger and service vehicles that are owned by, titled to, or otherwise controlled by or through Rockdale County Board of Commissioners. This policy also applies to use of personal vehicles owned by or titled to employees of the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners to conduct County business.

### DEFINITIONS

*Approved County Facility* shall mean property owned by the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners that has been approved by the Chairperson to park vehicles owned by the County.

*Assignment* shall mean that an employee has exclusive control over a vehicle's use during the workday or is the only employee who routinely drives the vehicle.

*De minimus personal use* shall mean minimal personal use such as an occasional stop for meals or personal errands on the way between a County work location/activity and the employee's home.

*Metropolitan Atlanta Area* shall mean Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Rockdale, Spalding and Walton counties.

*Personal Use* of a vehicle means all use that is not for County business.

*Control Employee* means a government employee whose compensation is equal to or exceeds Federal Government Executive Level V of \$133,000 annually.

## PROCEDURES

### Use of County Vehicles

County Vehicles shall be used to provide County services and to conduct County business. With approval of the Chairperson of the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners, County vehicles may be used for commuting between the employee's residence and their place of employment at the County and for de minimus personal errands during workdays only while traveling between work and home. Pursuant to the IRS commuting rule, the value of a vehicle provided to an employee, other than a Control Employee or an elected official, for commuting use will be determined by multiplying each one-way commute (that is, from home to work or from work to home) by the IRS statutory amount, currently \$1.50. (IRS Publication 15B)

All operators of County vehicles shall possess a valid driver's license of the appropriate class. Employees are responsible for notifying the County if their license is suspended or revoked. Employees shall notify their supervisor of any violations received while in possession of, or while operating a County vehicle. Failure to do so may result in the loss of vehicle use privileges or other disciplinary action.

All drivers of County vehicles must obey traffic laws. Any fines or other penalties for traffic violations incurred by an employee operating a County vehicle are the personal responsibility of the employee. All such violations or citations must be reported to immediate supervisor immediately.

All occupants of County vehicles or personal vehicles driven by employees on official County business must wear safety belts. Employees are strictly prohibited from operating a County vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription/over the counter medication that may impair their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

When operating or utilizing County vehicles, employees must keep in mind that they are representatives of the County and that their conduct while operating a County vehicle is a reflection on the County. County vehicle shall not transport or store alcohol or alcoholic beverages unless in connection with official duties.

The use of **any** tobacco products in any County vehicle is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to smoking (cigars, cigarettes and electronic cigarettes), chewing and dipping tobacco products. Containers used for expended tobacco products (i.e., spit bottles, ashtrays, etc.). In accordance with County No Use of Tobacco Policy.

Employees should not be engaged in cell phone use while driving a county vehicle, this includes, but is not limited to, talking on the phone, engaging in Smartphone activities, browsing the internet, and/or texting. All drivers, regardless of age, are banned from **texting** while behind the wheel in Georgia.

Employees assigned a County vehicle shall adhere to the No Idling Policy (Policy #2014-2-14), this policy shall not apply to County vehicles being operated by Sheriff's deputies who are on duty.

Only County employees may operate a County vehicle.

All unattended County vehicles shall be locked at all times.

All applicable policies/procedures stated herein governing the use of County vehicles by employees shall apply to rental vehicles, leased vehicles or borrowed vehicles paid for or controlled by the County.

### **Accident Reporting and Notification**

In case of an accident: Do not leave the scene. If your vehicle is creating a safety hazard, move it to a safer place, if able. DO NOT ADMIT FAULT. Do not commit to payment of any property damage or medical bills of any other party. The County employee shall immediately notify their supervisor and the local law enforcement agency to report the accident. Obtain the accident case number from the Law Enforcement as well as the name and contact information for any other individuals involved including the insurance company and policy number for the vehicles involved. An employee involved in an accident with a County vehicle will be subject to an alcohol/drug screening. The employee shall provide a written statement of the accident to his/her supervisor. The Talent Management department and the Fleet Services Manager shall be verbally notified of the accident by the employee's supervisor and the supervisor shall be provided the written statement and a completed police report by the supervisor.

Employee/Supervisor should ensure that vehicles covered under Rockdale County insurance are taken to Fleet Services as soon as possible for evaluation and/or repair. Any inoperable vehicle needing to be towed should be towed by one of the wreckers within the county rotation to Fleet Services by contacting dispatch at 770-785-5911. Fleet Services will evaluate damages and work in tandem with Talent Management/Risk Management to file a claim and coordinate with the county's insurance provider, third party insurers, provide estimates, authorize repairs, and collect any insurance proceeds.

### **Maintenance Regulations**

Employees assigned a County vehicle shall be responsible for scheduling their routine preventive maintenance. Vehicles shall be serviced according to the preventive maintenance programs that is required by the County's Fleet Maintenance Shop. Check the mileage/Date on "*Your Next Service Due*" sticker in the upper left corner of your windshield or in a large truck you will have a white sticker in the truck door jamb; date and mileage should be listed. If for any reason you do not see the sticker please contact Fleet Services for a new sticker. Routine service shall be performed at the County's vehicle maintenance shop. Defects and operational difficulties are to be promptly reported to the employee's supervisor and the Fleet Maintenance Shop.

The State of Georgia requires that all gasoline powered cars and light trucks more than three (3) years old, and up to 8,500 lbs. gross vehicle weight, receive an annual emission test to reduce air pollution. All applicable trucks and automotive owned by Rockdale County shall comply with this requirement. The county employee is responsible for having their vehicle emissions

completed. An email notice is typically sent out to all users department in July of each calendar year.

Employees assigned a County vehicle shall be responsible for completing a pre-trip inspection checklist, ensure county logo and unit number is on each vehicle and/or equipment, and check your engine oil level.

Employees shall refrain from making any repairs or having any repairs made to the vehicle other than at the County vehicle maintenance shop. Using fuel, oil, lubricant or other liquid or solid additives other than those issued at the County vehicle maintenance shop. Employees shall refrain from altering the body, making any general design changes to the appearance or markings of the vehicle. To include no mechanical or electrical systems of the vehicle to be altered without permission.

The county provides vehicles for employees to perform their day-to-day duties and these vehicles are provided at taxpayer expense. Employees assigned a County vehicle shall be responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of their assigned vehicle, both interior and exterior. The inside of vehicles should be free of clutter and trash, and the outside should be clean.

If a vehicle is taken to Fleet Services outside of normal business hours, a Fleet Services work order shall be completed and left in the appropriate location at Fleet Services. Information on the work order should include, at a minimum, the unit number, driver's name, brief description of the damage and contact information.

### **AUTOMOBILE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

Use of a personal vehicle for business use will be reimbursed at the IRS's mileage reimbursement rate which is set annually by the IRS guidelines. Employees must submit a reimbursement request to the Finance department that documents the mileage, time, place and business purpose of travel. This type of reimbursement is not required to be reported as income to the IRS.

### **VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES**

#### **1. Department Director Responsibilities**

Department Directors have the following responsibilities with respect to vehicle assignments:

- a. Designate positions eligible for vehicle assignments and the type of assignment as set forth in this policy.
- b. Annually submit a list of vehicle assignments with justification to the Fleet Services Manager for submission to the Director of Recreation & Maintenance.
- c. Submit a report annually to the Fleet Services Manager that will, by department show: vehicles that are driven to the residence; type of vehicle; employee's name

- and address; and the criteria to justify authorization for the employee to drive the vehicle to the employee's residence.
- d. Ensure that employees use vehicles only for official county business. The lists of authorized and unauthorized uses in Sections 4 and 5 of this policy serve as guidelines for determining when the use of a County vehicle is or is not appropriate.
  - e. Conduct periodic reviews to assess employee performance of operator responsibilities.
  - f. Report immediately to Fleet Services any changes that will impact any vehicle assignment or any changes in criteria for approved assignment.
  - g. Ensure that employees who are assigned a County vehicle be responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of their assigned vehicle, both interior and exterior. The inside of vehicles should be free of clutter and trash, and the outside should be clean.
  - h. Ensure that employees adhere to wearing their seat belts, obey the no Use of Tobacco in County vehicles and the No Idling Policy.
  - i. Ensure that employees who are assigned a County vehicle be responsible for scheduling their routine preventive maintenance, this is to include any equipment they may use. Ensure they are checking the engine oil to extend the life of the vehicle.
  - j. Ensure that employees who are assigned a County vehicle be responsible for having their vehicle emissions completed.
  - k. Ensure that employees are responsible for completing a pre-trip inspection checklist on all county vehicle/equipment. Proper County logos and unit numbers are attached to their unit.
  - l. Ensure staff reports all accidents and all documentation is forwarded to Talent Management and Fleet Services. Ensure that vehicles covered under Rockdale County insurance are taken to Fleet Services for an evaluation and/or repair.
  - m. Ensure staff locks all **unattended** vehicles at all times.

## 2. Vehicle Assignment Approval Process

The Department Director is responsible for submitting a written request, and obtaining approval before any vehicle can be assigned to an employee. Any person or department assigned a vehicle, must agree to comply with all requirements expressed by this policy.

Annually each Department Director shall assess the status of the vehicle assignments, utilizing the categories outlined in section 3 of this policy.

Vehicle assignments shall be submitted to Fleet Services on or before November 1 of each year on the forms provided by Fleet Services. Fleet Services will provide a recommendation to the Director of Recreation & Maintenance for review and submit to the Chairperson for approval by January 1 for the following calendar year.

The proposed list shall include:

The department, the employee name, the vehicle number, make and model and assignment category. By January 1, the Chairperson will review and authorize/reauthorize vehicle assignments for the following calendar year.

### **3. Vehicle Assignment Categories**

To better define and clarify vehicle roles and assignments, all County owned vehicles will be classified as one of the following types of vehicles, and comply with the listed respective requirements and responsibilities for the category:

- 24 hour assignment
- Work day assignment
- Pool assignment
- Department Assignment
- Personal vehicle

All assignments, including use of personal vehicle, are subject to the monetary limitations imposed by the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners as part of the annual budget process.

#### **A. 24 Hour Assignment**

1. Authorized 24 hour/day use of a County vehicle by a designated County employee/position for the purposes of efficiently and effectively performing County business. Commuting to and from home and de minimus personal use is authorized. County vehicles shall not be driven to an employee's residence if more than 11 miles from the Rockdale County Courthouse without approval from the Chairperson.
2. Employees who qualify for 24 hour assignment, but live more than 11 miles from the Rockdale County Courthouse may:
  - a. Park the vehicle at the closest Approved County Facility to employee's residence for drop-off and pick-up;
  - b. For call-back the employee may choose to respond in their personal vehicle or to drive their personal vehicle to the county assigned vehicle.
3. Mileage reimbursement will be provided at the current mileage reimbursement rate for any use of a personal vehicle to respond to a call-back as outlined in paragraph 2 of this section.
4. An employee must meet the following criteria to qualify for 24 hour assignment:
  - a. The employee has primary responsibility for responding to emergency situations which require immediate response to protect life or property. An individual who is first to arrive on the scene in an emergency situation, or is skilled and needed for callback to respond to facility emergencies should be designated as having on-call assignment (such as Maintenance, Transportation, Water Resources and/or Fire Department). When

appropriate, departments should establish a designated first responder, thus limiting the number of individuals who are on-call. An employee who is on-call after normal work hours is authorized to drive a pooled or assigned vehicle home only if the employee does not anticipate reporting to his normal worksite when called to duty and if the vehicle meets one of the criteria listed below:

- i. Has special equipment other than a radio or cellular telephone, is used to transport equipment which is too large or heavy, or has special features which make it impractical to be transferred between vehicles or between a vehicle and a fixed location; and
  - ii. A vehicle that is required to be driven in sites or under conditions that would endanger a privately owned vehicle.
  - iii. On-call staff must maintain documentation listing the number of times they are called to a scene on a month-to-month basis. Only those employees/positions that have 24 call-outs per year will be authorized for 24 hour vehicle assignment. This information must be documented on the form provided by and submitted to Fleet Services.
  - iv. Documentation listing the number and nature of call-outs for the six month period from the prior year. In addition, there must be an explanation of why alternate transportation cannot be used and why a County vehicle cannot be picked up from a designated County parking area.
5. Exception to this section is as follows:
- a. Vehicles assigned to Maintenance, Planning & Development/Code Enforcement, Stormwater Management, Transportation, Water Resources, or Communications/911 may be driven to the residence of employees who will need to respond during times of severe inclement weather. This exception is applicable when a prior warning of severe inclement weather has been broadcasted and issued for Rockdale County by the weather service or through Rockdale Communications/911.
  - b. Vehicles may be driven to the residence of the employee when mileage reimbursement are substantially more than the costs associated with the employee driving the vehicle beyond the 11 mile restriction. Documentation must be approved by Fleet Services to qualify for this exemption.

**B. Work Day Assignment**

Work Day Assignment is defined as the assigned use of a County vehicle by a designated employee for the efficient and effective performance of County business during the respective employee's assigned work day which may in fact be more than eight hours depending on job assignment. Authorized use and assignment of a County vehicle full time during the working day to specific employees will be based on a justified need and not based on position. Commuting to and from home and work privileges are not authorized.

**C. Pool Assignment**

Pool Assignment vehicles are defined as County vehicles, not assigned to a specific employee or position, which are maintained and assigned by Fleet Services. Pool vehicles are assigned to employees on a short-term or temporary basis for the efficient and effective performance of County business on an as needed basis and when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County to do so. Short-term basis is defined as the period of time (approximately 8 hours or less) to handle the department's transportation needs; however, the vehicle may be used on a temporary basis for periods greater than a day when approved by the Department Director and agreed upon by Fleet Services that temporary assignment is necessary to accomplish essential County business.

Employees must use County vehicles to conduct authorized County business when possible and expedient, unless their Department Director has granted a specific exemption. Exceptions to this may be:

1. Whenever there are no County vehicles available; or
2. When traveling on an out of town business trip; or
3. When the employee uses their personal vehicle to conduct official county business and will not be seeking mileage reimbursement.

If an out of town vehicle is available and the employee chooses to use their personal vehicle, the reimbursement rate will be the number of miles driven multiplied by 60 percent (60%) of the current rate allowable by IRS or the approved round-trip commercial coach airfare, whichever is the lower amount. This percentage will be reviewed periodically and will vary depending on the replacement cost of the vehicles and the allowable IRS reimbursement. Employees must receive approval from the department head to exercise this option.

#### **D. Department Assignment**

Department assignment vehicles are defined as County vehicles, not assigned to a specific employee or position, which are assigned to a department. Department assignment vehicles are maintained and controlled by the department which the vehicle is assigned. Department assignment vehicles are shared with the employees of the department as directed by the department director.

#### **E. Personal Vehicles**

Personal vehicle use is allowed in the performance of County business when a County vehicle is not otherwise appropriate or available. Approved employees who use their personal vehicles for County business may be reimbursed on a per mile basis as set by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage for transit between home and work and between work and lunch does not qualify for reimbursement.

#### **4. Authorized Uses of County vehicles:**



- a. The performance of duties by personnel designated by the appropriate Department Director.
- b. Travel between place of official business and place of temporary lodging while on official travel status.
- c. Travel, not within reasonable walking distance, between place of official business or temporary lodging and places to obtain meals or medical assistance, including drugstores, while on official travel status.
- d. Transport of officials, employees, clients or guests of the County.
- e. Transport of consultants, contractors or commercial firm representatives when in the direct interest of the County.
- f. Transport of any person or item in an emergency situation.
- g. Commute between the place of dispatch or place of performance of official business to a personal residence when specifically authorized by this policy.
- h. Minimal personal use such as an occasional stop for meals, personal errands, or subsistence shopping while en route on County business.
- i. Transport of children, under the employees care, to and from daycare or school.
- j. Transport of family members with employee to an out of town conference.

**5. Unauthorized Uses of County vehicles:**

- a. Operating County vehicles or equipment while under the influence as defined by Georgia State Law.
- b. Travel or task performance of a personal nature not connected with the accomplishment of official County business or as set forth in section 4h.
- c. Travel or task performance beyond the stated capabilities of the vehicle.
- d. Transport of families, friends, associates, or other persons who are not employees of the County or serving the interest of the County. Except that family members may be transported in a valid family emergency only to the extent necessary to alleviate the emergency situation, or as set forth in sections 4i and 4j.
- e. Transport of hitchhikers.
- f. Transport of items or cargo having no relation to the conduct of official County business.
- g. Transport of any item, equipment or cargo which projects from the side, front or rear of the vehicle in such a manner as to constitute a hazard to safe driving.
- h. Outings except planned official County activities.
- i. Loan of a vehicle for use in non-County authorized functions.

**6. Emergency Fuel Conservation**

The County must be able to supply public services and safety, should the motor-fuel supply become disrupted or impacted by economic conditions, natural disaster, war or terrorism. The County must have adequate fuel supply to ensure all critical public services in the event of inadequate supply or price increases which threaten the County's budgeted fuel expenditures.

**Fuel Conservation Levels**

The Chairperson is authorized to implement at any time one of the following fuel conservation levels:

#### Level 1

Level 1 shall be required of all County employees permanently. Should conditions necessitate additional conservation, the Chairperson shall inform the department heads of the level of conservation which shall be followed. Operators shall actively promote fuel conservation when operating County vehicles. Some helpful measures proven effective in reducing consumption includes, but are not limited to:

- Consolidating and coordinating trips.
- Using the postal service, telephone and courier services when appropriate.
- Not allowing vehicles to idle when not in service.
- Observing speed limits.
- Ensure that proper vehicle maintenance is performed and proper tire inflation is maintained.
- Selecting the appropriate vehicle for required task.
- Avoiding rapid acceleration, fast stops and excessive engine RPM.
- Maintaining constant speeds.
- Not overfilling gas tanks, spillage is dangerous and not recoverable.

#### Level 2

Level 2 shall eliminate any out of town training or conference travel not required as part of their departmental professional certifications or accreditations. In cases where training and travel are necessary, every attempt will be made to postpone the training until the emergency has subsided. When the travel is required, each trip must be approved in writing by the Chairperson. Other daytime business hours use of vehicles will be permitted.

#### Level 3

Level 3 shall eliminate take home vehicles. Only vehicles defined and equipped as emergency response vehicles, in a critical support role, will be allowed take home privileges. Driving during business hours must be limited to scheduled maintenance operations, emergency responses, or planned pick-up or delivery of critical supplies.

#### Level 4

Level 4 will allow only approved emergency response vehicles, specifically designated by the Chairperson, to be permitted to be operated. All other County owned vehicles normally used during business hours will be parked and taken out of service until the Chairperson reduces the implementation level, or ends the emergency.


### **6. Policy Change**

The County reserves the right to delete, modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time with or without prior notice.

This policy shall become effective the 27<sup>th</sup> day of 2018.

Approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2018.

Rockdale County, Georgia  
Board of Commissioners

By:   
Oz Nesbitt, Sr., Chairman

Attest:

By:   
Jennifer Rutledge, County Clerk