

# Mobile County Motor Vehicle Operations Policy

**Purpose:** The Mobile County Commission is committed to insuring that its fleet operations are conducted in a safe and efficient manner. This policy addresses specific responsibilities of those employees whose job duties require that they operate county vehicles and equipment. It is the responsibility of these employees to familiarize themselves with and follow this policy and its requirements.

**Definition of County Vehicle:** A County vehicle is any vehicle or equipment that is owned, leased, rented or loaned to the Mobile County Commission.

**Definition of Authorized Driver:** An authorized driver is any employee who has been approved by the Mobile County Commission or Risk Management Coordinator to operate a County vehicle.

Authorized drivers shall not allow an unauthorized individual to operate their assigned County vehicle. Driving privileges may be suspended or terminated. Additionally, if unauthorized use results in an accident, the responsible employee may be required to make restitution for the damages.

**Driver Conduct:** Every operator of a County vehicle has a duty to drive in a safe and courteous manner. Drivers are expected to drive defensively and not in an aggressive manner.

Complaints from citizens of reckless driving by a County driver will be investigated and appropriate action taken which may result in the suspension or termination of driving privileges with the County.

## **Drivers License Requirements:**

**A.** Prospective and current employees whose job duties include the operation of a County vehicle must be in possession of a valid and current Alabama driver's license to include the appropriate class of commercial license for the vehicle being operated. A County employee whose license has been cancelled, revoked, suspended or expired shall not operate a County vehicle.

**B.** Any employee whose job duties include the operation of a County vehicle shall, within 24 hours, notify his/her department head of any major or minor violations against their driver's license as defined in the Motor Vehicle Report Guidelines or any changes in status. This reporting requirement applies to violations incurred while driving any vehicle – personal or County. Failure to report within 24 hours any violations against his/her driver's license or status changes may result in the employee's loss of County driving privileges.

## **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Requirements:**

Risk Management will annually review a current MVR for each employee authorized to drive a County vehicle to determine acceptability to drive said County vehicle. Risk Management will also conduct such a review for a new employee whose job requires the operation of a County vehicle or an existing employee who transfers to a position requiring the operation of a County vehicle. If the MVR contains violations that put the employee in "Borderline" status as defined by the attached County guidelines, the employee will be placed on probationary driving status for one year, conditional upon maintaining a clean motor vehicle record during that period. Additionally, the employee may be required to attend and complete a nationally recognized defensive driving course within 30 days of notification at his/her own expense. If a Mobile County Personnel Board sponsored Defensive Driving class is being offered and seats are available, the employee may, at the discretion of his/her department head, attend at no cost.

If the MVR contains a Major Violation or multiple Minor Violations that put the employee in a "Poor" status as defined by the attached County guidelines, the employee may be disqualified from operating a County vehicle for up to three (3) years, conditional upon maintaining a clean motor vehicle record during that period. Additionally, the employee may be required to attend a County approved defensive driving class at his/her own expense. If a Mobile County Personnel Board sponsored Defensive Driving class is being offered and seats are available, the employee may, at the discretion of his/her department head, attend at no cost.

**Based on the information in the MVR report, the County Commission reserves the right to refuse to allow any employee to drive a County vehicle.**

**Seat Belt Use:** Seat belt use in County vehicles is mandatory for all drivers and passengers. Failure to utilize seat belts may result in suspension of driving privileges with the County.

## **Vehicle Maintenance & Inspection:**

**A.** Each driver is responsible for insuring that their vehicle is in proper working condition prior to being placed in operation. This includes, but is not limited to, the following equipment:

- Brakes
- Tires and wheels
- Steering
- Lights and reflectors
- Horns
- Windshield wipers
- Mirrors

**B.** Each department will have inspection checklists for their large vehicles and specialized equipment as defined by their department that the operator will be responsible for using on a daily basis. Should any defects be discovered during these checks, it is the driver's responsibility to insure the problem is reported in a timely manner.

**C.** The driver is responsible for keeping the interior and exterior of the vehicle clean and neat in appearance. This means no trash or debris on the seats, floor or dash, and the exterior is not excessively dirty. The driver's supervisor or other designated employee will inspect the vehicle on a weekly basis using the Vehicle Inspection Checklist and take appropriate action for deficiencies. This form will be kept on file in the department.

**Note: Smoking is not allowed inside a County vehicle.**

Failure to properly maintain the interior and exterior of your County vehicle may result in disciplinary action.

**D.** In the event of inclement weather, the driver is responsible for taking reasonable steps to protect their County vehicle. The driver should follow any department policies regarding same.

**Vehicle Backing:** Vehicle backing is one of the most potentially dangerous operations involved in vehicle operations. Prior to backing any vehicle the operator must insure that no obstacles or personnel are behind the vehicle. In operating heavy equipment, a spotter is required when backing.

### **Accident Reporting:**

**A.** All drivers will be expected to follow the Rules of the Road. Any driver involved in a vehicular accident should take the following actions unless injuries or other circumstances reasonably prevent them from doing so:

- ? Immediately stop the vehicle. Do not leave the accident scene.
- ? Take whatever steps may safely be taken to prevent another accident from occurring.
- ? Notify law enforcement and supervisor immediately. Supervisor will notify the Risk Management Department.

**Failure to notify law enforcement will result in automatic one month suspension of driving privileges.**

**B.** As per the County of Mobile Drug-Alcohol Policy, the employee is required to submit to drug and alcohol testing as soon as possible but not later than 8 hours following the accident. **Failure to do so will be deemed refusal to submit to said testing.** *Section 4.0 of the Mobile County Drug-Alcohol Policy states: Disciplinary action may be taken against an employee subject to the foregoing testing for violation of any of the following, but not limited to: (1) testing positive on a confirmed*

*test; (2) refusing to submit to testing or to provide blood, alcohol or breath specimens; (3) refusing to execute a release/consent form for testing; (4) failure to notify the MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION of the use of legitimate medication which may endanger safety; (5) failing to cooperate with an investigation or search. Infraction of any of the above items may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination without warning.*

**C.** The driver shall complete the Mobile County Vehicle Report Form in detail which shall be reviewed by the department head and sent to the Risk Management Department within three business days after the accident. However, if the County driver is at fault, the Accident Report Form shall be faxed to the Risk Management Department within 24 hours. A Department of Public Safety SR-13 Form must be completed by the driver and mailed to the Department of Public Safety if applicable.

**Note: Refer to Accident Reporting Procedures for details and phone and fax numbers.**

**D.** Employees who fail to report accidents involving County vehicles may have driving privileges suspended or terminated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Review of Vehicle Accidents:**

**A.** All accidents involving County vehicles will be reviewed by Risk Management for the purpose of determining if the accident was preventable. If Risk Management believes the accident was not preventable, a memo will be sent to the employee's department head to that effect. If it is determined that the accident was preventable, it may, at the discretion of Risk Management, be referred to the Accident Review Board (ARB) for further review.

**B.** The ARB will consist of three members: two from the County Commission staff and one from the employee's department. Employees may be required to appear before the ARB when their accident is being reviewed. If so, the ARB will provide written notice at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the hearing. The employee may bring witnesses or legal representation.

**C.** It is the responsibility of the ARB to conduct hearings to review the cause of the accident, make recommendations for corrective action, and make other recommendations as necessary. The review will be based on all pertinent information, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ? Written reports related to the accident
- ? Number of previous preventable accidents while operating a County vehicle within the past three (3) years
- ? Severity of the loss
- ? Contributing/mitigating circumstances to the accident
- ? The egregious/wanton nature of the accident
- ? The employee's work record
- ? The employee's driving record

**D.** All actions taken by the Accident Review Board shall be kept on file in the County Commission Office and a copy shall be provided to the appropriate elected official, or department head, and the employee.