

# **POLICY ON**

## **MOTOR VEHICLE USE**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard requirements and procedures for Town of East Hartford employees who are assigned a town-owned or leased vehicle in the course of providing Town services and conducting Town business. The policy is intended to ensure the safety and well being of Town employees, to facilitate the efficient and effective use of Town resources, to minimize the Town's liability exposure, to monitor the use of town-owned vehicles, which includes the use of electronic motor vehicle monitoring devices, and to comply with Internal Revenue Service regulations relating to Town vehicle usage. Motor Vehicle Use by the Mayor is governed by Town Ordinance and Town Charter.

### **II. General Provisions**

- All employee operators of Town vehicles must possess a valid operator's license and provide a copy of their current license to their department head on an annual basis. Individual Departments may do more frequent visual checks. Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor if their license is suspended or if there are any violations or infractions received while in possession of or while operating a Town vehicle. In the event of a suspension, vehicle use privileges will be suspended and/or permanently terminated.
- All employees and Town business travelers must wear seat belts and obey traffic laws. Parking fines and other violations are the personal liability of the operator.
- In case of an accident, the employee shall notify the nearest police department and his/her supervisor.
- Employees must comply with any preventative maintenance programs and must keep the vehicle free of litter and debris. The physical appearance of the vehicle must create a good impression. Each employee assigned a vehicle shall conduct a daily inspection to assure it is in safe running condition before operating.
- Drug and alcohol use is prohibited at all times. Improper or unsafe operation is prohibited.
- All Directors who have employees, who drive Town vehicles or personal vehicles on Town business, shall provide written documentation that they have distributed and discussed this Motor Vehicle Policy with them. A completed copy of the attached template must be sent to Human Resources for placement in each respective employee's official personnel file. Additionally, a copy should be kept at each department.

### **III. Assignment and Use**

#### **A. General Employees**

The assignment of Town vehicles shall require the approval of the employee's supervisor and Director. Vehicles used for commuting need written approval from the Mayor. The Town reserves the right to review the continuing need for any vehicle assignment.

The following criteria must be met for employee's assigned Town vehicles to have commuting privileges.

- Employees with responsibility for on-going and recurring time critical emergency responses requiring direct transportation to the site of the emergency and/or specialized equipment kept in the Town vehicle.
- Aside from providing Town services and conducting Town business, Town vehicles used for commuting may be used for de minimis personal errands during workdays only while traveling between work and home, pursuant to Internal Revenue Services (IRS) regulations. The IRS may amend these regulations from time to time.
- For employees who fall within the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, the Town will comply with the IRS regulations regarding the reporting of income. Since the only authorized non-business use is commuting and de minimis personal errands, the Town will use the commuting valuation method to report income. This method will use a \$3.00 per day for each commuting day as the amount of untaxed income reported to regulators and any other regulation requirements regarding employer provided vehicles.
- Besides "on the clock" full and part time employees and Town business travelers, there are to be no other occupants in a Town vehicle at any time. Employees are the only ones allowed to operate the vehicle.
- Exclusive assignment of a vehicle to an employee with non-commuting privileges should be justified. If that employee is on vacation, the keys should be left with the Department Director for other usage. No distinct criteria for permanent assignment are provided, however, Department Heads should use their best judgment when deciding on exclusive assignment. Employees who may use a Town vehicle under applicable terms of their collective bargaining agreement.

#### **B. Public Safety Employees**

The Police Chief, Deputy Police Chiefs, Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief have unrestricted personal use of their assigned vehicles and no restrictions as to who may be transported. Canine handlers are allowed personal use of their assigned vehicles as determined by the Police Chief. Aside from providing Town services, other vehicles used for commuting may be used for de minimis personal errands during workdays only while traveling between work and home. Public Safety vehicles are excluded from the IRS commuting regulations. Unless written approval is received by the Mayor, no other personal use of Town vehicles is allowed and no passengers are allowed other than those associated with Town business. When vehicles are responding to an emergency, absolutely no civilians shall be allowed in the vehicle.

#### **IV. Complaints**

All complaints concerning Town vehicles, drivers or passengers shall be immediately investigated by the Department Director to which the vehicle is assigned. The results of the investigation shall be reported promptly in writing to the Director of Human Resources. The report shall contain:

1. Name, address and phone number of the complaint
2. Summary of the complaint
3. Investigative findings
4. Any remedial action taken
5. Name and operator's license number of the driver.

If the complaint involves a safety issue, the report must be sent to the Risk Manager.

#### **V. Reimbursement for use on personal vehicles**

The use of privately owned vehicles in connection with official Town business during normal duty hours is authorized. Mileage reimbursement is permitted with rates subject to current IRS regulations or contract language. A mileage request form needs to be completed and submitted to Finance for review and payment. All personal vehicles used for business must have current liability insurance in force per state law and a valid insurance card must be carried.

This personal automobile policy will be primary in the case of a motor vehicle accident. The Town does have excess liability in case damage and/or awards exceed their primary policy limit.

This policy, which may be reviewed annually and updated when necessary, shall supersede any other Town policy on "Motor Vehicle Use".

**This policy will become effective October 15, 2010.**

**Replaces previous policy dated January 1, 2005**