



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 Provided Vehicles/Equipment

Program Area: Fleet Management

Purpose: As Federal employees, we have a responsibility to ensure that the BLM fleet is operated in a safe and efficient manner and to be cognizant of the public's perception of how we are using our fleet. Our ability to do our jobs as well as our personal safety depends on this. This Instruction Memorandum reiterates, in part, the existing BLM and Interior policy regarding the use and care of government owned/leased motor vehicles and equipment. The need to reiterate existing policy arises in part from the fact that GSA has received complaints from citizens who have perceived the misuse of government vehicles. GSA is required to report these incidents to the heads of the affected agencies for investigation and possible disciplinary action.

Policy/Action: Government owned/leased vehicles (GOV) are for official use only.

“Official use” of a government vehicle is:

- That form of transportation authorized by your supervisor and provided for the purposes of performing an assignment of duties within the scope of Federal employment.

Examples of unauthorized use of GOVs include but are not limited to the following situations:

- Transporting unofficial passengers, including family members, other passengers in “ride-along” status, etc.
- Transporting animals other than Law Enforcement K-9 and/or other BLM-owned or sponsored animal programs
- Using a GOV to drive to meal breaks or other trips while off-duty, in non-travel status, or local travel which has not been previously authorized by the supervisor.
- Operating a GOV without proper training for the class of vehicle provided or without a valid operator's license/certification

Standards

- Driver Licenses: Each Federal employee, including temporary staff, volunteers, or contractors using BLM-provided vehicles, is required to carry a valid operator's license or heavy equipment certification for the appropriate class of vehicle or equipment. Current out-of-state licenses will be recognized and honored for employees on extended detail or who reside in an adjoining state and work in California. In addition to a valid operator's license, each Federal employee operating a government-provided vehicle/equipment is required to have a valid U.S. Government or Agency Identification card in their possession.
- Training: 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 training.
- Vehicle Inspections: Employees should perform a basic pre-trip inspection prior to operating the vehicle. The inspection should include oil/coolant levels, tire pressure/wear and visual inspections for vehicle damage. Failure to perform these checks may lead to serious safety problems, and/or cause personal or property damage.
- Travel/Property Protection: Employees should exercise sound judgment in the use of the GOV while in travel status. Equipment should be removed from the vehicle or placed in a covered bin or area to prevent and/or discourage vandalism or theft. The need for after-hours use of the GOV also should be carefully considered. If there are questions about what is appropriate, the situation should be discussed with the supervisor.
- Accidents: Federal employees, volunteers, and contractors operating government-provided vehicles/equipment must exercise every precaution to prevent accidents. All accidents or incidents that result in vehicle or equipment damage, employee injury and/or any situation(s) that involve vehicle damage or injury to members of the public (including private or commercial organizations, contractors and cooperators) must be reported to your immediate supervisor within 72 hours. These occurrences also must be recorded in the Safety Management Information System (SMIS): <http://www.smis.doi.gov>. The circumstances of the accident/incident involving property loss or damage will determine the need for referral to the CASO Survey Board for further investigation.
- Safety: In addition, the following vehicle safety guidelines must be followed by every vehicle operator:
 - Employees and passengers in government-provided vehicles, rentals or privately owned vehicles are required by law to use seat belts.
 - Due to the obvious safety issues, managers and supervisors should discourage the use of hand-held cell phones while operating a GOV and/or provide hands-free accessories.
 - Employees are prohibited from smoking, consuming alcohol, narcotics or other intoxicants in government-provided vehicles or 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 two (2) hours when driving continuously. At least eight (8) consecutive hours of rest without duty are required prior to each duty period requiring driving.

Remember, for many of us use of government vehicles is a necessity in order to accomplish our work. Government drivers must use and care for government vehicles in a safe and appropriate manner to ensure personal safety and allow work to be accomplished successfully.

Referenced Sections: Master Labor Agreement, May 2003; 41CFR Ch. 101; 41CFR Ch. 301, 5 USC Sec. 1349, 31 USC Sec. 1349, 1520-3, 1112-2.

Please contact Dona Maxcy at (916) 978-4314, if you have questions regarding this IM.

Signed by:
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