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**USE OF COUNTY AND PERSONAL VEHICLES
ON COUNTY BUSINESS
POLICY 170**

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USE OF COUNTY AND PERSONAL VEHICLES ON COUNTY BUSINESS

POLICY 170

1. PURPOSE

- To provide uniform and consistent criteria/guidelines for the use of County vehicles or personal vehicles while on County business;
- To ensure County vehicles are operated consistent with risk management standards, and;
- To ensure County vehicles are used only while in the course of doing County business, and in accordance with their intended use.

*Note: This policy does not address regulations related to reimbursement for travel or training. Those rules are contained in the County's Travel Reimbursement procedure.

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to the use of all County owned vehicles, leased, rented or on loan from another entity and the use of personal vehicles for County business by all County Officials, employees, and volunteers.

3. GENERAL POLICIES

3.1 Authorized Operators

Except as specifically provided for in this policy, only County officials and County employees shall be authorized to operate a County vehicle.

3.2 Safety

In all cases, operators are expected to use County vehicles in a safe and prudent manner. Vehicles may be used only when in safe operating condition. All operators shall have received and be current in a County approved safe driver training, emergency vehicle operation training, or defensive driver training. All employees shall complete safe driver training at least every three years. Emergency vehicle operation training or other driver training for fully commissioned Sheriff's personnel shall be completed as determined by the Sheriff. Employees requiring CDL shall complete other training as required by law and determined by the County Official.

3.3 Limitation on Personal Use

County vehicles shall be used only in the scope and course of County business. County Officials and employees may not use County vehicles for personal matters (including

transport of children to school or daycare facilities) except under one of the following conditions:

- a. Travel to an eating establishment when an employee is on County business, in a location where driving to switch to a personal vehicle would result in an extra and unnecessary expenditure of County time and money, or is operating a vehicle assigned to him/her pursuant to section 3.8.
- b. Travel to and from the employee's residence if authorized pursuant to Section 3.8 or 3.9 of this policy; or
- c. Limited and incidental personal use, with *de minimis* cost, such as driving to eating establishments while traveling or at conferences or traveling to events and emergencies.

Pend Oreille County maintains a "no deviation" policy. County Officials, employees and volunteers who use County vehicles for purposes outside this policy are not considered "at work" and any injuries resulting from accidents during such times are not subject to compensation including workers compensation.

3.4 Passengers

Only individuals directly engaged in activities which are associated with official County business may ride as passengers in a County vehicle. With permission of the County Official, a spouse may ride with an employee to or from a conference in a County vehicle. No animals may be transported unless they are official K-9 unit animals or animals being transported as part of the animal control program.

3.5 Driving of County Vehicles by Volunteers Restricted

Volunteers are allowed to drive County vehicles only under the following conditions and circumstances. If a County Official believes it is necessary to permit a volunteer to drive a County vehicle, they must demonstrate all of the following:

- a. County employees are either unavailable or unable to drive the vehicle;
- b. Volunteers approved to drive County vehicles comply with all requirements of this policy, and
- c. The volunteer is currently and properly registered with the County and have completed the County's driver safety program.

The County Official may require additional information and documentation as necessary to minimize risk and to assure the safety of volunteers, County employees, and the public.

Certain volunteers listed in Appendix A may operate County vehicles with permission of the County Official if they comply with all requirements of this policy.

3.6 Use of Personal Vehicle on County Business

- a. Personal vehicle use for County business is subject to this policy.

- b. Personal vehicles shall not be used on County business unless prior approval from the County Official has been granted.
- c. Drivers who routinely use their personal vehicle on County business shall provide, upon the request of the Human Resources Office or the County Official, proof of liability insurance.
- d. Mileage reimbursement for business use of a personal vehicle contains compensation for fuel, insurance coverage, vehicle depreciation, and vehicle maintenance. The employee's automobile insurance is the primary carrier. Pend Oreille County does not insure private vehicles. Employees and volunteers who use their personal vehicle on County business are recommended to notify their insurance carrier of the business use.

3.7 Collisions/Accidents

All motor vehicle collisions involving County vehicles or private vehicles being operated on County business shall be reported and investigated in accordance with adopted policies and procedures.

3.8 Criteria for Personal Assigned County Vehicles

Upon written request of the County Official, the Board of Commissioners, or their designee, may approve assignment of a motor vehicle to an employee who is on 24-hour call and routinely responds to emergencies outside regular business hours and a significant distance from their regular duty station. Employees residing outside Pend Oreille County will not be assigned County vehicles. In addition to those individually approved by the Board, employee classifications authorized to be assigned County vehicles are contained in Appendix A.

Unless exempted by federal law, the use of assigned County vehicles for daily travel between a residence and duty station shall be treated as a taxable benefit. For additional information see the Auditor's policy regarding taxable benefits.

3.9 County Vehicles to be Stored on County Property

Except as noted below, all County vehicles shall be stored on County property unless permission is obtained from the County Official. Exceptions:

- a. County vehicles assigned to employees in accordance with section 3.8.
- b. Employee must commence a trip prior to or complete a trip after regular County business hours.
- c. Construction vehicles parked at work sites or other locations during the duration of a project.
- d. County vehicles parked at businesses for repairs or maintenance.

3.10 Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and/or Drugs in County Vehicles

In addition to complying with Pend Oreille County's Smoking and Drug-Free Workplace Policies, County employees or volunteers shall not smoke or use tobacco products in County

vehicles nor drive a County vehicle or personal vehicle on County business under the influence of any alcohol or drugs.

If alcohol or drug use or impairment is demonstrated to be a contributing factor in a motor vehicle collision or violation, such use or impairment shall be grounds for separate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

3.11 Seat Belts

All drivers and passengers in County vehicles or operating or riding in private vehicles on County business must wear a seat belt in accordance with the law.

3.12 Use of Cell Phones/Two-way Radio's While Driving

Employees and volunteers operating County vehicles or driving personal vehicles on County business shall not use cellular phones while the vehicle is moving unless such use is an emergency or the cell phone is equipped with "hands free" capability.

Employees and volunteers operating County vehicles or driving personal vehicles on County business shall not text on their cell phones or any other electronic equipment while the vehicle is moving.

Employees and volunteers should recognize the increased risk with the use of cellular phones and/or two-way radios while operating moving equipment. Employees and volunteers are responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle, which they are driving even when they are using either a cellular phone or a two-way radio under this policy.

3.13 Employees/Volunteers Responsible for Fines

Employees/volunteers will be personally responsible for any fines related to the violation of any traffic laws.

3.14 Safety Equipment

Each County motor vehicle will have, at a minimum, the following equipment:

- a. First aid kit
- b. Fire extinguisher
- c. Vehicle accident check list envelope

3.15 Fuel

County vehicles will be fueled at County-provided facilities whenever practical. Prior to traveling outside the County, drivers of County vehicles will obtain gas credit cards maintained by ER&R and will purchase fuel using those cards. Other means of purchasing fuel, including County or private credit cards (i.e., Visa or MasterCard); will be used only if

fueling stations representing County gas cards are not available. Visa or MasterCard will not be used to purchase fuel as a matter of convenience. All fuel receipts should include drivers name, date, time, odometer reading, vehicle number and amount of fuel purchased.

3.16 Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy will result in suspension of driving privileges for County vehicles. Failure to comply may also result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 County Official

County Officials shall ensure the following:

- a. Overall use of County vehicles is conducted in as cost effective and energy efficient manner as practical.
- b. Employees are properly informed and trained regarding the requirements of this policy, the safe and legal use of County vehicles, and the proper procedures for reporting accidents and equipment deficiencies.
- c. County vehicles assigned to each department are maintained in good, safe and clean operating condition. Vehicles must receive regularly scheduled maintenance services as provided for by ER&R and/or an accepted vehicle maintenance service.
- d. Motor vehicle collisions involving County vehicles or private vehicles on County business are properly reported and investigated.
- e. A person who is not qualified to operate a vehicle has not been granted an accommodation for driving, or who's driving record shows unsatisfactory driving performance shall not be considered for employment in positions that require driving.
- f. Only employees and volunteers authorized by policy and meeting vehicle operator requirements may operate County vehicles or drive on County business.

4.2 Vehicle Operators

The Vehicle Operator shall ensure the following:

- a. Perform a general inspection of the vehicle per the safety checklist as provided by Risk Management and/or posted in the vehicle.
- b. Promptly report any equipment problems, deficiencies or failures to the employee's supervisor and ER&R or responsible maintenance organization.
- c. Operate their vehicles in a safe, legal, courteous, and defensive manner, including obeying speed limits and proper use of seat belts or other vehicle safety restraints as required by law. Operators will not use obscene or other

gestures; overuse the vehicle horn, or other behavior which may cause others to become enraged.

- d. Possess a current and valid driver's license, including a commercial driver's license where appropriate to the job classification. The employee will immediately report any suspension, revocation, expiration or other loss of a valid operator's license to their supervisor.
- e. Are aware they are subject to a driving history record review. Drivers must have a driving history record which demonstrates their ability and willingness to drive in a safe and legal manner.
- f. Are aware they are subject to a physical examination and driving test for employees in designated classifications.
- g. Complete a Pend Oreille County sponsored driver safety training course within ninety (90) days of hiring and at least once every three years thereafter. Additional or more frequent training may be required by the County Official.
- h. Take adequate precautions to protect the vehicle from damage or theft.
- i. Promptly report any motor vehicle collisions to the employee's supervisor, County Official, RM, and proper law enforcement agency using the proper reporting forms.
- k. Be personally responsible for any fines related to traffic violations while operating the vehicle. Any such infractions shall be immediately reported by the employee to the employee's supervisor.
- l. Any defects or safety problems should be reported to the employee's supervisor. The vehicle should not be driven if operational or safety problems are found.

4.3 Risk Management (RM)

Risk Management is responsible to:

- a. Investigate all reported motor vehicle collisions, damage and thefts pursuant to basic risk management practices and principles.
- b. Provide and administer at least semi-annual safe driving training programs for County employees.
- c. Provide a safety checklist for the performance of a general vehicle inspection.
- d. Make available to appointing authorities a list of drivers who, per the guidelines of this policy, have completed required training.
- e. Notify appointing authorities of drivers who have violated this policy or who no longer are qualified to drive County vehicles.

4.4 Equipment Rental and Replacement (ER&R)

The supervisor and personnel assigned to ER&R are responsible to:

- a. Maintain and repair designated County vehicles pursuant to an adopted vehicle maintenance schedule.
- b. Provide basic safety supplies to be kept in each County vehicle.

- c. Not release any vehicle from maintenance with a known safety defect.
- d. Issue and replace fuel system cards and fuel credit cards.

5. DRIVING RECORDS

Employees and/or volunteers required to drive on County business, whether in a private vehicle or County owned vehicle, must possess a valid driver's license and must comply with any license restrictions. Employees and/or volunteers, who drive on County business may at any time, have their driving record and license status checked by the County. The County monitors driving records as a component of risk management.

Employees/volunteers whose driving records indicate criminal traffic violations within the last five (5) years, or more than two moving infractions within the last three (3) years or criteria as listed below may be disqualified from driving on behalf of the County and applicants for positions that include driving as an essential job function may not be considered for employment. Additional circumstances which may result in loss of authorization to drive a County vehicle or drive on County business include, but are not limited to:

- a. Considered unfit to drive for health reasons.
- b. Determined to have operated a vehicle while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- c. Determined to have operated a County vehicle in a reckless, negligent, or careless manner.
- d. Involved in three or more motor vehicle collisions in a period of two years where their driving contributed significantly to the motor vehicle collision.
- e. A history of failure to follow traffic regulations or willfully disobeying County policy or procedure relating to the use of motor vehicles.

Loss of ability to drive due to suspension or revocation of a driver's license or County permission to drive due to violation of this policy is grounds for termination in all positions where driving is an essential job function. Termination from employment under such circumstances shall be at the sole discretion of the County Official and may be based upon the employee's inability to perform essential job functions.

APPENDIX A

The following classifications and/or employees are authorized by the Board of Commissioners to be assigned County vehicles:

- a. The Sheriff and all fully-commissioned, general law enforcement authority, deputy sheriffs employed as regular, full-time employees.
- b. Emergency Management.
- c. Others designated by the Board of County Commissioners.

In addition to volunteers authorized to operate County vehicles pursuant to the procedures detailed in section 4.5 of this policy, the following classifications of volunteers are authorized by the Board of Pend Oreille County Commissioners, to operate County vehicles on official business if they comply with all requirements of this policy:

- a. Sheriff's reserves/posse members.
- b. Search and rescue, and registered Emergency Services volunteers.
- c. Others designated by the Board of County Commissioners.

Employees of other law enforcement agencies when working jointly with the Sheriff's Department as directed by the Sheriff are authorized to be assigned, and/or operate County vehicles.

APPENDIX B

In order to ensure that Risk Management is meeting its responsibilities and reporting requirements; all accidents resulting in injury or vehicle damage shall be reported verbally to Risk Management and the department owning the vehicle within one (1) working day or immediately for those that a reasonable person would expect to result in an eventual claim against the County. The employee involved shall have completed the Vehicle Accident Check List or other accident report as required by their department and those written reports forwarded to Risk Management within one (1) week of the event.

As the payee, it is Risk Management's responsibility to ensure that purchasing and contracting laws are being followed and that repairs are made as economically as possible. Risk Management will work with the department owning the vehicle and the department utilizing the vehicle to determine if repairs can be made in-house, to hire an adjuster, to work directly with an auto body shop or to total the vehicle. No authorization to repair shall be made without the Risk Manager's consent.