

County of Erie Fleet Management and Motor Vehicle Use Policy

Definitions

AVL: Automatic vehicle location system

Bureau of Fleet Services: A division of the Department of Public Works, maintains administrative responsibility for the County's vehicle fleet. Enforcement of this Fleet Management Policy rests with the Bureau of Fleet Services, in coordination with the Department of Personnel and department heads whose employees use county vehicles. The Commissioner of Public Works holds administrative oversight of the Bureau of Fleet Services.

County Vehicle: Any vehicle owned, leased, rented, or otherwise operated by Erie County for official County business.

Emergency on-call role: Includes, but is not limited to, police officers and emergency services responders driving vehicles with emergency lights and sirens, who must relate to emergency County services. Meetings before or after regular work hours or early-morning work assignments in the field are not grounds for a 24-hour assignment.

Emergency or Law Enforcement Vehicle: See Section 101 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law.

Fuel Fob: A county-issued access device assigned to a vehicle or authorized operator that enables fueling or charging of county vehicles through approved fueling systems and records usage data for tracking, accountability, and auditing purposes.

Fleet Management System: Centralized digital system used by Erie County to track county vehicles, assignments, maintenance history, fuel usage, utilization data, and operational metrics.

Heavy-duty vehicles: County vehicles, excluding those that are primarily used as a mode of transportation for people.

Independently Elected Offices: Independently elected offices include the Erie County Sheriff, the Erie County District Attorney, the Erie County Clerk, and the Erie County Executive.

Individually Assigned Vehicles: Vehicles assigned to a county employee's duties are required for frequent field operations.

LENS: LENS refers to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles License Event Notification System. The Department of Personnel utilizes the LENS program to ensure the validity of County employees' driver's licenses and status.

Official County Business: Activities performed by an Erie County employee or authorized individual that are necessary to carry out assigned job duties, provide County services, or otherwise fulfill the operational responsibilities of Erie County government.

Personal Vehicle: Any motor vehicle owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by an employee or individual that is not owned, leased, or assigned by Erie County and is used for County business purposes when authorized under this policy.

Rental Vehicle: Any motor vehicle obtained through a third-party rental agreement by Erie County or an authorized employee for the purpose of conducting official County business, whether paid directly by the County or reimbursed in accordance with County travel and reimbursement policies.

Take-home Vehicle: Vehicle assigned to an employee that may be used for commuting between home and work when authorized by said employee's department head.

Trip Ticket: A standardized County-issued form documenting the use of a county vehicle, including, but not limited to, driver identification, date and time of use, mileage, destination, purpose of trip, fuel usage, and vehicle condition before and after use. Trip tickets are required for Central Motor Pool and other designated fleet vehicles as directed by the Bureau of Fleet Services.

1. Purpose

1.1 The effective delivery of Erie County government services requires transportation to be available. This policy establishes the rules governing the acquisition, assignment, operation, maintenance, and disposal of all county vehicles. The purpose of this policy is to ensure responsible stewardship of public resources.

1.2 This policy aims to strengthen oversight, accountability, and transparency regarding the procurement, assignment, and use of county vehicles used for official County business.

1.3 Independently elected offices are required to comply with the provisions of this policy. Independently elected offices may adopt supplemental policies and procedures to address office-specific operational needs and workflows; however, such policies must be consistent with this policy, which shall serve as the governing countywide standard.

2. Authorized Drivers

2.1 Only authorized Erie County employees may operate county vehicles. To qualify as an authorized driver, an employee must be enrolled in the LENS program, possess a valid driver's license issued by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles that is appropriate for the class of vehicle being operated, and must be authorized by their department.

2.2 Employees operating county vehicles must carry both a valid New York State driver's license and an Erie County Employee Identification Card while operating the vehicle. They must present such identification to law enforcement officers or authorized officials when requested.

2.3 Employees who drive county vehicles and whose driver's licenses become suspended, revoked, restricted, or otherwise formally impeded by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles or a court of record must immediately self-report that status to their supervisor. The supervisor, in turn, shall notify the department head of this license status. At no time may a County employee whose driver's license has been revoked, suspended, or impeded operate a county vehicle, or their personal vehicle while conducting County business.

2.4 Individuals who are not Erie County employees, including contractors, volunteers, family members, or members of the public, are prohibited from operating county vehicles.

3. Vehicle Use

3.1 County vehicles are assigned to departments to support the operational needs of the County government. They shall not be used for personal errands, private activities, or any non-County purpose, including during the work day/work shift.

3.2 Passengers in county vehicles shall be limited to Erie County employees, individuals conducting official County business, and individuals in the custody of Erie County.

3.3 The use of county vehicles for ride sharing, such as UBER/LYFT, is strictly prohibited. County employees who use their personal vehicles for County business are

prohibited from utilizing their personal vehicle during County-paid time for ride-sharing transactions such as UBER/LYFT.

4. Driver Responsibilities

4.1 Employees operating county vehicles are responsible for the safe operation, care, and safeguarding of those vehicles. Operators must exercise reasonable care and attention at all times. They must operate vehicles in accordance with all applicable laws, including the provisions of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law.

4.2 Drivers must operate county vehicles with due regard for road, weather, and traffic conditions, and prioritize public safety at all times. Vehicles must be operated lawfully and responsibly.

4.3 Drivers are responsible for maintaining county vehicles in a reasonably clean condition and ensuring that any assigned equipment remains secure and properly maintained while in their custody.

4.4 Drivers must promptly report mechanical issues, vehicle damage, safety concerns, or other operational problems to their supervisor, who then must report that information to the Bureau of Fleet Services.

4.5 Smoking or vaping tobacco or electronic cigarettes, and the use of alcohol or drugs while operating county vehicles, are prohibited.

4.6 No person operating a county vehicle or personal vehicle while conducting County business shall use a mobile phone while such vehicle is in motion. Bluetooth and hands-free devices are allowed.

4.7 Drivers are responsible for any traffic violations and parking citations while operating a county vehicle unless otherwise authorized by the County.

4.8 Anyone riding in a county vehicle being used for official County business must use a seat belt at all times when the vehicle is in motion. If other safety restraint types are used for people in the county's custody, those options must be used in place of a seatbelt.

5. LENS Reporting Obligations for Employees and Department Heads

5.1 When a County employee needs access to a county vehicle, or will be driving their personal vehicle or a County rental car for official business, they are required to submit a photocopy of their driver's license to the Department of Personnel and the Bureau of Fleet Services.

5.2 The Department of Personnel will enter the employee's name and data into LENS and check on their license status. If LENS indicates an employee's license status precludes them from driving a county vehicle (or a personal or rental vehicle for County business), the Department of Personnel will contact the department head and notify them and the employee's status for driving for official business will be correspondingly altered.

5.3 Department heads will be held responsible for ensuring employees provide their driver's license data to the Department of Personnel. Conversely, when an employee

leaves a department or separates from the County, their department head or designee must notify the Department of Personnel to remove the employee from LENS.

6. Personal Vehicles and Rental Vehicles

6.1 Employees may be authorized in certain circumstances to operate rental vehicles for their personal vehicles while conducting official County business.

6.2 When county employees operate personal vehicles and rental vehicles for official county business, the rules and responsibilities in this policy apply, aside from aspects that are especially challenging to adhere to in a personal or rental vehicle, such as vehicle markings.

6.3 Employees must comply with New York State law and the County's official travel and reimbursement policy issued by the Division of Budget and Management.

6.4 Employees who are authorized to use personal vehicles for County business maintain adequate personal automobile insurance coverage purchased by and indemnifying themselves. The employee's personal automobile insurance is generally considered the primary insurance coverage.

6.5 Employees must also ensure that their vehicle is in a safe operating condition and compliant with all applicable vehicle regulations.

7. Vehicle Assignments

7.1 The Bureau of Fleet Services, in coordination with the Director of Purchase, the Director of the Division of Budget and Management, and with department heads, is responsible for the assignment of county vehicles.

7.2 Fleet vehicles may be assigned as Central Motor Pool vehicles, department vehicles, or take-home vehicles, depending on operational requirements. The Bureau of Fleet Services shall determine assignment types based on operational necessity, utilization levels, and cost effectiveness.

8. 24-hour take-home motor vehicle

8.1 For any County employee to receive access to a 24-hour take-home vehicle, a department head must request the assignment of a 24-hour vehicle to an eligible employee via the prescribed 24-hour take-home vehicle assignment form. The request must be approved by the appropriate independently elected official, depending on which department is making the request. Then this request must be filed with the Bureau of Fleet Services or the employee working under said independent elected official, who is responsible for tracking county vehicle information before any employee is granted access to any such vehicle. No 24-hour take-home vehicle assignments may be modified without prior written approval from an independently elected official.

8.2 No department head may authorize an employee of the County of Erie to have a vehicle for 24 hours unless the employee is in an emergency on-call role.

8.3 If an employee is assigned to a 24-hour vehicle equipped with emergency or specialized equipment or a radio, said information shall be noted. The Bureau of Fleet Services shall consult with the department head to determine the appropriate vehicle to

assign to a County employee.

8.4 Annually, beginning on June 1 and ending on June 30, all departments must resubmit 24-hour take-home vehicle assignment requests via the prescribed form for all County employees with 24-hour take-home vehicles. This is a control mechanism to ensure that only employees who merit or need such vehicles for the performance of their official duties have them.

8.5 When an employee with a 24-hour vehicle changes their title/position, if their department head believes they should continue operating a 24-hour vehicle, a new request form must be completed and submitted for approval. Automatic continuation of the vehicle assignment is not permitted.

8.6 AVL devices will be installed on County vehicles, including 24-hour take-home vehicles. If an AVL device is not yet installed on a take-home vehicle, departments must request that one be installed as soon as possible. In the absence of an AVL, a physical log should be maintained that accurately accounts for the vehicle's usage. Vehicle logs (via the AVL or physical) are required for 24-hour take-home vehicles at the direction of anyone within a department whose role includes tracking County vehicles. The vehicle log shall be actively monitored and reviewed by the department head. These logs are to be kept on file in the departments. Independent elected officials are not required to adhere to the requirements in 8.6.

8.7 All County employees assigned a 24-hour take-home vehicle who are not in an emergency on-call role are subject to required federal taxes and withholding from their bi-weekly payroll. It is the responsibility of the department head who authorizes a 24-hour vehicle assignment to immediately notify the Department of Personnel about the employee so that the employee's tax withholding status is confirmed and the appropriate withholding occurs from their payroll, or is terminated when the employee no longer has access to a 24-hour vehicle.

9. Fleet Administration and Budget Oversight

9.1 Erie County fleet shall be managed through the Bureau of Fleet Services to ensure accountability, transparency, and lifecycle cost optimization.

9.2 No county vehicle, including heavy-duty vehicles, may be placed into service, sold, sent to surplus, or otherwise transferred or disposed of without the consent of the Bureau of Fleet Services, the Director of Purchase, and the Director of the Division of Budget and Management.

9.3 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall review all requests to determine necessity, evaluate existing fleet availability, and ensure alignment with County operational and fiscal objectives. Fleet decisions shall be based on the total cost of ownership, including acquisition costs, maintenance costs, fuel consumption, depreciation, and disposal value.

9.4 It is the responsibility of the department requesting the purchase of the vehicle to accurately complete the New Vehicle Request/Replacement Sheet, including any request to purchase an alternative-fuel vehicle.

9.5 For the Erie County Division of Sewerage Management and the various sewer districts, a similar process shall apply, except that the approval of the various Boards of Managers of the districts shall be required before submission of requests.

9.6 All vehicles shall be purchased through competitive bidding procedures as established and enforced through the Division of Purchase. In determining the most economical vehicles to purchase, it shall be the responsibility of the Bureau of Fleet Services to prepare the information needed by the Division of Purchase to assess actual needs best. Departments must justify the need to replace existing vehicles in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Bureau of Fleet Services, in conjunction with the Division of Budget and Management, the Division of Purchase, and the County Executive.

9.7 Vehicle replacement decisions shall be based on factors including age, mileage or operating hours, maintenance cost history, the availability and accessibility of parts and service reliability concerns, safety considerations, fuel efficiency, and operational requirements. Wherever possible, it shall be the policy of the County to purchase vehicles that are economical and require less maintenance, have higher fuel efficiency, and are appropriate to the conditions.

9.8 Grant-funded or externally funded vehicles shall remain subject to Bureau of Fleet Services approval and lifecycle oversight.

9.9 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall maintain a centralized fleet management system used to track vehicle inventory, assignments, utilization, maintenance history, fuel usage, lifecycle cost, collision data, and sustainability metrics.

9.10 The Bureau of Fleet Services, in cooperation with the Division of Purchase, will maintain a roster of vehicles. The roster is to be updated as needed and include the year, make, and model, as well as information regarding where the vehicle is assigned.

9.11 It shall be the responsibility of all department heads to cooperate fully with the Bureau of Fleet Services in the proper procedures for record-keeping and maintenance of all vehicles, regardless of their administrative control.

9.12 Heavy-duty vehicles shall be the responsibility of the respective department heads, and the replacement and maintenance of those vehicles shall be in accordance with the procedures as directed by the Bureau of Fleet Services.

9.13 It shall be the policy of the County of Erie to maintain all vehicles in a manner that ensures safety for the driver and passengers at all times. No vehicle will be operated by the County unless it is in good mechanical and safety condition.

9.14 Vehicles determined to be underutilized may be reassigned, pooled, or removed from service to reduce fleet size.

9.15 Vehicles that exceed lifecycle thresholds, incur excessive maintenance costs, or are no longer required for operations may be removed from service. Disposal methods may include public auction, online auction, trade-in, intergovernmental transfer, recycling, or salvage, in accordance with any guidelines issued by the Division of Purchase. Departments relinquishing vehicles must remove all departmental equipment and

materials before disposal and return keys, fuel cards, and associated documentation to the Bureau of Fleet Services.

9.16 Someone who is designated by the head of their respective department must file a report on or around June 30 with the Erie County Legislature that details vehicle requests, reservations, mileage reporting, incident reporting, and assignment tracking.

10. Fleet Identification and Markings

10.1 Each vehicle and piece of fleet equipment shall be assigned a unique fleet identification number within the Erie County Fleet Management System. These identification numbers shall be used for maintenance tracking, asset inventory, financial management, and reporting purposes.

10.2 Departments may implement department-specific vehicle numbering systems for internal operational use.

10.3 Vehicles shall display the appropriate county identification, such as, but not limited to, Political Subdivision Plates, and an official County seal clearly visible on the driver and passenger side front doors. The County Executive, Sheriff, County Clerk, District Attorney, and police or other law enforcement vehicles deemed necessary by the Sheriff are exempt from this rule.

10.4 Improper markings or objects, including commercial advertisements, unauthorized decals, dolls, or other unprofessional displays, are not permitted on county vehicles and must be removed.

10.5 Vehicles may operate as unmarked vehicles only when consistent with their operational purpose and when approved by the department head and the Bureau of Fleet Services.

10.6 All unmarked vehicles must be recorded in the Erie County Fleet Management System.

11. Emergency Lighting and Vehicle Classification

11.1 Emergency lights and sirens may be installed only on vehicles designated as law enforcement or authorized emergency response vehicles. They may be used only by personnel authorized to operate such vehicles.

11.2 No department or employee may install lights or sirens on a vehicle that is not legally classified as an emergency vehicle. The Bureau must approve the installation of emergency lighting or sirens for Fleet Services and the appropriate department authority.

11.3 Emergency lights and sirens may only be used during emergency response activities, law enforcement operations, or other circumstances authorized by departmental policy. Such equipment may not be used for personal reasons, convenience, or non-emergency travel.

11.4 Vehicles equipped with emergency lights and sirens may not be reassigned to departments or divisions not authorized to operate such vehicles.

11.5 Other County departments may use amber safety lighting for road work, roadside operations, construction activities, maintenance operations, or safety visibility purposes. Amber lighting does not designate emergency vehicle status.

12. Central Motor Pool

12.1 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall operate a Central Motor Pool for County employee use, consisting of county vehicles. The Central Motor Pool may exclude certain vehicles, such as pickup trucks, used by departments for daily work tasks, including the Departments of Parks and Public Works and the Division of Sewerage Management.

12.2 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall maintain an adequate number of vehicles and shall periodically review the Central Motor Pool and make recommendations to the County Executive and the Division of Budget and Management regarding its status

12.3 No vehicles shall be assigned as replacement vehicles permanently to any other County department without the concurrence of the County Executive and the Director of Budget and Management.

12.4 Central Motor Pool vehicles are not authorized to be used outside of Erie County without the prior written approval and written request from the department head seeking such use, and the written approval of the Bureau of Fleet Services.

12.5 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall establish such procedures as are necessary for the effective use of the Central Motor Pool, and all user departments will be interdepartmentally billed for the costs of using the Central Motor Pool.

12.6 Any employee in need of a Central Motor Pool vehicle after 5 PM or before 8 AM, necessitating overnight possession, shall not be allowed such use without the written request of his/her department head and the written agreement of the Bureau of Fleet Services. Such requests by departments shall be made no later than the morning of the day before the vehicle is needed.

12.7 When utilizing a vehicle from the County Central Motor Pool, the driver is responsible for ensuring that they complete a trip ticket documenting their use of the vehicle before taking the vehicle and again upon its return.

12.8 The driver is responsible for checking the vehicle for visible damage before beginning the trip, informing the Bureau of Fleet Services attendant of any damage, and noting the damage on the trip ticket. Before returning the vehicle, it shall be the operator's responsibility to refuel. Upon completion of the trip, it shall be the operator's responsibility to accurately complete the trip ticket, sign it, and return it, along with the keys, to the attendant.

12.9 The Bureau of Fleet Services may establish shared-vehicle programs, including motor pool vehicles or reservation-based fleet systems, to improve vehicle utilization and reduce the need for individually assigned vehicles.

12.10 The Bureau of Fleet Services may, in coordination with the Director of Purchase and the Director of the Division of Budget and Management, administer contracts for

vehicle rental services, car share services, ride services, telematics providers, fuel management systems, and other fleet-related services that support County operations.

12.11 Employees must follow established reservation procedures, return vehicles in acceptable condition, and report any damage or operational issues.

13. Fueling Management and Sustainability

13.1 All county vehicles shall utilize authorized fueling and charging systems approved or managed by the Bureau of Fleet Services. Fuel fobs may be assigned to vehicles or operators, and all transactions shall be monitored for accuracy and misuse.

13.2 Personal fuel and electric purchases are prohibited, including charging at county buildings that have fueling stations.

13.3 The Department that uses the county fleet must track fuel consumption and may investigate potential misuse or operational inefficiencies.

13.4 Erie County shall manage its fleet in a manner that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves fuel efficiency

13.5 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall prioritize electric, plug-in hybrid, and hybrid vehicles, as well as other high-efficiency vehicle technologies, where operationally feasible.

13.6 All Departments that use county vehicles shall set annual goals for sustainability performance, including fuel consumption.

14. Maintenance and Repairs

14.1 The Bureau of Fleet Services shall repair all fleet vehicles and manage preventive maintenance, including but not limited to scheduled inspections and servicing to maintain vehicle safety, reliability, and operational efficiency.

14.2 Departments that use county vehicles must have a person whose role includes tracking county vehicles. That employee must maintain records, including inspection records and repair histories, for all county vehicles. The Bureau of Fleet Services shall maintain access to said records through a system.

14.3 Drivers must present vehicles for scheduled maintenance when notified. The Bureau of Fleet Services must authorize all repairs.

15. Collision and Vehicle Incident Management

15.1 In the event of a collision, vehicle incident, damage, theft, vandalism, or other accident involving a county vehicle, it shall be the responsibility of the County driver to ensure that the proper police and/or medical authorities are notified, if necessary. In the event of an accident that results in property damage or bodily harm, the driver shall: (1) Call an ambulance or other medical attention if needed, then notify the police; (2) Notify their immediate department supervisor as soon as possible; and (3) Completely and accurately fill out the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles' Report of Motor Vehicle Accident (Form MV-104), which is in all motor pool vehicles, and arrange for submission of the form to the Bureau of Fleet Services and copies to the Department of

Law and to the driver's immediate department supervisor, who shall provide it to the department head.

15.2 The driver shall immediately, or as soon as possible, notify his/her department supervisor of the incident. The supervisor, in turn, must immediately notify the department head, who shall notify the Bureau of Fleet Services and the Department of Law no later than 24 hours following the incident or accident.

15.3 Drivers must not admit fault or liability at the scene. Vehicles involved in collisions may not return to service until approved by the Bureau of Fleet Services.

15.4 The Bureau of Fleet Services may review telematics records, driver statements, witness reports, and law enforcement documentation to determine preventability and recommend corrective actions.

16. Emergency Fleet Operations

16.1 During declared emergencies or disaster response situations, the Bureau of Fleet Services may temporarily reassign county vehicles, suspend normal assignment rules, and prioritize emergency response departments.

16.2 Departments shall comply with emergency fleet directives issued by the Bureau of Fleet Services, and vehicle utilization and assignment procedures may be temporarily modified to support continuity of operations.

17. Misuse and Disciplinary Action

17.1 Misuse of county vehicles, violations of this policy, or failure to comply with the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law shall result in disciplinary action.

17.2 Depending on the severity of the violation, disciplinary measures may include suspension of driving privileges, suspension of an employee's right to use the Central Motor Pool, formal disciplinary action under applicable employment rules or labor agreements, financial responsibility for damages, or termination of employment.