



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: All California Employees

From: State Director

Subject: Use and Care of Government Owned/Leased Motor Vehicles and Equipment

This IM reiterates in part, the existing BLM and Interior policy concerning the use and care of government owned/leased motor vehicles and equipment.

Government owned/leased vehicles are to be used for official use only. "Official use" is interpreted as that form of transportation authorized and provided for the purposes of performing an assignment of duties within the scope of Federal employment. It is the responsibility of all managers and employees to ensure that proper care, operation and maintenance of the GOV is sustained. Employees should exercise the same degree of care when using a GOV as they would in operating their personal vehicles.

Statutory provisions require that any officer or employee of the government who willfully uses, or authorizes the use of any government owned/leased motor vehicle/aircraft/equipment for other than official purposes shall be suspended, without compensation, for not less than 30 days. If circumstances warrant, government employees may be suspended for a longer period of time, or removed from Federal service.

Use of government owned/leased vehicles are limited to official passengers only. Official passengers include:

- Federal officers and employees, temporary employees and volunteers utilized for the benefit of the government.
- Members of Congress or Congressional committees
- Non-federal passengers when engaged in missions which relate to an Interior program, e.g., cooperating State, county or local agency personnel; representatives of foreign governments; contractors and contractors' representatives; advisory board members; conservation society members; representatives of the news media, etc.

Passengers deemed “unofficial” include: Spouses and/or relatives of Federal employees or passengers other than those cited above. The State Director is the only delegated authority to approve transportation of unofficial passengers.

Use of government vehicles/equipment in the case of emergencies, e.g., fires, floods, storms, earthquakes, etc. is not restricted. Employees are authorized to exercise their own judgement in using or authorizing use to assist in avoiding loss of life or property in emergencies.

Operator qualifications: Each Federal employee, including temporary staff and volunteers, or contractors using BLM-provided vehicles, is required to carry a valid California driver’s license or heavy equipment certification for the appropriate class of vehicle or heavy equipment. Current out-of-state licenses will be recognized and honored for employees on extended detail or will be valid for the first 30 days of residence in California following permanent transfer.

In addition to a valid California driver’s license, Federal employees operating a government vehicle are required to have a valid U.S. Government Identification card or accepted Agency Identification card in their possession.

All employees must participate in a Defensive Driving Training course every three (3) years. OSHA requires that heavy equipment operators undergo certification training every four (4) years. Managers and supervisors must ensure that funding is made available to provide for this mandatory training annually, on an as-needed basis.

Employees will not be authorized to operate a government provided vehicle or heavy equipment unless the supervisor has determined the employee can operate the vehicle safely under the anticipated conditions.

Use of Government Vehicles While in Travel Status: Employees should exercise sound judgment in the use of vehicles while in travel status. The degree of propriety in the after-hours use of government vehicles should be carefully considered. If there are questions about what is appropriate, the situation should be discussed with supervisory staff.

Vehicle fleet card use:

, **Interior** vehicles use a vehicle-assigned MasterCard. Operators should use the card for only the vehicle to which it is assigned to ensure proper accounting/data collection. Repairs to the vehicle are now permitted on the vehicle fleet card for *authorized* repairs. Some point-of-sale purchases for fuel *may* prompt the user for a “Driver ID”. Although these instances are rare, operators should enter either the vehicle’s license number on the keypad or any variation in order to bypass this screen. Operators will then be prompted to enter the odometer reading of the vehicle and should respond accordingly.

, **GSA** vehicles use a Voyager card for fuel purchases. Operators *will* be prompted to enter a Driver ID during the fueling transaction. The ID consists of the last 5 digits of the license plate number of the vehicle, which is also embossed on the fuel card. The odometer reading will also need to be entered when prompted. Any repairs under \$100 can be put on the GSA Voyager card. All others need to have prior approval by GSA by calling the number on the back of the blue repair card provided with each vehicle.

Vehicle Pre-Trip Inspections: Employees should perform a basic pre-trip inspection prior to operating the vehicle. The safety check should include fluids, tire pressure and or visual inspections for tire wear or vehicle damage. Failure to perform these checks may lead to serious safety problems, and potentially cause personal and/or property damage.

Motor pool vehicles should be returned with at least 3/4 tank of fuel and cleaned as conditions warrant. This includes the exterior of the vehicle as well as the interior of the vehicle. Vehicles should not be returned with obvious road wear (dirt, insects) for the next person to use. A majority of the oil companies provide car washes at their fueling facilities. These should be used and can be charged to the fleet card if the wash is not included in the price of fuel.

ANNUAL VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Vehicle Safety Issues:

- < **SEAT BELTS:** Employees and passengers in Government-provided vehicles, rentals or privately owned vehicles are required by law to use seat belts.
- < **CELL PHONES:** Due to the obvious safety issues, managers and supervisors should *discourage* the use of hand-held cell phones while operating a government-provided vehicle and/or provide hands-free accessories and/or a hands-free car kit.
- < Employees are prohibited from smoking, consuming alcohol, narcotics or other intoxicants in Government-provided vehicles/heavy equipment.
- < Employees will not exceed 8 hours of driving time (behind the wheel) during a 16-hour duty period. Breaks of 15 minutes are recommended every 2 hours when driving continuously. At least 8 consecutive hours of rest without duty are required prior to each duty period requiring driving.

Vehicle Accidents:

Employees are required to report motor vehicle accidents to their supervisor(s) immediately. Supervisors must notify the State Safety Manager and make an entry into the Safety Management Information System (SMIS) (www.smis.doi.gov) within 48 hours of notification of such accidents.

The Operator's Guide kept in each vehicle binder outlines the necessary steps employees should take in the event of a vehicle accident. Accident reporting forms (SF91, SF94, etc.) are also included in the vehicle binder. A Report of Survey should be prepared within 30 days of the occurrence of damage or accident and in accordance with BLM policy contained in Guidebook G-1520-4.

Questions concerning this IM may be directed to Dona Maxcy at (916) 978-4314.

Signed
James Wesley Abbott
Acting State Director

Authenticated by:
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Records Management