

City Vehicle/Car Allowance Policy

The following Policy shall apply to all employees of the Columbus Consolidated Government who are assigned a city-owned vehicle or who receive a car allowance to compensate them for providing their own transportation while on city business. This Policy shall become effective as of **August 8, 2023**. The City Council Car Policy Committee shall periodically, and at least annually, review the policy, and make recommendations for changes to the full City Council.

1. Public Safety employees who are assigned a city-owned automobile may drive the vehicle to and from work to his or her private residence if the residence is located in Muscogee, Harris, Talbot or Chattahoochee counties, Georgia **or in Alabama within 50 miles of City Hall, Columbus, Georgia**
2. General Government employees who are assigned city-owned vehicles which may require a response to an emergency situation (i.e. loss of internet connection at individual fire stations, etc.) during the employee's off duty hours may drive the vehicle to and from work to his or her private residence if the residence is located in Muscogee, Harris, Talbot or Chattahoochee counties.
3. City-owned vehicles may not be driven to any residences located in Alabama except under the following conditions:
 - a. If the state or federal agency which oversees a local agency of the Columbus Consolidated Government requires a specific response time in the event of incidents at or involving the local agency, the vehicle may be driven to a residence in Russell County or Lee County, Alabama upon approval by the applicable Department Head or Elected Official.
 - b. Written notification to the Director of Public Safety shall be required when assigning a vehicle for this purpose.

4. The above-listed policies do not apply to Public Safety officers who, in the active performance of duties, are involved in travel across state lines, to include investigations, police pursuits, support of mutual aid agreements, and traffic enforcement. Such travel is permitted with proper notification to the Public Safety agency, which can be accomplished through the 911 Center.

5. In the event a Public Safety officer must travel out of the state of Georgia on official business (i. e. to transport a prisoner or to interview a witness), such travel may be accomplished in a city-owned vehicle upon written notification to the head of the **Public Safety department**.

6. All employees who are issued city-owned vehicles are responsible for the periodic maintenance and upkeep of the vehicle. In the event an employee is found to be negligent in maintaining a vehicle, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

7. The pre-operational checklist provided with each city-owned vehicle shall be completed by every driver each day a vehicle is driven on city business. Failure to complete the checklist may result in discipline of the employee up to and including denial of future use of city vehicles. It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure the compliance with this policy.

8. Employees within general government departments that are on call for a specific time period during each month may be authorized to take the vehicle home only during the time they are on call (i.e. Engineering and Risk Management Investigators}. This discretionary approval must be obtained from the City Manager in advance except in an emergency. In case of an emergency or special circumstance, a department head may authorize an employee to temporarily retain a vehicle overnight and/or weekends under certain conditions without prior approval of the City Manager. In the event of an emergency authorization, the City Manager shall be notified no later than the next business day.

Emergency work is defined as necessary work requiring immediate attention for the protection of persons or property and specifically requiring the presence of the

employee in a supervisory and/or technical capacity to reduce the emergency.

9. In all cases where written notification of a supervisor is required by this policy, a copy of such notification shall be provided to and maintained by the City Manager in his/her official capacity as the custodian of city property.
10. Employees who drive a city-owned vehicle shall participate in an initial training course as provided by the employee's department or agency, **which shall include the rules and regulations of driving a city-owned vehicle while off-duty across state lines.** If the department or agency does not offer an annual driver refresher course, the employee shall participate in the course provided by the city. **which shall include the rules and regulations of driving a city-owned vehicle while off-duty across state lines.** Any employee involved in an at-fault accident shall participate in the next available remedial driver course as provided by the city. Failure to participate shall result in loss of driving privileges.
11. In instances where an employee regularly requires transportation to complete assigned duties and it is determined that it is not an efficient use of a City-owned vehicle to issue a City car to that employee, at the time of employment or at the request of the employee or supervisor, a determination shall be made regarding the payment of a car allowance or payment of mileage. The initial determination shall be made by the department head with the final determination made by the Mayor or City Manager as appropriate. After August 1, 2020, the amount of a car allowance shall be determined each year by position during the Budget Cycle and approved by the City Council.