Section 5

Motor Vehicle Safe Practices

Introduction

All employees who drive a County vehicle or are on County business shall:

(a) Have a valid Florida Drivers License (not suspended, revoked, or restricted for business purposes only.)

(b) Only operate vehicles for which they have the proper class license. This includes any type of Commercial Driver License (CDL) required by applicable regulations.

(c) Attend the Defensive Driving Course within 30 days of hire and once every three (3) years thereafter.

(d) Only be authorized to drive or operate a County vehicle when that employee has satisfactorily demonstrated complete familiarity with its functions. It is mandatory the employee thoroughly understand the manufacturer's operating instructions, vehicle limitations, emergency procedures, and be able to successfully pass an operator's check-out test to the satisfaction of the supervisor. (See **Exhibit E** for a guideline.)

(e) Be knowledgeable and understand County vehicle operating rules and safety requirements before driving a County vehicle.

Suspension of Driver Authority

A County employee's authority to operate a vehicle on County business will be suspended any time the employee does not possess a valid Florida Drivers license. Authority to drive a vehicle may be suspended when evidence is documented of a physical, medical or mental condition that could affect the employee's ability to drive safely; or at any time his/her County or State driving record reflects one or more of the following conditions:

(a) Driving while intoxicated.

(b) Driving under the influence.

(c) U.B.A.L. (Unlawful Blood Alcohol Level).

(d) Failure to report an accident while driving on County business.

(e) Medical/legal evidence of alcohol or drug abuse.

(f) Misuse or abuse of a County vehicle

All moving traffic violation citations received while driving on County business or any suspension or revocation of any employee's driver's license must be reported to the employee's supervisor immediately. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

All traffic fines assessed to an employee while on County business will be paid by the employee and not the County.

No county employee will drive on County business if their license has been revoked, suspended or has a restriction on the license of C (business purposes). No County employee will be allowed to drive on County business at night if they have a restriction E (daylight driving only).

Reinstatement Procedures for Driving Privilege Suspensions

For driving privileges to be reinstated, the employee must provide proof to his/her supervisor/department and then to Risk Management that he/she has received clearance from the authority initiating the suspension such as:

(a) State of Florida, Division of Driver Licenses.

(b) County designated medical facility.

Rules and Safety Requirements

Seat belts or seat belt/shoulder harness shall be worn at all times when conducting County business in any County vehicle or personal vehicle used during working hours.

Note: Any employee injured in a vehicle accident while not wearing a vehicle safety belt or seat belt/shoulder harness, may be subject to partial Workers' Compensation benefits as stipulated in F.S. 440.

Effective October 1, 1990, Florida Law specifies that failure to use a seat belt when required may be considered as evidence of comparative negligence in a civil action.

Inspect assigned vehicles daily for safety discrepancies, malfunctions, signs of abuse, unreported damage, and cleanliness. Have all repairs related to the safety and reliability of vehicles made as soon as possible.

Each driver is responsible for the safe and proper operation of his/her vehicle and shall check the following items daily before putting the vehicle into service.

Check List for Vehicles

-Fuel	-Housekeeping
-Water	-Tires
-Brakes	-Turn and Stop Lights
-Horn	-Headlights and Taillights

-Oil -Windshield wipers
-Cargo

Keep safety above expediency.

Comply with all traffic ordinances and safe driving practices.

Call police to investigate **any** accident involving County vehicles and report accident details to the immediate supervisor and Risk Management as soon as possible.

Extreme care shall be exercised in all backing operations, and the path behind the vehicle shall be determined to be clear before backing the vehicle. Where there are two employees in or assigned to a vehicle, one employee shall be stationed where the driver can see and hear to direct the driver while backing.

An employee who operates a County vehicle shall refrain from using any cellular phones, direct connect or radios unless a hands-free device is in use. No employee will eat and/or drink and drive or operate a computer while driving a County vehicle.

No County employee driving or in charge of any motor vehicle shall leave it unattended without first stopping the engine, putting the automatic transmission to park or manual transmission into gear, locking the ignition, engaging the parking brake, and removing the key. The key will be in the employee's possession or controlled at the worksite. No key will remain in the vehicle while unattended.

Vehicles must comply with Florida Statutes 316.228, which requires a 12-inch square red flag or light on all loads extending 4 feet beyond the rear of a vehicle.

Operators of County-owned vehicles are responsible for checking all safety devices before driving the vehicle. Any defects found shall be reported to the immediate supervisor and the vehicle shall not be operated until made safe.

Report to his/her supervisor as soon as possible, if evidence of vehicle damage is found.

No County vehicles or equipment will be used for transport of employees unless they are designed and equipped to safety carry personnel. Employees shall not ride on the top of side rails, top of cabs or running boards of any vehicles. County employees will not ride in the back of any utility truck or van that does not have a manufacturer's installed seat and seat belt.

Tailgates shall be closed when the vehicle is in operation and not transporting long loads.

Bodies of dump trucks shall be secured in the down position or the hoist lever secured in the lock position when the vehicle is in motion.

When a vehicle is towing a trailer or semi-trailer by means of a trailer hitch, safety chains from the trailer or semi-trailer to the vehicle shall also be attached. Safety chains shall be connected to the towing vehicle by crossing the chains under the tongue of the trailer. These safety chains shall be of sufficient strength to maintain connection of the trailer or semi-trailer to the pulling vehicle under all conditions while the trailer or semi-trailer is being towed by the vehicle. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to trailers or semi-trailers using a hitch known as a fifth wheel.

A “slow moving vehicle” sign shall be prominently displayed on all slow moving vehicles working on or near a roadway.

Vehicle Checkout Procedures

With the help of Fleet Management, Risk Management has implemented the following Vehicle Checkout procedures to be used by all Orange County employees when checking out County-owned vehicles:

Division managers and/or Supervisors will notify Fleet Management in advance of their need to checkout a vehicle to be used on official County business only.

Fleet Management will verify that a current insurance packet, vehicle registration and Vehicle Operator Manual are present in that County-owned vehicle.

Prior to sending over assigned employee to pickup the vehicle from Fleet Management, Division Managers and/or Supervisors will ensure that the assigned employee has a valid Florida Driver’s License or Commercial Driver’s License and successfully completed Orange County’s Defensive Driving Course within the last three years.

Employee will possess and carry the appropriate valid Florida Driver’s License or Commercial Driver’s License prior to their arrival at Fleet Management.

After arriving at Fleet Management, employee will sign the “Customer Issue Ticket ” and write in their appropriate Florida Driver’s License or Commercial Driver’s License number.

Fleet Management will retain the original completed “Customer Issue Ticket” for their records, and the employee will a retain and present a copy of the “Customer Issue Ticket” upon arrival to Division Manager and/or Supervisor.

Upon receipt of the County-owned vehicle, employee will verify that a current insurance packet, vehicle registration and Vehicle Operator Manual are present. Employee will also inspect the vehicle and complete the Driver Vehicle Inspection Report noting any safety deficiencies or shortcomings, and provide the completed report back to Fleet Management for review.

Prior to driving the vehicle, the employee will adjust the rear view mirror, side mirrors, driver seat and head restraint.

Employee will wear seat belts while in route to facility, and require all passengers (if any) to wear seat belts.

The employee is responsible for operating the vehicle in a safe and courteous manner, which reflects favorably on Orange County Government. He/She will obey all State and Local Traffic laws and abide by all operating procedures.

All employees must adhere to these procedures in order to checkout a County-owned vehicle.

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Vehicular accident and property damage is defined as any accident occurring between a County vehicle (or private car when the employee is on official County business) and another vehicle, pedestrian, animal or fixed object. Although police are called to investigate all County vehicle accidents, it is incumbent upon the employee to ensure that all facts are obtained with respect to the other driver. Under no circumstance should any County employee make any statement relative to guilt or responsibility.

Heavy Equipment Operations

Road Grading Operation
The grading crew and the highway user must be protected when grading work it being performed on existing streets and highways. At a minimum, supervisors shall ensure that the following precautions are taken:

(a) When graders, scrapers, and other earth-moving equipment are in operation along a section of a road, traffic shall be warned of the danger ahead.

(b) Where operations are extensive, flagmen shall be placed at each end of the working area so that they are visible to oncoming traffic for at least 500 feet.

(c) Traffic shall be warned of danger ahead by barrier signs at both ends of the section of road undergoing construction or repairs. Primary warning signs, such as “ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION,” “BARRICADE AHEAD,” or “ROAD GRADING OPERATION,” shall be placed 1,500 feet from the end point of operation.

(d) An orange flag on a staff that will project the flag at least six feet above the rear wheel of a blade grinder shall be used in uneven terrain.

(e) Operators of motor graders shall normally keep to the right side of a roadway. When blading against traffic is necessary, flags and barricades shall be used to warn traffic.

(f) The operator must look to the front, sides, and rear before moving the machine, and be constantly alert for people on foot and other equipment.

(g) No passengers shall be permitted to ride on the equipment.

(h) Jumping from a standing machine is prohibited.

(i) Before an operator leaves his/her equipment, even for a short time, he/she shall lower the bowl or blade to the ground, stop the engine and set and lock the parking brake.

Wheel-Type Loader and Dozer Operations
Employees shall observe the following procedures for operating loaders and dozers:

(a) No passengers shall be permitted to ride on equipment.

(b) Never move a load above the heads of other workmen or over truck cabs.

(c) Carry the bucket or attachment low so it does not block your vision when traveling.

(d) Avoid driving across obstacles. If you must drive across them, use extreme caution.

(e) Stay back from the edge of banks and pits, which can cave in on your machine or collapse under the machine.

(f) Keep a loaded bucket or attachment close to the ground for stability. If an overload causes the machine to tip forward, lower the load immediately.

(g) Keep proper distance from overhead power lines and check for buried power and utility lines before you dig.

(h) If you must leave the machine unattended, even for a short time, lower the bucket or attachment "flat" to the ground. Shut off engine and engage parking brake, if provided.

Crane and Dragline Operations
Cranes and draglines are complex and powerful machines that require complete operator attention for proper control during every movement of operation. Operators shall take the following precautions and controls whenever there is a crane or dragline operation in progress:

(a) Equipment such as hydraulic hoses, wire rope, etc. shall be visually checked for evidence of physical damage and loose or missing hardware.

(b) Know and understand the rated capacity of the crane or dragline and never exceed the manufacturer's load rating.

(c) Operate with only the manufacturer's recommended counterweight or ballast.

(d) Learn and use the accepted hand signals used by your department.

(e) Respond to operating signals only from the appointed signal person; but shall obey a stop signal at anytime from anyone.

(f) Know the working range of your machine and keep personnel out of the swing radius of equipment.

(g) Never load a vehicle unless the operator of the vehicle is out of the truck cab and in a safe place.

(h) Never swing or position the hook or load over personnel on the ground.

(i) Never violate the minimum clearance when working near power lines.

(j) Keep the machine away from backs or edges of pits, etc.

Towing Equipment

Towing is a hazardous operation, especially when towing equipment in congested areas. The following are the minimum safety precautions that shall be used by the operator whenever equipment is being towed:

(a) Do not move the vehicle if anyone is between the two couplings.

(b) Ensure that the hitch or drawbar is properly secured to the vehicle.

(c) Ensure that all equipment being towed is secured by a safety chain or chains, attached to the pulling unit.

(d) Safety chains shall be sufficient strength to maintain connection under all conditions while the trailer or equipment is being towed.

(e) When one vehicle is towing another and the connection consists of a chain, rope or cable, there shall be displayed upon such connection a white flag or cloth not less than 12 inches square.

(f) The drawbar or connection shall not exceed 15 feet from one vehicle to the other except the connection between any two vehicles transporting poles, pipe, or other materials that cannot be dismembered.

(g) Vehicles performing towing operations shall be operated at or below posted speed limit and shall not exceed 45 mph.

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