



**City of Vernon, California  
Human Resources Policies and Procedures**

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*Number: Section 1.2 - Miscellaneous Effective Date: November 5, 2024*

**SUBJECT:** Administrative Policy Manual – City Owned Vehicle Authorization and Use Policy

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the use of City vehicles. "City Vehicles" are vehicles owned or leased by the City. This policy applies to all City officials and employees with the exception of Sworn Police Department employees who are covered by the Vernon Police Department Policy Manual, Vehicle Use Policy.

**A. General Requirements:**

1. Any person operating a City vehicle is required to possess a valid California Driver's License of the proper classification and endorsement(s) as appropriate.
  - a. Any person who operates a vehicle in the course of City business is required to notify the Department of Human Resources following any changes in status to the employee's Driver's License, including expiration, suspension or revocation, as soon as they become aware of the change.
2. The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring that regular and temporary employees who operate City vehicles are enrolled in the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Pull-Notice Program.
3. The Human Resources Department shall maintain all DMV Employer Pull Notice documents and shall notify the appropriate supervisor immediately upon being put on notice by the DMV of any change in the status of an employee's license or other action

which affects the employee's ability to perform his or her job requirements or which may require action by the City.

4. Employees are expected to operate vehicles and/or equipment safely, lawfully, and courteously. It is the policy of the City to provide a safe working environment that protects our employees and members of the public from injury and property loss. The City is committed to safe responsible employee driving behavior that reduces the risk of personal injury and property loss.
5. City vehicles must be maintained in a clean and neat manner at all times and employees are expected to have their assigned vehicles washed at the City's designated car wash service.
6. Each employee or designated person assigned or permitted to operate a City vehicle shall participate in vehicle safety and defensive driving training as may be required by the City.

**B. Permitted Use of City Vehicles and Equipment**

City vehicles and equipment shall be used exclusively for city business. Only eligible City employees or temporary employees may operate City vehicles and equipment. Persons not employed by the City or a temporary agency may be carried as passengers only when their transportation has a direct connection with City business.

At their department head's discretion, City employees working in the field and using City vehicles may stop for designated lunch or break periods when the employee is enroute to or from the worksite. Personal business such as banking or shopping, whether or not enroute to an authorized destination, is prohibited.

**C. Temporary Vehicle Assignment:**

City vehicles may be made available on a temporary basis to employees who are performing assignments that require them to travel in the conduct of business. This includes, but is not limited to, travel to and from City worksites or other authorized destinations, meetings in and outside the City, and authorized conferences.

**D. Take-Home Vehicle Assignment:**

Take-home vehicles are assigned City vehicles that employees have been authorized to drive to and from their residences. The City's primary interest regarding take-home vehicles is to achieve a balance between the City's responsibility to provide staff with the tools to perform their duties with maximum efficiency and its responsibility to use public resources in a prudent manner by minimizing unnecessary costs and liabilities associated with take-home vehicles.

City vehicles will not be assigned to individuals as compensation or as a condition of employment. Generally, employees should use their own vehicles when conducting City business and will be reimbursed for the use of such vehicle or will receive a monthly vehicle allowance. Employees receiving a vehicle allowance shall not use City vehicles except with written approval by the City Administrator.

1. To ensure the City's take-home vehicle assignments are equitable and a justified use of public resources, take-home vehicles shall only be assigned under the following criteria:
  - a. Employees may be eligible for a take-home vehicle if they require the use of a City vehicle on a frequent basis, including but not limited to frequent attendance at required meetings or events during non-working hours, or in order to respond to after-hours and weekend emergencies.
  - b. Take-home vehicle assignments must be authorized in writing by the City Administrator, subject to the criteria set forth herein. Take-home vehicle assignments for the City Administrator and City Attorney positions must be authorized by the City Council.
2. Prior to assigning a take-home vehicle to an employee on an ongoing basis, the department head must request and receive written approval from the City Administrator or designee using the "Take-Home Vehicle Authorization Form" (Exhibit 1).
  - a. After receiving approval from the City Administrator or designee, the employee must sign the "Take-Home Policy Acknowledgement" and "Vehicle Assignment Acceptance & Understanding" Form, verifying that they have read and understand this policy. Department heads have the responsibility to inform the Finance Department that the assignment has been approved by forwarding them a copy of the employee's approved "Take-home Vehicle Authorization" Form so that fringe benefits withholdings can be applied to the employee's salary receiving the benefit.
  - b. City Administration will conduct an annual review of take-home vehicle assignments to ensure that they continue to meet the needs and best interests of the City.
  - c. Take-home vehicles may only be driven by authorized City employees or volunteers and shall not be used to transport non-City employees, except when authorized to conduct City business.
  - d. Except for de minimis personal use (defined by IRS Regulations as infrequent and of little value, such as stopping for a meal or personal errand to or from the worksite), take home vehicles may not be used to conduct personal business. This policy and practice ensures that take-home vehicle assignments are

assigned to those who must respond quickly and that they represent a prudent use of City resources.

- e. The vehicle shall be locked at all times while not in use and parked in a secure location. If the employee fails to take proper security measures, damage or theft may be the responsibility of the employee.
  - f. The Director of Public Works shall be responsible for maintaining a take-home vehicle assignment list.
  - g. Once the City Administrator or designee has approved a vehicle assignment, new requests are only necessary when changes in status (new employee, reassignment of duties, employee transfers, etc.) occur as part of the annual review.
3. In designated operations, employees on standby duty may be allowed to take their assigned City vehicle home at the discretion of their department head. City vehicles while on standby shall be utilized in accordance with all conditions outlined in this policy.

**E. IRS Reporting:**

- 1. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the personal use of government-owned vehicle is a taxable fringe benefit and is considered a form of pay, so the fair market value of such benefits must be included in the employee's wages unless specifically excluded by federal tax rules. Please refer to Administrative Policy 1.1 regarding the regulations as set forth by the IRS regarding government-owned vehicles provided to employees.
- 2. Employees authorized to use a take-home vehicle who do not qualify for one of the IRS's exempt categories, are subject to one of the three IRS valuation rules for reporting fringe benefit wages associated with personal use of the vehicle. For a summary of these IRS valuation rules please refer to Administrative Policy 1.1.
- 3. Department Heads are required to notify the Finance Department of an approved vehicle assignment by forwarding a copy of the employee's approved "Take-home Vehicle Authorization Form" within five (5) working days after approval.
- 4. Employees are required to submit a mileage log to the Finance Department within five (5) working days following the end of each month. This ensures that fringe benefits withholdings are timely applied to the salaries of those receiving the benefit.

**F. Automobile Allowance:**

1. Employees eligible to receive monthly automobile allowance are identified in the Fringe Benefits Policy. Any monthly automobile allowance shall not exceed the rates set forth in the Fringe Benefits Policy.
2. Each employee receiving an automobile allowance shall provide for the use of a passenger vehicle in good repair and appearance and insured at least to the extent required by state law.
3. Individuals authorized to receive the monthly automobile allowance must personally bear the expenses associated with the operation and maintenance of their vehicles. The City will not provide gas, oil, mileage, service or repair of any kind to personal vehicles.

**G. Seat Belts**

All vehicles used for City business, both City-owned and privately owned, shall be equipped with seat belts, which conform to the requirements of State law. It shall be the responsibility of the driver operating a vehicle on City business to ensure that all occupants of that vehicle are wearing seat belts while the vehicle is in operation.

**H. Mobile Communication Device, Cell Phone, and Computer Use**

Safe driving practices, as well as the California Vehicle Code, require the use of a hands-free device when using a mobile communication device during the operation of a motor vehicle. Employees shall not operate laptop computers, navigational devices, or any other device that may cause vehicle operator distraction while operating a vehicle in the course of conducting City business. Exception: Sworn law enforcement officers may use a wireless telephone while operating an authorized emergency vehicle, in the course and scope of his or her duties.

**I. Smoking Prohibited in Vehicles**

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is expressly prohibited in all City vehicles and/or equipment.

**J. Impaired Driving**

1. No driver may operate a vehicle when his/her ability to do so is impaired or influenced by alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances, prescribed or over-the-counter medication, or illness, fatigue or injury.
2. The employee driver is obligated to report to his/her supervisor any reason that may affect his/her ability to drive or operate a vehicle safely.

**K. Proof of Insurance**

Employee drivers must ensure that the vehicle's current insurance card is kept in the vehicle at all times.

**L. Accident Reporting**

1. Employees involved in any vehicle accident, regardless of the nature or severity, involving a City vehicle, shall, when possible, first check on the safety and welfare of all persons involved and seek immediate medical attention should it be required for themselves or others. If safe under the circumstances, move the vehicle to a location out of the way of traffic.
2. Drivers shall always have a law enforcement officer investigate any accident that involves a City vehicle. This will help ensure that City of Vernon is protected from unwarranted claims. Do not discuss fault with, or sign anything from anyone except for a police officer, a representative from the City's Finance or City Attorney's Office, or an authorized representative from the City.
3. Drivers shall notify their supervisor immediately of the accident and complete the Vehicle Accident Report. Making false statements on vehicle accident reports is strictly prohibited and could result in disciplinary and/or legal action.
4. Drivers shall cooperate fully with the City's Finance Department and/or City Attorney's Office in the handling of the claim.

**M. Traffic Violations**

1. All citations, fines, or other criminal penalties while operating a City vehicle or personal vehicle on City business are the personal responsibility of the driver. These costs are not reimbursable by the City of Vernon and must be paid promptly by the driver.
2. Any City employee who receives a traffic citation while operating a City vehicle or personal vehicle while on City business shall immediately report same incident to his/her supervisor.
3. Intentional abuse, moving violations, reckless operation, or negligent actions while operating any City vehicle or personal vehicle while on City business may result in the suspension of employee driving privileges, and/or further disciplinary action.



## TAKE-HOME VEHICLE AUTHORIZATION FORM

For all employees except the City Administrator and City Attorney, take-home vehicle assignments are subject to approval of the City Administrator. All use of City vehicles must be in compliance with the City Vehicle Use Policy. A new form must be submitted for changes in employee assignment or place of residence.

**Requesting Department:**

**Department Head Name:**

**Employee Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee's Home Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Miles from Home to Work Site:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Vehicle Make, Model, Year:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Vehicle's Fair Market Value:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Odometer Reading:**

The employee attends after-hours events or responds to after-hour emergencies on an average of \_\_\_\_\_ times per year.

**Describe the type of after-hours events (justification for Take-Home Vehicle Assignment):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate the category of vehicle assignment:**

- ☐ Qualified Non-Personal Use Vehicle (Exempt Vehicles defined in Section F(1)(a) of Policy)  
☐ All other Employer-Provided Vehicles (Non-Exempt Vehicles defined in Section F(2) of Policy)

**Assignment Approved:**      ☐ **YES**      ☐ **NO**

**City Administrator  
Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

***If Approved:***

**Employee Acknowledgement**

Your signature below indicates you have read, understand and are in compliance with the City Vehicle Use Policy.

**Employee Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Department Head  
Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_



## VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT ACCEPTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

### ACCEPTANCE:

My signature below affirms that I have received a copy of the **City of Vernon Vehicle Authorization and Use Policy (the "Policy")**. I have read and understand the terms of the Policy and I have addressed any concerns or questions regarding this Policy with my Department Head or designated Human Resource staff. I further understand that I am governed by the contents of this Policy, and it is my responsibility to remain familiar with all of the information contained. If I have questions regarding any aspect of the Policy, I will discuss these questions with my Department Head or designated Human Resource staff as necessary until I fully understand the policies and procedures of the City of Vernon. I understand that should this Policy be modified; I will be provided with a copy of the modification. Any violation of this Policy may be cause for termination.

Additionally, I acknowledge that I may be given authorization to operate a city-owned insured vehicle. I agree to:

- Regularly maintain and service the vehicle according to the service schedule outlined in the instructions provided by the fleet mechanic.
- Operate the vehicle in a safe manner and in compliance with the Policy.
- Complete the "Take-Home Vehicle Trip Log" and submit log within five working days after each month's end for fringe benefits withholding purposes.

I understand I am required to maintain a valid driver's license. Further, I herewith grant the City of Vernon the right to investigate my driver's license record at any time. My current driver's license is issued as follows:

State of: \_\_\_\_\_  
License Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to be responsible for all traffic and parking violations that occur while the vehicle is assigned to me. I agree to promptly report all accidents or incidents resulting in injury or damage to the vehicle or other property, no matter how slight.

I understand that sustaining this vehicle in a safe operating condition is my responsibility. If this vehicle becomes unsafe, it is my responsibility to notify my supervisor immediately.

I understand articles of this agreement apply regardless of who is operating this vehicle.

**I have read and agree to the provisions of this Vehicle Assignment Agreement and the requirements of the Vehicle Use Policy.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head Signature (Witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date