

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Policies & Procedures

Use of Town Vehicles & Personal Vehicles for Town Business

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of Town vehicles and privately owned vehicles when used to conduct Town business. Town employees who need transportation for the performance of their duties will either have a Town vehicle assigned or available to them, or be adequately reimbursed for the use of a privately owned vehicle when such use is authorized.

Personnel requiring transportation in the performance of their official duties are expected to conform to the policies set forth herein. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to assure that employees under their supervision conform to this policy.

Vehicle Use

1. Assigned Vehicles for On-Call Personnel:

Personnel who are on-call for emergencies are assigned Town vehicles (First Selectman, Director of Public Works, Fire Marshal, Foreman, Assistant Foreman, and Animal Control Officer). The assigned vehicles may be used for commuting to and from work on a regular basis, used to obtain meals while on duty, driven to evening meetings and used for out-of-town travel on Town business. Under no circumstance shall any family member or any other unauthorized individual be permitted to drive any Town vehicle.

2. Town Vehicles:

Personnel who use Town vehicles (except on-call personnel) shall park them in the Town Hall parking lot overnight. Town vehicles are to be used strictly to conduct Town business. Use of Town vehicles to conduct personal business is prohibited.

If an employee wishes to use a Town vehicle, the employee must obtain authorization by the respective Department Head or the First Selectman. A copy of the employee's driver license must be on file in the Finance Office. The Town reserves the right to obtain a copy of the employee's DMV driving record.

Passengers, other than Town employees, are not allowed in Town vehicles unless required to conduct Town business or authorized by the First Selectman. Under no circumstances shall any unauthorized individual be permitted to drive any Town Vehicle.

3. Privately Owned Vehicles Used to Conduct Town Business:

A privately owned vehicle may be used for transportation in the performance of official Town business upon approval of the Department Head or the First Selectman, when a Town vehicle is not available or under special agreement approved by the First Selectman.

Employees shall be compensated for privately owned vehicle usage (**form attached**) at the prevailing IRS rate per mile.

No employee shall use a personal vehicle on official Town business unless approved in advance and a certificate of insurance is first submitted to the First Selectman (**form attached**). Employees are required to maintain liability insurance on privately owned vehicles used on Town business at a level not less than \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 combined single limit for bodily injury and/or property damage. The Town carries limits of \$1,000,000 with an additional \$10,000,000 in excess liability insurance. Proof of insurance will be required for mileage reimbursement.

Employees are personally responsible for insuring privately owned vehicles for physical damage claims including but not limited to glass, theft, vandalism and collision. The Town does not provide any excess physical damage coverage; however, if an employee is involved in an accident while on official Town business, the Town of Ellington shall reimburse the employee for the policy deductible up to a maximum payment of \$500. Payment will be made upon receipt of all documentation required including proof of payment from the employee's insurance carrier.

Recordkeeping

Any employee who uses a Town vehicle on Town business shall keep a record on a log (**form attached**), to be supplied by the Town, of mileage, destination, time and purpose of trip. The record log, along with the completed log forms, will be kept with the keys to the vehicle.

Financial Responsibility

Employees operating Town automobiles are protected against claims for property damage and/or bodily injury arising out of the use of that vehicle when (a) the employee is acting in the performance of his/her duties and within the scope of his/her employment; and, (b) the damage is not the result of a willful, malicious or intentional act.

Employees operating Town vehicles outside the performance of their duties and scope of employment and without the written permission of the First Selectman shall be held responsible for property damage, including but not limited to the reasonable value of wear and tear on the car, and/or personal injury arising out of such unauthorized use.

Employees using privately owned vehicles on official Town business are provided liability coverage by the Town on an "excess" basis, secondary to any other collectible insurance. This does not include physical damage coverage to the employee's vehicle (comprehensive and collision). Mileage reimbursement payments anticipate insurance costs borne by the owner of the vehicle; therefore, any privately owned vehicle used on business must be covered by insurance with minimum limits as set forth herein. The mileage reimbursement rate will be determined by IRS guidelines.

Conduct in the Use of Motor Vehicles

Employees using Town or personal vehicles shall use appropriate caution in their driving habits and abide by all applicable laws governing both emergency and non-emergency use. All Town employees are required to use seat belts when operating a Town vehicle and when operating a privately owned vehicle in the conduct of official Town business. Operation of a Town vehicle or a personally owned vehicle without a valid driver's license is expressly prohibited.

Markings

All Town vehicles shall be identified by a Town seal displayed on each side of the vehicle except for vehicles assigned to the police and First Selectman. All vehicles shall bear municipal license plates. No private equipment, decorations, stickers or advertisements shall be affixed to a Town vehicle.

Maintenance of Town Vehicles

Mechanical problems of which the operator becomes aware shall be reported to the Department of Public Works immediately.

Doors shall be locked and windows closed when vehicles are not being used.

Under no circumstance shall a privately owned vehicle be fueled, maintained or otherwise serviced by the Town of Ellington, even if the vehicle is being used for municipal purposes.

The Town reserves the right to charge individual drivers of Town vehicles for costs of repairs due to carelessness and/or damages beyond normal wear and tear.

Employees are expected to leave the interior of the vehicle in the same condition as they found it; remove all trash and belongings.

Complaints

All complaints concerning Town vehicles, drivers or passengers shall be immediately investigated by the Supervisor. The results of the investigation shall be reported in writing to the First Selectman. The report shall contain the following: Name, address and phone number of the complainant; name and operator's license number of the driver; summary of the complaint; findings of the investigation; remedial action taken, if any.

Fines and Charges

Parking fines and moving violations are the personal responsibility of the vehicle operator. All such fines and charges must be reimbursed to the Town if necessary. If any fines, charges or other bills owed to the Town by the employee pursuant to this policy are not paid within three (3) months of the date they are incurred, the Town will request authorization to deduct proper legal amount from the employee's paycheck after one (1) written warning to the employee.

Penalties and Discipline

Employees with poor driving records may have the privilege of using a Town vehicle revoked. Each employee using a Town vehicle shall provide the Town with a copy of his or her driving record annually, if requested by the Town.

Accident Reporting Procedures

Employees involved in an automobile accident while conducting Town business must follow the following procedures:

1. Remain calm. Do not argue.
2. If possible, move your vehicle out of harm's way. Stop the vehicle and turn off the ignition.
3. Make sure everyone is all right. Call for medical assistance if necessary.
4. Contact the police. By reporting the accident to the police and filing a report, you will help protect the Town from potential liability claims and legal action.
5. Use the Town of Ellington Vehicle Accident Report Form* (**form attached**) to record the following information:
 - Names, addresses, driver's license numbers and insurance company information.
 - Note weather and road conditions.
 - Record the names and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
6. Take a photograph of the damage if a camera is available.
7. Submit Town Vehicle Accident Report form to the Finance Office. The Finance Office will notify the Town of Ellington insurance carrier.

**Town vehicles will contain a supply of the Vehicle Accident Report form to assist the employee with the above procedures.*

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Use of Town Vehicle & Personal Vehicles for Town Business Policy shall result in discipline, up to and including termination.

All records, files, documents, equipment and other materials, or copies thereof, relating to the Town's business, shall be and remain the sole property of the Town. These materials shall not be removed from the Town's premises except when required in connection with the performance of an employee's duties for the Town, and shall be promptly returned to the Town and not retained by any employee upon request at any time and upon termination of employment with the Town. Employees must return all Town property in their possession by their last day of employment.

Complete Acknowledgement Form on Page 5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
Use of Town Vehicles & Personal Vehicles for Town Business Policy

Please complete and submit to Human Resources.

I have read and understand the Town of Ellington Use of Town Vehicles & Personal Vehicles for Town Business Policy and agree to follow all policies and procedures that are set forth therein for the duration of my employment with the Town of Ellington. I am aware that violations of this policy may subject me to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment.

Furthermore, I understand this document can be amended at any time.

Employee Printed Name

Employee Signature

Date