

MISSOULA COUNTY
COUNTY VEHICLES & MOTOR POOL

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of county vehicles and the operation of the county motor pool. For purposes of this policy, “employee” includes all County employees, elected officials, and appointed members of boards, commissions, and councils. “Employee” also includes the employees of the County’s component units (organizations with significant operational and financial relationships with the County as defined by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board which currently applies to the following entities: Larchmont Golf Course, Missoula County Airport Industrial District, and Missoula Aging Services). Furthermore, while acting under the direction of the Missoula County Sheriff, reserve deputies, members of the Missoula County and Seeley Lake search and rescue units, and the sheriff’s chaplain are also considered employees for purposes of this policy.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all County departments and entities. Departments may apply additional requirements as long as they are equal to or more restrictive than these standards.

Administration

Department heads are responsible for: the implementation of the policy within their departments, employee compliance with vehicle policy, and any recordkeeping required to substantiate compliance.

Other References

County Travel Policy; Accident/Injury Reporting Policy; Inattentive Driving Policy; Smoke Free and Tobacco Free Workplace; HR Policy 215.00 On-call Time; Standard IRS Mileage Rate; IRS Publication 15-B Employer’s Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits

Policy

It is the intention of the County to ensure that adequate transportation is available to accomplish the objectives of the various County departments. “Adequate transportation” is defined as: (a) the availability of County-owned vehicles, (b) mileage reimbursement at the current IRS rate for employees using a privately-owned vehicle for County business, or (c) other arrangements as deemed appropriate by the applicable department head. Employees are encouraged to utilize the county fleet and should be aware that the County is not responsible for damage to a personally owned vehicle driven for county business.

Role of Central Services

Central Services (CS) is responsible for the acquisition, maintenance, repair, and disposal of fleet vehicles, taking reservations for vehicle use, and billing departments for use of fleet vehicles. Vehicle acquisition decisions will include safety, fuel efficiency, and economy in the selection criteria. CS may arrange with departments for the periodic rotation of vehicles as they age or user needs change.

CS will take reservations for pool vehicles on a first come, first serve basis. Users are responsible for entering odometer information on trip logs and returning vehicles cleaned and fully fueled.

CS staff will check employees' driver's licenses before handing out vehicle keys to ensure that the employee has a current driver's license.

CS will bill mileage quarterly. Actual odometer readings for vehicles assigned to specific individuals or departments must be reported to CS on a timely basis—reporting of estimated readings is not allowable. Users and departments will be charged the current IRS rate for miles driven.

CS is responsible for routine maintenance and repair of fleet vehicles, except those permanently assigned to individuals. Repair work on such assigned vehicles must obtain pre-approval from CS. The cost of repairs, maintenance, fuel, and debt service will be charged to CS for the life of the vehicle unless special circumstances argue otherwise.

General Policies

The following policies govern the use of Missoula County vehicles and are applicable to all users:

- County vehicles shall be used only for authorized, official County business. Personal use of County owned vehicles is expressly prohibited, except for authorized commuting (see below) and de minimus personal use. De minimus personal use may include stopping for lunch between business stops or stopping for a personal errand on an authorized trip. Such a stop must be within two miles of the route taken for business purposes. De minimus personal use may also include a County vehicle being taken to an employee's residence at the end of a work day for travel that will commence before 8:00 a.m. the next work day; or parked at an employee's residence at the conclusion of travel that ends after 5:00 p.m. for return to the County the next business day. This only qualifies as de minimus use if it occurs once a month or less.
- County vehicles shall be operated with priority given to safety, cost effectiveness, and fuel conservation.
- Operators and all passengers shall obey the Montana motor vehicle code, including the Montana Seatbelt Use Act and the Missoula County Inattentive Driving Policy.

- Only an employee, as defined above, who has a valid state driver's license may operate a County vehicle. If a personal vehicle is used, the driver must carry vehicle liability insurance as required in 61-6-103, MCA.
- Only employees, as defined above, or non-employees on legitimate County business may be passengers in a County vehicle. Personal passengers, including pets, are not allowed in County vehicles.
- Per Missoula County Policy No. 2013-01, smoking is not permitted in County vehicles.

The following policies restrict the use of Missoula County vehicles. County vehicles shall not be used to commute to and from an employee's place of residence unless:

- The County vehicle qualifies as a working condition benefit vehicle as defined in IRS Publication 15-B. The County recognizes that some employees are responsible for responding to emergency situations related to public safety, public health, or the protection of property on a 24/7 basis. These employees have special training and the vehicles they drive are specially modified to suit the needs of the job.
- Employees assigned non-emergency on-call duties on a rotational basis, as defined in HR Policy 215.00, shall only take a County vehicle home on those days that the employee is assigned on-call duty. This is considered an employee fringe benefit, as defined in IRS Publication 15-B, and is subject to tax (see below).
 - Departments must ensure that records are available to show that on-call employee does, in fact, get called back to work on more than an occasional or infrequent basis.
- The employee's job description includes duties of a nature which involves travel directly from home to a location other than the regularly assigned workplace, though departments should schedule work to keep these instances to a minimum. This is considered an employee fringe benefit, as defined in IRS Publication 15-B, and is subject to tax (see below).
- Attendance at night meetings is required. In such cases, the County vehicle shall only be taken home on the day the employee is assigned to attend the night meeting. This is considered an employee fringe benefit, as defined in IRS Publication 15-B, and is subject to tax (see below).

The use of a County vehicle to commute to an employee's place of residence, except for de minimus use or emergency on-call use, is a taxable fringe benefit. The employee must keep a log of commuting trips and turn the log into payroll along with their timesheet. A flat rate of \$3.00 per round trip commute will be added to the employee's gross income and withholding made accordingly.

Employees using a personally owned vehicle for County business will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate. Documentation must accompany a claim for reimbursement which provides details of miles driven, destination, and purpose of the trip.

