

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
PAROLE DIVISION**



**POLICY AND
OPERATING PROCEDURE**

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SUPERSEDES: 06/18/13

SUBJECT: VEHICLE USAGE GUIDELINES

AUTHORITY: N/A

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for use of State-owned vehicles by Parole Division staff and to describe the responsibilities of Vehicle Managers.

PROCEDURE:

I. GENERAL POLICY

The guidelines listed below shall be followed to ensure maximum use of State-owned vehicles assigned to the Parole Division. They supplement but do not replace Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Administrative Directive (AD) 02.50, *Vehicle Policy*. All staff who use State-owned vehicles are expected to be familiar with AD-02.50 and to strictly adhere to the policy and procedures described in that directive, with special attention to the sections on "Accidents" and "Use of Personal Vehicles" (regarding liability insurance). Additionally, drivers shall obey all applicable TDCJ rules.

II. SCHEDULING AND RESERVATIONS

It is important for maximum use to be made of all assigned vehicles. The District Parole Office (DPO) Vehicle Manager shall ensure that a user is scheduled for each business day of the month, whether at staff request or via assignment. The following procedures shall be used to make vehicle reservations and assignments:

- A. Requests to reserve a vehicle may be submitted to the DPO Vehicle Manager via email up to five weeks in advance of the desired reservation date and until the last business day preceding the month in which the vehicle needs to be used. After that point, staff who want to make reservations for the use of a vehicle shall directly contact the DPO Vehicle Manager between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on business days. Requests should be made in advance (at least one day prior to the day the vehicle is required). Requests shall include the driver's name, date and time of departure and return, destination, and any other pertinent information.

On the 25th day of each month (or on the last business day preceding that date if it falls on a weekend or holiday), the DPO Vehicle Manager shall send an email message as a reminder to all district staff advising them to submit requests or make reservations for the following month.

- B. Priority reservations for the State-owned vehicles shall be given to staff who will use the vehicle to make lengthy one-day trips out of town. The next highest priority will be given to parole officers who have scheduled a full day of field visits. Within each usage category, reservations shall be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Use of the vehicle will be allowed on the basis of a special request (i.e., in cases where a personal vehicle is inoperative), only when an assignment has not been made on the requested date.

If the vehicle is required for more than three (3) consecutive days, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall consider other requests for use during that period and make a decision based on total mileage anticipated.

- C. Although priority in making vehicle reservations shall be given to staff headquartered in the district office where the vehicle is assigned, reservations shall also be accepted from staff in nearby offices who need to use the vehicle for business-related purposes.
- D. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall confirm reservations, when approved, by contacting the requestor directly. In case of duplicate or multiple requests, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall provide timely notification to the requestor(s) that the request(s) could not be honored for the dates noted.
- E. When a reservation is made and the DPO Vehicle Manager determines that up to four persons are going to the same destination and car pooling is possible — particularly in cases of training — all persons concerned will be notified.
- F. After all voluntary requests are placed on the schedule for vehicle use, the DPO Vehicle Manager will determine available open dates. On the first business day of the month, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall use the following options to ensure that the vacant dates are filled:
 1. Contact unit supervisors/office managers to request that assignments be made to individuals in their units within a 24-hour period;
 2. Assign vehicle use to groups of two or more who are traveling to training outside of the area. If a DPO Vehicle Manager makes a vehicle assignment to a staff member who chooses to drive his or her personal vehicle instead of the State-owned vehicle, the staff member will not be reimbursed for mileage traveled in the personal vehicle.

- G. A scheduled driver who becomes aware of the need to cancel a reservation shall immediately contact the DPO Vehicle Manager or his immediate supervisor. If the scheduled driver contacts an immediate supervisor instead of the DPO Vehicle Manager, as may be the case when reporting an absence from work due to illness, the scheduled driver shall inform the immediate supervisor of the need to cancel the reservation. The immediate supervisor shall then advise the DPO Vehicle Manager as soon as possible. Approved leave is considered a valid reason for cancellation.
- H. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall maintain vehicle reservation information separate and apart from any other recorded information (i.e., calendar, log sheet). Monthly schedules need to remain on file for one year.

III. ISSUANCE AND USE OF VEHICLES

- A. Issuance of vehicles may occur outside normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with special arrangements made in advance with the DPO Vehicle Manager. The keys and vehicle packet must be picked up prior to 5:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled departure, if the vehicle is scheduled for use prior to 8:00 a.m.
- B. The driver signing for a vehicle is solely responsible for the vehicle until its return. Transfer of a vehicle from one employee to another is prohibited. If arrangements have been made for more than one TDCJ employee to travel in the same vehicle, then the driver who signed for the vehicle assumes primary responsibility for submitting reports, purchasing fuel, etc., but the other TDCJ employees may share driving responsibilities.
- C. Upon issuance of a vehicle, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall provide a vehicle packet to the driver which contains the following:
 - 1. Vehicle Keys;
 - 2. Vehicle Monthly Use Report (RS-025);
 - 3. Vehicle Trouble Report (OF 6300-68);
 - 4. Responsibility Sheet (signed by the driver);
 - 5. Instruction Sheet (for vehicle breakdown);
 - 6. Motor Vehicle Accident Form (RO-92); and
 - 7. Gasoline credit cards, along with instructions for obtaining fuel.
- D. Prior to leaving the designated headquarters, the driver shall inspect the packet for completeness, inspect the vehicle for any visible damage that was not noted by the DPO Vehicle Manager, and verify the beginning mileage on the mileage log.
- E. While in possession of the State-owned vehicle, the driver shall make every effort to drive safely and shall strictly adhere to agency rules, such as those against using a State-owned vehicle for purposes not related to official State business. Using the vehicle to obtain a meal during travel or during the course of a business day is allowed.

- F. Use of a State-issued gasoline credit card is mandatory for, and shall be limited to, purchases of gasoline, oil, necessary car washes, and services and/or parts needed on an emergency basis.
1. The driver may use the credit card for minor essential repairs up to \$200 (i.e., to replace broken or nonfunctioning parts such as a battery, belt, hose, windshield wiper, or for tires when a flat tire cannot be repaired, and the spare tire is not sufficient).
 2. When making expenditures with the credit card, the driver shall obtain a receipt and invoice that specifically itemizes the items or services purchased. "Miscellaneous" entries are not acceptable.
 3. The driver shall document the purchase of necessary parts or minor essential repairs for the vehicle on the Vehicle Trouble Report and, as indicated above, ensure that receipts and invoices for any such repairs are included when the packet is returned.
- G. The driver shall be alert to the need for general maintenance and/or repair of minor operational problems (e.g., malfunctioning windshield wipers, headlights, tail lights, turn signals, etc.). Remember, the next driver's safety depends upon prompt notification of vehicle problems. The driver shall provide this information to the DPO Vehicle Manager by completing a Vehicle Trouble Report. The DPO Vehicle Manager should not be contacted directly for general maintenance or minor operational problems.
- H. The driver shall alert the DPO Vehicle Manager if a vehicle breaks down or needs major mechanical or service repairs, so that arrangements can be made for service and/or vehicle pick-up. As an additional safeguard, the driver shall place a special note on the driver's seat describing the problem.
1. If necessitated by the circumstances, the driver may arrange for towing services without obtaining advance permission from the Vehicle Manager.
 2. If the vehicle is involved in an accident, the driver shall follow the procedures described in Section V of AD-02.50, in addition to contacting the DPO Vehicle Manager.
- I. When returning the vehicle to the designated headquarters, the driver shall be responsible for the following:
1. Refuel the gas tank and clean the interior.
 2. Park the vehicle in the assigned parking space and lock all doors.
 3. Complete the Responsibility Sheet and the mileage reporting and inspection/problem forms in the Vehicle Monthly Use Report (RS-025).
 4. Complete the Vehicle Trouble Report to either reflect "no problem" or to indicate problems encountered.

5. Return the entire packet to the Vehicle Manager (along with all gasoline or maintenance receipts, if applicable). In case of a return during off-duty hours, the driver shall place the packet and receipts in a secure “drop box” or other predetermined secure location.
- J. In the event the driver will be returning the vehicle late, he must notify the DPO Vehicle Manager.

IV. VEHICLE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

The DPO Vehicle Manager oversees all records management and preventive and general maintenance associated with the vehicles assigned their office or motor pool. Additionally, the DPO Vehicle Manager makes vehicle assignments to staff in accordance with the guidelines described above. There shall be a DPO Vehicle Manager assigned at each Parole Division office with an assigned state car. This shall typically be a DPO III. Specifically, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall:

- A. Conduct weekly inspections of vehicles to check their general condition (including the condition of windshield wipers, tires, etc.) and the presence of body damage.
- B. Arrange for maintenance and repair of vehicles:
 1. General/preventive maintenance and repairs

For all vehicles assigned to their districts, DPO Vehicle Managers shall implement a Preventive Maintenance Program (PMP) based on the procedures and service intervals outlined in the TDCJ Vehicle/Equipment Service Manual. The maintenance schedule to be followed for each vehicle includes the procurement of up-to-date inspection stickers and license tags in addition to such services as regular fluid changes.

2. Problem maintenance and repairs

The DPO Vehicle Manager is responsible for responding to vehicle breakdowns and for submitting a RS-142 TDCJ-Correctional Institutions Division Equipment Work Order for repairs to assigned vehicles. The Vehicle Manager shall coordinate vehicle service and repairs with the Mechanical Shop, Huntsville Unit, at (936) 437-1110. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall also solicit support from the Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator in the Mechanical Shop, Huntsville Unit, when guidance or assistance on vehicle-related matters is needed, particularly if it appears that major mechanical services or repairs are needed.

3. General requirements pertaining to maintenance and repairs
 - a. If the part or service that is needed is still under warranty, the vehicle shall be taken to an appropriate dealership for repair.

- b. Whenever possible, a TDCJ mechanical shop in the area in which the vehicle is assigned shall be utilized for automotive services other than those covered by a warranty.
 - c. TDCJ may have ongoing contracts for purchase of certain items (e.g., tires) and automotive services. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall be familiar with all such contracts and service agreements made by TDCJ through the General Services Commission. Information on such contracts may be obtained from the Mechanical Shop, Huntsville Unit.
 - d. At times, a vehicle may need to be pulled from service for problem maintenance. However, whenever possible the DPO Vehicle Manager shall arrange for general maintenance to be done on weekends or during other non-work hours.
 - e. A RS-142 must be completed for all maintenance work and repairs, whether preventive or in response to problems.
 - f. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall maintain a record of all services and repairs performed.
 - g. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall ensure that all invoices and receipts for automotive services or repairs are immediately forwarded to the Mechanical Shop, Huntsville Unit.
- C. Train staff who use vehicles on AD-02.50, *TDCJ Vehicle Policy*, AD-14.55, *Use of TDCJ Fuel Credit Cards*, and the Parole Division guidelines contained in this policy. Also, ensure staff are aware of AD-11.04, *Reporting Accidents to the Office of General Counsel*, and the SAF-05, Safety Officer's Investigation of Accident/Incident form.
- D. Ensure that drivers possess a valid operator's license.
- E. Provide an instruction sheet outlining local procedures to follow in case of vehicle breakdown, as referenced in Section III.C.5 of this directive.
- F. Maintain complete vehicle packets.
- G. Identify local vendors for vehicle-related credit cards and purchase order use. At the time of vehicle assignment to a district office, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall identify a local vehicle maintenance provider who is willing to set up an account with TDCJ and/or contract with TDCJ for maintenance work and bill the agency on a monthly basis. Prior to carrying out this process, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall consult with the Mechanical Shop, Huntsville Unit.
- H. Maintain vehicle activity documentation.
- 1. No later than the fifth (5th) business day of each month, the DPO Vehicle Manager shall report (via fax or email) the total number of miles traveled by the vehicle during the previous month to the Parole Division Safety Manager.

2. The Vehicle Monthly Use Report (RS-025) shall be maintained by the DPO Vehicle Manager and submitted to the Administrative Assistant of Field Operations, by the fifth (5th) of each month. A copy shall be maintained in the district office file.
 3. Copies of all vehicle requests and denials shall be retained for a one-year period.
- V. The DPO Vehicle Manager shall ensure that an up-to-date copy of this policy and AD-02.50 are kept in each assigned vehicle.

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