Hennepin County Administrative Policy

County-owned vehicles and equipment

Print copies are for reference only. The most recent version is in the county's online policy hub.

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Effective date: 04/18/2024

Last reviewed: 04/18/2024

Purpose

Hennepin County has a significant investment in vehicles and equipment. The policy reflects the commitment of Fleet Services to manage these resources.

This policy provides direction to departments and employees regarding county-owned vehicles and equipment. It provides resources and assistance so that departments can better manage fleet management responsibilities, reduce risk of injury or accident, and reduce costs associated with maintenance.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff (employees and volunteers) and elected officials.

The policy covers all vehicles and equipment operated and owned, leased, and rented by Fleet Services.

Out of scope

With County Administrator approval, departments may have responsibility for procuring, leasing, and managing certain vehicles under certain circumstances (e.g., Sheriff's Office undercover).

Policy statement

Hennepin County will procure and manage fleet vehicles and equipment consistent with statutory and county requirements and Fleet Services procedures.

Procurement and utilization

To support Hennepin County's Climate Action Plan and achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, new or replacement vehicles and equipment will be selected to achieve the greatest level of emission reductions possible while still meeting the operational needs. Equipment will be considered based on cost-effectiveness on a total lifecycle basis. Zero emission vehicles (such as Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV), Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEV), or Hybrid Elective Vehicles (HEV)) will be procured when they are appropriate to the application, are technically and economically feasible, ergonomically feasible, have available fueling infrastructure in place, and meet the organizational needs of the county. The county shall make every effort to obtain the vehicles that are the most fuel-efficient and emit the lowest pollutants possible as measured by available emissions certification standards and those published by the manufacturers.

Follow the guidelines described in the procurement and utilization procedures.

Vehicle idling

Exhaust from vehicles is a substantial source of ozone precursors and particulate matter in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. By eliminating unnecessary idling of Hennepin County owned and leased vehicles, county staff play an important role in improving air quality, which supports the goals of the county's Climate Action Plan. This in turn will greatly improve the fuel efficiency of our operations and reduce fuel costs.

Follow the guidelines described in the vehicle idling procedures.

County Vehicle Assigned to Staff

The County Administrator or designee may approve the assignment of a departmental vehicle on a permanent basis to staff when the department requires the staff to take a vehicle home for authorized business reasons. However, department directors may approve staff taking county vehicles home on an incidental and temporary basis. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 471.666, the take-home vehicle policy is for staff whose primary responsibility is to protect life and property in emergency situations, or when there is a demonstrated economic benefit to the county. The minimum criteria from a take-home vehicle assignment shall be based on emergency response needs,

special equipment needs, or calculated economic benefit to the county. Personal use of the vehicle is prohibited.

Staff who reside outside of Hennepin County shall not be authorized to have a take-home vehicle unless there are compelling justification that support the intent of this policy, as determined by the County Administrator or designee. In general, a staff's commute mileage shall not exceed their business mileage.

The administration of occasional overnight vehicle use shall comply with applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules and the administrative procedures outlined in this policy.

Follow the guidelines described in the county vehicle assigned to staff procedures.

County Pool Vehicles

Fleet Services maintains a pool of vehicles to provide authorized Hennepin County staff a county vehicle when conducting Hennepin County business.

The use of a pool car reduces the number of fleet vehicles needed to meet demand and offers the following benefits to departments and drivers:

- Reduces reimbursement costs for the use of personal vehicles.
- Reduces costs to the end department or organization as "pay when you use it" is a more cost-effective option than "pay all the time."
- Allows access to a variety of vehicles (i.e., electric vehicles, sedans, SUVs, and vans).
- Increases the use of existing vehicles (improves fleet utilization).
- Offers the ability to provide vehicles on demand.

Follow the guidelines described in the Motor Pool procedures.

Telematics

All county owned vehicles and equipment will have telematics installed (under certain criteria some exceptions may apply). This technology allows global positioning data, vehicle diagnostic data, and vehicle usage data to improve vehicle diagnostics, fuel efficiency, and mileage tracking. The technology data and reporting capabilities can also be used to review and improve operator safety, monitor fuel consumption and idling time, and determine vehicle diagnostics and maintenance requirements.

Telematics may not be use routinely for monitoring staff. However, the county has the right and authority to use the data obtained from telematics devices in any manner it deems necessary including training purposes, safety, program improvement, workforce and performance management, improved vehicle security, or the use of any other data, at management discretion.

Users of county vehicles shall have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality when using such vehicles.

Staff

Staff must follow county-owned vehicle and equipment policy and all other associated policies, as appropriate.

Supervisors/Managers

Supervisors/Managers should ensure all staff are aware of policies and ensure accountability.

Departments

Director must designate a Fleet Coordinator(s) to serve as the primary contact between the user department and Fleet Services in accordance with the Fleet Coordinator Role.

Ensure all employees are aware of policies and ensure accountability.

Department Fleet Coordinator

Serve as the primary contact and liaison between the user department and Fleet Services regarding vehicle and equipment support and issues including vehicle maintenance, authorized drivers, and vehicle use, and will be responsible for overseeing the department's use of vehicles and equipment.

Area/Department with specific policy responsibilities

Human Resources, Workplace Safety

Workplace Safety is responsible for the Motor Vehicle Safety Policy which includes requirements for staff who drive county vehicles.

Workplace Safety is responsible for the county's driver permit program.

Responsibilities for Area/Department that owns the policy

Public Works Fleet Services

Manage and administer this policy.

Communicate updates and changes to Fleet Services Department Coordinators.

Provide oversight of operations and decisions regarding county vehicles and equipment.

Develop, and monitor policies, procedures and practices related to the purchase, utilization, replacement of county vehicles/equipment and take-home vehicles.

Definitions

Not applicable.

Authorities and related information

Related information

Report a compliance concern

- Compliance reporting

Authorities

- Minnesota Statutes Chapter 471.666 Personal Use of Publicly Owned Automobiles Prohibited
- IRS Regulations – Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits
- Climate Action Plan
- Automobile required policy
- Mileage and parking reimbursement policy
- Motor vehicle safety policy

Procedures

- County-owned vehicles assigned to staff procedure
- County-owned vehicles procurement and utilization procedure
- Motor pool procedure
- Vehicle idling procedure