

# City of Pahokee

## Vehicle Take Home Procedures

### I. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidelines for the assignment, operation and maintenance of City vehicles, and reporting vehicular collisions and incidents.

### II. **Statement:**

A City-owned vehicle is a noticeable agent of the City of Pahokee and therefore, its appearance and condition must always reflect favorably upon the City.

All personnel assigned vehicles shall exercise good judgement while operating vehicles and shall not drive or park in a manner to cause unfavorable comments or discredit the City. All traffic laws and regulations shall be obeyed.

Use of a City vehicle is a privilege, not an automatic fringe benefit or employment right. It is the driver's responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and to drive defensively to prevent injuries and property damage.

Vehicle assignments are reviewed yearly and are subject to change at any time at the City Manager's sole discretion.

Employees may be ineligible to be assigned City vehicles if they have been involved in two (2) or more preventable collisions in City vehicles within a twelve (12) month period. If employees are suspended from duty or are on light duty status they may also be prevented from driving a City vehicle. In addition to vehicular collisions, the City Manager may also consider the number of other traffic citations or other moving violations of the employee.

Any assigned vehicle shall be left at the city while an employee is on vacation or sick leave.

### III. **Assignment of Vehicles:**

#### A. **Department Assignments**

The City Manager will determine the number of vehicles necessary for each department and conduct an annual review of vehicle requirements to determine the appropriate vehicle inventory.

#### B. **Individual Vehicle Assignment (Not Take Home)**

City employees requesting assigned full-time vehicles must demonstrate that they meet the following:

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1. The job assignments and tasks requires employees to spend at least fifty percent (50%) of on-duty time in the field; and,
2. Assignments requires immediate response to job-related situations while on duty; and,
3. The City Manager agrees with the identified need and has budgeted for the expense.
4. Employee must keep a **Vehicle Use Log** indicating all vehicle use, available for review at any time.

### **C. Take-Home (Twenty-four Hour) Assignments**

There are positions in which the employee's duties and responsibilities require the use of a vehicle on a twenty-four-hour basis. The City Manager has the authority to determine which employees will be issued a take home vehicle. Employees with take-home vehicles shall secure their vehicles to minimize exposure to vandalism or other damage (remove keys from the ignition, close all windows, secure all exposed equipment and compartments and lock all doors).

Any employee assigned a city vehicle on a 24-hour basis is ineligible for a car allowance.

The City Manager shall have the sole authority to assign, deny, suspend, or remove any employee from the City "take-home" vehicle program.

Some considerations for issuing a twenty-four-hour vehicle are:

1. Meet all the criteria under the previous section (individual vehicle assignment) for full-time on-duty vehicle use;
2. Job classification or position is subject to "after-hours" call-outs on short notice requiring a response. The frequency of after-hours response for work requirements should be sufficient to indicate a realistic need for the vehicle on an ongoing basis. This frequency should average no less than four (4) times per month over a calendar year.

Take-home vehicles may only be used for personal use with written authorization from the City Manager. Such authorization will be filed in the employee's personnel folder.

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### **D. Temporary Vehicle Use**

If employees do not meet the minimum requirements for full-time vehicle assignments, they may be assigned shared vehicles or have access to a pool vehicle for the time during which City-business related travel is needed.

If "shared vehicles" or pool cars are not available, employees may elect to use their personal vehicles and submit requests for mileage reimbursement to the division or department directors.

Employees who use their personal vehicle for City business must provide evidence of insurance, in amounts required by the State of Florida, to the Risk Manager for approval.

### **IV. Operation of Vehicles:**

City vehicles are to be operated in a safe, responsible, and courteous manner at all times. The following shall be adhered to:

1. Employees shall not operate City vehicles or heavy equipment after the consumption of any amount of alcoholic beverages and/or use of illegal or controlled substances;
2. Employees shall not operate City vehicles when their ability to do so safely has been impaired by illness, fatigue, injury, or prescription medication;
3. Employees shall not carry any alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance in their assigned City vehicles;
4. City vehicles and heavy equipment shall not be left running while unattended;
5. Employees shall remove keys from the ignition, close all windows, secure all exposed equipment and compartments and lock all doors while City vehicles are unattended; and
6. City vehicles and/or heavy equipment shall be operated in a manner that ensures maximum life expectancy of the vehicle/heavy equipment.

### **V. Drivers Other Than City Employees**

Only City employees are authorized to drive or operate City vehicles.

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### A. Passenger Restrictions While Operating City Vehicles

City vehicles may be used to transport other City employees as passengers if both employees are on official City business. Non-City employees may be transported if involved in furtherance of official City business, and permission has been granted in advance by the City Manager.

City employees, who have twenty-four hour assigned vehicles, shall not transport non-city employees in assigned vehicles without written authorization by the City Manager.

### B. Use of Vehicles for Out-of-City Business

If City vehicles are needed for out-of-City business, the City Manager may choose to use one of its assigned vehicles; have the employees drive their vehicles and submit requests for mileage reimbursement; or request authorization to use rental vehicles.

Due to liability restrictions, City vehicles may not be used out of state on City business without the express written permission of the City Manager. Allow at least ten (10) days to obtain such approvals.

### C. Use of Rental Vehicles for Approved Travel

Employees may obtain authorization from the City Manager to use rental vehicles for approved travel.

### D. Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Use

Employees are explicitly **prohibited** from operating motor vehicles on the unpaved park areas. Exceptions to this rule are listed below:

1. The Public Works' vehicles are required to access to parks to perform various aspects of work.
  - a) All Public Works vehicles shall enter and depart the park at the access point nearest to where the work will be performed.
  - b) Prior to entering the park, vehicle headlights and overhead flashing lights (if so equipped) and flashers shall be turned on.
  - c) Speed in the parks shall be limited to 10mph, unless a slower speed is posted.

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- d) Pedestrians always have the right of way. Employees need to be especially mindful of children and pets that may dart into traffic.
- e) Be on alert for people lying, standing or walking in the parks.
- f) Prior to re-entering the vehicle, employees shall walk completely around the vehicle, checking for children, pets, or people lying on the ground anywhere near the vehicle.
- g) Cellular phones or hand-held radios may not be used while operating motorized vehicles in a park.
- h) Laws applicable to vehicle use on paved roads in the State of Florida apply to ORV use in parks.
- i) Containers of any alcoholic beverages are prohibited in ORVs.
- j) Use of seatbelts is required.
- l) Reckless driving (e.g., cutting circles) is prohibited.

Access to City parks for official business is dependent upon following guidelines stated herein:

- a. Golf-cart or gator use is highly recommended.
- b. Prior to entering a park, vehicle headlights and overhead flashing lights (if so equipped) and flashers shall be turned on.
- c. Speed at parks shall be limited to 10 mph, unless a slower speed is otherwise posted.
- d. Pedestrians always have the right of way. Be especially mindful of children and pets that may dart into traffic.
- e. Be on alert for people lying, standing or walking in the park
- f. Prior to re-entering the vehicle, walk completely around the vehicle, check for children, pets or people lying on the ground anywhere near the vehicle.
- g. Cellular phones or hand-held radios may not be used while operating any type of motorized vehicle in a park.
- h. Laws applicable to vehicle use on paved roads in the State of Florida apply to ORV use in parks. (e.g., golf carts or gators).
- i. Use of seatbelts is required.
- l. Do not hang out of golf-carts or gators or sit on the tailgate or roof.
- m. Reckless driving (e.g., cutting circles) is prohibited.

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### **E. Possession of a Valid Florida Driver License**

All City vehicles and heavy equipment operators are responsible for possessing and maintaining a valid Florida Driver's License; with the proper applicable endorsement(s), if required. Additional requirements from Federal and State regulators may apply to operators of specialized vehicles such as emergency vehicles, commercial motor vehicles and heavy equipment.

Employees authorized to operate City vehicles or heavy equipment are required to immediately inform the City Manager if their drivers' licenses are cancelled, invalid, expired, restricted, suspended or revoked. The City Manager shall immediately notify the Human Resources Director. The employee's failure to inform the City Manager of such a situation may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

An employee whose driver's license is a job requirement and has had it cancelled or revoked no longer meets the requirements of his/her job and shall be subject of disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

### **F. Driver's License Check**

On a bi-annual basis, the HR department shall verify the validity of driver's licenses for all City employees.

The HR department will notify each department director and appropriate personnel in writing, of any employee who has a deficiency with his/her driver's license. Employees whose jobs require a valid driver's license no longer meets the requirements of their jobs and shall be relieved of duty, on their own time, until the deficiency has been cured. Failure to maintain a valid driver's license makes them unqualified to perform the job they were hired to do. Employees shall not be allowed to operate City vehicles while there are deficiencies with their driver's license.

The employee shall be responsible for providing written proof that the deficiency has been cured and the license is valid. Employees with an invalid driver's license shall have their parking privileges suspended at all City facilities until proof of corrective action has been submitted and accepted.

The City Manager may request the employee to provide proof of a valid driver's license at any time prior to the operation of any City vehicle or

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equipment.

### **G. Adherence to Traffic Regulations**

Employees operating City vehicles and/or heavy equipment shall obey all municipal, county, state and federal traffic regulations at all times.

Employees authorized to drive a City vehicle shall notify the City Manager within one (1) calendar day of being issued a traffic violation.

Within two (2) calendar days of an arrest, employees shall provide written notification to the City Manager and the Director of Human Resources for driving under the influence (DUI) or any other criminal offense.

Any and all other citations received while conducting official City business, regardless of who owns the vehicle, issued within the boundaries of the City of Pahokee shall be reported to the City Manager and Director of Human Resources within 72 hours of issuance. Such reports shall include: (1) the employee's name; (2) classification; (3) department/division where employee works; (4) telephone number or email address where the employee may be reached; (5) name of the person who issued the citation; and (6) reason for the citation.

### **H. Safety Requirements**

All operators and passengers of City vehicles shall use the vehicle seat and lap belts, if the vehicle is so equipped. Any employee injured in a crash and found not to have been wearing such protection may have his/her workers' compensation benefits reduced as allowed by Florida Statute §440.09(4). Airbags may not be rendered inoperable on vehicles so equipped. Doing so may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Anyone operating a city vehicle should not use cellular phones or radios while in traffic. Employees should pull off the road to make or receive calls.

### **I. Vehicle Inspection**

The vehicle/equipment operator is the first line of defense' against unexpected breakdowns and repairs. Vehicles must be inspected by the operator prior to each use to ensure that safety features and systems are in safe operating condition and free of any damage or defect.

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Employees are responsible for reporting any safety deficiencies or mechanical problems to the Public Works Director for the City immediately upon detection. Failure to do so may result in the driver being held responsible for the damage and/or condition of the vehicle.

The following vehicle systems should be monitored by the driver:

- Vehicle safety items (e.g., tire pressure and windshield wipers, horn, brakes, steering, etc.).
- Vehicle drivability items (e.g., misfire, rough idle, etc.).
- Vehicle body (e.g., glass, body damage, cleanliness, etc.).
- Vehicle miscellaneous repair items (A/C, windows, etc.).

No vehicle shall be put into service until defects and/or safety violations have been corrected. If body damage is discovered, the employee must report it to the Public Works Director. Said director shall determine the operability of the vehicle prior to allowing the vehicle on the road.

### **J. Altering Vehicles**

City vehicles may not be altered in any way.

No City vehicle shall have any stickers, posters, signs or any other similar attachment placed on or affixed to them except for city logo.

The City Manager has the sole authority to approve or deny the installation of window tinting in a vehicle. Any requests to install window tinting, including supporting medical justification, shall be submitted in writing by the department head to the City Manager.

### **K. Smoking**

Smoking in any City vehicle is prohibited.

### **L. Fleet Fuel Card**

The city has implemented a fuel card program through Palm Beach County Fleet Maintenance,

Employees authorized to use the fuel card shall continue to follow procedures outlined at the fleet maintenance fueling facility. Card users are responsible for the security of their personal blue fuel card.



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All vehicles shall be maintained at no less than one half (1/2) tank of fuel.

### VI. Maintenance of Vehicles

#### A. Responsibilities for Scheduled Maintenance

The Palm Beach County Fleet Maintenance Division operates a preventive maintenance (PM) program that results in a PM schedule for each vehicle or motorized equipment. PM schedules are provided with reasonable advance notice to vehicle/equipment operators and their supervisors.

In order to properly maintain the operating integrity and safety of vehicles and equipment, operators and their supervisors must comply with these scheduled PM services.

### VII. Vehicle Collisions

#### A. Employee's Responsibilities

Employees involved in any vehicle collision when operating a City vehicle, irrespective of fault or severity, shall:

1. If injuries are involved, call 911 for medical attention;
2. Call the appropriate law enforcement agency, and wait on the scene for their arrival;
3. Notify the City Manager if unable to reach the City Manager notify the Public Works Director;
4. Complete the **Vehicle Collision report** that day, or the next business day. If you are injured, complete First Report of Injury, Obtain the Police Report Case Number;
5. If possible, take photos of the damage to the City's vehicle and any other property damage.
6. Present him or herself, accompanied by the supervisor or designee, at the authorized center for post-accident alcohol/drug testing.

#### B. City Manager's Responsibilities

1. Notify the Human Resources Director of the collision, and proceed to the scene, or send a representative.
2. Without interfering with emergency personnel on scene, provide assistance to City employee involved in the collision, gather names and phone numbers of any witnesses, take photographs of the scene;

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3. Obtain the Police Report Case Number;
4. Complete the ***incident Report*** and First Report of Injury (if necessary);
5. Forward all forms and related documents/photos to Human Resources within 24 clock hours of the collision.
  
6. Confirm that the vehicle has been presented to the Public Works Director for inspection and appraisal within 48 hours of the collision.

### **VIOLATION OR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH VEHICLE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**

Any violation or non-compliance with the requirements and responsibilities of this administrative procedure may result in suspension of driving privileges, the revocation of an employee's take-home vehicle privilege, or disciplinary action including termination.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I read and understand the information contained in the City's Vehicle Administrative Procedure.

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Employee Name (Print)

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Employee Signature

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Date