



Using Staff and Personal Vehicles to Conduct Agency Business POL-AD-1002

Definitions:

Department Staff Vehicle: A staff vehicle assigned to a single department and intended for use primarily by the employees of that department.

Driver: A person authorized to drive an agency-owned vehicle, regardless of that person's relationship to Community Transit. Drivers include permanent employees, temporary employees, contractors, and other persons authorized to drive an agency-owned vehicle on Community Transit's behalf.

General Use Staff Vehicle: Any staff vehicle that can be scheduled using agency scheduling software or through the agency receptionist.

Staff Vehicle: A vehicle owned by Community Transit which is not used for revenue service.

Staff Vehicle Monitor: An employee designated to coordinate staff vehicle use.

This policy applies to any person who uses a personal vehicle or a Community Transit staff vehicle to conduct agency business.

Section 1: Driving a Staff Vehicle on Behalf of Community Transit

1.1 Employees Should Use Public Transit When It Reasonably Meets Business Needs.

When employees travel to and from business meetings, appointments, events, training, etc., public transit should be the primary transportation choice whenever practical (SAAM 10.10.25). Drivers should use staff vehicles when public transit is not reasonably available or does not reasonably meet business needs. If these alternatives do not meet business needs, employees may use their personal vehicles (POL-AD-1000, Agency Travel Policy, Section 3.1 and POL-AD-1002, Section 7.)

1.2 Community Transit Staff Vehicles Will Be Used Only For Official Agency Business.

Incidental personal use in conjunction with official business is permitted so long as the incidental use does not impact vehicle availability for other employees and is consistent with provision 1.3.

Staff vehicles may not be reserved and used solely for personal purposes.

1.3 Drivers Must Maintain Awareness of Public Perception When They Use Staff Vehicles.

All persons driving or riding in a Community Transit staff vehicle represent Community Transit to the public. All employees conducting agency business in any location must be sensitive to public perception of their activities.

Section 2: Determining Driver Qualification

2.1 Drivers Must Have a Valid Driver's License. (RCW 46.20.001)

All persons who operate a staff vehicle in any location for any reason must have a valid driver's license. Any driver who knowingly operates a staff vehicle without a valid license, whether cited or not, has violated this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

2.2 Drivers Must Produce a Valid Driver's License Upon Request. (RCW 46.20.017)

Whenever they operate a staff vehicle, drivers must have their licenses with them and available for inspection by law enforcement or company officials such as the driver's supervisor, the Risk Manager, a Transportation supervisor, or any Community Transit manager or department head.

2.3 Drivers With Valid Out-of-State Driver's Licenses Have 30 Days From Their Date of Hire to Get a Valid Washington State License.

If an employee has a valid residency exemption at date of hire, this provision may be reviewed to ensure that the employee can still meet job requirements. Human Resources staff will make this determination on a case-by-case basis and with the advice of legal counsel.

2.4 Employees Hired for Those Jobs Where Driving is an Essential Job Function Must Have a Valid Driver's License.

When driving a staff vehicle is an essential job function, employees who are unable to produce a valid driver's license may be suspended from work without pay until they obtain a valid license. The valid license must be produced within a timeframe established by the driver's supervisor, and that timeframe can be no more than 90 days after the employee was first unable to produce a valid license. Drivers who are unable to produce valid driver's licenses within the designated timeframe may be discharged for failure to maintain qualification to perform the job.

Before making a decision to discharge the employee, the employee's supervisor will work with Human Resources staff to determine whether:

- A temporary reassignment of duties can be made without affecting the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job, OR
- The employee can use alternative means of transportation and still perform the essential duties of the job.

Each situation will be evaluated based on the requirements of the employee's job and the employee's specific circumstances.

2.5 Supervisors, Managers, and Department Heads Ensure That Their Employees Meet All Requirements Before Driving Staff Vehicles.

Training staff provide initial and refresher defensive driving training for all employees. The Staff Development Manager determines the frequency of refresher training and the delivery method(s) best suited to an employee's job requirements.

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure that their employees complete initial driver training before driving staff vehicles and that employees complete refresher training as required by either the Staff Development Manager or the Risk Manager.

When a permanent or temporary employee has a business need to drive a staff vehicle and a scheduled defensive driving training session is not available in time to meet the business need, the employee's supervisor contacts the Staff Development Manager or the Risk Manager for assistance.

Section 3: Monitoring Driving Status

3.1 Community Transit is Authorized to Obtain Driver's Abstracts.

As a condition of continued employment, all employees whose job requires them to operate a company vehicle must authorize the company to check their driving record.

Any employee who refuses authorization will be suspended from work without pay and scheduled for a pre-termination hearing. Employees who authorize Community Transit to check their driving records will be returned to or will remain on active duty while their driving records are reviewed.

3.2 Drivers Are Personally Accountable for All Citations Issued to Them When They Drive Staff Vehicles.

It is the driver's responsibility to pay all fees, fines, or charges resulting from citations received while driving a staff vehicle.

3.3 Drivers Must Report Citations Received While Driving Staff Vehicles.

Drivers who receive a citation while driving a staff vehicle must report the citation to their supervisor by close of business the day the citation is received.

If the citation is received outside the employee's normal work hours, the employee must report the citation immediately upon returning to work the next business day.

Supervisors must report citations to Risk Management the same day they are notified. (PRO-AD-1002-C, *Reporting Citations*.)

Traffic citations may result in suspension or loss of driving privileges.

3.4 Employees Required to Drive Company Vehicles Must Report DUI Citations.

These employees must report DUI citations received when off duty and while operating a personal vehicle:

- Employees required to hold a commercial driver's license to perform their jobs.
- Employees whose jobs require them to drive staff vehicles.

Employees required to hold a CDL are subject to all legal requirements regarding DUIs. Suspensions of CDLs may result in termination.

Employees not required to hold a CDL but required to drive a staff vehicle who are off duty and cited for DUI while operating a personal vehicle will be directed to the employee assistance provider's substance abuse professional for assessment and

referral for treatment if necessary. Employees so directed may not drive company vehicles until released to do so by the substance abuse professional.

Community Transit considers deferred prosecution and deferred sentencing on a DUI charge as equivalent to a conviction.

3.5 Employees Required to Hold CDLs May Also Be Subject to Other Requirements.

Employees required to hold a CDL must follow agency Standard Operating Procedures and applicable regulatory and statutory requirements for any traffic citation they receive.

3.6 Drivers Who Fail to Report May Be Considered for Discharge.

Employees who fail to report a moving violation, a charge of driving while intoxicated (DUI), or a suspended license will be considered for discharge if they drive a company vehicle during the period when they failed to report the infraction or if they were required by law to report the infraction to their employer but failed to do so.

3.7 Employees Report Loss or Restriction of Driving Status to Their Supervisors.

If their driving status changes, employees must notify their supervisors immediately.

Supervisors report changes in an employee's driving status to the Risk Manager the same day they receive notification.

If a change in an employee's driving status affects the employee's ability to perform essential job functions, supervisors also notify their HR representative the same day.

Any driver whose license has been revoked may not drive any vehicle to conduct agency business.

Section 4: Monitoring and Scheduling Staff Vehicles

4.1 Staff Vehicle Monitor Coordinates Availability of General Use Staff Vehicles.

The Staff Vehicle Monitor will make and screen staff vehicle reservations, coordinate staff vehicle maintenance requests, and maintain each staff vehicle's travel storage clipboard.

Staff vehicles—both general use and department specific—must be outfitted with a travel storage clipboard that includes:

- Keys to the vehicle.
- An accident packet.
- This policy.
- PRO-AD-1002-B, *Reporting Vehicle Maintenance Needs* (applies to general use staff vehicles).
- PRO-AD-1002-C, *Reporting Citations*.
- TSK-AD-1002-A, *Reporting an Accident*.
- The *Driver's Vehicle Condition Report* form (This form is maintained and controlled by the Maintenance Department).

- Plastic gloves.
- A pen.
- A *Staff Vehicle Use Log* (FRM-AD-1002-A) for the vehicle.
- Any special information about the vehicle, such as how to operate a hybrid.

4.2 Drivers Use Corporate Scheduling Software to Check Out General Use Staff Vehicles.

Drivers reserve general use staff vehicles using the corporate scheduling system or by contacting the agency receptionist (PRO-AD-1002-A, *Reserving Staff Vehicles*). For vehicles assigned to departments, drivers follow that department's staff vehicle reservation procedures.

4.3 Department Heads May Designate Employees in Their Departments as Staff Vehicle Monitors.

Department Heads with staff vehicles assigned to their departments but no designated Staff Vehicle Monitor must still meet all elements of this policy.

4.4 Drivers Report the Need for Vehicle Repairs to Maintenance.

Drivers complete the *Driver's Vehicle Condition Report* form in their vehicle travel packet and turn in their completed form to any automotive maintenance lead or maintenance manager.

Section 5: Using Staff Vehicles

5.1 Drivers Will Operate Staff Vehicles in a Safe and Prudent Manner.

Drivers maintain their driving privileges by:

- Obeying all traffic laws and ordinances.
- Using good defensive driving techniques.

If Community Transit receives reports that a driver operated a staff vehicle in an unsafe manner, the Risk Manager will determine the validity of the report and recommend corrective action which may include the loss of driving privileges.

5.2 Drivers May Not Use Personal Electronic Devices While Driving Any Agency Vehicle.

See POL-AD-1001 for information on the use of personal electronic devices.

5.3 Drivers Record Travel Information on the Staff Vehicle Use Log (FRM-AD-1002-A).

Drivers complete one Vehicle Use Log entry each time they use a staff vehicle. At minimum, entries must include:

- Vehicle unit number
- Date(s) of the trip
- Times the trip begins and ends
- Beginning and ending mileage

- Trip destination
- Trip purpose
- Driver's signature

Completed *Staff Vehicle Use Logs* must be sent to the Risk Manager.

5.4 *Any Staff Vehicle Contact with Another Vehicle, an Object, and/or a Person is Initially Considered an Accident.*

After reviewing the accident information and completing any additional investigation deemed necessary, the Risk Manager determines whether to classify the event as an accident, incident, or unsubstantiated accident.

Refer to Community Transit's accident policies, 166-POL-001 to 005, for information about reporting and analyzing accidents, the Accident Review Committee, appealing preventable accident decisions, and potential discipline resulting from preventable accident decisions.

5.5 *Drivers Must Report Accidents to Dispatch at the Time and Location of the Accident.*

Drivers must follow TSK-AD-1002-A, *Reporting an Accident*, if involved in any accident.

Drivers describe the circumstances of the accident only to police, to a Community Transit Transportation supervisor or other Community Transit official sent to investigate the accident, or to an adjustment service representative working for Community Transit, and only to these people after the driver has seen proper identification.

The only discussion the driver should have with drivers of other vehicles involved in the same accident is only what is necessary to collect the information required in TSK-AD-1002-A and the accident packet.

Failure to report or an attempt to conceal or misrepresent details of an accident may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

5.6 *Only Authorized Passengers May Be Transported In a Community Transit Staff Vehicle.*

All Community Transit employees are authorized as passengers. Other authorized passengers include, but are not limited to, Board members, Citizens Advisory Committee members, consultants, contractors, temporary employees, and employees of other transit agencies so long as the reason they are passengers is for the purpose of conducting Community Transit business.

5.7 *Unauthorized Use of Community Transit Staff Vehicles May Result in Disciplinary Action and Personal Liability.*

Unauthorized use of staff vehicles includes, but is not limited to:

- Driving unsafely.
- Transporting family members or other passengers who are not Community Transit customers or business associates without prior consent from the driver's department head.

- Using a staff vehicle for purposes not in conjunction with official business.
- Regularly taking a staff vehicle without checking it out or failing to release a vehicle reservation if it is no longer needed.

Unauthorized use of a Community Transit vehicle may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge. The severity and frequency of infractions will determine discipline.

Drivers are personally liable for all damages and costs resulting from unauthorized use of a Community Transit vehicle. If Community Transit's insurer pays for damages from unauthorized use, the insurer may recover those costs from the driver.

5.8 Occasional Overnight Use of Staff Vehicles Is Allowed.

Overnight use of a staff vehicle is allowed under any of these conditions:

- The driver is attending a meeting away from the normal place of work and/or outside that person's normal workday schedule.
- The driver is on-call and has a primary responsibility to respond to emergency or inclement weather situations.
- The driver has an assignment requiring that work activities be accomplished early the next day and closer to the person's home than to the normal work location.
- The driver's department head has identified a valid business reason requiring overnight use of a staff vehicle.

Section 6: Assigning Staff Vehicles for Long-Term Use

6.1 Staff Vehicles May be Assigned to Individual Employees with Legitimate Business Needs.

A legitimate business need may arise from:

- The need for an employee to perform work which cannot be completed at the employee's or department's assigned work location and which requires frequent travel to other locations.
- Executive management's expectation that an employee must be available to travel to designated locations at any time of day or night using a staff vehicle to respond to agency needs.

To qualify for a long-term vehicle assignment, Community Transit employees must have a legitimate business need which meets one or more of the criteria listed in Section 6.2.

6.2 Legitimate Business Needs Meet One or More of These Criteria:

- The employee is required to respond to emergencies and/or accidents.
- The employee cannot pick up Community Transit staff vehicles at designated sites without impacting emergency response time.
- The assignment meets some other legitimate business need the employee fulfills on behalf of the agency.
- The assignment saves the agency time and/or money.
- Use of a Community Transit staff vehicle is part of an employment contract.

6.3 Staff Vehicle Assignments Are Usually Approved For One-Year Periods.

Assignments less than a year in duration may be approved when there is a valid business need. Assignments are renewed annually.

6.4 Employees Request Staff Vehicle Assignments in Writing.

Staff vehicle assignment requests (FRM-AD-1002-B, Staff Vehicle Assignment Request) must explain how an employee's job requirements meet one or more of the criteria listed in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2.

The employee's department head evaluates vehicle assignment requests to ensure they meet legitimate business needs (PRO-AD-1002-D, Requesting a Long-Term Vehicle Assignment).

6.5 The Risk Manager Reviews All Staff Vehicle Assignment Requests and Provides the Director of Administration with a Recommendation for Further Action.

6.6 The Director of Administration Makes the Final Decision Concerning Staff Vehicle Assignments.

The Risk Manager notifies employees and their department heads whether requests are approved or disapproved. The Risk Manager must also notify the Controller within five work days when a staff vehicle is initially assigned to an employee or when a vehicle assignment is terminated (PRO-AD-1002-D, Requesting a Long-Term Vehicle Assignment).

6.7 Employees Are Responsible for Vehicles Assigned to Them.

Before receiving a vehicle, employees read, complete, and sign the *Staff Vehicle Assignment Responsibilities* form (FRM-AD-1002-C) which identifies the vehicle initially assigned and states all employee responsibilities concerning use of that and any subsequent vehicle (PRO-AD-1002-E, Issuing a Vehicle for Long-Term Assignment).

6.8 The Risk Manager Maintains a List of Approved Long-Term Vehicle Assignments.

FRM-AD-1002-D, *List of Assigned Staff Vehicles*, includes the employee's name, title, department, and a description of the vehicle assigned to that employee. This list applies only to vehicle assignments made to individual employees.

At least once each year, the Risk Manager will provide this list to the CEO, Controller, and all department heads. The Risk Manager updates and redistributes the list whenever changes in employee long-term vehicle assignments are made.

6.9 Using a Company Vehicle for Commuting is a Taxable Benefit.

If an employee is assigned a staff vehicle and that employee uses the staff vehicle to commute to and from home and work, the IRS considers the commute trip a taxable benefit.

Employees with assigned vehicles must complete a daily usage log, FRM-AD-1002-E, *Assigned Vehicle Use Log*, which is required for payroll tax purposes. Logs for the previous month are due to the Risk Manager by the fifth day of the current month (PRO-AD-1002-F, *Completing the Assigned Vehicle Use Log*).

Section 7: Using Personally Owned Vehicles To Conduct Agency Business

7.1 Travelers May Use Personally Owned Vehicles for Company Business if They Meet These Requirements:

- Drivers must have a valid driver's license, AND
- Drivers must maintain the minimum Washington State statutory limit of auto liability insurance.

The employee's supervisor, department head, the Risk Manager, or an employee designated by the Risk Manager may ask drivers who use personal vehicles to conduct company business to provide proof of insurance coverage.

7.2 The Driver's Personal Insurance is the Primary Coverage.

If an accident occurs while using a personal vehicle for company business, the driver's personal insurance is the primary coverage for any claims that may arise from the accident.

7.3 Drivers Who Use Personal Vehicles to Conduct Agency Business Are Responsible for All Citations Issued to Them.

7.4 Personal Vehicles May be Used for Any Authorized Business Travel.

Any driver who meets both requirements set forth in paragraph 7.1 may use a personal vehicle to conduct agency business. However, at least one of the conditions listed in paragraph 7.5 must be met before mileage reimbursement will be authorized.

7.5 Mileage Reimbursement For Use of a Personal Vehicle May Be Authorized.

Employees may request mileage reimbursement under any of the following circumstances:

- Use of public transit is not a reasonable alternative.
- A staff vehicle is not available or another business need has a higher priority for use of a staff vehicle.
- The conference, training, or meeting requires overnight accommodations and use of a staff vehicle would impact other employees' ability to use the vehicle for valid business activities.
- The driver has a verified need for physical accommodations that are best met by the driver's personal vehicle.
- There is a valid business need that makes use of a personal vehicle more efficient or less expensive. Driver convenience is not a valid business need.

The signature of the Driver's supervisor on the expense claim for mileage reimbursement serves as authorization that one of these conditions has been met.

7.6 Drivers Are Not Required to Request Mileage Reimbursement When They Use Personal Vehicles to Conduct Agency Business.

Drivers who do not request reimbursement may opt to report business mileage expenses on their personal tax returns.

7.7 Mileage Reimbursements for Some Out-of-Area Travel May Be Restricted.

For some destinations (usually central and eastern Washington; Oregon, especially Portland; and British Columbia) paying for airfare or train fare and parking or a shuttle may be less expensive than reimbursing for mileage. No matter the end destination, when a personal vehicle is used for out-of-area travel, transportation costs will be reimbursed at the least expensive rate, which may be the value of airfare/train fare and parking/shuttle, not mileage.

Exceptions are allowed when the driver is transporting other authorized passengers or when one or more of the conditions described in paragraph 7.5 have been met.

7.8 Mileage for Authorized Use of a Personal Vehicle is Reimbursed at the Current IRS Rate.

The IRS rate is assumed to reimburse all operating costs for use of a personal vehicle for the number of miles reimbursed.

7.9 Board Members Are Reimbursed According To The Rates Issued By The Washington State Office Of Financial Management.

7.10 Drivers With Employment Contracts May Qualify for Mileage Reimbursement.

Drivers with employment contracts which include a car allowance may request mileage reimbursement for business-related travel which exceeds 75 miles for the round trip. Reimbursement will be made for the full mileage, not just the amount in excess of 75 miles.

7.11 Drivers Request Mileage Reimbursement on a Standard Claim for Expenses form (FRM-AD-1000-G).

The expense claim must include:

- The number of miles for which the driver requests reimbursement.
- The business purpose of the trip.
- The names of all other passengers in the vehicle.

Claims for mileage reimbursement must be submitted within 90 calendar days of the business trip. See the Travel Policy (POL-AD-1000), Section 7, for deadlines, requirements, and other information about filing a claim for travel expense. See TSK-AD-1000-O for directions on completing the *Claim for Expenses* form.

Section 8: Administering This Policy

8.1 The Director of Administration Administers This Policy.

The Director of Administration may approve revisions to procedures, tasks, or forms relevant to this policy. Revised procedures, tasks, or forms are forwarded to the policy committee for immediate posting on the online policy access drive.

Approved by: _____	Written by: Cherrill Mears
Cancels or Supersedes: January 15, 1997, Staff Vehicle Use and Assignment Policy	
Last Reviewed:	
See Also:	