

## City of Newton, Massachusetts



# POLICY FOR CITY VEHICLE USE, ASSIGNMENT, AND PURCHASE

Revised March 13, 2013

Revised July 1, 2015

Effective immediately the following policy shall govern the use, assignment, and purchase of City of Newton vehicles. This policy supersedes any previous executive policies on this subject.

### **A. GENERAL POLICY**

Employees assigned vehicles for daily use and for commuting purposes are governed by this general policy and a philosophy that City vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use. City vehicles should be viewed as belonging to the citizens of the City of Newton and are only assigned for purposes consistent with providing municipal services.

### **B. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR VEHICLE USE**

1. Each employee assigned a City vehicle for routine use will sign a vehicle acknowledgement statement (Appendix A).
2. City vehicle shall be driven over the most direct route taking into account road and traffic conditions. Employees shall not drive City vehicles outside the direct route for personal reasons.
3. Passengers shall be limited to City employees and individuals who are directly associated with City work activity (committee members, consultants, contactors, etc.). Family members shall not be transported in City vehicles.
4. City vehicles shall carry only those items, supplies and safety equipment, for which the vehicle is designed or utilized. City employees shall only transport City property in City vehicles, and employees are solely responsible for any damage or loss to their own property which may occur while in a City vehicle.
5. The operators of City vehicles must observe and obey all traffic ordinances, rules, and regulations, including having and maintain a valid driver's license. Fines or penalties for moving, parking, or any other violations are the responsibility of the operator. Operators and passengers shall wear seatbelts at all times.
6. Employees shall not operate City vehicles while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs or any medication that may interfere with safe and alert operation of the vehicle. In no event is a City vehicle ever to be utilized to transport alcoholic beverages,

controlled or illegal substances, or weapons, except in the case of police officers acting in their official capacity. Smoking is prohibited in all City vehicles.

7. City employees authorized to use a City vehicle for commuting outside the city limits are responsible for emergency road service. It is recommended that employees acquire AAA or some other appropriate emergency road service membership. For City vehicles other than sedans, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works or his/her designee will make a case-by-case determination as to the type of emergency road service required.
8. At the discretion of the Department Head, whenever an employee who is assigned a City vehicle is on vacation or any other absence for any length of time, the vehicle may be temporarily reassigned and parked in the appropriate City lot for that period of time.
9. Employees are not allowed to use cell phones while driving City vehicles.
10. All vehicles, except appropriate public safety vehicles shall be identified with the standard City seal and vehicle identification number.
11. City vehicle use will be reconciled on a monthly basis by the Fleet Manager. Employees assigned vehicles may be required to document reasons for significant month-to-month variances. Vehicle use may also be monitored.
12. In the event any of the above guidelines are not observed, an employee using a City vehicle may face disciplinary action. In addition, the employee may be required to reimburse the City at the prevailing mileage rate for any personal use of a City vehicle.

#### **C. ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUTING WORK TO DOMICILE**

Positions eligible for assignment of a vehicle for commuting purposes are listed on Appendix C. Other employees not generally authorized to take City vehicles home may do so, on a case-by-case basis with the recommendation of the Department Head and written approval of the Chief Operating Officer, and only when a specific need arises.

#### **D. TAXABLE FRINGE BENEFIT**

Employees who have City vehicles assigned for commuting may be subject to the tax provisions of the 1984 Tax Reform Act. Such employees shall file annually in accordance with Internal Revenue Service Publication 15-B, Employers Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits, Section 3, with the City Treasurer to report of usage for commuting purposes, unless exempted from taxation by the Act.

#### **E. MANAGEMENT AND PROCUREMENT OF FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLES**

The City's goal is to reduce, to the maximum extent possible, the consumption of fuel within the existing fleet and to purchase fuel efficient vehicles wherever practicable to further reduce the City's energy needs within the City. The City therefore establishes the following policy for management of energy consumption through a fleet replacement strategy and guidelines for the purchase of fuel efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practical. This policy applies to all divisions and departments of the City of Newton.

##### **1. DEFINITIONS**

***Combined city and highway MPG (EPA Combined Fuel Economy):*** Combined Fuel Economy means the fuel economy from driving a combination of 43% city and 57% highway miles and is calculated as follows:  $=1/[(0.43/\text{city MPG}) + (0.57/\text{highway MPG})]$

**Drive System:** The manner in which mechanical power is directly transmitted from the drive shaft to the wheels. The following codes are used in the drive field:

- **AWD** = All Wheel Drive: 4-wheel drive automatically controlled by the vehicle powertrain system.
- **4WD** = 4-Wheel Drive: driver selectable four-wheel drive with 2wheel drive option.
- **2WD** = 2-Wheel Drive

**Heavy-duty vehicle:** A vehicle with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds.

**Exempt Vehicles:** Heavy-duty vehicles utilizing specialty equipment permanently affixed to the vehicle, or sedans required to have minimum performance requirements based on the security/safety functions within the City. Exempt vehicles include fire trucks, ambulances, passenger or cargo vans, public works trucks 1 ton or more in payload capacity, and police cruisers. The City is committed to purchasing fuel efficient police cruisers, passenger and cargo vans when they become commercially available.

**Non-exempt Vehicles:** General purpose vehicles used for daily administration of the City while typically include pick-up trucks or smaller vehicles and not required for emergency use.

## **2. Guidelines**

City vehicles will conform to any and all state and federal air emission standards.

Use of non-exempt vehicles will be cognizant of best practices for efficient and effective operation to include maximizing occupancy in vehicles travelling to a common destination, not leaving idling vehicles unattended for more than one minute, or stationary waiting in an idling vehicle for more than five minutes.

All departments and divisions shall purchase only fuel efficient vehicles for general municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.

## **3. Inventory**

The City of Newton will maintain an annual vehicle inventory for all vehicles.

The following information shall be included in a vehicle inventory of all vehicles and said list shall be updated on an annual basis by the Fleet Manager:

- a. Model; Make; Model year; Drive system; Weight Class; MPG
- b. Year purchased; Annual miles driven; Total Fuel Consumption; Vehicle Function

## **4. Fuel Efficient Vehicle Replacement Plan**

The City of Newton shall develop a plan to replace all non-exempt vehicles with fuel efficient vehicles that meet, at a minimum, the fuel efficiency ratings contained in the most recent guidance for Criteria 4 published by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Grant Program. (Criteria 4 can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities->

[clean-tech/green-communities/gc-grant-program/criterion-4.html](http://www.fueleconomy.gov)). The fuel efficiency ratings contained therein are based on the most recently published US Environmental Protection Agency combined city and highway MPG ratings for vehicles. (MPG ratings for specific vehicles can be found at <http://www.fueleconomy.gov>). Criteria 4 of the Green Communities Grant Program must be checked for updates prior to ordering any non-exempt replacement vehicles.

As of the date of this Policy and based on 2010 US Environmental Protection Agency data on fuel efficient vehicles, vehicles are to have a combined city and highway MPG no less than the following:

- 2 wheel drive car: 29 MPG
- 4 wheel drive car: 24 MPG
- 2 wheel drive small pick-up truck: 21MPG
- 4 wheel drive small pick-up truck: 19 MPG
- 2 wheel drive standard pick-up truck: 17 MPG
- 4 wheel drive standard pick-up truck: 16 MPG
- 2 wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 21 MPG
- 4 wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 18 MPG

Hybrid or electric vehicles in these vehicle classes will meet these criteria.

*Note: The US Environmental Agency maintains a database on vehicle fuel efficiency that is updated occasionally throughout the year, as new models are released. As increasing numbers of fuel efficient vehicle models are released, the minimum combined MPG requirements of the Green Communities Act will be revised upwards. Both Criteria 4 and the US Environmental Agency data on fuel efficient vehicles must be checked prior to any purchase of a replacement vehicle.*

#### **5. Questions/Enforcement**

All inquiries should be directed to the Public Works Department which is responsible for fleet management or the Office of the Mayor, which is responsible for fleet procurement.

### **F. POOLING POLICY AND CITY HALL PARKING**

#### **1. Pool Sign Out Process**

Employees participating in the pooling program for official use of a City vehicle will be required to sign out a vehicle using a process set up by a managing department. At a minimum, the managing department will maintain a sign-out board with:

- Vehicle description and number.
- Hooks with keys to each vehicle.
- Sign out date/time for the vehicle and an estimated return date/time.
- Process for notification of vehicle repair required.

#### **2. Vehicle Condition Report**

Employees using a pool vehicle must fill out a Vehicle Condition Report (VCR) with the following information to be returned with the vehicle:

- Time/Date/Mileage when picked up
- Condition of the car (interior/exterior)
- Fuel in the tank
- Repairs needed (if any)
- Time/Date/Mileage when returned

### **3. Return and Repair Protocol**

In the event that major repairs are needed, a City of Newton Vehicle Condition Report (VCR) will be required to be filled out. General procedures that should be followed are:

- Each car must always be returned with no less than ½ tank of gas.
- Car keys will have a tag that will state the vehicle number and a car gas key for that vehicle only.
- VCR must be turned in with the keys.
- If a vehicle is not safe, then it should be marked on the board and in the VCR that it is not fit for driving.

### **4. Designated Parking Area at City Hall**

- a. A parking area will be designated strictly for the car pool system at City Hall. A vehicle sign-out process from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. will be instituted by a designated department to manage the process. Pool cars should be returned to the designated area and keys returned immediately to the sign-out location.
- b. Non-pool City vehicles assigned to City Hall employees will utilize available parking spaces primarily on Homer/Walnut Streets and the Memorial Circle on the west side of City Hall. City vehicles should refrain from parking in the library parking lot during the library's hours of operation.

## **G. BICYCLE POLICY**

The City of Newton has two bicycles and accessories for use by City employees. The following guidelines facilitate the safe use of the bicycles. This program will help the City and its employees reduce vehicle trips, reduce congestion on City streets, and will promote a healthy activity for City employees.

- City bicycles are for exclusive use by employees of the City of Newton for activities during the workday. They may be used for work-related trips such as site visits or for modest personal use during the day, such as travel to lunch or for minor errands. The bicycles should not be used between dusk and dawn unless the user provides his or her own bicycle lights. The bicycles must be returned to their designated location by the end of each work day.
- In order to use a City bicycle an employee must sign up in advance through the same sign-out procedure used for pooling cars at City Hall (section F). Keys will be available upon verification of adequate training and safety gear.
- City employees must use the bicycles with appropriate safety precautions, including wearing a bicycle helmet. (Adjustable bicycle helmets are available, but users may use their own helmets).
- Users of City bicycles must observe and obey all traffic ordinances, rules, and regulations. Fines or penalties for any violations are the responsibility of the operator.

- Before signing out a City bicycle, employees must complete approved training covering topics such as rules of the road, hand signals, and safety equipment. This training is typically offered by the Police Department staff.
- Smoking and using cell phones are prohibited while riding City bicycles. Under no circumstances is a City bicycle ever to be used to transport alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or weapons, except in the case of police officers acting in their official capacity.
- No liability of coverage of any kind covers the operator and property carried on City bicycles, except while used as authorized on City business.
- The bicycle must be locked when a user is not riding it. Locks are provided for each City bicycle.
- Immediately after a user finishes using the bicycle, the user must lock the bike to its designated bike rack location. Helmet should be left locked to the bicycle, and the bicycle should be covered with the associated cover.
- A pump is available in the custodian's office for use in inflating the tires. The pump must be returned to the office immediately after using it.

Please contact the City vehicle pool managing Department to receive access to these resources. Similar to vehicles, users must notify the pool manager about any damage to the bicycles and repairs that are needed. Prior to use of a city bicycle, a statement of acknowledgement (Appendix B) will be signed by the individual stating they understand and will adhere to this policy.

## **APPENDIX C: Positions Eligible To Commute Work-to-Domicile**

The following positions have been deemed to be in the public interest to allow commuting with a City vehicle. Some positions not listed here are subject to contract and employment agreements which authorize use of a City vehicle for commuting purposes. On an annual basis (January 1<sup>st</sup>), any employee utilizing a vehicle for commuting purposed will file a report of the number and nature of occurrences to attend to City matters in an official capacity (see Appendix D).

<b><u>DEPARTMENT</u></b>	<b><u>POSITION/TITLE</u></b>
1. Police	Chief
2. Police	Executive Officer
3. Police	Bureau Commander- Internal Affairs
4. Police	Bureau Commander- Patrol
5. Police	Bureau Commander- Special Operations
6. Police	Bureau Commander- Traffic
7. Police	Bureau Commander- Dispatch
8. Police	Bureau Commander- Community Services
9. Police	Bureau Commander- Detectives
10. Police	Bureau Commander- Research
11. Police	Traffic Sergeant in Charge
12. Fire	Chief
13. Fire	Assistant Chief
14. Fire	Wire Division, Superintendent On-call
15. Fire	Fire Prevention and code enforcement, On-call
16. Public Works	Water-sewer Division, On-call technician
17. Public Works	Highway Division, On-call snow watch (Nov 15-Apr 15)
18. Public Works	Highway Division, Director of Snow Operations(Nov 15-Apr 15)
19. Inspectional Services	Senior Building Inspector, On-call
20. Inspectional Services	Electrical Inspector, On-call





**City of Newton, Massachusetts**



**Policy for City Vehicle User, Assignment and Purchase**

Appendix A: Vehicle Acknowledgment Statement

I hereby acknowledge that I received a copy of the City of Newton Vehicle Policy. I understand it is my obligation to read and abide by its terms and procedures. I understand that a copy of this acknowledgment statement will be placed in my personnel file.

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Print Full Name

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Signature

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Date

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Department

# City of Newton, Massachusetts



## Policy for City Vehicle User, Assignment and Purchase

### Appendix B: Bicycle Acknowledgment Statement

I hereby acknowledge that I received a copy of the City of Newton Bicycle Policy. I understand it is my obligation to read and abide by its terms and procedures. I understand that a copy of this acknowledgment statement will be placed in my personnel file.

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Print Full Name

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Signature

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Date

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Department