


<b>TOWN OF WOODFIN – POLICY STATEMENT</b>		Policy #:	
Department: Administration / Finance		Issuing Date:	06/20/2017
	Policy Title:	Effective Date:	06/16/2021
	<b>Vehicle Usage Policy</b>	Revised Date:	06/20/2017
		Prepared By:	Jason Young, Town Administrator
		Approved By & Date:	Board of Commissioners 06/20/2017

**PURPOSE:** This policy establishes uniform vehicle use practices and requirements for Town employees of all departments, as well as partners and affiliated agencies that operate motor vehicles to conduct Town business including but not limited to use vehicles owned by the Town, vehicles leased or rented by the Town, or an employee’s personal vehicle or otherwise within the possession and control of the Town, to ensure safe driving and efficient use of public property. The following provisions shall apply unless in conflict with or exempt by State or federal statute.

**OVERVIEW:** Town employees in various departments may be required to use/operate a motor vehicle to conduct business on behalf of the Town. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Town employees are properly licensed to operate said motor vehicle and that the vehicles are used in a safe and efficient manner.

**USE OF VEHICLES:** All employees from every department in the Town must be properly licensed to operate a motor vehicle to use a motor vehicle to conduct business on behalf of the Town. “Conducting business” shall mean any time an employee using a motor vehicle to perform a job function, at the direction of his or her Supervisor or travel for the Town.

**DRIVER’S RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. While on Town business, employees shall operate all vehicles in a safe and courteous manner. Employees shall not exceed the speed limit and shall obey all traffic laws.
- B. Violations, citations, fines, and other actions taken by any enforcement agency against any employee while operating a motor vehicle for Town business shall be the responsibility of the employee and may be cause for disciplinary action by the Town.
- C. All employees are subject to random reviews of their Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) by the Town Administrator. Upon request, all employees must provide a copy of their current license to the Town Administrator.
- D. Every employee is required to notify his or her Department Head within one business day of any change in the employee’s driver’s status this includes but is not limited to civil revocations for impaired driving, suspensions and revocations. Failure to notify one’s Department Head of said change shall result in discipline up to and including termination.
- E. No vehicle used for Town business shall be driven if the driver has consumed or is under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance.
- F. The use of smoked, vaped or other means of use that create airborne tobacco or similar substances in any form is prohibited in Town-owned vehicles. Smokeless tobacco products are permitted in Town-owned vehicles as a privilege not a right. As a privilege, the use of smokeless tobacco within Town-owned vehicles may be further reduced, restricted or eliminated at the discretion of the Town Administrator and or Department Head. Any modifications to this policy will be considered non-grievable and no appeals will be heard.
- G. Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by anyone in the vehicle is prohibited. Law enforcement personnel may transport lawfully individuals and or confiscated items as

required and within the scope and course of their official duties.

**USE OF TOWN VEHICLES:**

- A. Town vehicles are assigned to one or more employees for their primary use for Town business and obligations. At the end of the workday, all Town vehicles are to be parked in their assigned parking area unless specifically otherwise authorized by the respective Department Head.
- B. Employees driving Town vehicles must be at least twenty-one years of age.
- C. Employees assigned Town-owned vehicles are to take proper care of the interior and exterior appearance and servicing of Town-owned vehicles at the scheduled times and/or every 4,000 miles. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Upholding the maintenance requirement is the responsibility of the Department Head.
- D. The vehicle operator of is responsible for routinely checking for proper oil level, water and antifreeze levels, wear on belts, and adequate inflation of tires by reviewing the vehicle manual.
- E. When fueling vehicles, the grade of fuel used shall be consistent with the lowest grade as stated in the operator's manual. Exceptions shall only be granted by the expressed written consent of the Department Head or in cases of dire emergency where the lowest grade fuel is unavailable for purchase.

**PRIVATE USE:**

- A. General Statutes §14-247, Private Use of Publicly Owned Vehicles, provides:  
  
"It shall be unlawful for any officer, agent or employee of the State of North Carolina, or... Town ... to use for any private purpose whatsoever any motor vehicle of any type or description whatsoever belonging to the... Town.... It is not a private purpose to drive a permanently assigned state-owned motor vehicle between one's official work station and one's home as provided in G.S. 143-341(8) i7a."
- B. Personal use is prohibited. Town vehicles are to be used for official Town business only and shall not be used for the convenience of the employee with regard to transportation needs or other non-business activities.
- C. The Town acknowledges that its employees may need at times, to keep personal items and information stored in or on Town Owned Property. However, due to security and accountability concerns, all employees can have no expectation of privacy for personal items/information stored on or in Publicly Owned Vehicles and Publicly Owned Vehicles are subject to inspection at any time without any prior notice. This includes the installation of a GPS device to track the whereabouts of the Publicly Owned Vehicles.
- D. Town vehicles may be used to travel to a nearby restaurant for meals where the cost-benefit in travel time to the work quarters for a personal vehicle would not be in the best interest of the Town. Such determinations will rest with the Department Head.
- E. Each Department Head will provide the Town Administrator a list of Town vehicles assigned for overnight use. The list must include the vehicle number, driver's name, and driver's license number.
- F. Department Heads shall immediately notify the Town Administrator of any driver changes to assigned vehicles. Failure to provide driver changes may result in revocation of an assigned vehicle.

**COMMUTING:**

- A. Consistent with policies and procedures for State-owned take-home vehicles, employees assigned Town-owned take-home vehicles shall reimburse the Town for using these vehicles for commuting to and from work. This rate shall be set at \$3 per day, which also satisfies Internal Revenue Service (IRS) fringe benefit requirements. As a result, no additional attributed income is added to the employee's gross income for taxation

purposes.

- B. Reimbursement shall be made by payroll deduction and based upon average annual usage. The bi-weekly deduction is calculated as follows:
- a. 365 Average number of days per year
  - b. (104) Less average number of Saturdays and Sundays per year
  - c. (11) Less average number of Holidays per year
  - d. (23) Less average number of Annual Leave days per year 227 Average number of days vehicle will be used to commute X \$ 3.00 Per day rate= \$ 681.00. This sum is to be paid proportionately every pay period.
- C. Certain vehicles are excluded from the commuting reimbursement requirement. These exceptions are consistent with those as outlined in IRS Publication 15-B, Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits. They include most all Police vehicles, certain other public safety vehicles, any vehicle designed to carry cargo with a loaded gross vehicle weight over 14,000 pounds, dump trucks (including garbage trucks), flatbed trucks and "qualified specialized utility trucks" which is defined as any truck (not including a van or pick-up truck) specifically designed and used to carry heavy tools, equipment, or parts, if shelves, racks or other permanent interior construction have been installed to carry and store such items. A pick-up truck with only a toolbox attached is therefore not exempt.

If more than one employee is required to commute in the same Town owned or leased vehicle for an official government purpose, each employee will be charged the \$3.00 per day commuting charge, based upon IRS requirements.

**OVERNIGHT  
ASSIGNMENT  
(TAKE HOME  
VEHICLE):**

- A. Authorized employees may be assigned a take-home vehicle when the best interest of the public is served by providing Town employees with safe, dependable transportation for extensive travel during or after working hours, for after-hours response to emergency requests for service, or for an approved, official purpose.
- B. Authorization for use of Town vehicles overnight may be granted by the Department Head to specified employees based on the following criteria:
- a. Employees whose regular duties require frequent use of a Town vehicle overnight and whose responsibilities involve emergency response, afterhours response, evening and weekend duties, public meetings, or other business activities.
  - b. Employees assigned to stand-by duty who are subject to call or who respond to service requests.
  - c. Employees on temporary overnight assignment by the Department Head for emergencies or an approved, official purpose.
  - d. Employees expected to respond when called after hours, unless specifically excused due to authorized leave.

**VIOLATIONS:**

Violations of this policy are considered inappropriate personal conduct and/or misuse of Town property. Employees violating the terms and conditions of this policy or misusing or abusing Town-owned vehicles may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**VEHICLE NEED:**

- A. Town Department's must justify to the satisfaction of the Town Administrator the need for a Town-owned vehicle based on whether a vehicle will be used a minimum of 9,900 miles per year. The cost-benefit of paying an employee mileage for use of the personal vehicle versus use of a Town-owned vehicle must be documented before a Town-owned vehicle is considered. Evaluation of the ongoing need for Town-owned vehicles assigned to a department will be made on an annual basis before bidding new Town vehicles.
- B. The Town Administrator must approve all new vehicle purchases and requests for a vehicle

- from the surplus list when that vehicle increases the fleet assigned to a department.
- C. Public Safety and special use vehicles required for a specific job function will be considered based on need, usage, and cost-benefits over the life of the vehicle versus mileage limitations.
  - D. The Town Administrator may remove or recall any Town-vehicle from a department for one of the following:
    - a. The vehicle does not meet the minimum mileage requirement, excluding “special use” vehicles.
    - b. Vehicle abuse, which includes but is not limited to, inadequate care or maintenance and damage to a vehicle caused by disregard or improper use.
    - c. The termination of an employee or position with an assigned vehicle that will not be replaced within a reasonable time period.
  - E. Department Heads may submit a written request to the Town Administrator justifying retention of a vehicle removed or recalled because of underutilization.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is the responsibility of the Department Head to administer this Town Vehicle Usage Policy properly regarding all Town vehicles in his or her department.

**EXEMPTIONS:** Emergency response personnel operating Town vehicles are exempt from this policy only to the extent that they are operating within the scope and course of their official duties and such operation is not in violation of North Carolina General Statutes.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all employees of the Town of Woodfin.

**COMMENTS:** Policy should be reviewed annually and updated, as necessary.

**POLICY AUTHORITY:** Please contact the Town Administrator at 828-253-4887 with any questions pertaining to this policy.