

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGONIn the Matter of Adopting) Order No. 77-2025
the Columbia County Vehicle Use Policy)

WHEREAS, the Columbia County Human Resources Director, in coordination with the Risk Management Committee has recommended changes to Section 19.7 of the Columbia County Personnel Rules to address vehicle use; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 95-5, the Columbia County Personnel Ordinance, provides that the Board of County Commissioners may, by order, adopt and update personnel rules; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the County to update Section 19.7 of the County's Personnel related to vehicle use;

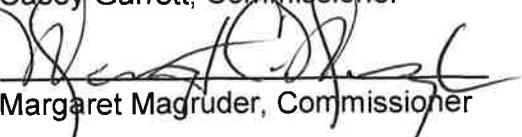
NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. The Vehicle Use Policy which is attached hereto as Attachment "1" is hereby adopted.
2. The adopted Vehicle Use Policy shall supersede Section 19.7 of the County Personnel Rules.
3. This Order shall be effective ten days after adoption.

DATED this 13 day of December, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

Approved as to for

By: 
Office of County CounselBy: 
Kellie Jo Smith, ChairBy: 
Casey Garrett, CommissionerBy: 
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

19.17 VEHICLES USED FOR COUNTY BUSINESS

19.17.1 Driver's Licenses. Any employee whose work requires driving a vehicle for County business must hold a valid driver's license from the State in which the employee resides. Candidates for hire into such position will undergo a driving record check through the Department of Motor Vehicles, processed through the Human Resources Department except as delegated elsewhere, as a condition of employment. A report indicating a suspended or revoked license status, or a history of traffic violations may be cause to deny or terminate employment. The general guidelines for evaluating driving records shall be as follows:

A. No major violations in the previous three years. See Matrix below for a list of major violations.

B. No more than two minor violations in the previous three years. Minor violations include:

- Failure to obey a traffic control or signal
- Improper lane change
- Failure to signal
- Failure to yield the right of way
- Other similar violations
- Speed greater than ten mph over the posted speed limit
- Failure to use seatbelt
- Distracted (cell phone use) driving, etc.

C. No at-fault vehicle accidents in the previous three years.

Note: All vehicle accidents are considered at-fault unless determined otherwise by law enforcement.

The following matrix may help evaluate motor vehicle record criteria.

Number of Moving Violations Within Past Five Years	Number of Accidents Within Past Five Years				Number of DUI or DWI Within Past Five Years
	0	1	2	3	
0	Clear	Acceptable	Borderline	Prohibited	Prohibited
1	Acceptable	Acceptable	Borderline	Prohibited	Prohibited
2	Acceptable	Borderline	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
3	Borderline	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
4	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
5	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited

Borderline
Prohibited

Motor Vehicle Report will be checked every 6 months; insurability subject to no deterioration in the record.
Employer may prohibit driver from driving company vehicles or using personal vehicle on company business.

Periodic checks of employee's drivers' license may also be made throughout employment. Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles' Automatic Reporting System (ARS) may be used by the County to be notified of changes in

license status. No employee who does not hold a valid driver's license applicable to the work assignment and meet County motor vehicle record criteria, will be allowed to operate a vehicle for County business until such time as a valid license is obtained and motor vehicle record is in compliance with County policy. If driving is an essential duty of the position held by an employee, loss of a driver's license may lead to consequences with County employment up to and including dismissal from County employment.

An employee performing work which requires the operation of a vehicle for County business must immediately, or as soon as practicable and without unnecessary delay, notify their immediate supervisor of any changes in driver's license status, vehicle accidents, and citations. If an employee's license becomes expired, suspended, or revoked and/or the employee is unable to obtain an occupational permit from the State Motor Vehicle Department or if an employee fails to report required information accurately and timely, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

19.17.2 Use of Vehicles for County Business. Employees who operate vehicles for County business are expected to exercise care, cause required maintenance to occur and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Employees and passengers must always wear seatbelts or proper restraints when the vehicle is in motion as required by State Law.
- B. Consumption of alcohol or drugs while operating a vehicle for County business is prohibited. Driving while impaired is also prohibited.
- C. Employees are prohibited from providing rides to hitchhikers or non-county employees without expressed Supervisor or Manager permission for a named person and defined period of time, unless it is within the scope of the employees' positions.
- D. Following OR DMV Rules of the road, employees may use County radios or cell phones to arrange for aid to stranded motorists.
- E. Employees must notify a supervisor immediately, or as soon as practicable and without unnecessary delay of any accidents, damage or needed repairs and complete the appropriate reports.
- F. Employees must notify a supervisor of any personal conviction of any major traffic violations.
- G. Employees must obey all laws and regulations related to the operation of motor vehicles.

19.17.3 County Vehicles. In addition to the requirements in Section 19.17.2 above, the following rules apply for use of County vehicles.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive or unsafe use or operation of a County vehicle, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations while using a County vehicle, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

County vehicles are not to be used for transporting family members or friends or conducting personal errands, except that, during the workday and within the area of work an occasional personal errand, such as driving to a restaurant for the lunch break, is allowed. Employees can request clarification from their Department Head or Supervisor prior to using County vehicle for personal transportation to determine if circumstances are within policy guidelines.

County vehicles may not be taken home overnight except as follows:

- A. Department Heads may formally assign a County vehicle to an employee for use in commuting daily, provided there is an underlying justifying reason, such as frequent need for after-hours response. Payroll shall be notified of such assignments in writing so that payroll can calculate the tax consequences of the fringe benefit.

- B. An employee who is formally "on call" for a designated period, and is being paid for such status, may take a County vehicle home for the nights during this designated period.
- C. To facilitate safer travel, employees may take a County vehicle home for one night before or after attending an out of County meeting, training, or conference which takes place late at night after normal working hours or early in the morning prior to normal working hours. Department Heads may approve additional nights for multi-day events.
- D. Department Heads may establish supplementary department vehicle policies, these must comply with all related County policies.
- E. Vehicles operated by sworn and unsworn employees of the Sheriff's Office and assigned to the employee as a take home vehicle.

The Sheriff will establish rules as deemed appropriate for the use of marked and unmarked vehicles in the Sheriff's Office.

19.17.4 Maintenance and Care of County Vehicles. Adequately maintaining vehicles promotes the safety of passengers, operators, and protects the public.

- A. Conduct regular pre-trip and post-trip inspections to identify vehicle and equipment problems and assure vehicles are in good operating condition. Employees shall report any damage or other issues to their supervisor, immediately or as soon as practicable and without unnecessary delay, when found to be addressed in a timely manner.
- B. Departments should conduct basic preventative maintenance service routines as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer for owned or assigned vehicles in a timely manner to identify vehicle problems and keep vehicle systems in good repair.
- C. Employees should maintain a clean appearance for vehicles through regular interior and exterior cleaning.

19.17.5 Personal Vehicles. In addition to the requirements in Section 19.7.2 above, the following rules apply to use of personal vehicles for County business. Employees are encouraged to use County vehicles when conducting County business instead of their personal vehicle whenever possible. Personal vehicles may be used for official County business with the prior approval of the employee's Department Head.

An employee who operates a privately-owned vehicle while conducting business for the County must maintain automobile liability insurance in accordance with State law. **Auto claims that arise while using a personal vehicle are the responsibility of the employee or owner of the vehicle.**

19.17.6 Use of Cell Phone While Driving on County Business. The use of a cell phone while driving on County business presents a hazard to the driver, other employees, and the general public. This section is meant to ensure the safe operation of vehicles operated for County business.

Employees must adhere to all federal, state, or local rules and regulations regarding the use of cell phones while driving. Accordingly, employees must not use cell phones if such conduct is prohibited by law, regulation, or other ordinance.

Employees shall not use handheld cell phones for business purposes while driving. If an employee needs to make a business call while driving and does not have hands free access, the employee should locate an appropriate

area where it's legally safe to park and make the call. Employees may use hands free cell phones to make business calls, but only in emergency situations.

Texting while driving is prohibited, as is any other distracting use of a cell phone or other electronic devices (e.g. taking pictures, watching video).

The Sheriff's Office may adopt its own rules regarding appropriate use of mobile technology to be used by sworn deputies.