

CITY OF RICHARDSON INTERDEPARTMENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

CITY VEHICLE USE AND CAR ALLOWANCES

POLICY

It is the policy of the City of Richardson to provide City vehicles for employee use in certain circumstances and situations, and to provide car allowances to other employees who are required to use their personal vehicles in the conduct of City business. The City desires to ensure consistency concerning the use of “take home” City vehicles. The City also desires to establish consistent guidelines for those employees who receive car allowances.

Decisions regarding the use of City vehicles which are not explicitly stated herein will be left to the discretion of the appropriate Department Head, as authorized by the City Manager. Department Heads are authorized to administer, provide guidance on, and assure compliance with the features of this policy.

PROCEDURES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to establish consistent procedures for using City of Richardson vehicles, to establish conditions for taking City vehicles to an employee’s residence, and to establish procedures applicable to City employees who receive car allowances.

II. USE OF CITY VEHICLES

City of Richardson employees who use City vehicles will adhere to good stewardship practices and common sense pertaining to responsible use of the vehicles. This includes, but may not be limited to:

- maintaining appropriate cleanliness of the vehicle;
- maintaining proper oversight of operational matters; and
- notifying the immediate supervisor/manager in the event of vehicle damage, a need for repairs, and/or any incident involving a complaint or a condition which is believed by the employee to reasonably result in a complaint.

Employees who use City vehicles must adhere to the following instructions:

- A. All City vehicles, and personal vehicles used for the conduct of City business, must be operated in the manner prescribed in applicable State laws and City ordinances.
- B. No employee shall operate any City vehicle, or a personal vehicle under his/her control for the conduct of City business, in a hazardous, unlawful, or reckless manner.
- C. Employees are prohibited from transporting unauthorized persons in any City vehicle without the permission of the immediate supervisor.
- D. No employee shall alter, repair, or in any way change, add to, or remove, any parts or accessories of any City vehicle unless proper permission is obtained prior to such action.

- E. The use of a City vehicle to conduct personal business is prohibited other than for incidental uses, such as stopping at a restaurant or convenience store. However, in no case shall a City vehicle be used in the conduct of purchasing, transporting, or consumption of alcohol.

- F. The operator of a City vehicle shall remain constantly aware of the public perception of, and expectation of, driver courtesy from all drivers of City vehicles. All drivers of City vehicles are expected to maintain courteous driving habits, including but not limited to:
 - 1. courteous yielding to other vehicles when appropriate;
 - 2. prudent use of the vehicle's horn; and
 - 3. patient and defensive driving techniques.

- G. An employee operating a City vehicle shall notify his/her supervisor in the event of receiving a traffic citation; however, the City is not responsible for the payment or defense of such a citation. The severity of a citation and/or the frequency of receiving citations may result in disqualifying an employee from operating City vehicles; this may result in loss of employment with the City if driving is an essential function of the employee's job.

- H. The operator of a City vehicle shall take the following actions when involved in an accident:
 - 1. Stop immediately.
 - 2. Notify police immediately through radio dispatch or by telephone.
 - 3. Make no admission of fault or negligence to anyone. Be courteous, but do not discuss the accident, except with the police officer, and do not sign any statement or releases.
 - 4. Exchange name, address, insurance information, and drivers license numbers with drivers of other vehicles involved.
 - 5. If on a controlled access highway, remove the vehicle from the roadway (if possible). Otherwise, unless required for safety reasons, do not move the vehicle involved until instructed to do so by a police officer.
 - 6. **Immediately** notify your immediate supervisor or Department Head. File an accident report immediately upon return to your work place.

III. USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES AND SAFE DRIVING

All City employees are expected to drive with safety as the first consideration. This includes driving safely while operating cellular telephones, electronic paging devices, and/or other wireless personal communications devices. Recommendations for safe handling of vehicle-based calling from the wireless communications industry include the following:

- A. When driving, use voice-activated dialing, or have frequently called numbers preprogrammed into the device, or consider pulling off the road to dial (or ask a passenger to dial).

- B. Do not use the wireless communications device at all if there are hazardous road or traffic conditions.

- C. Avoid multiple tasks when driving, such as trying to take notes while you are using a wireless communications device.

Employees are responsible for, and will be held accountable for, safe driving at all times.

IV. VEHICLE IDLING/OZONE MANAGMENT

City employees who use City vehicles or personal vehicles for the conduct of City business will adhere to the following guidelines with regards to vehicle idling. Idling is the continuous operation of a vehicle's engine when the transmission is not engaged or the vehicle is in park. Engine idling adds to the problem of creating ground level ozone and engine emissions and fueling are major sources of ground level ozone.

Restrictions on idling are as follows:

- A. No engine idling time (other than reasonable vehicle warm-up) is permitted.
- B. When the driver exits the vehicle, the engine will be turned off.
- C. Vehicles will not be left unattended while the engine is running.
- D. Vehicles will not be left running to maintain cab temperature (air conditioning or heating).
- E. All service delivery vehicles will have the engines turned off while making pickups and deliveries.
- F. Vehicles waiting to be loaded or unloaded will have the engines turned off if the idling time will exceed 5 minutes.
- G. Restrain from fueling vehicles and equipment between the hours of 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM from March to September except in cases of emergency. Vehicle and equipment fueling should be performed in the afternoon or evening hours.

The vehicles and operating conditions noted below are exempt from the idling time restrictions listed above.

- A. Clearly marked police, fire and emergency response vehicles. However, personnel operating these vehicles are encouraged to keep idle time to a minimum.
- B. Unmarked vehicles used by law enforcement officers, if the use is officially authorized.
- C. Other vehicles equipped with light bars, strobes and/or directional lighting when extended operation of the lighting is considered necessary for work crew and/or public safety when such equipment is in use.
- D. During operation of power take offs (PTO's) on vehicles, which requires engine operation.
- E. During vehicle maintenance for defect verification, troubleshooting and repair actions.
- F. Vehicles and equipment operating at the Transfer Station/Service Center that have an extended manufacturer's recommended warm-up and cool down time.

V. TAKING CITY VEHICLES TO AN EMPLOYEE'S RESIDENCE

Employees who use City vehicles will be assigned by the appropriate supervisor/manager/director to take them to the employee's residence as needed for City business reasons. Such a need may exist when an employee is officially on call or on standby duty. Occasional situations may arise, involving special projects or assignments, which may also

necessitate an employee taking a City vehicle to his/her residence; these situations must also be authorized by the appropriate supervisor. Employees who are authorized to take City vehicles to their residences must adhere to the following:

- A. All precautions shall be taken to ensure the safety and security of City vehicles. This includes, but is not limited to: locking all doors and/or compartments; properly parking vehicles in accordance with applicable laws and ordinances.
- B. Avoid situations that would give rise to a legitimate complaint from neighbors, such as blocking streets, driveways, etc.
- C. In no case shall a person other than the City employee be allowed to operate or drive the City vehicle.

VI. CAR ALLOWANCES

All employees who receive a car allowance from the City will maintain personal automobile insurance as required by the State of Texas.

City employees who receive a car allowance will not use a City vehicle in lieu of their personal vehicles unless one of the following conditions exists:

- A. The employee's personal vehicle is temporarily out of service due to mechanical reasons; or
- B. The employee is traveling to a work site with another employee who would normally drive a City vehicle to that site; or
- C. Three (3) or more City employees are traveling together to the same location or work site and the vehicle(s) of the employee(s) receiving a car allowance cannot accommodate the total number of passengers.

An employee using a City vehicle under the preceding conditions is not required to reimburse the City a portion of his/her car allowance IF the City vehicle is utilized for forty-eight (48) hours or less.

However, an employee using a City vehicle longer than forty-eight (48) hours must reimburse the City for each subsequent day the City vehicle is driven to the employee's residence, using the following procedures:

- A. The employee will calculate the amount of reimbursement by dividing their monthly car allowance by thirty (30), and then multiplying the result by the number of nights the City vehicle was taken to the employee's residence.
- B. The employee will prepare a memo to the Director of Finance, instructing Accounting to deduct the calculated reimbursement amount from the next car allowance payment. A copy of this memo shall also be sent to the employee's Department Head.

An employee who receives a car allowance shall **not receive a mileage reimbursement except when traveling over sixty (60) miles from his/her assigned work site** (sixty (60) miles one way; 120 miles round-trip). For travel over sixty (60) mile (one way) from his/her assigned work site, an employee who receives a car allowance is entitled to the mileage reimbursement which is communicated and periodically updated by the Finance department, based on Internal Revenue Service bulletins. (Mileage is calculated from the assigned work site to destination(s) and back to the assigned work site.)

VII. IRS REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

Car allowances are reported to the IRS as taxable income on W-2 Statements. The Internal Revenue Code allows a tax deduction for amounts attributable to business miles driven. In order to take this deduction from the W-2 Statement, an employee must submit to Accounting a signed statement of the number of miles driven for business (see attachment). **Amounts deducted from taxable income will also be deducted from TMRS and FICA (Social Security) wages.**

As an alternative, an employee may seek to deduct the cost of business miles driven as an itemized deduction on his/her personal income tax return (using IRS Form 2106, Employee Business Expense). Questions about individual personal income tax deductions should be referred to personal tax accountants or to the IRS, as federal tax law is subject to change.

Original Signed by Dan Johnson

7/28/2015

Dan Johnson
City Manager

Date

Attachment 1 – Certification of Business Miles Driven