DEKALB COUNTY GOVERNMENT
VEHICLE OPERATION POLICY
Adopted 06-20-2012

A. Policy

The operation of vehicles is indispensable in conducting County business, and the way in which each vehicle is handled directly affects the production of County departments. First, the safety of our employees is our primary concern. Second, vehicular collisions are potentially the most costly losses we can incur when the summation of property damage, bodily injury, fatalities, and liability suits is considered. Such costs can mount to proportions that will adversely affect every department in efforts to accomplish its mission and maintain good public relations.

B. Coverage

This policy applies to all departments of County Government headed by appointed officials or those headed by elected officials who have chosen to adopt these policies. This policy shall be in addition to any existing policies previously put in place by the various departments of the County.

C. Responsibilities/Procedure

1. Department Heads and Elected Officials who have adopted these policies shall:

    a. Once these policies have been adopted, insure departmental compliance by monitoring internal implementation procedures and periodically checking on employee compliance.

    b. Notify all employees of the existence of these policies and the potential disciplinary actions that may be taken against those employees who show a disregard for these policies.

    c. Assure that all county-owned vehicles are maintained adequately for safe operations.

    d. Establish periodic inspections of county-owned vehicles for safety discrepancies, malfunctions, signs of abuse, unreported damage and cleanliness. If repairs are necessary, such repairs shall be made as soon as possible.

    e. Support the County's on-line driving training program and require all covered drivers to complete it.

2. Supervisors, having direct authority over employees, shall:

   a. Insure that employees do not drive any County vehicle unless they have valid State of Illinois driver's licenses, are familiar with State laws and this policy, and for employees whose primary duty is driving shall be required to have a valid license of the proper class.

   b. Insure that only authorized personnel be allowed to operate County vehicles, special purpose vehicles and trucks.

      1. An employee shall not be certified as authorized to operate a special purpose vehicle until he/she has satisfactorily demonstrated his/her complete familiarity with its functions. The employee shall thoroughly understand the manufacturer's operating instructions, vehicle limitations, and emergency procedures and be able to successfully pass an operator's checkout test to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

      2. These procedures shall be accomplished for each type of special purpose vehicle and truck the operator is required to operate.

   c. Insure that unsafe vehicles are not driven until safety discrepancies have been corrected.

   d. Insure that all employees are briefed and understand that the use of seat belts while driving or riding in a County vehicle is mandatory.

3. Employees are required to follow defensive driving practices, which are established for the protection of themselves, their fellow employees and the citizens of DeKalb County. Every driver of a County-owned vehicle and every County Employee who routinely (average of once per week or more) operates their own vehicle on County business must pass the on-line course within six months of the effective date of this policy. Course cost will be paid by the tort fund. Department heads may mandate that all drivers that drive on county business pass the on-line course. Following the effective date of this policy, new hires will be expected to pass the on-line course prior to completion of their probation period. Employees shall also:

a. Inspect the vehicle which he/she is about to drive in accordance with the following:

   1. If there is evidence of accident damage, the employee shall report it to his/her supervisor before driving. Otherwise he/she could be charged for the accident he/she didn't have.

   2. If the vehicle is found to be unsafe, the employee shall report it before driving and request another vehicle.

   3. Vehicles having steering or braking defects shall not be driven. They shall be towed to a garage and repaired before being returned to service.

b. Report to the supervisor in writing all defects noted during the trip.

c. Wear seat belts at all times while driving, requiring passengers to do same.

d. Call police in the jurisdiction responsible to investigate all collisions involving County vehicles and report details to immediate supervisor (or other supervisor if immediate is not available) as soon as possible.

e. Employees operating a vehicle in service to the County shall follow these operating rules:

   1. Removal of any equipment from a county-owned vehicle without written permission of the immediate supervisor and/or the Department Head is prohibited.

   2. Operating any vehicle on County business while impaired in any way is a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge for a first offense. Impairment includes any physical, mental or emotional state or condition naturally or artificially induced that would lessen the ability of the driver to safely operate the motor vehicle.

   3. No alcoholic beverage (whether opened or unopened), narcotics, firearm or explosive material may be transported in a vehicle being utilized for county business purposes unless designated as part of the driver's responsibility.

4. County vehicles shall not be parked in front of or in parking areas associated with taverns or liquor stores unless employee is on official county business with said establishment. (Restaurants serving liquor are not included in this prohibition.)

5. Each driver who operates his/her personal vehicle in service to the County must present his/her supervisor with a valid certification of insurance and renewals of it. Each driver must provide initial proof of a valid State of Illinois Driver's license and notify their supervisor immediately of the loss, revocation or suspension of those driving privileges.

6. Modification of any vehicle or of any equipment in a County owned vehicle without written permission of the immediate supervisor and/or the Department Head is prohibited.

7. Employees who operate a County vehicle shall restrict use of the vehicle to official County business and incidental personal use.

4. The DeKalb County Finance Office shall:

a. Maintain and administer an aggressive program for County employees that seeks to reduce vehicular collisions and liability claims against the County.

b. Provide access to an on-line Driving Course for County employees. Departments will be responsible for maintaining compliance records and making sure employees complete training on a timely basis.

c. Recommend safety equipment requirements and specifications for purchasing new vehicles.

d. Maintain a database of driver's licenses of County employees who drive in service to the County and periodically spot check that drivers are maintaining a valid license.

e. Maintain complete records on County collisions, property damage, and liability claims.

5. Take-Home Policy:

The decision regarding assignment of County vehicles to employees, and the subsequent decision to allow the vehicles to be driven to and from work each day, shall be left to the discretion of the Department Head.

a. County-owned vehicles parked at employee's homes shall be locked and secured.

b. On-street parking should be avoided to the extent possible. County vehicles should be parked and stored in the safest possible manner at all times.

6. Accident Reporting Requirements:

Any accident involving a County owned, rented or leased vehicle or privately owned vehicle used in service to the County shall be reported as follows:

a. Summon medical care for any injured parties.

b. Notify appropriate law enforcement authorities

c. Notify employee's immediate supervisor

d. The supervisor shall be responsible for initiating the departmental investigation of the accident, completing all required reports and recommending any follow-up preventative actions.

7. Personally Owned Vehicles Used in Service to the County:

   a. The County's Self-Insurance program provides for excess liability coverage, but does not cover physical damage to an employee's personal vehicle. For excess liability coverage to apply, the accident must be determined by the Finance Office to have occurred during the course and scope of the employee's work duties.

   b. An employee's personal automobile insurance policy is primary to any County coverage. Employees who use personally owned vehicles for County business might wish to confirm with their insurance carrier that their personal automobile insurance policy provides coverage for this use.

8. Reporting Requirements

   All vehicle operators are required to notify their immediate supervisor immediately of any temporary or permanent suspension, revocation or loss of driving privileges. Such reports shall be forwarded to the Finance Office by the applicable department. Employees who become ineligible to drive, and whose job requires them to do so, are subject to reassignment or discharge at the sole discretion of the Employer.