

County of Madera Vehicle Use Policy

The public entrusts County employees to maintain high standards in their representation of the County of Madera; thus, it is necessary to have a reasonable set of standards to be followed when driving for the County. Employees should inquire of their departmental personnel representative if their department has internal guidelines regarding vehicle use. A Departmental Policy is to be followed in conjunction with this County-wide policy.

DMV Pull Notice Program (Program)

1. Employees who drive for the County as part of their employment at least once per month, shall be enrolled in the Program.
2. Employees utilizing a County vehicle for any purpose (i.e., for travel to trainings, conferences, etc.) shall be enrolled in the Program.
3. All drivers must have a current, valid California Driver's license.
4. Risk Management oversees the Program and shall receive notice when an action is taken against an employee's driving privilege (i.e., excessive driving citations (more than three driving citations in a single month), or driver's license revocation, suspension, or expiration, etc.). Risk Management shall notify the Department Head when an employee has had an action taken against their driving privilege.

General Use

1. Employees checking a vehicle out from Central Garage must complete a form that includes, at a minimum: employee name, department, starting mileage, ending mileage, purpose for trip, and indicate whether or not the gas tank has been filled.
2. All County vehicles are subject to inspection and/or search at any time by a supervisor without notice and without cause. An inspection and/or search of a public safety vehicle shall be made pursuant to Government Code Section 3309. No employee assigned to or operating a vehicle shall be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to the vehicle or its contents. This does not include private property of the employee.
3. Drivers of private vehicles being used for County business or being driven during an employee's shift shall maintain automobile insurance and be able to provide proof of such insurance when requested.
4. Drivers are expected to obey all laws. Any moving or parking violations that a driver incurs are the responsibility of the driver and not the County of Madera. Except as allowed by law (ex: calling 911 during an emergency), drivers shall not hold a cellular phone while the vehicle is in motion.
5. Employees operating County vehicles (or personal vehicles for County business) shall pay appropriate toll charges or utilize the appropriate toll transponder. Employees may submit a request for reimbursement from the County for any toll fees incurred in the course of official business.
6. Drivers shall inspect the interior and exterior appearance of vehicles prior to each use and at the conclusion of their vehicle use. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents or other issues with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor. Drivers will confirm the vehicle is not due for service prior to use.

7. Personal use of County vehicles is not allowed.
8. Home garaging of vehicles is not allowed without Department Head approval.
9. Non-County personnel are not allowed as passengers in County vehicles without Department Head or designee approval.
10. Non-County personnel are not allowed to drive County vehicles without Department Head approval.
11. Employees shall complete a defensive driving course provided by the County, on County time, prior to driving.
12. Employees shall follow defensive driving principles when driving for the County.
13. Smoking (including vaping) as well as chewing tobacco is not allowed in any County-owned vehicles and trash shall be removed after vehicle use.
14. Modifications to County vehicles are not allowed without prior written approval from Central Garage.
15. Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary (operating emergency lights, equipment charging, etc.) When a vehicle is parked or left unattended, valuables should be secured or out of sight.
16. County vehicles may be equipped with a system designed to track and record the vehicle's precise location, diagnostic status and certain data points. This may include but is not limited to oil level/life, fuel level, vehicle mileage, vehicle speed, acceleration and braking. All data captured by the system shall be retained in accordance with the County's records retention schedule.
17. Employees who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs are prohibited from operating any County vehicle.

Flat Tires and Lock Outs

1. During normal business hours, call Central Garage at 559-675-7874 for flat tires and lock outs and assistance will be provided. All towing for lock outs will be charged to the department using the vehicle.
2. After hours, refer to the emergency procedure instructions located in the glove box of the vehicle for contact information.
3. Prior authorization is required for towing, either from Central Garage or department supervisor.

Gas Cards, Trips, and Rental Cars

1. For trips out of the County, a Central Garage gas card should be checked out so the vehicle may be filled at an approved service station. Fuel should be filled at Central Garage prior to returning the vehicle.
2. Rental cars may be used but must be approved in advance by the Department Head.

Accident Protocol

1. If involved in a traffic collision during work hours, while driving a County vehicle, or a County vehicle otherwise incurs damage, the employee shall dial 911 or notify the agency having jurisdiction. The employee will promptly notify a supervisor as soon as practical, to report the incident. Ask for an officer to take a report for any traffic collision.

2. Exchange information with the other party and, if possible and safe, take pictures before moving the vehicles.
3. Do not admit liability; allow the investigation to determine this.
4. Contact Central Garage to assess the vehicle's condition and safety regarding further usage and need to tow the vehicle.
5. Fill out and file a Report of Vehicle Accident with a supervisor.

Vehicle Replacement

1. Vehicle acquisition, utilization, and disposal policies will follow guidelines set forth by the County Administrative Office and the approval of the Board of Supervisors. Vehicle replacements are based on the estimated use and life of the vehicles according to department usage. Vehicles that reach the vehicle replacement criteria based on mileage and age are listed for replacement.
2. Vehicle replacement shall be determined by the Fleet Services Manager or their designee; however, generally vehicles are recommended to be decommissioned based on the following criteria:
 - a. Passenger cars: 130,000 miles or 12 years
 - b. Sheriff/emergency vehicles: 130,000 miles or 10 years
 - c. Special service vehicles: 150,000 miles or 12 years
3. When newly acquired vehicles enter into the service pool, decommissioned vehicles are earmarked for disposal through open auction per County guidelines.
4. At no time will any vehicle be allowed to remain in the County Fleet that is not operationally sound and safe.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the loss of driving privileges and progressive intervention up to and including dismissal from County employment.