

FRIO COUNTY

VEHICLE POLICY



Purpose

To increase efficiency and set fiscal priorities in County operations, the Frio County Commissioners Court has formulated this Vehicle Policy ("Policy") in order to attempt to maximize the County's vehicle resources. The purpose of this Policy is to establish the County's guidelines in the assignment and use of all of the County vehicles.

The use of the terms "Commissioners Court" and "County" in this Policy shall also mean the Frio County.

All provisions in this Policy shall apply equally to all Frio County-owned vehicles, and Frio County owned vehicles as well as personal vehicles used for County business, regardless of whether specifically stated in this Policy.

Role of Commissioners Court

The Commissioners Court, as the policy development and budgetary control unit of County government, shall be the final authority in determining the utilization of all of the County's vehicle resources. This Vehicle Policy is subject to revision at any time by the Commissioners Court. Ideally, the mileage reimbursement rates shall be reviewed annually during the budgetary process and set at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Prohibited Activities

Employees are prohibited from the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale, attempted sale or having in their control any illegal drug, intoxicant and/or alcohol while in County vehicles whether on or off duty, on County premises during work hours whether on or off duty, or while acting in the course and scope of their employment at any geographic location or as any part of its activities.

Vehicles will be used for Permitted Purposes Only

All County-owned vehicles will be operated for permitted purposes only by authorized County employees. Permitted purposes include, but are not limited to, use of the vehicle for official County purposes within the scope of the driver's job description, at no time will a County-owned vehicle be used for personal purposes. Commissioners Court will be the final authority on whether a vehicle is being used for permitted purposes.

Only authorized individuals may operate the County-owned vehicle at any time. Non-permitted use of County-owned vehicles includes, but is not limited to:

1. Transportation to or parking at establishments in which the primary scope of business is the sale and/or distribution of alcohol, unless the official/employee is in his or her official capacity.

2. Transporting children, spouses, or other non-county employees at any time.
3. Transporting other County employees for non-county activities.
4. Traveling to a political or social event, unless the official/employee is attending the event in their official capacity.
5. Personal errands.
6. Non-county purposes not related to authorized employee's County duties.

Categories of Vehicles

This Policy shall include, but not be limited to, the following categories of County Vehicles.

A. FORFEITED VEHICLES: Forfeited Vehicles are those vehicles seized by County law enforcement agencies or those vehicles that are legally seized and forfeited to the seizing County law enforcement agency by an appropriate judicial body.

B. GRANT VEHICLES: Grant vehicles are those vehicles that are purchased or leased entirely without County funds by solely using grant funds and whose operation, upkeep, and insurance are paid entirely by grant funds.

C. DEPARTMENT / OFFICE VEHICLES: Department/office vehicles are those vehicles that are utilized by County departments or offices in the performance of their duties. Automobiles, pickups and utility vehicles may be assigned to officials/employees to take home only upon approval of Commissioners Court and only under the provisions of this Policy.

D. ABANDONED VEHICLES: Abandoned Vehicles are those vehicles taken into custody by County law enforcement agencies found on public or private property that have not been claimed.

ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES

A. Commissioners Court shall strictly control acquisition and assignment of all County-owned vehicles through the budgetary process. Upon acquisition, the County Auditor's Office will reflect the vehicle's acquisition in the County's fixed asset inventory records.

B. County-owned vehicles will be assigned only to those departments/offices who must have access to a County-owned vehicle in order to carry out their duties. All departments/offices with County-owned vehicles will provide Commissioners Court (or its designee) with a list of all departmental/office vehicles and vehicle assignments with corresponding justification at intervals to be established by the Court.

C. All officials/employees driving a County-owned vehicle must have a valid Texas driver's license with a classification that allows for operation of the assigned vehicle. If during the course of employment an official/employee loses their driver's license due to suspension or non-renewal, the employee shall immediately notify their Department Head or Elected Official, who shall notify the Human Resources Office. It shall be the Department Head's or Elected Official's responsibility to ensure that each of their employees possess a valid Texas driver's license with the proper classification to operate the employee's assigned vehicle. Improper use of a County vehicle shall be subject to disciplinary action. Improper use includes, but is not limited to: (a) having three (3) or more moving violations assigned against a driver's license over a three (3) year period; and/or (b) driving a County-owned vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug. Should an

official/employee cause excessive wear or damage to a vehicle through abusive driving or failure to have the vehicle properly maintained, Commissioners Court may require the official/employee to reimburse the County for the cost of the excessive wear and/or damage. Commissioners Court shall be the sole authority on determining whether damage is the result of abusive driving.

D. A User Agreement to Purchase Driver Records or Driver Record Mentoring Services form must be completed by all officials/employees who operate County-owned vehicles. This agreement is interactive system that will notify the county of any updates or changes to an officials/employee's driving record.

E. Vehicles may only be authorized for driving to and from work, for work-related duties and/or for incidental use. Officials/employees will be responsible for any and all damage during any unauthorized use.

F. Only County officials/employees who have complied with the terms of this Vehicle Policy are authorized to drive a County-owned vehicle.

G. In the event of an accident involving a County-owned vehicle being used by an official/employee for personal reasons or unauthorized use, as determined solely by Commissioners Court, the official/employee will be fully liable for all damage and/or injuries sustained to all parties in the accident.

H. All drivers of County-owned vehicles, and those using their personal vehicles on County business, shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. It will be the responsibility of the official/employee to pay any fines and/or penalties imposed for not complying with such laws.

I. A County vehicle may not be assigned to an employee as a take-home vehicle unless specifically authorized by this Policy or Commissioners Court.

J. A Department Head or Elected Official may be assigned a vehicle and use it as a take-home vehicle if Commissioners Court determines that the vehicle is an essential tool needed to perform their duties and if they are subject to a continuous on-call status.

NO COUNTY-OWNED VEHICLE MAY BE OPERATED OR TAKEN OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

Take Home Vehicles

A. Vehicles assigned to officials/employees may be taken home only if:

1. Commissioners Court specifically approves the assignment of a take home vehicle to a specific official / employee; and
2. At least twice a week the official/employee departs their residence and goes directly to a meeting or job site without first going to the official/employee's home office; or
 - a. The official/employee routinely travels to meetings or functions related to their specific duties and responsibilities after normal business hours or on weekends; or
 - b. The official/employee's duties require the official/employee to be "on call" and they are routinely called to an emergency or work; and
3. The official/employee lives in Frio County.

B. It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head/Elected Official to seek and receive prior Commissioners Court approval before they allow any official/employee to take home a County-owned vehicle, or take home a County-owned vehicle beyond county lines.

C. Any exception to this Policy must receive Commissioners Court approval before an official/employee is allowed to take a vehicle home.

D. Any exception to this Policy must receive Commissioners Court approval on at least an annual basis.

E. Commissioner's Court considers all assignments of a take home vehicle to be temporary and as such subject to review and revocation at any time by Commissioners Court.

F. Each department or office shall maintain a list of those officials/employees authorized to take a County-owned vehicle home and a copy of that list shall be furnished to the Auditor's Office. The County Auditor's Office shall be responsible for maintaining a master vehicle list.

Mileage Reimbursement

A. Department Heads/Elected Officials may approve mileage reimbursements to officials/employees who drive their personal vehicles on official County business will be reimbursed at the rate established by IRS. The mileage reimbursement rate is intended to help defray the normal costs of operating expenses (including but not limited to gasoline, oil, maintenance, depreciation and insurance expense).

B. Commissioners Court hereby sets the mileage reimbursement rate at an amount equal to the IRS published rate for mileage reimbursement for business use of a personal vehicle.

C. The mileage reimbursable rate will be the maximum amount payable without the assessment of additional income to the official/employee.

D. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted using a Travel Expense Form to the Auditor's Office and supported according to IRS guidelines on mileage reimbursement including, the date, destination, miles driven, and the nature of the trip.

E. The County Auditor's Office will endeavor to pay properly submitted mileage reimbursement requests within two (2) weeks of submission.

F. The Department Head/Elected Official or designee must approve all mileage reimbursement requests prior to submission.

Wrecked and Disabled County Vehicles

A. In the event that a County-owned vehicle is involved in an accident or the driver is issued a traffic violation citation, the driver of the County-owned vehicle shall immediately notify their supervisor.

B. The Department Head/Elected Official or their designee shall immediately notify the Auditor's Office, the Human Resources Office and the County Judge's Office. An incident report form must be completed and submitted to the County Auditor's Office within 24 hours of the incident, or 72 hours if the incident occurs over the weekend.

C. The Department Head/Elected Official shall forward an incident report to the County Auditor's Office within five (5) calendar days of the incident. No repairs may begin until all the necessary information has been completed and sent to the Auditor's Office.

1. The incident report must include a full narrative - from the driver - of all conditions of the accident, including, but not limited to, the name, driver's license number, insurance company, vehicle description, license plate number, assessment of damage to all vehicles involved and assessment of injuries sustained by all parties, if any.

2. The incident report must be signed and dated by the driver of the County-owned vehicle and their Department Head or Elected Official.

D. A copy of the police/crash report covering the accident must also be submitted to the Auditor's Office.

E. If at all possible, the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the location of the accident shall immediately be notified. When appropriate, the Sheriff's Office shall also be notified.

F. The County Auditor's Office shall prepare a report that is to include:

1. A full narrative - from the driver - of all conditions of the accident, the name, driver's license number, insurance company, vehicle description, license plate number, assessment of damage to all vehicles involved, assessment of injuries sustained by all parties, if any;

2. An evaluation of the extent of the damages; and

3. A recommendation as to what action should be taken regarding whether the wrecked vehicle should be repaired or sold.

4. Upon completion, this report should be made available to the respective Department Head/Elected Official, and the County Judge.

G. Any driver involved in an at-fault, preventable accident while operating a County-owned vehicle that results in damage to any vehicle or property, shall be required to attend a defensive driving class within 60 calendar days from the date of the accident, at the cost of the driver.

1. Proof of successful completion of the defensive driving course must be submitted to the County Auditor's Office and the Human Resources Office.

H. If the vehicle has been disabled to the point that repairs are necessary for its safe operation, the Department Head/Elected Official will coordinate the repairs to which the vehicle is assigned and the Auditor's Office.

I. Any driver involved in an accident while operating a County-owned vehicle shall submit to a timely alcohol and drug test as defined on the County's Employee Handbook.

J. If a County-owned vehicle is unoccupied and legally parked at the time of the accident, the County driver will not be considered to be at-fault and the accident will be considered non-preventable.

Acquisition and Disposal of County Vehicles

A. Vehicle Budgeting Procedure.

1. All Departments/Offices shall identify new vehicles as a replacement or as an additional vehicle during budget requests meetings.

2. Replacement vehicles should be considered by projecting current usage information from current year and current budget and high mileage, old age, and type of service should be weighed conservatively.
3. The Auditor shall submit the budget request to Commissioners Court for approval in the County's fiscal year budget.

B. Vehicle Specifications.

1. Vehicles will be specified by a joint decision between Auditor, Commissioners Court and the end-user department/office.
2. Commissioners Court may consider maintenance issues, and purchase price when determining the best buy.

C. Ordering Vehicles.

1. Purchases of vehicles shall follow the Purchasing and Debarment Policies & Procedures.
2. End-user department/office will submit estimates/quotes for vehicles to Commissioners Court for approval.
3. End-user department/office will submit requisitions for the purchase of vehicles with options to the Auditor's Office.
4. The County Auditor will address the purchase price compared to the budget differences to determine the type of vehicle appropriated.
5. Any new equipment to be added to a vehicle must be ordered as soon as possible by the end-user department/office.
6. When possible, all equipment should be standardized to facilitate installation, warranty, and repair issues.

D. Use and Transfer of Abandoned Vehicles.

1. The law enforcement agency that takes an abandoned vehicle into custody that is not claimed may use the vehicle for agency purposes.
2. The law enforcement agency that takes an abandoned vehicle into custody that is not claimed may transfer the vehicle to any other County agency.
3. The law enforcement agency must comply with the notice requirements before the agency may transfer a vehicle.

E. Delivery of Vehicles.

1. All vehicles will be delivered to the end-user department/office
2. The County Judge will sign quote/estimate agreements, once approved by Commissioners Court
3. The County Judge will sign title applications and other necessary documents for the vendor, or the County Auditor will sign if County Judge is not available.

4. The County Auditor's Office will complete new vehicle checklists to prepare the vehicle for fixed assets.
5. The County Auditor's Office will take pictures of all new vehicles to add to the county's insurance policy.
6. A numbering system consisting of numbers will be used to identify the vehicles.
7. The County Auditor's Office will create new vehicle file and will contain the new vehicle check-in sheet.
8. The County Auditor's Office will order and assign fuel cards if necessary. (see Fuel Card Issuance Form Policy)
9. The County Auditor's Office will create a file for all titles and exempt license plates.
10. Regardless of current status, Commissioners Court must approve any vehicle requiring any license tag besides an exempt tag, on an annual basis.
11. Non-exempt tags will be applied for and maintained by the user department/office with the only information necessary for Commissioners Court approval.
12. The County Auditor's Office will maintain possession of all titles.

F. Vehicle Upkeep.

1. The Auditor's Office will deliver all license plates and window stickers to the department/office for installation.
2. Departments/offices are responsible for keeping their vehicles clean and provide preventive maintenance on their vehicles.
3. Flat tires and tire changes on the road will be the responsibility of the assigned departments/ offices.

G. Operation of Vehicles.

1. End-user department/office will be responsible to fuel, maintenance, and repair assigned County-owned vehicles.
2. The County Auditor's Office will send a copy of the County Vehicle List for corrections to all departments/offices on an annual basis.
3. The County Auditor's Office is responsible for handling all damage claims.
4. No repair work can begin on a damaged County vehicle until all of the necessary paperwork (Incident Report and/or any other documents or photos necessary to illustrate the extent of the incident and the damage) have been completed and submitted to the Auditor's Office. Following receipt of the necessary paperwork, the County Auditor's Office will arrange for an appraisal after which the vehicle may then be sent for repair.
5. Purchase and installation of emergency / non-emergency equipment shall be the responsibility of the department / office to follow Tex. Trans. Codes specifically for the intended use of the county vehicle.

6. Any transfer of vehicles from one department to another must complete an Asset Disposal Transfer Form provided by the County Auditor's Office and approved by each department head, and County Auditor.

H. Disposal of County Vehicle

1. Each department/office shall make the determination to surrender a county vehicle due to age, cost associated due to repairs, etc.
2. Departments/offices shall hold control of all surrendered vehicles and store the vehicles until disposition of the vehicle can be made.
3. An Asset Disposal Transfer Form must be completed by the department/office for all surrendered vehicles and provide the form to the County Auditor's Office.
4. The County Auditor's Office along with the Building Maintenance Department will create a list of all vehicles, and equipment requested for disposal.
5. The Building Maintenance Department shall recommend to Commissioners Court the disposition of all surrendered vehicles.
6. Commissioners Court, by an authorized Court Order, shall designate the disposition of all surrendered vehicles.
7. The County Auditor's Office shall reflect the disposition of all surrendered vehicles in the County's fixed asset inventory records.
8. The County Auditor's Office, in conjunction with the Building Maintenance Department/office, shall make every effort to dispose of all surrendered vehicles at the earliest possible date.

Vehicle Safety

- A. All officials/employees assigned a County-owned vehicle shall maintain a copy of this Policy for reference.
- B. All officials/employees shall operate all County-owned vehicles in accordance with the vehicle's designed use, taking into consideration traffic and other conditions surrounding the use of the vehicle and the safety of others.
- C. All drivers of County-owned vehicles shall comply with all federal, state, County and local laws, rules and regulations governing the safe and legal operation of vehicles.
- D. At all times that the vehicle is in motion, the driver and all passengers must wear their seat belts in the proscribed manner.
- E. The driver shall be responsible for ensuring that all passengers are seated and properly secured before placing the vehicle in motion.
- F. Under no circumstances, whatsoever, shall passengers ride on fenders, running boards, the tops of vehicles, truck beds or any other place not designated by the manufacturer for passengers.
- G. Drivers are responsible for securing all doors and for checking seat belts prior to placing a vehicle in motion.

- H. All drivers should exercise extra caution when closing sliding doors on vans or other vehicles.
- I. Drivers of vehicles transporting materials shall secure all materials tightly to prevent movement in transport.
- J. All cargo that extends beyond the end of a vehicle bed shall be clearly marked with red cloth not less than sixteen (16) inches square.
- K. At night, red lights shall be used to mark any cargo that extends beyond the end of a vehicle bed.
- L. All vehicle equipment, including lights, brakes and tires shall be checked daily by the driver prior to operating the vehicle to verify proper working order.
- M. Any malfunction of the vehicle or its equipment shall be immediately reported by the driver to the driver's immediate supervisor and corrective measures shall be immediately employed.
- N. In the event a vehicle is found to be unsafe, regardless of how urgent the need for such vehicle, proper repairs shall be made before the vehicle is placed into service.
- O. All authorized County drivers shall drive defensively at all times.
 - 1. Once a year, all County employees who routinely operate County vehicles must attend a Safety Driving Course presented by Texas Association of Counties (TAC).
- P. All authorized County drivers shall be courteous to other drivers at all times.
- Q. Flashing emergency lights shall be turned on and traffic cones shall be in place any time a County-owned vehicle or piece of equipment obstructs traffic or is stopped where work is being performed.
- R. County-owned vehicles and/or equipment shall not be parked where they obstruct traffic unless it is absolutely necessary during an emergency.
- S. Whenever backing up, drivers shall determine what is behind their vehicle, even if obtaining such knowledge should require the driver to get out of the vehicle to investigate.
- T. During any hauling operations, loads shall be properly secured and covered.
- U. Drivers will be held responsible for the vehicle they are driving, the passengers riding in the vehicle and the load being transported.
- V. Vehicle operators must be constantly aware of all surrounding conditions, (i.e., ground personnel, overhead lines, pedestrians and other hazardous conditions).
- W. All vehicles shall be properly parked and secured before being left unattended
- X. At no time shall keys be left in any unattended vehicle.
- Y. All vehicle tailgates will be secured (closed) while the vehicle is in motion.
- Z. Cell phones and computers should not be used while the vehicle is moving.

IDENTIFICATION

No County-owned vehicle will be operated without appropriate identification affixed thereto, in compliance with Texas Transportation Code Section. 502.2015, except those vehicles exempt by state law and approved, when authorized by law, by Commissioners Court.

Insurance Coverage

A. The County shall provide automobile liability coverage for all covered third-party injury or death and property damage claims resulting from the authorized use of a County-owned vehicle.

B. The County shall also cover physical loss or damages to its vehicles arising out of or connected with the permitted use of County-owned vehicles as authorized in this Policy.

C. No County-owned vehicle is to be operated without proof of insurance in the vehicle. Statement of coverage may be obtained from the Auditor's Office.

D. Employees who operate a personal vehicle on County business must maintain auto liability insurance as required by the State of Texas. Employees should carry proof of auto liability insurance at all times when operating a personal vehicle for County business purposes.

Personal Use

A. At no time may a County-owned vehicle be used for personal gain, personal business, to drive to a place of secondary or part-time employment not related to official County business, or for any other non-County related use.

B. The official / employee shall be personally responsible for violation of the personal use policy.

C. Designated parking spaces must be approved through Commissioners Court.

D. Officials/employees assigned designated parking spaces must furnish a vehicle description and license plate number to the County Auditor's Office for all vehicles expected to be parked in the designated space.

Driver Records Monitoring Services Form

The Driver Records Monitoring Services Form will be provided by the Human Resources Office during the new employee onboarding process to employees who will be operating County-owned vehicles.

The above Vehicle Policy is **APPROVED, PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Commissioners Court of Frio County, Texas, on this 13th day of May 2025, with the following members of the court voting: 4 AYE, _____ NAY, with _____ ABSTAINING, and _____ ABSENT.

HON. ROCHELLE CAMACHO
County Judge

HON. JOE VELA
Commissioner, Precinct No. 1

HON. MARIO MARTINEZ
Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

HON. RAUL CARRIZALES
Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

HON. DANNY CANO
Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

ATTEST:

HON. AARON IBARRA
Frio County Clerk
Ex officio Clerk of the
Frio County Commissioners Court

By: _____
(Chief) Deputy Clerk

FILED
At 6:00 o'clock P M
This 13th day of May 25

Aaron T. Ibarra
Clerk County Court FRIO COUNTY, TX
BY: _____ DEPUTY