

HARRIS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Vehicle Use and Driver Responsibilities

Effective: August 15, 2012

Last Revised: August 15, 2012

STATEMENT OF POLICY

All vehicles insured by the Harris County Housing Authority will be used only for Authority business or for transportation that fulfills the Authority mission. Only employees or authorized individuals that meet the Driver Requirements listed below may operate a vehicle insured by the Harris County Housing Authority.

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A. PURPOSE

This vehicle use policy has been established to provide information and guidelines to employees regarding responsibilities for the safe operation of Authority insured vehicles. Employees who are authorized to drive on behalf of Harris County Housing Authority will receive a copy of this policy to review and use as a reference.

B. DEFINITION

An Authority insured vehicle is defined as owned, rented or leased in the name of Harris County Housing Authority.

C. DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

1. Possess a valid Texas driver's license.
2. Must be at least 21 years of age and have a driving record deemed acceptable by the Authority's insurance carrier.
3. Submit a copy of the driver's license to the Finance Department.
4. Agree to Authority driving policies stated in Vehicle Use and Driver Responsibilities Policy.

Drivers should be conscientious and courteous drivers and understand the importance of driving safely. Drivers should conduct themselves in a professional manner as representatives of Harris County Housing Authority and honestly report any accident or damage that may occur involving a vehicle under their care and control. Drivers will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to assure they maintain a safe driving record. Any changes to the status of the driver's license must be reported immediately through the supervisor to the Finance Department.

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D. DRIVER AUTHORIZATION

To obtain authorization to drive an Authority insured vehicle, an HCHA employee will:

- Obtain approval from your immediate supervisor to obtain authorization, and
- Submit a copy of your driver's license to the Finance Department.

E. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential for supervisors who are charged with supervising employee drivers to take an active role in assuring the safe operation of motor vehicles. Supervisors are in the best position to observe and correct inappropriate or unsafe behavior. Any report of unsafe operation of a vehicle received by Finance Department will be communicated directly to the supervisor or department head of the area involved. Supervisors should be aware of all trips taken and driving assignments made. Supervisors are also responsible for reporting accidents.

F. USE OF AUTHORITY INSURED VEHICLES

Short Term Rental Vehicles

Short term rental vehicles must be rented under the name of Harris County Housing Authority. The rental agency may require the driver's name to be on the rental agreement. In this case, after your name write "for Harris County Housing Authority."

Prior to leaving the rental agency, a physical inspection of the rental vehicle should be made, noting any defects on the rental agreement and confirmed by the rental agency. A final inspection should be conducted upon return of the rental vehicle. Charges made by the rental agency for pre-existing damage that was not noted by Authority's authorized driver renting the vehicle will be the responsibility of the driver.

For domestic rentals, decline to purchase the comprehensive and collision liability coverage offered by the rental agency. The Authority carries full automobile liability insurance coverage including for rented cars. It is not necessary to specifically schedule short term rentals with the insurance carrier to qualify for this coverage. Authority insurance is only available on vehicles used for approved Authority functions/business.

All incidents involving rental vehicles should be reported promptly to the rental agency and to the Authority's Finance Department.

Maintenance

Maintenance of a vehicle is the responsibility of the assigned individual or department.

G. VEHICLE INSURANCE Harris County Housing Authority maintains extensive business automobile insurance coverage for Authority insured vehicles. This coverage includes liability, physical damage and uninsured motorist. All authorized drivers are covered. Specific information regarding insurance coverage is available in the Finance Department.

H. AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE I.D. CARD All Authority owned vehicles should carry an automobile liability insurance card indicating proof of insurance. Please keep this card in the vehicle's glove box. Additional identification cards are available in the Finance Department for rental or leased vehicles.

I. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES Personal vehicles may be used at the employee's option and at their own risk and must be insured by the owner. The owner's automobile liability

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insurance is the primary coverage. There is no physical damage (collision and comprehensive) coverage through the Authority on a personal vehicle, even those operated for Authority business.

Authority employees who drive their own vehicles and who receive mileage reimbursement must provide proof of insurance coverage to the Finance Department. Limits of liability shall be in accordance with state and/or Authority requirements. Physical damage (collision and comprehensive) limits and deductible are at the discretion of the owner.

J. SAFETY ISSUES

Alcohol and Drug Use

No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or controlled substances are to be used or consumed by the driver or any passenger at any time while operating or riding in an Authority insured vehicle.

Seat Belt Use

Use of seat belt(s) is required for any person(s) occupying the vehicle. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all persons are properly secured before the vehicle is put in motion.

Cell Phone Use

Drivers are to refrain from any use of cell phones or other personal devices when the vehicle is in motion. This prohibition covers the sending and receiving of texts and emails from both personal and Authority phones or other personal devices.

Traffic Laws

Driver must operate the vehicle in accordance with all traffic laws, ordinances and regulations. Any fines resulting from violations are the responsibility of the driver and not the Authority. This policy applies to both moving and non-moving violations.

Safe Operation

All authorized drivers are expected to operate vehicles safely and with great care. Especially when transporting passengers, the driver must make a concerted effort to provide for the safety and wellbeing of those aboard. If a driver is found to have committed any unsafe act while driving, disciplinary action may be initiated. Intentional reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in Authority owned, leased, or rented vehicles.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials should not be transported in Authority insured vehicles unless approved by the Authority.

K. ACCIDENT PROCEDURES. Each accident must be reported to the proper police jurisdiction as soon as it occurs and to the Authority's Finance Department within 24 hours. Do not hesitate to call the police. They will usually respond even if the accident involves only property damage. While the police may not make a determination of responsibility, they will at least document the obvious facts, which will be of help. If you have questions or are not sure what to do, please contact the Finance Department.

The police will ask for evidence of liability insurance. This information can be found on the auto liability insurance identification card which should be located in the glove box of every Authority

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insured vehicle. However responsible you may feel for the accident, do not admit to liability. The Authority's insurance carrier and/or the other party's insurance company will likely assign a claims adjustor, coordinated through the Finance Department.

The driver will be held personally responsible for all costs of the accident if the driver is found to be operating the vehicle in a reckless manner due to the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and/or controlled substances. The Authority has the right to require drug/alcohol testing in the event of an accident caused by an employee.

L. ENFORCEMENT AND DISCIPLINE

The chief financial officer (CFO) of the Authority or the designee of the CFO shall be responsible for the enforcement of this Vehicle Use and Driver Responsibilities Policy. Failure to adhere to the Vehicle Use and Driver Responsibilities Policy may result in disciplinary action.

M. AMENDMENTS

This policy is subject to change as deemed appropriate by the Authority. Notice of changes to this policy will be posted on the Authority's website.

N. EFFECTIVE DATE

The official version of this policy is located on the Harris County Housing Authority website www.hchatexas.org/policies and became effective August 15, 2012.

I have read and will abide by the conditions as stated in the *Vehicle Use and Driver Responsibilities* policy regarding the operation of any vehicle for Harris County Housing Authority business.

Name
(Printed) _____

Signature _____ Today's
Date _____