



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice: <b>Section 6.10</b>	Issue Date: New <u>  X  </u> Revised <u>      </u> Supersedes Policy Dated:
Title: <b>Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance</b>	Approved By Effingham County Board of Commissioners Initials and Date

#### **6.10 - Vehicle Use, Care, Maintenance, and GPS**

##### **A. STANDARD**

***Sheriff's Office Policy Supersession: The Effingham County Sheriff's Office is authorized to adopt and implement its own vehicle use, care, and maintenance policy. In cases where the Sheriff's Office has established a policy that differs from this document, the Sheriff's Office policy shall take precedence for its personnel and operations.***

The Effingham County Board of Commissioners is committed to establishing procedures that promote vehicle usage efficiently and economically, provide consistent and understandable guidelines related to staff vehicle assignments, and appropriately maintain county-owned resources.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including disciplinary write-up, revocation of vehicle driving permissions from the County Manager, or termination. The Effingham County Board of Commissioners does not tolerate any form of retaliation against an employee who brings forth a good faith concern or asks a clarifying question.

This policy shall apply to any and all contractors, FT/PT employees, and Elected Officials who use or operate a county-owned, leased, or rented vehicle(s).

##### **B. Guidelines**

The assignment of vehicles used to conduct County business will fall into one of the three (3) following categories. No employee may use more than one category (i.e., An employee may not receive a Take-Home Vehicle and use a Daily or Pool Vehicle). When a conflict or question arises as to which category is appropriate, the decision of the County Manager will be final.



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

1. **Take-Home Vehicle Assignment** - Positions approved in writing by the County Manager are eligible for assigned take-home vehicles. Take-home vehicles may only be used for commuting and County-related business unless authorized for additional personal use. Employees living outside the county must reside within 35 miles of the County Government Center unless the County Manager grants an exception.
2. **Daily Vehicle Assignment** - Vehicles assigned for daily use by employees to perform County business. These vehicles may not be used for commuting or personal purposes.
3. **Pool Vehicle** - County-owned vehicles that are not assigned to a specific employee but are available for use on an as-needed basis for official County business. These vehicles are intended to provide transportation when a department does not have a permanently assigned fleet vehicle or when additional vehicles are required to support operational needs.

#### **a. Authorized Use:**

- i. Pool vehicles may only be used for official County business and must be reserved in advance per the procedures outlined in the Pool Vehicle Form.
- ii. Vehicles are available to employees during normal business hours unless prior authorization is obtained for extended or after-hours use.

#### **b. Reservation and Checkout:**

- i. Employees must request and check out a pool vehicle by following the reservation process outlined in the Pool Vehicle Form.
- ii. All pool vehicle checkouts must be documented, including the date, time, purpose of use, and expected return time and any other required details specified in the Pool Vehicle Form.
- iii. Employees requiring a County vehicle for overnight travel must submit a reservation request at least one (1) week in advance to ensure availability. This must also be reflected on the Travel Information section of the Travel Request form and Pool Vehicle Form.

## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

- iv. For short-term or last-minute travel needs, vehicle assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability. Departments should plan accordingly to avoid disruptions in travel arrangements.

#### **c. Return and Condition Requirements:**

- i. Vehicles must be returned at or above 1/2 tank of fuel or more using the assigned WEX fuel card.
- ii. Employees are responsible for ensuring the vehicle is clean and free of personal items and trash after use.
- iii. Any mechanical issues, damage, or safety concerns must be reported immediately upon return to the Fleet Manager as well as reported in the Pool Vehicle Form.

#### **d. Restrictions:**

- i. Pool vehicles may not be taken home overnight unless approved by the County Manager or designee.
- ii. Unauthorized passengers, including family members and non-business-related individuals, are strictly prohibited.
- iii. Smoking, eating, and the use of alcohol or controlled substances are strictly prohibited in pool vehicles.

**Accountability:** Failure to comply with the Pool Vehicle policy, including improper use or failure to report damages, may result in disciplinary action, revocation of vehicle use privileges, or other corrective measures as determined by the County Manager.

### **C. Definitions**

1. **Assigned vehicle** – referred to in this policy as a County Vehicle assigned primarily to a department or county employee for official County business, but not for employee commuting to and from the employee's home and work site.
2. **Assigned Take-Home Vehicle** – referred to in this policy as a County Vehicle used by a County employee for County official business and commuting between the employee's home and work site. This must be approved in writing by the department head and County Manager.



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

3. **Business Need** – referred to in this policy as the need of a County employee to use a County vehicle for official County business, as opposed to personal use of a County vehicle, including after-business hours use, weekend use, and non-County business use during work hours. This excludes explicit assignment of vehicles based on an employee's rank, management status, or other category that does not reflect vehicle use based on the employee's day-to-day duties. Business use is further defined as vehicle use required to perform functions necessary for the County department to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
4. **County**- referred to in this policy as Effingham County.
5. **County Departments** – referred to in this policy as all County agencies, departments, and offices that utilize County vehicles at any time.
6. **County Drivers** – referred to in this policy to include all County staff and Elected Officials, whether full-time, part-time, extra help, paid or unpaid interns, contractors, or volunteers that drive County vehicles or their private vehicles to conduct official County business.
7. **County Vehicles** – referred to in this policy as all County-owned or controlled motor vehicles and motorized equipment.
8. **GPS Tracking** - Used to monitor County vehicle operations and ensure safety and efficiency.
9. **Official business** – referred to in this policy to include vehicle travel to directly perform the department's business needs, including employee work assignments, parts/materials acquisition, meetings, training, authorized conferences, or business-related events. County vehicles shall not be used for private or personal business unless otherwise indicated by the policy or with the department head's and County Manager's written approval.
10. **Pool Vehicle** – A County-owned vehicle that is not assigned to a specific employee but is available for shared use by authorized personnel on an as-needed basis for official County business.

#### **D. Operations, Maintenance, Repair and Fueling**



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 6.10	Title: Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance
---------------------------------------	---

#### 1. General Guidelines

County vehicles are distinctly marked with the Effingham County logo, and how they are operated directly reflects the county's public image. County vehicles are to be used as necessary to conduct the county's business and operations. Employees shall not operate County vehicles for pleasure travel or to conduct private business. However, it is recognized that a minimum amount of personal use of a County vehicle may be required for those employees who are assigned a take-home vehicle. At the same time, they commute to and from work in the County vehicle and conduct their daily work in or from a County vehicle. The necessity of a minimal amount of personal use is also recognized when employees are using a county vehicle for authorized travel outside of Effingham County. In such cases, brief stops while en route to or from work or authorized business travel to legitimate business sites such as banks, grocery stores, convenience stores, or restaurants for meals are permitted. Any visits to business establishments that may lend discredit to the county are prohibited.

#### 2. Department Head Requirements:

- Ensure that County employees are trained and reminded that operating a County vehicle is neither the employee's right nor privilege; instead, it is a trust conferred to the employee to facilitate the necessary performance of departmental business needs that directly benefit the county;
- Determine, consistent with this policy, whether or not it is appropriate for an employee to operate a County vehicle;
- Establish departmental procedures to ensure vehicles are operated in a safe and serviceable condition, e.g., drivers have reviewed this policy, are authorized to drive and licensed, vehicle maintenance is completed and up to date, and vehicles are clean and ready to use;
- Ensure all GPS tracking units are installed securely in vehicles and routinely monitor reports from GPS tracking.

#### 3. County Driver Requirements



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

- a. Remember that their actions represent the professionalism and character of all County employees to the citizens of the county and ensure their use of a County vehicle always leads to a positive perception by our citizens;
- b. Be subject to applicable Local, State, and Federal laws and be aware of new and existing regulations;
- c. Operate vehicles according to the official use of vehicles section outlined in this policy, drive defensively, anticipate emergency situations, follow the rules of the road, and make every reasonable effort to avoid accidents;
- d. Know the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the County vehicle the employee is driving, and promptly report any suspected equipment malfunctions, damage, or safety condition to his/her supervisor, who will schedule follow-up repairs and ensure that vehicles are swiftly scheduled for preventive maintenance and repair work;
- e. Not transport family members or other passengers not engaged in County official business or required to be conveyed in the performance of duty;
- f. Ensure that seat belts are to be worn by all occupants of a County vehicle while it is in operation;
- g. Keep vehicles clean and free of litter and debris;
- h. Ensure that, absent emergency conditions, vehicles never have less than ½ tank of fuel in the event they are needed to assist in disaster response;
- i. Be responsible for any personal property stored or left in a County vehicle or private vehicle being driven on County business, as the county assumes no such responsibility;
- j. Ensure that no one smokes in a County vehicle;
- k. Not eat or drink while operating the vehicle;
- l. Taking the most direct route to, from, or between job assignments;
- m. Ensuring tires are adequately inflated;
- n. Not using quick acceleration or rapid braking;





## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

- o. Not be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to a County-owned vehicle and allow inspection/search of a County-owned vehicle by their supervisor/department;
- p. Follow the safety, accident prevention, and accident/loss/damage reporting requirements, including the prompt reporting of any vehicle service code notifications to the Fleet Manager or designated personnel for further evaluation and necessary maintenance.
- q. Immediately notify their supervisor/department of receiving any moving violation and/or parking citations while driving a County vehicle.

#### **4. Official Use of Vehicles**

- a. Unless otherwise stipulated below, county vehicles are only to be used for official county business.
- b. Generally, the determination as to whether a particular use is for official business is a matter of administrative discretion of the department head. In making determinations, department heads shall consider all pertinent factors including, but not limited to, whether the transportation is:
- c. Essential to the successful completion of a County business need, function, activity, or operation; and
- d. Consistent with the purpose for which the motor vehicle was acquired.
- e. Driving vehicles to commercial establishments for meals or breaks is prohibited unless:
  - i. The County driver has an approved travel authorization for out-of-county travel, and the department subsequently approves the reasonable and necessary mileage uses;
  - ii. The County driver is on official business in the field;

#### **5. Assigned Take-Home Vehicles**

- a. Only positions approved in writing by the County Manager shall be eligible for assigned take-home vehicles. The department head and Human Resources department will keep the written authorization on file. It shall



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

notate if the approval is for "commuting only" or "commuting and personal use."

- b. County take-home vehicles may be assigned to individuals who reside within the county. For those living outside the county, the commute must not be more than thirty-five (35) miles from the County Government Center, 804 S. Laurel St., Springfield.
- c. Assigned take-home vehicles are for the use of County employees only. Non-county employee passengers other than County clients are strictly prohibited.
- d. General Roles for Take-Home Vehicles: The following roles typically qualify for assigned take-home vehicles:
  - i. First Responders (e.g., Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, Coroner)
  - ii. Effingham County Sheriff's Office Staff/Deputies per their own Policy
  - iii. On-call Maintenance Personnel for critical infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, road repairs)
  - iv. Department Heads with documented 24/7 availability requirements.
- e. Elected Officials are not eligible for assigned take-home vehicles under this policy. Elected Officials may only use vehicles during official business hours and for county-related business as approved by the County Manager.
- f. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the County Manager, all assigned take-home vehicles may not be used for non-business-related purposes other than commuting.
- g. Temporary assignment of a take-home vehicle may be authorized by the County Manager when an emergency exists. "Emergency" means immediate, unforeseeable, and temporary circumstances where there is a need specific to the performance of a County mission. An emergency





## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

may occur where there is a significant disruption of available means of transportation to or from a work site, an essential service must be provided, and there is no other way to transport those employees. All temporary assignments must be reported to the County Manager with start and projected end dates.

- h. Exceptions to Temporary Assigned Take-Home Vehicles include instances wherein departments utilize common sense and practical assignment of vehicles for employees traveling to out-of-county meetings, in such cases where there is greater efficiency by allowing vehicles to be taken home the evening preceding the business meeting and retain the evening following the business meeting. In these cases, the Travel Authorization Form shall be completed to reflect the temporary assignment and approved by the County Manager.

#### **6. On-Call County Employees**

- 6. County vehicles to be used by on-call employees may be assigned as take-home vehicles and are individually approved by the County Manager or designee based on the nature of the on-call assignment.

#### **7. Business Use of Private Vehicles**

- a. Department Heads or their designee may authorize using private vehicles on County business when a fleet vehicle is not available or practical.
- b. Employees who utilize private vehicles to transact County business may apply for reimbursement for mileage at the rate established by the IRS.
- c. These reimbursement claims must be submitted onto the Effingham County Mileage Reimbursement form and approved by the Department Head before being submitted to the Effingham County Finance Department for processing.
- d. Should an employee drive his/her own personal vehicle during County business, he/she will assume all liability for property damage to his/her personal vehicle that occurs in the normal course of use and shall waive any claims against the county as a result of any such property damage.



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

Employees must maintain automobile liability insurance of at least the minimum limits required by state law. Since the county does not accept liability for an employee's vehicle, it is always in the employee's best interest to use a County vehicle if at all possible.

#### 8. Vehicle Maintenance

- a. Department Heads are responsible for the proper maintenance and care of the vehicles assigned to their department, including but not limited to the following:
- b. Oil changes every 5,000 miles or as required by the Enterprise Fleet Program
- c. Keep the tires inflated to the proper PSI rating
- d. Frequently inspect belts and hoses for cracks, leaks, loose fittings, and oil levels.
- e. Neglect, intentional misuse, or intentional disregard of the maintenance schedule of a County vehicle may result in disciplinary action.
- f. It is your responsibility to have all scheduled maintenance performed on your County vehicle at the designated intervals to ensure maximum vehicle performance for safety, operating efficiency, and extended life of the vehicle.
- g. For major repairs, including towing and car rental, please call Enterprise National Service Department at 800-325-8838. They will handle repairs and direct you accordingly. You must not act independently of the scheduled and Enterprise-managed maintenance programs. Any personal expenses incurred from doing so will be reviewed and may not be reimbursed. Additionally, employees must report any vehicle service code notifications to the Fleet Manager promptly to ensure timely diagnostics and necessary repairs. Any maintenance program questions should be referred to the Effingham County Fleet Manager.

## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

- h. Employees are responsible for safeguarding County vehicle keys. In the event that keys are lost or stolen, the employee must immediately report the incident to their Department Head and the Fleet Manager. Depending on the circumstances, replacement costs and any necessary security measures (such as rekeying the vehicle) may be the responsibility of the employee's department. Failure to report lost or stolen keys in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action.

#### 9. WEX Fuel Cards

Wex fuel cards are assigned to specific vehicles and shall only be used for those vehicles. The fleet manager assigns numbers that need to be requested by the department head.

- PIN Security:** Employees must use only their assigned WEX PIN when fueling a County vehicle. The use of another employee's PIN is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- Odometer Accuracy:** Employees are required to enter an accurate odometer reading at the fuel pump when using a WEX fuel card. Failure to input the correct mileage may result in administrative review and corrective action.

#### E. GPS Tracking for County Vehicles

##### 1. Statement of Purpose and Overview:

This policy aims to establish criteria for the maintenance and use of all County vehicles equipped with GPS monitoring devices. GPS tracking is a valuable tool to promote safer driving habits and alleviate risks associated with using County vehicles. In addition, it will be used to manage County vehicles more efficiently and cost-effectively while fostering the safe operation of County vehicles.

##### 2. Operational Guidelines under GPS Tracking



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice	Title:
Section 6.10	Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance

Effingham County employees operate county-owned vehicles on behalf of the county and drive hundreds of miles every year. Effingham County's commitment to highway safety, employee welfare, and the general public's well-being are the driving factors for utilizing GPS tracking.

GPS units in County vehicles will monitor the following:

- a. Speed of travel
- b. Time of arrival
- c. Length of stop
- d. Time vehicle is spent idling
- e. Location of the vehicle at every stop
- f. Seat Belt Use
- g. Vehicle Mileage
- h. Acceleration and Deceleration
- i. Rapid starts or hard braking
- j. Erratic driving
- k. Etc.

All employees who drive County vehicles are expected to comply with all governmental statutes and regulations related to the operation of motor vehicles and all County vehicle policies. GPS tracking devices will enable the county to monitor employee compliance. The department head shall review driving habits, patterns, and usage.

### **3. Device Tampering**

The Fleet Manager is responsible for assigning GPS units to the County Vehicles. They are to be installed by the Fleet Manager or their designee. Any tampering or attempts to remove or turn off the equipment is prohibited. Any such actions will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees must report any malfunction of the GPS tracking devices immediately to their supervisor and/or the Fleet Manager.



EFFINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Human Resources Standards of Practice

Standards of Practice Section 6.10	Title: Vehicle Use, Care and Maintenance
---------------------------------------	---

***The County Manager may authorize certain vehicles to operate without GPS units installed when deemed necessary for operational security, such as investigative units.***

DRAFT