

**COLUSA COUNTY
DRIVING POLICY**

POLICY NUMBER: 501
DATE ADOPTED: 5 May 1998
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the responsibilities and rules for the use of County vehicles and equipment, and privately owned vehicles used for County business. This policy applies to County officers, employees, and other authorized individuals as specified in this policy. This policy supersedes all previous County vehicle policies and resolutions of the Colusa County Board of Supervisors related to these topics.

An exception to this policy shall be made for the Sheriff's Department as a result of its unique law enforcement function. The Sheriff's Department will develop and enforce its own written policy, a current copy of which shall be on file with the Risk Manager. This policy shall guide vehicle utilization of employees of the Sheriff's Department and other County employees engaged in law enforcement activities that are under the direction of the Sheriff.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Authorized County Driver** - Employees whose job description and/or assigned duties require the operation of a motor vehicle
- B. **Code of Safe Practices** - List of safe workplace practices.
- C. **County Employees** – Persons who have completed all prerequisites to County employment. This includes all Elected Officials, Department Heads, Employees, and persons on volunteer status. This also includes the University of California Employees/COOP Extension.
- D. **County Vehicles** - Vehicles owned by the county and driven in the performance of, or necessary to, or in the course of, the duties of County employment.
- E. **Defensive Driving** - Driving to prevent an accident in spite of the incorrect action of others and adverse driving conditions.
- F. **DSR** – Department Safety Representative.
- G. **Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)** – Vehicles owned by the employee and driven in the performance of, or necessary to, or in the course of, the duties of County employment.
- H. **Safety Restraints** - Includes seat belts, shoulder harnesses, and child restraints.

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- I. **Special Equipment** - Hi-lifts, high rangers, graders, mowers, cranes, or any unit which has special devices added for specific kinds of work.
- J. **Vehicle Incident** – Any occurrence involving a motor vehicle occurring in a place of employment or in connection with any employment, resulting in, or having the potential for injury, illness, or property damage in excess of \$500.00.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

The elected board of supervisors assigns the responsibility for the implementation of and compliance with this policy to the County Risk Manager.

B. RISK MANAGER:

- 1. Ensure that department heads, supervisors and employees fully implement and comply with this policy.
- 2. Ensure Department of Motor Vehicle license and medical certificate checks (for classes of licenses requiring such certification) be made regularly on safety sensitive employees who drive a vehicle on county business.

C. SAFETY OFFICER:

- 1. Provide support to county departments in the implementation of this policy.
- 2. Monitor all aspects of this policy and provide periodic status reports to the Risk Manager and/or County Board of Supervisors as requested.
- 3. Provide support to Department Safety Representatives in implementation of this policy.
- 4. Upon written request, may grant temporary driving privileges, to newly hired employees, prior to the Four Hour Defensive Driving Course being offered for the first time after the date of hire.
- 5. Will maintain records to assist the Department Heads in compliance with this policy and shall notify each department of their non-compliance employees before each Defensive Driving Course.

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D. DEPARTMENT HEADS:

1. Shall inform all employees of this policy standard and ensure employees acknowledge the reading of same by signing an "Acknowledgment of County Driving Policy" which shall be retained in the employee's personnel file.
2. Ensure that their supervisors and employees fully implement and comply with this policy.
3. Ensure the completion of the Incident/Hazard form resulting from a Vehicle Involved Incident.
4. Shall check with the Human Resources Director to ensure job descriptions for classifications requiring a drivers' license state that employees must continue to meet the established driving standards and that it is a condition of employment for that position.
5. Shall ensure driving standards are enforced consistently and fairly among all employees working in classifications where driving is required.
6. Are responsible for verifying that employees who drive on County business have a valid driver's license and that the license is the appropriate license for the vehicle(s) they are operating.
7. Are responsible for verifying that employees who drive their POV on County business have auto insurance. A copy of the insurance certificate will be filed with the County Clerk Recorder annually.
8. Shall ensure that all county vehicles have a county insurance card in the glove compartment. When departments procure a new vehicle, they will call Risk Management to get an insurance card for said vehicle.
9. Shall ensure that all new employees, including permanent and part time, who drive on County business, successfully complete the County sponsored Four Hour Defensive Driving Course within 30 days of hire.
10. Shall ensure that all employees, whether permanent or part time who drive on County business, successfully complete the County sponsored Two Hour Defensive Driving Refresher Course every two years following completion of the four hour course.

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11. Shall provide the County Safety Officer with a listing of all County Employees, both permanent and part-time, who will drive on County business, whether they use a County car or a POV.

E. SUPERVISORS:

1. Will ensure that before the initial use of any vehicle each day, the driver will walk around and inspect the vehicle. The inspection should include:

- a. Mirrors
- b. Steering
- c. Horn
- d. Overall cleanliness
- e. Brakes
- f. Fluid levels to include fuel.
- g. Lights and reflectors (if driving at night)
- h. Emergency equipment
- i. Tires

2. Ensure employees do not operate a County vehicle that appears unsafe. Supervisor will ensure that appropriate action is taken to correct any problems found while conducting the walk-around of the vehicle.

F. EMPLOYEES:

- 1. Employees shall comply with all provisions of this policy.
- 2. Employees shall operate all motor vehicles in accordance with state laws.
- 3. A valid driver's license, appropriate for the vehicle operated, must be in the possession of the operator any time a County vehicle is operated.

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4. If an employee's license is suspended for any reason, he or she must inform her/his supervisor immediately.
5. Employees will not engage in unsafe practices, including failure to use and to ensure that all passengers use all available safety restraints in the vehicle being operated. This requirement does not apply to motorcycles or to disabled individuals who cannot wear safety belts. Any defective safety belt shall be immediately reported to the employee's immediate supervisor.
6. Safety Restraints shall be worn by all occupants in the vehicle at all times when the vehicle is in motion. If children are being transported, they must be in the proper child restraint.
7. Vehicles are to be maintained in a safe operating condition. Unsafe vehicles are not to be driven. The employee is responsible for inspecting the vehicle prior to driving off the parking lot and for reporting any hazards to her/his supervisor immediately.
8. All employees who drive on county business shall be re-certified in the Defensive Driving Course offered by the Safety Officer every two years.
9. All new employees who require driving in the course of their employment are required to attend a Four Hour Defensive Driving Course offered by the Safety Officer within 30 days of hire.
10. Shall drive responsibly, anticipate emergency situations and make every effort to avoid accidents in the performance of their duties.

G. DEPARTMENT SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES (DSR):

1. Provide support within their department in the implementation of this policy.
2. Monitor all aspects of this policy within their department.

IV. DRIVING RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. Only county employees may drive county vehicles. Employees may not loan or lease a County vehicle to any non-county entity.

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- B. All drivers of county owned vehicles or those using their own vehicles pursuant to county business will comply with all applicable laws of the State of California.
- C. County vehicles are to be used for official business only.
- D. No employee, under any conditions, shall operate a vehicle or combination of vehicles if under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol. If the employee is taking over the counter medication, said employee will ensure medication does not impact their ability to drive a vehicle in a safe manner.
- E. Smoking is prohibited in all county vehicles including special equipment vehicles.
- F. County vehicles will not be parked in "No Parking" zones except in an emergency situation.
- G. No county vehicle of any type will be left unattended with the ignition key left in the ignition.
- H. When leaving a vehicle, set the parking brake and lock the doors.
- I. No vehicle will be in motion day or night with only its parking lights on.
- J. If it is necessary to use your windshield wipers, you will also ensure that your head lights are on.
- K. During periods of limited visibility, headlights will be turned on.
- L. The driver will ensure that windows, headlights, tail lights and wipers are clean and in operating order at all times.
- M. If a vehicle does not have a tailgate but is loaded, the driver of the vehicle will ensure that the load is secure and that overhangs are properly flagged in accordance with state law.
- N. Backing of vehicles when the driver does not have a clear view of the entire area behind the vehicle will be done with the assistance of a spotter. If a second person is in the vehicle he will get out and guide the vehicle using appropriate hand and voice signals. If the driver is alone he will get out of the vehicle and inspect the area behind before backing and then back with extreme caution.

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- O. Riding on the sides, tool boxes, running boards, tailgates, on roof, and/or standing or riding in the back of any truck or pick-up is prohibited
- P. Posted speed limits will be obeyed.
- Q. Drivers will direct their full attention to driving while their vehicle is in motion. Necessary inspections, such as street, trees, signs, etc., will be made only when the vehicle is at a complete stop.
- R. Trailers are to be fastened securely to hitches according to prescribed safety standards for the equipment being towed.
- S. All items which might be transported either in a truck or trailer, which can move around during transport, will be secured.
- T. If your vehicle appears to have an unsafe operating condition, contact your supervisor or department head.
- U. Employees must expect reckless, illegal and clumsy behavior on the part of other drivers and be prepared to adjust their driving to prevent accidents.
- V. Be especially courteous to pedestrians regardless of whether or not they have the right-of-way. Watch carefully for erratic behavior by children.
- W. Learn to recognize the hazards rural roads present.
- X. Employees with three at-fault accidents and/or moving violations within the last two years may not be allowed to drive in the course of their employment. In addition, the county may implement disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment if an employee is unable to perform the responsibility of operating a motor vehicle, if the position requires it.
- Y. Employees having any of the following within the last three years shall be prohibited from driving in the course of their employment and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment:
 - 1. Driving while under the influence (DUI) offense; or
 - 2. Driving while license is suspended or revoked offense; or
 - 3. Two reckless driving or speed contest violations; or

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4. A combination of any two of the offenses named in 1, 2 and 3 above.
5. Hit and Run.
6. Homicide, assault or manslaughter arising out of the operation of a vehicle.

V. DRIVING COUNTY VEHICLES ON COUNTY PROPERTY

A. Employees who are required to drive any county vehicle (including forklift, cart, and other types of motor vehicles) within the perimeters of the county property shall also be subject to those minimum eligibility standards indicated above in addition to the following:

1. Employees with three vehicle accidents within three years that involve county vehicles shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment if it is determined by the county that the accidents or damage to the county property or vehicle was preventable.

VI. DRIVING PERSONAL VEHICLES ON COUNTY BUSINESS

A. The operation of a county owned vehicle or a personal vehicle on county business may be a requirement of an employee's work performance. All standards for obtaining and maintaining a California Drivers License, as set forth in the Vehicle Code, are adopted as the standard for operation of all county owned vehicles and for the operation of personal vehicles when operated in the course of county business.

VII. CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

A. Talking on a cell phone or texting on a cell phone while driving a vehicle on County time is prohibited. Employees and volunteers are expected to pull to the side of the road for such activities.

B. Employees and volunteers will not write, send, or read text-based communication on an electronic wireless communications device, such as a cell phone, while driving a motor vehicle while on county business.

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VIII. COMMON CAUSES OF VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

A. Most accidents are caused by the following operator errors:

1. Following too closely: This dangerous habit results in the most serious accidents. Injury to the back and neck, often irreparable, is common in this type of collision. Employees operating a vehicle must be aware of their situation at all times, anticipate potential problems, and provide adequate spacing for other vehicles.
2. Improper lane changes: The lane change is always a hazardous movement. It should only be done with extreme caution and alertness. Traffic laws generally give the vehicle in a traffic lane the right of way over other vehicles. Always use the mirror and look around to verify that the lane is clear.
3. Improper backing: Backing up is generally considered the most dangerous maneuver in vehicle operation. Thorough training is needed on all aspects of backing including backing from a parking space, proper use of mirrors, proper clearance, and general attentiveness.
4. Improper parking: All County vehicles shall be properly parked in legal spaces, except in an emergency situation or when necessary for service or repair work. Vehicles will not to be left running or keys left in the ignition when the vehicle is unattended.

IX. REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS/TICKETS INVOLVING COUNTY VEHICLES

- A. Should the operator of a county vehicle be involved in an accident, the appropriate law enforcement agency shall be called to the scene to make a report when the accident results in personal injury or when property damage exceeds \$500.00.
- B. Employees shall immediately report to her/his department head any vehicle accident or incident. Failure of the employee to report such an occurrence may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. All damage to county property shall be reported verbally, as soon as possible, to the department head or employee's immediate supervisor and shall be followed by a written report. All information, including witness information, damage incurred, etc., shall be included.

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C. Drivers of county-owned vehicles will give the driver's license information to the other party and state that all communications regarding losses, injuries, etc., are to be directed to the Colusa County Risk Manager, 546 Jay Street, Suite 202, Colusa, California.

X. VEHICLE ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

A. The following procedures are to be followed when an accident occurs, whether or not there is property damage or personal injuries:

1. Immediately **report the accident** to your supervisor and to Risk Management.
2. A Vehicle Incident Form (attachment 1) and an Incident Hazard Report Form (attachment 2) must be completed and sent to Risk Management as soon as possible.
3. Give the location, make, model, type and color of vehicle, extent of damage, and the license number of the vehicle struck.
4. Place warning triangles and/or traffic cones to protect the scene, if available and able to do so.
5. Make no comments or statement regarding the accident, or vehicle damage except to law enforcement personnel, the employee's supervisor, and to Risk Management.
6. If the employee hits an unoccupied vehicle while driving a County vehicle and the owner cannot be located, the employee should leave a note on the damaged vehicle stating the employee's name along with the County name, address and phone number.
7. The operator of the county vehicle, or the police officer, must obtain the following information from the driver(s), passenger(s), and witnesses:
 - a. Name(s), addresses and phone numbers.
 - b. Driver license numbers (from drivers)
 - c. Vehicle license numbers (if applicable)
 - d. Insurance carrier

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8. If the accident occurs after hours or during the weekend,
 - a. Contact your supervisor immediately.
 - b. If your auto is damaged and needs to be towed, your supervisor will inform you of the following:
 - (1) Where to tow the vehicle
 - (2) What credit card to use
 - c. Attachments 1 and 2 must be submitted to the Supervisor and Risk Management the first workday following the event or when the injured party is able to give a statement of the occurrence.
 - d. If injuries are involved:
 - (1) Notify the local paramedics and law enforcement at 911.
 - (2) Inform the 911-dispatcher that there are injuries and to send an ambulance, if necessary.
 - (3) If able to do so, render first aid to all injured parties.
 - (4) Do not move vehicles until directed to do so by law enforcement unless it is necessary to prevent further accident or injuries.
 - (5) Except for the injured party, do not leave the scene until law enforcement arrives to make a report of the incident and injuries incurred.
 - (6) If you are injured, make sure you fill out the Workers' Compensation Forms and give them to your supervisor. Your supervisor will send them to Risk Management.

XI. DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND MEDICATION

- A. Employees shall not operate motor vehicles while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication that may affect driving proficiency.

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B. Employees who are on call shall not consume intoxicating beverages or take medications which can affect driving while on call. If a call to return to work is received by an employee who is not on-call and he/she has partaken of alcohol, drugs, or is on medication which affects driving, the employee shall notify her/his supervisor who will contact another employee.

XII. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

A. Special equipment such as hi-lifts, high rangers, graders, mowers, cranes, or any unit which has special devices added for specific kinds of work, will require formal training and instruction prior to use by a driver.

B. Passengers will ride only in seats designated for passengers. Employees riding in the back of crew trucks will remain seated when the vehicle is in motion.

C. Use of special equipment without training or authorization or the willful violation of any of these rules will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

D. Employees are prohibited from using cell phones while operating special equipment.

E. Smoking is prohibited in all county vehicles including special equipment.

XIII. INCIDENT RESPONSE

A. Notify appropriate law enforcement agency.

B. Immediately notify the County Safety Officer.

C. Immediately notify their designated Department Safety Rep.

D. Immediately respond to the incident site.

E. Remain at the scene (unless injured) until the investigation is completed and/or has been released by Law Enforcement or the Vehicle Incident Investigation Team.

F. Do not disturb incident scene (except to prevent further injury or damage or if ordered to do so by law enforcement authorities) until all of the following have been completed:

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1. The arrival of the immediate supervisor.
2. In the event the incident takes place out of county and/or in a location not readily accessible by the immediate supervisor, the supervisor will direct the involved authorized county driver to follow direction of law enforcement and then await instructions in a safe and secure location.
3. The arrival of the County Safety Officer or designated person.
4. The arrival of the DSR or alternate.
5. The entire scene has been photographed.
6. Involved employees and witnesses have been interviewed

XIV. TRAINING

A. New Employees:

1. Including permanent and part time who drive on County business will successfully complete the County sponsored Four Hour Defensive Driving Course within 30 days of hire.

B. All Other Employees:

1. Including permanent and part time who drive on County business will successfully complete the County sponsored two hour Defensive Driving Refresher Course every two years after completing the four hour course.

XV. RECORDKEEPING

A. Records required by Colusa County will be maintained as follows:

1. The Safety Office will maintain:
 - a. A copy of all sign-in sheets
 - b. A training spreadsheet with dates of training for all county employees.

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