



Alpena County Vehicle Use Policy
Draft for Consideration by the Personnel Committee
June 4, 2024

PURPOSE

The County of Alpena has the responsibility to provide a safe work environment for its employees, and to ensure the responsible use of taxpayer property. As such, the purpose of this policy is to establish the duties, responsibilities and expectations associated with driving on the job (including County vehicles, rental vehicles and personal vehicles) and to ensure that any employee who operates a County-owned vehicle understands the responsibilities associated with operating that vehicle. Employees should familiarize themselves with this policy.

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Scope

This policy applies to all County employees (excluding the Sheriff's department) who operate a vehicle for County business, whether it is their own vehicle, a leased rental vehicle, or a County- assigned vehicle.

Requirements

All County employees who operate a vehicle, whether their own or a County vehicle, must obtain and maintain a valid Michigan Driver's License as well as any special endorsement required for their individual operation of specialized vehicles (trucks, hazardous chemicals, passengers, etc.). Employees using County vehicles must produce, upon request by Human Resources, a valid Michigan Driver's License for inspection. County employees must obey ALL traffic regulations and laws. All policies, procedures, rules and regulations of Alpena County shall apply when operating a vehicle for business use. Unless otherwise determined by law, the driver is personally liable for any traffic or parking violations received while driving their own or a County vehicle. Failure to comply with this policy shall be considered a major violation and will be grounds for restriction of driving privileges with or without a County vehicle and disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Responsibilities When Driving on the Job

1. General Operation of a Vehicle

County employees are expected to exercise courteous driving behavior as representatives of the County. Complaints of discourteous driving will be investigated by the Department Head or the Human Resources Department and those found to have violated the law and/or any County policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

2. Parking

All vehicles will be parked legally and in a safe and secure parking area. Irregular parking may be expected in emergency situations, however, on routine business, employees are expected to park vehicles in “legal” parking areas only. Vehicles shall be locked at all times while parked.

3. Alcohol and Drugs

Employees will not operate a vehicle for business use when they have consumed alcohol, drugs, narcotics or any other substance. Employees will not transport or possess alcohol or contraband in an assigned vehicle unless it is a specific part of the job. An employee must report to their Department Head and/or Director of Human Resources that they have been prescribed and are taking a medication that may impair their ability to operate a vehicle. An employee may be sent for an independent medical evaluation to determine if, while taking this medication, they are unable to drive on the job. All County employees are required to report any Driving While Impaired (DWI) arrest, or any other drug or alcohol arrest related to driving, whether on or off duty, to their supervisor. The employee’s driving privileges will be suspended pending final disposition by the courts. Failure to report the arrest shall be grounds for disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

4. No Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all County owned vehicles. This includes but is not limited to tobacco, vapes, e-cigarettes, etc.

5. Seat Belts

Any person, whether staff or citizen, driving or riding in a County vehicle, or conducting County business using their own personal vehicle or rental vehicle, shall wear a seat belt whenever the vehicle is in motion.

6. Passengers

Only passengers on official County business are allowed in County vehicles.

7. Traffic Convictions and Accidents

Staff shall immediately report all traffic violations/convictions to their Department Head and Human Resources. Excessive violations or a major violation that result in staff’s inability to perform the essential functions of their job may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Staff involved in an accident while driving a County vehicle, or conducting County business using their own personal vehicle, shall notify their Department Head and County Administrator as soon as possible. Alpena County will investigate all accidents involving damage to County property, private property, and/or injuries. Human Resources will be notified immediately in cases of injury to an employee or third party. Staff involved in an accident while driving a County vehicle, or conducting County business using their own personal vehicle, may be sent for a medical evaluation.

The circumstances noted below will be cause for individuals being considered disqualified for driving privileges when they are driving a County issued vehicle and/or when they are traveling in their own vehicle on County business:

- Conviction of a driving-related felony.
- Loss of driving privilege through suspension or revocation of license due to an unsatisfactory driving record as defined by the Michigan Secretary of State.
- An at-fault accident resulting in a fatality (an at-fault accident is defined as one in which the individual has been fined, sued, and received an adverse judgment, the individual's insurance company settled for damages to other party, or the individual settled out of court or otherwise was determined to be liable).
- Accumulation of more than eight (8) points on the driving record within the last three (3) years.
- Conviction of any alcohol/drug related offense in the last three (3) years or two or more alcohol/drug-related convictions within any time period.
- Conviction of driving while license was suspended or revoked for moving violations within the last three (3) years will result in loss of driving privileges.
- In the event that an employee accumulates six (6) points or has more than two (2) events where points are added to their record within one (1) year, the employee may be required to take a driving class.

8. Automobile Insurance

Employees driving a non-county vehicle for County business must maintain and provide proof of insurance for that vehicle upon request.

9. Assignment of a County Vehicle

County vehicles may be assigned to specific County personnel or assigned for occasional use to support overall County operations. Such assignments may include, but are not limited to, administrative staff and other staff likely to make an emergency response. All County vehicles shall be properly operated, utilized and maintained by the assignees.

Employees will be assigned County vehicles to ensure their availability to the County and to allow the constant monitoring of County operations and providing of County services. Assigned vehicles shall be made available to other County functions when deemed necessary by the employee's immediate supervisor. When the assigned staff is on vacation, absent, or on light duty, their vehicle may be reassigned.

Employees that are assigned a County vehicle are expected to utilize their assigned vehicle, prior to using their personal vehicle, while traveling for County business, unless pre-approved by their Department Head and County Administrator.

Assignment of a County owned vehicle is not guaranteed and may change based on the needs of the department or the County. The County reserves the right to suspend the privilege of an assigned vehicle for any reason.

10. Over-Night/Take Home Privileges and Off Duty Use

On a case-by-case basis, the Department Head and County Administrator may authorize temporary overnight take-home privileges for employees. In those instances, the employee must have been attending an authorized meeting as an official representative and it is not in the best interest of cost and safety to return the vehicle to its normal location. In such instances, the Department Head must document for file the temporary overnight privilege to indicate the justification for the action.

Staff may be permitted to use their vehicle while off duty, but only when their Department Head and County Administrator determine that operations are enhanced by doing so. The purpose of use must be documented by the Department Head and filed.

11. Maintenance of a County Assigned Vehicle

It is the responsibility of the assigned employees to arrange for and ensure the completion of, regular maintenance (oil, grease, lube, etc.), and repair work. Employees will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred for these services.

The assigned employee shall be responsible for the appearance and cleanliness of their assigned vehicle. This includes but is not limited to the inspection of fluids, proper tire inflation, body damage or defects, and audible indications of mechanical defect.

Employees shall refrain from altering the body, general design, appearance, markings, mechanical or electrical system of the assigned vehicle including bumper stickers unless approved by their Department Head.

Employees using vehicles shall ensure the vehicle is adequately fueled (at least 1/2 tank). Employees shall report any vehicle malfunctions to their supervisor for corrective action.

Alpena County will not be responsible for any personal equipment placed in County vehicles.

12. No Right to Privacy

County vehicles are the property of Alpena County and as such, are subject to inspection, audit, and search by County officials. This includes the right to place tracking devices on County vehicles and monitor their whereabouts without notice to employees. The County Administrator shall designate persons authorized to conduct inspections, audits, searches, and monitoring.

13. Report to Board of Commissioners

A report will be delivered to the Board of Commissioners, upon request, which lists the following: department; employee name and residence; type of vehicle; and reason for authorization to take the vehicle home at night.

Note: This policy may differ for those employees who are members of recognized unions, organizations, or associations. Any questions related to the content of this policy, or its interpretation, should be directed to Human Resources.