

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 11, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #34: CITY VEHICLE USE POLICY AND SIZE OF CITY'S FLEET

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Fannon's request to provide information about the City's policy for the use of City-owned vehicles by City employees as well as to describe recent changes in the overall size of the City's fleet. Attached to this memo are the City's Administrative Regulations 7-2 and 7-3, which cover the Motor Pool Operations and Use of City Vehicles in more detail.

The overall size of the City fleet is projected to decrease by approximately 56 units, from approximately 988 units at the beginning of FY 2012 to approximately 932 units in FY 2013. The term "units" is used to describe and include all City vehicles and equipment (i.e. sedans, vans, pickup trucks, buses, fire apparatus, specialty vehicles, EMS units, garbage trucks, street sweepers, trailers, mowers, etc.). With the opening of the Eisenhower Fire Station in calendar year 2014, we can expect a slight increase in the total City vehicles above the 2013 number. The reason these numbers are approximate is that the actual number of vehicles in the City's fleet changes frequently based on the purchase and disposition of City-owned vehicles and equipment.

The projected reduction in the size of the City fleet in FY 2013 is primarily due to the elimination of older vehicles that had been retained to provide "loaner" vehicles to operating agencies when the agency's assigned fleet vehicles were brought in for service or involved in an accident. The decision to eliminate the "loaner" category of vehicle was made primarily to reduce maintenance and fuel costs attributable to older vehicles. The City recently awarded a rental car contract to provide operating agencies with the option of short term rentals in the event that their assigned vehicle is made unavailable due to maintenance, repair or accident. The projected reduction in the size of the City's Fleet is also partially attributable to the elimination of retained vehicles assigned to specific departments based on need and utilization and the increased use of the City's motor pool program.

The City's Administrative Regulation A.R. 7-3 (Attachment 1), the policy for the use of City owned and leased motor vehicles, describes three categories of vehicles: assigned vehicles; pool vehicles; and take-home vehicles. Each vehicle category has different regulations defining appropriate usage, but all vehicles are to be used to carry out City responsibilities and functions. While the user and use of each vehicle may vary, no City vehicle, other than to some extent Take-Home vehicles, may be used for personal or routine errands other than brief convenience

stops when genuinely necessary and to nearby restaurants for meals. The three categories of vehicles are defined as:

- Assigned Vehicles – Vehicles that are assigned to departments and agencies of the City and are dispatched and controlled by those departments including public safety and constitutional officers. This is the most common class of vehicle in the City.
- Pool Vehicles – Vehicles that are assigned centrally to the Department of General Services and are issued from either the Market Square Garage or the Fleet Services Division facility for use by City agencies on an hourly basis.
- Take-Home Vehicles – Vehicles authorized to be taken to the employees' homes during non-working hours including public safety and constitutional officers. The Police Department's In-City Take-Home vehicle program provides for a number of marked police cruisers to be taken home by officers who reside in Alexandria in order to provide a police presence, crime deterrent and sense of security for citizens in a number of areas throughout the City.

Departments with assigned vehicles have demonstrated that some or all of their business functions require the regular use of a City-owned vehicle by certain employees. The need for an assigned vehicle can either be for basic transportation and mobility purposes (e.g. social workers, code inspectors, etc.) or for trade and technical purposes (e.g. police officer, park manager, facility technician, etc.). These vehicles are not permanently assigned to a particular individual, but rather to a specific position or job function. The users of assigned vehicles are required to travel with enough regularity that relying on other transportation solutions such as a motor pool vehicle or public transportation would be extremely inefficient. In addition, some assigned vehicles provide technical capabilities or are used to carry equipment that could not be adequately reproduced with a motor pool vehicle or public transportation (i.e. code enforcement vehicle, police cruiser, garbage truck, etc.).

The City also provides access to motor pool vehicles for employees who have a more periodic need to travel locally and regionally for City business. The City's Administrative Regulation A.R. 7-2 provides regulations describing the procedures and appropriate use of the City's motor pool vehicles. Typically motor pool vehicles are used for travel to meetings, performing site visits, and attending training sessions. Although there are a few exceptions, the City tries to limit the use of motor pool vehicles to the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area and primarily during business hours. City employees currently utilize public transportation options in lieu of pool vehicles when it provides an efficient alternative, however, both the destination's proximity to public transportation and the specific service frequency that is offered during business hours often make the use of pool vehicles the most efficient choice for employees. Ultimately, the City's motor pool is designed to make the most efficient use of resources by minimizing travel times and holding the overall size of the fleet down. All City employees that utilize City-owned vehicles are required to attend and complete a Defensive Driving class sponsored by the City, maintain a valid driver's license from their state of residence, maintain a current City Motor Vehicle Operators Permit and maintain an up-to-date Pool Car Authorization card signed by the agency's department head.

The final category of City vehicle is regular take-home vehicles, which can be taken to an

employee's home during non-working hours in certain circumstances. These vehicles are authorized for specific positions by the City Manager through the department head. These positions are limited to those that may be required to report back to work at any time in response to emergency situations (e.g., public safety employees, certain department heads, etc.) or certain job-specific incidents (e.g., on-call building technicians, snow commanders during snow events, etc.) in an expedited manner. Per A.R 7-3, when commuting between work and home the user of a take home vehicle may make brief (i.e. no more than five minutes) convenience stops (e.g. to pick up some milk) when genuinely necessary. The exception to this is the Police Department in-City Take-Home marked vehicle program in which officers are encouraged to use their vehicles for in-City trips. Due to the sensitivity of the take-home vehicle practice, the Addendum to A.R. 7-3 provides a complete list of the positions by department authorized to take home City-owned vehicles. This list is revised as required to reflect agency operational needs and requirements. Over the last three years, the number of authorized take home vehicles has decreased by 30 vehicles. The revised Addendum to A.R 7-3 dated February, 2012 is attached which reflects the most up-to-date take home list by department and position.

Due to the highly visible nature of official City vehicles, the City frequently receives phone calls and emails from the public each year reporting or questioning specific situations. Staff always follows up on these inquiries and typically determines that the use of the City vehicle in question was appropriate. The City has effective processes and procedures in place to determine who is utilizing a City-owned vehicle and for what purpose at any given time. In circumstances where use of a City-owned vehicle is deemed inappropriate, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken per City administrative regulations.

Staff will continue to examine fleet management processes, procedures and best practices, making revisions and developing new processes as necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the City's fleet and to ensure that the City's fleet of vehicles and equipment are used only to support the mission of the City and its agencies.

Attachments: A.R. 7-2 – Motor Pool Operations
A.R. 7-3 – Use of City Vehicles including Revised Take-Home Addendum

STAFF:

Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services
Alfred Coleman, Deputy Director, General Services
Prab Rao, Division Chief, Fleet Services, General Services

Administrative Regulations Details

Supersedes:
A.R. 6-4 dated July
1, 1969

Title:
MOTOR POOL OPERATIONS

Number: 7 - 2

Effective Date: 05-
23-1983

Related Documents:
[Motor Pool Procedures](#)

Sections: I - IV

Chapter: General
Services

I. PURPOSE

A central motor pool is operated under the supervision of the Department of General Services. Cars assigned to the motor pool are available to all City employees whose duties require field trips but who are not assigned vehicles.

II. DEPARTMENT HEAD ACTION

- A. Each department head will submit a list of employees who are authorized to use motor pool cars. Lists will be submitted to the Director of General Services at once and will be revised as changes occur. See A.R. 6-24 regarding issuing of driver's permits.
- B. Each driver must obtain an authorization card (F-OMB-5036) for up to a 90-day period authorizing use of a pool car signed by the department head.
- C. Department heads will receive trip tickets at the end of each month that were used by their staff members. Department heads should review distances, destinations, and time periods of use that were charged to assure compliance with this Administrative Regulation.
- D. Department heads should ensure that staff is familiar with the procedures of the motor pool and are required to comply with these procedures (attached).
- E. Overnight and out-of-area use of motor pool cars must be authorized by the department head.

III. USE OF MOTOR POOL CARS

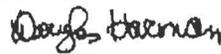
- A. Keys to motor pool cars are kept at the Cashier's Booth, Market Square Garage. Personnel should call the parking attendant (Ext. 4989) to determine availability of transportation before leaving their office for a field trip. The motor pool cars

are parked on the south and east side of the lower level.

- B. Each driver must complete the trip ticket provided and must report mechanical troubles as soon as they are observed.
- C. Upon the return of the vehicle, garage attendant inspects the vehicle for damage and fuel and tells the employee where to park the vehicle. If there is less than ¼ tank of fuel, the attendant may ask the employee to fuel the vehicle. The employee should park the car, return the keys to the attendant with a completed trip ticket, and should then complete the trip log. The garage attendant should return the employee's authorization card.
- D. No motor pool or assigned car shall be used for overnight commuting (residence) purposes in or outside of the City. The only exception to this policy are stipulated in A.R. 7-3, D (3).

IV. DIRECTOR OF GENERAL SERVICES ACTION

- A. The Director of General Services is responsible for control of the motor pool and will prescribe forms and procedures required for efficient operation, and will cause necessary maintenance of vehicles to be performed.
- B. Charges for use of motor pool vehicles will be apportioned monthly to each department on the basis of actual mileage or hours of use.



Douglas Harman
City Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Supersedes: A.R. 7-3 dated August 15, 1991	Title: USE OF CITY VEHICLES	Number: 7 - 3
		Effective Date: March 28, 2008
Related Documents: List of Authorized Users of Take- Home Vehicles		Sections: I - IV
		Chapter : General Services

I. PURPOSE

To define a policy for the use of City owned and leased motor vehicles.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Assigned Vehicles - Vehicles that are assigned to departments and agencies of the City and are dispatched and controlled by those departments.
- B. Pool Vehicles - Vehicles that are assigned centrally to the General Services Department and are dispatched from either the Market Square Garage or the Fleet Services Division facility for the use of City agencies.
- C. Take-Home Vehicles - Vehicles authorized to be taken to employees' homes during non-working hours.
- D. Local Trip - Any trip within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area, generally within 30 miles of Alexandria.
- E. Marked Vehicle- A marked vehicle is a City vehicle that has City seals on the sides and rear of the vehicle, "Public Use" tags, and a vehicle number designation affixed to it.
- F. City- The City of Alexandria, Virginia
- G. Authorized Users ("users"): Full-Time, Part-Time, Seasonal, or Contract staff employed by the City of Alexandria who possess a valid Municipal Motor Vehicle Operators Permit issued by the City Attorney's Risk Management Division and a Pool Car Authorization card issued by their Department or Agency Head. The employee must be operating a vehicle class for which he or she has been approved by a qualifying official in Risk Management, and must possess a valid driver's license issued by the employee's state or territory of residence.

III. POLICY

- A. Authorized Uses - City vehicles shall be used when necessary to carry out the functions and responsibilities of City departments and agencies.
 - 1. Operators are to be authorized users of the City, as defined in Section II (G) above. Users shall satisfy the qualifications set forth at the discretion of Department and Agency Heads and within parameters defined by the Risk Management Division of the City Attorney's Office.

2. Authorized passengers of City vehicles are those clients, employees, residents, or guests of the City who are being transported in support of an official City purpose or function. The City Manager or designee must specifically approve any exception to this policy.
 3. Trips for personal purposes are prohibited; although, vehicles that are dispatched to the field or on trips may be taken to nearby restaurants for meals and to other non-City facilities for meetings and similar City-business-related activities or events. City vehicles are not to be used for routine personal errands.
 4. When commuting with a take-home vehicle, the driver must take a direct route between home and work. Also, when commuting between work and home, and only then, brief (i.e., no more than five minutes) convenience stops (e.g., to pick up some milk) may be made when genuinely necessary. Routine convenience stops are not authorized. In making such stops, drivers must exercise their best judgment in concluding that the necessity of the stop outweighs the negative appearance that the stop may have to the public.
 5. At all times, employees must operate City vehicles in a courteous manner and obey all traffic signs, posted speed limits, and other State motor vehicle laws. All driver's licenses and insurance coverage are to be valid and up-to-date.
 6. Employees with assigned or take-home vehicles are expected to maintain the appropriate gas, oil and fluid levels. Employees must bring any issues regarding maintenance of, or equipment for, their City vehicle to the attention of the Director of General Services or his designee immediately.
 7. Smoking or use of other tobacco products while operating or inside a City vehicle or piece of motorized equipment is prohibited.
 8. The use of wireless telecommunications devices (as defined under A.R. 10-7) is strongly discouraged while operating a City vehicle, unless the vehicle is parked or the wireless device is operated using a "hands-free" mode. In all cases, wireless device use must comply with State law.
- B. Assigned Vehicles - Department Heads should manage their assigned vehicles so as to maximize their utilization and to maintain proper care and accountability.
1. To the extent possible, vehicles should not be assigned permanently to an individual. Central dispatching and key control assures the best utilization.
 2. Department Heads must establish assignment systems to assure that there is personal accountability for the safe and courteous operation of vehicles and for their proper care and protection.
 3. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that only qualified operators as defined in Section II (G) are operating departmental assigned vehicles.
- C. Pool Vehicles - Pool vehicles are available at the Market Square Garage and at the Department of General Services/Fleet Services Division shops. These vehicles are dispatched to meet departmental needs that exceed the availability of assigned vehicles. Some departments that do not have assigned vehicles will rely completely on the pool vehicles for their transportation. The operation of the motor pool shall be as outlined in AR 7-2.

D. Take-Home Vehicles:

1. Regular take-home use (pool or assigned vehicle) is authorized only to positions expressly stated by the City Manager or designee. Due to the need for public accountability, authorized users of Take-Home vehicles are now listed as an addendum to this Administrative Regulation and shall be reviewed and revised annually at the conclusion of the fiscal year by the Office of Management & Budget,
2. If any of the personnel in positions listed in the Addendum reside outside of the City, then the take-home use will not be authorized without the prior written approval of the City Manager or designee.
3. Department Heads that have take-home vehicles within their organization are responsible for reporting the names, addresses, and vehicle numbers of persons operating these vehicles to the Director of Finance, with a copy to the Director of General Services. The reports shall be submitted by January 1 of each year and updated during the year as necessary. The Director of Finance shall determine taxable earnings, exemptions, amounts to be taxed, etc. All employees with take-home vehicles shall be listed regardless of their tax status. Regular passengers of take-home vehicles must also be included in the report.
4. Any salaried employee who must return to work during non-working hours (evening, holiday, weekend days) may take a car home for that evening, holiday, or weekend provided that he or she has a City residence and has the prior authorization of the Department Head.

E. Out-of-Town Trips:

1. City vehicles should normally not be taken on trips that exceed 250 miles from Alexandria.
2. Before departing on an out-of-town trip, drivers should obtain a City fuel card from General Services, be certain that they are familiar with the procedures outlined in the pamphlet, City Shop Maintenance Services, regarding emergencies and repairs outside the Metropolitan area, and depart with a full tank of fuel from the City fuel facility.
3. With the Department Head's approval an employee may take a City vehicle to his/her residence prior to an early morning trip departure the following day. An employee who returns from an Out-of-Town trip (any trip not defined as Local in Section II-D of this regulation) may, with the Department Head's approval, keep the vehicle overnight if the employee's return is after City business hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays.

F. Vehicle Markings:

1. All City vehicles shall be painted white, display a vehicle number, and bear "Public Use" tags unless the vehicle's primary use is for plainclothes or undercover investigative work. Additionally, the City seal shall be conspicuously affixed to the front driver and passenger doors as well as the vehicle's rear (except as previously noted).

2. The only authorized vehicle markings shall be those applied by the Department of General Services/Fleet Services Division or the Fire Department Maintenance Shops and shall include inspection stickers, identification numbers, City seals, City WEB decal, public safety emblems, and other emergency vehicle markings. No bumper stickers, flags, streamers, window stickers, advertisements, etc., shall be affixed without specific approval from the Deputy City Manager.

G. Citations (to include citations given by automated enforcement systems e.g. "red light cameras"):

1. Citations for moving violations that employees receive while operating City vehicles must be reported immediately to the employee's Department Head. The employee shall be personally financially responsible for fines imposed, and will not be granted Administrative Leave to attend Court proceedings relative to the violation. Additionally, City funds shall not be used to directly pay fines imposed for moving violations or to reimburse employees remitting said fines unless expressly authorized in writing by the City Manager or designee.
2. Parking citations are the personal financial responsibility of the employee and must be paid promptly. Department Heads are responsible for identifying delinquent employees and ensuring their compliance. Employees are not personally financially responsible for citations issued due to expired vehicle registrations, State Safety inspections, or faulty equipment unless the continued operation of the vehicle presents a hazard to other employees or the general public. The City Manager or designee may grant exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

IV. EXCEPTIONS AND APPEALS

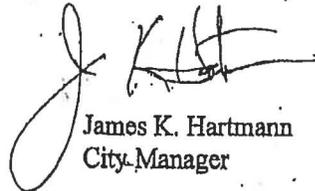
Exceptions and appeals to this regulation should be made to the City Manager or designee in writing. Individuals who are added to the "take-home" list as a result of appeals shall maintain a log book in the vehicle indicating all origins and destinations by date and time. The renewal of take-home additions shall be reviewed annually on the basis of the logbook entries.

V. DISCIPLINE

The personal use of a City vehicle, to include unauthorized commuting use, is considered as "misappropriation of public property" as defined in A.R. 6-20 under Group III Offenses.

VI. ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Department and Agency Heads may adopt more stringent internal policies, procedures and controls, provided these are not in conflict with City Administrative Regulations or any provision of State or Federal law.



James K. Hartmann
City Manager

Addendum to Administrative Regulation 7-3 ("Use of City Vehicles")

List of Authorized Take-Home Vehicles

Updated: Feb. 2012

Department/Agency	Positions Authorized	# Vehicles Assigned
Commonwealth's Attorney	Commonwealth's Attorney	1
Fire	Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Assistant Fire Chief Chief Fire Marshal Communications Coordinator Director- Code Enforcement Bureau Emergency Management Coordinator Emergency Management Operations Fire Chief Captain/Chief's Aide Maintenance Supervisor Public Information Officer Safety Officer Special Operations Chief Training Battalion Chief Training Operations/Asst. Safety Officer	19
General Services	On-call Building Technician	1
Police	All K-9 Officers Captains Crime Scene Investigator (on-call) Criminal Investigators Deputy Police Chiefs Domestic Violence Investigators Lieutenants Marked Cruiser Take-Home program Mobile Computer Manager Motorcycle Officers Police Chief Public Information Officer Special Operations Team Members Various, Unmarked	126
Sheriff	Captains Chief Deputy Sheriffs Commanders Sheriff Undersheriff	11
T&ES	C&I Inspector (snow season only) Chief, Construction & Inspection Division Chief, Transportation Division Deputy Director Director Snow Commanders (snow season only)	7
GRAND TOTAL TAKE-HOME UNITS		165