



HAYS COUNTY USE OF COUNTY EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

Effective January 1, 2019

Vehicle Use and Operator Responsibilities

Employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines. Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. All employees operating county equipment and vehicles should inspect them daily and report any unsafe condition to their supervisor immediately. Supervisors must be notified if any equipment, machines, tools or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. It is the responsibility of all drivers and equipment operators to report any need for repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, or the failure to report a need for repairs may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Supervisors will respond to questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

County property, materials, supplies, tools, vehicles, and equipment are to only be used for Hays County business. Employees may not receive any income, compensation, or personal gain from individuals other than the governing body of Hays County for materials produced or services rendered while performing their Hays County jobs. Employees may not use Hays County facilities, property or equipment for outside employment, income, compensation, or personal gain. When the usage of county equipment by off-duty law enforcement officers is authorized, reimbursement for the usage must be made to the county per County Auditor requirements and applicable Hays County Sheriff and Constable Fees. If an employee is in doubt about a circumstance, they must obtain permission from the appropriate department head before proceeding. While performing county business employees may make what is considered a convenience stop so long as it does not require a detour from their direct travel route. This stop is limited to five or ten minutes and allows the employee the benefit of taking care of limited personal errands of little consequence and is not intended to be used for purposes that expend a greater amount of time. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

All vehicles purchased on or after October 1, 2015 shall be fitted with GPS tracking systems. The selection of a GPS tracking system will be coordinated with the County Auditor's office. Efforts will be made to utilize the same system across departments where viable. The supervising Elected

Official or department head is responsible for the administration of the tracking system within their department. The installation of GPS tracking systems and other electronic equipment should be coordinated with the IT Department.

Employees may not use county vehicles to transport minors except for official county business, or in the event of a family emergency when approved by the supervising Elected Official or department head.

Equipment and property purchased with monies received through grants shall be used and managed in accordance with established procedures as long as the equipment is used for the purpose intended.

Only authorized personnel shall be permitted to operate county vehicles. Drivers are to observe all laws and regulations for safe driving as defined by the State of Texas. Safety belts are to be used by all occupants of the vehicle. Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is prohibited. The possession of alcohol or illegal drugs in vehicles is prohibited unless it is required within the official duties of a Law Enforcement Officer. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Please refer to the Hays County Drug and Alcohol Policy for further information.

Hays County understands that it is convenient for employees to use their cell phones while driving. However, due to recent research about the safety of cell phone use while driving and in an effort to do everything possible to prevent workplace accidents the county discourages employee use of cellular phones while driving. Hays County recognizes that other distractions occur while driving, however, eliminating the use of cell phones while driving, is one way to minimize the risk of accidents. Therefore, while driving a Hays County owned/leased vehicle (including any machinery) you are advised to utilize hands free methods to communicate on your cell phone. State law prohibits the use of electronic messaging while driving, including text messaging and emailing. It is however recommended, that if possible you either stop your vehicle so that you can safely use your cell phone, or you should ask the caller for permission to contact them at a better and safer time.

All operators of county vehicles are required to maintain a valid State of Texas driver's license. Employees are responsible for notifying their department head of any change in status regarding their licenses.

Hays County maintains up to date liability insurance coverage on all vehicles owned by the county. Any employee involved in an accident while driving or riding in a county vehicle or equipment must report the incident to proper law enforcement authorities immediately so that an official accident report can be filed. All accidents must be reported no matter how minor. In no instance should the driver leave the scene of an accident before the police have made their investigation

and cleared the driver to leave. The employee must notify their department head and the Human Resources Department on the day of the incident. A copy of the official accident report must be forwarded to Human Resources as soon as the report is available. Employees may be required to participate in a defensive driving course at their expense. Course attendance is mandatory if it is found that the employee is considered at fault in a reportable accident.

All accidents require the completion of a Hays County Accident and Incident Report within 24 hours. If an accident occurs while operating a vehicle or equipment that involves noticeable bodily injury to a county employee or other persons the employee must participate in a drug screening within 24 hours. Any injuries that are not immediately noticeable following the accident must be reported to the Human Resources Department as soon as they become apparent and a description of the injury must be documented and added to the Hays County Accident and Incident Report. If an accident occurs while operating county equipment or a county vehicle that involves damage to any property, the employee must participate in a drug screening within 24 hours. The Human Resources Department will schedule the drug screening and coordinate with the administrative official. Drug screening tests that may be used include but are not limited to blood tests, breath-analysis, saliva tests, hair tests, as well as urinalysis or other scientific methods. All testing results will be kept strictly confidential by the county, unless required to be disclosed by a court order, or unless disclosure is otherwise permitted in writing by the individual who is the subject of testing. Hays County has adopted the Department of Transportation (DOT) “Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 49 CFR Part 382” as the minimum standard for testing. Hays County expressly reserves the right to initiate additional testing processes if it determines such to be advisable. A copy of this standard will be provided to DOT licensed drivers for their acknowledgement by their respective county department.

Employees who drive personal vehicles to perform county business are responsible for all damage incurred in the course of such business and are therefore required to maintain state minimum liability vehicle insurance coverage. Failure to do so can result in termination of employment. The county shall not be responsible for damages to a personal vehicle.

Departments within Hays County may institute further policies regarding Vehicle Use and operator responsibilities so long as they do not conflict with county policy.

Driving Record Review

A driving record review will be conducted by the Human Resources Department for all Hays County employees during the hiring process. The results of the review will be communicated with the hiring administrative official. A review resulting in ineligibility will result in a notification to the applicant that they do not meet the basic requirements for the position and are not eligible for hire if the position requires the operation of county vehicles. The inability to operate a Hays County

vehicle does not affect the applicant's eligibility for hire for positions not requiring the operation of a county vehicle.

Any employee that operates a county vehicle must maintain a valid, current Texas driver's license and a safe driving record. Employees are responsible for notifying their department head of any change in status regarding their licenses. Human Resources will annually perform a driving record review on all employees. Employees will not be able to operate fleet vehicles or drive their personal vehicle to conduct county business unless their driving record is satisfactory annually.

The eligibility to drive for applicants or employees will be determined by the following driving record review:

- All violations, including those that occur while off-duty or in a personal vehicle, within 36 months of the date of review will be considered.
- Automatic Ineligibility for:
Vehicular Manslaughter or Vehicular Homicide
Revoked, Suspended, or Cancelled Driver's License
Expired Driver's License
- 6 points:
Leaving the scene of an accident
Hit and run
Negligent Homicide
Driving Under the influence of drugs or alcohol
Unlawful use of driver's license
Driving while license is suspended
- 4 points:
At fault accidents
Driving on the wrong side of the road
Driving in the wrong lane
Turn from wrong lane
Failure to control vehicle
Illegal passing
- 3 points:
Speeding and all other minor moving violations (to include all other scheduled violations)
- Ineligible
An employee will become ineligible to operate a county vehicle when receiving within 36 months of the review date:

- a) a violation that results in automatic ineligibility; or
- b) a total of 12 points or more

- Warning Period

A total of between 8 and 11 points within 36 months of the review date will result in a written warning to the employee informing the employee that they have entered a warning period and they are in jeopardy of becoming ineligible to drive a county vehicle if their point total reaches 12 or more within any 36 month period. This warning period will result in semi-annual reviews, beginning 6 months from the date of the review resulting in the warning period. The semi-annual reviews will continue for the employee until the 36 month point total falls below 8. Within 30 days of entering the warning period the employee, at their expense, must satisfactorily complete a defensive driving safety course approved by the Human Resources Department. If during any review the 36 month point total equals or exceeds 12 points, the employee becomes automatically ineligible to operate a county vehicle.

If an employee's job duties require the operation of a county vehicle, the failure to maintain eligibility to operate a county vehicle will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Assigned Vehicles

Due to emergency response responsibilities the following employees are assigned vehicles and may be authorized to take county vehicles home regularly.

Law Enforcement Officers

Public safety personnel who are on an "on-call" status

Emergency Services Director

Transportation Department Director

Transportation Department Assistant Director

Transportation Department Equipment Superintendent

Transportation Department Maintenance Superintendent

Transportation Department Operations Superintendent

Transportation Department Budget and Financial Manager

Transportation Department Assistant Road Maintenance Superintendent

Transportation Department Construction Manager

Transportation Department Road Supervisors

Transportation Department Leads

Transportation Department Inspectors

Chief Environmental Health Specialist

Environmental Health Specialist-1

With the exception of Law Enforcement Officers and Emergency Management personnel hired prior to October 1, 2015, employees within the positions listed above may not take a county vehicle home without Commissioners Court approval unless they reside: a) in Hays County or b) within 20 miles from their principal office location if they reside outside of Hays County. All employees hired on or after October 1, 2015 for any position listed above must reside: a) in Hays County or b) within 20 miles from their principal office location if they reside outside of Hays County, in order to take a county vehicle home without Commissioners Court approval. It is understood that principal office locations may change from time to time for some personnel that are authorized to take county vehicles home regularly. Temporary changes in office locations will not result in a violation of this policy with respect to the distance from the principal office location. In the event a permanent change in the principal office location for a county employee is made and the employee is no longer authorized to take a county vehicle home per this policy, the supervising Elected Official or department head can request Commissioners Court approval to allow the employee to continue to take the vehicle home.

Employees not authorized to take a county vehicle home may be allowed to do so from time to time for specific situations when warranted and upon approval of the supervising Elected Official or department head.