



# Williamson County

## Risk Management

## County Vehicle Use Policy

Sensitivity: Controlled

Criticality: Critical

Primary Type: Policy

### Summary

Williamson County is committed to operating County Vehicles in the safest manner possible. Only Authorized Drivers are permitted to drive County Vehicles. All Authorized Drivers must adhere to the County's safety policies, procedures, and state laws.

### Purpose

This Policy outlines Williamson County's commitment to safety and mitigation of property loss and liability risk by establishing minimum standards and expectations for those operating County Vehicles. This Policy will operate in conjunction with any other County policies regarding the operation and use of County Vehicles (e.g. County Budget Order, Asset Policy, Employee Policy Manual, Department Policy, and job descriptions).

### Scope

This Policy applies to all Authorized Drivers who operate County vehicles. It sets County-wide minimum standards, acknowledging that specific office/departmental policies must also be followed. Office/departmental policy documents may be more prescriptive than this Policy but not less. This Policy supersedes any office/departmental policies that are less prescriptive. Please check with your department leadership about any applicable policies specific to your department's vehicle use.

### Definitions

#### Authorized Drivers

A County employee or non-employee permitted by their office or department to operate County Vehicles.

#### County Vehicles

Any motor vehicle or motorized equipment used by Authorized Drivers, whether owned, leased, rented, borrowed, or hired by the County.

#### Injury

Bodily injury or harm, including death, resulting from a vehicle incident.

#### Non-Employee

Temporary staff or volunteers providing services on behalf of Williamson County.

**Non-Preventable Incident**

Regardless of fault, an incident where Authorized Drivers took all reasonable precautions to avoid the incident.

**Preventable Incident**

Regardless of fault, an incident where Authorized Drivers failed to take all reasonable precautions to avoid the incident.

**Vehicle Incident**

Any occurrence involving a vehicle that requires reporting under a County-managed line of coverage, regardless of fault.

**Unauthorized Driver**

A County employee or non-employee not authorized to operate County Vehicles or who is otherwise disqualified from operating County Vehicles under this Policy.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**All Drivers**

Must adhere to this Policy effective immediately.

Must sign the County Vehicle Use Policy, Commitment to Safety, and any other required documents.

Must possess and maintain a current, valid Texas Driver's License appropriate for the vehicle being driven. If a driver has had their driver's license revoked or suspended, they shall immediately notify their supervisor.

Are required to obey all applicable traffic laws and regulations and to operate vehicles in a safe, responsible, and defensive manner at all times.

**Department Heads / Managers / Supervisors**

Must inform all Authorized Drivers about the Policy, ensure full understanding and compliance and are designated to enforce this Policy at the departmental level.

Must select their Authorized Drivers and submit a list of these drivers to Risk Management, promptly notifying Risk Management of any updates or changes.

Must notify Risk Management within 24 hours of becoming aware that an Authorized Driver's license has been suspended or revoked.

**Commissioners Court**

Commissioners Court, as the policy development and budgetary control unit of county government, is the final authority on the acquisition and utilization of County Vehicles. This Policy may be revised at any time by Commissioners Court.

**County Risk Management Department - Responsible Department**

The County Risk Management Department ("Risk Management") manages the County's auto insurance program and ensures compliance with the Vehicle Use Policy.

## **Policy**

### **A. Vehicle Use and Safety**

#### **1. Vehicle Operation**

- a) Authorized Drivers must be familiar with the vehicle prior to operation. For more information, refer to the vehicle owner's manual.
- b) Authorized Drivers must be capable of using standard features including, but not limited to, lights, horns, emergency flashers, and other safety items.
- c) The use of the cruise control feature in adverse weather conditions is prohibited.

#### **2. Electronic Device Use While Driving (Non-First Responder)**

- a) The use of cell phones, computers and other electronic devices while driving a motor vehicle can cause distraction to the driver, which can result in a vehicle incident and injury.
- b) To maintain safety for our employees and others on the road, Authorized Drivers who are operating a County Vehicle will not dial numbers or enter coordinates, compose, read or respond to emails, text messages, or other communications which require the act of typing into or reading a cellular phone or other communication devices, while driving.
- c) Any necessary voice calls or text messages while driving shall be facilitated using hands-free technology.

#### **3. Electronic Device Use While Driving (First Responder)**

- a) The use of cell phones, computers and other electronic devices shall be limited to instances of need. If available and necessary, use of wireless devices is preferred over non-wireless means.
- b) In such cases that the driver must operate these devices, it must be of limited use and in the safest manner.

#### **4. Vehicle Safety Restraints (Non-First Responder)**

- a) Authorized Drivers must ensure that all occupants wear safety restraints while the vehicle is in use.
- b) Passengers shall not travel in areas of the vehicle intended for cargo or in seats without available safety restraints.

#### **5. Vehicle Safety Restraints (First Responder)**

- a) It is expected that First Responders follow the established safety protocols of their Office/Department.

#### **6. Vehicle Securement**

- a) All vehicles shall be properly parked, locked and secured when not in use.
- b) Vehicle keys should be secured during non-business hours such as in a locked key box.
- c) Authorized Drivers are responsible for securing tailgates, doors, tools, and other cargo as to prevent hazards to themselves and the public.

#### **7. Vehicle Inspection**

It is the Authorized Drivers responsibility to perform routine pre and post inspections on County Vehicles, including:

- a) Perform an inspection of the vehicle, noting:
  - (1) Ensure valid insurance card for the current fiscal year is in the vehicle before operating
  - (2) Visible damage (scratches, dents, cracks, etc.)
  - (3) Visible low tire pressure (not flat nor apparently low)
  - (4) Visible fluid on ground from vehicles
  - (5) Ensure that all vehicle lights are functioning properly (emergency lights, headlights, brake lights and turn signals)
  - (6) Surrounding obstacles
- b) Report any damage or concerns to supervisor.
- c) Authorized Drivers shall understand the fuel type required to operate vehicle. Fuel shall be obtained at the Fleet Department yard fueling station or with authorized PCard or Fuelman Card.

NOTE: Inspection criteria may vary for each County office or department, and for each type of vehicle or equipment. Vehicles with issues that affect safety should not be driven until the issue is repaired.

#### 8. **Vehicle Maintenance Program**

Authorized Drivers must not operate County Vehicles with known safety-related defects. County Vehicles with such defects should be reported to Fleet Services for assessment and/or repair before being returned to service. For detailed maintenance procedures, refer to the [Wilco Fleet Management Policy Manual](#).

#### 9. **Passengers**

Authorized Drivers are prohibited from allowing non-employees to travel in their County Vehicle unless authorized to within the scope of the driver's job description.

#### 10. **Prohibited Use**

Authorized Drivers who operate a County Vehicle outside the course and scope of County business and are involved in a Vehicle Incident may be held personally responsible for resulting damages.

### **B. Authorized Driver Training**

1. Risk Management will provide and/or approve driver remedial and safety training through web-based programs and/or in-person classes for all Authorized Drivers who operate County Vehicles. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their Authorized Drivers are scheduled for and complete all required training. Failure to complete the required training may result in further review and potential disciplinary action up to and including termination.
  - a) **Initial Training:** Must be completed within one year of this policy's implementation or within 90 days of an Authorized Driver's date of hire, whichever occurs first.
  - b) **Refresher Training:** Must be completed at least once every 2 years following completion of the Authorized Drivers initial training and may be recommended for Authorized Drivers following non-preventable incidents.
  - c) **Remedial Training:** An Authorized Driver involved in any vehicle infraction, including but not limited to preventable incidents, traffic violations, or other infractions related to vehicle operation, must complete remedial driver training approved by Risk Management within 90 days.

### **C. Auto Incident Checklist**

Refer to the [Auto Incident Checklist](#) for steps to follow if you are involved in a Vehicle Incident.

### **D. County Vehicle Incident Reporting**

#### **1. Reporting Incidents**

- a) All vehicle incidents must be reported immediately by the driver to the appropriate Supervisor, Manager, Department Head, or Elected Official.
- b) Offices/departments shall submit an [Incident Reporting Form](#) to Risk Management within 24 hours of the incident.
- c) Failure to report any Vehicle Incident may result in suspension, demotion, disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or referral for criminal investigation.
- d) Incidents **include** those that would be considered minor due to the cost of repair or that cause no damage to the County Vehicle and minimal damage to other property.

#### **2. Claims Settlement**

- a) The office/department involved shall work with Risk Management to provide any information needed to investigate or resolve a claim.
- b) When the County is determined not to be at fault, Risk Management will, as appropriate and feasible, file a claim with the responsible party's insurance carrier and/or pursue subrogation efforts against the at-fault party.
- c) Only personnel authorized by the Commissioners Court are permitted to:
  - (1) discuss or assess liability (including admissions of fault at the scene of the incident),
  - (2) negotiate payment for damages,
  - (3) agree to any terms, or
  - (4) enter into any agreements on behalf of Williamson County.
- d) **No Authorized Drivers or other individuals have the authority to make liability determinations or commitments, and any such unauthorized actions are outside of the scope of employment and are not binding on Williamson County.**

#### **3. Vehicle Appraisal and Repair**

- a) Vehicle appraisals will be conducted for all County Vehicles involved in any Vehicle Incident, regardless of the extent of damage.
- b) Appraisals will be utilized to support Fleet Services in determining the appropriate course of action for each vehicle.
- c) Fleet Services shall submit a repair recommendation to Risk Management factoring in replacement criteria (age, mileage, maintenance dollars LTD, extent of damage, etc.) pending the written appraisal.
- d) The affected Department/Elected Official must comply with all instructions and repair recommendations from Fleet Services and Risk Management. Failure to comply will result in notification to Commissioners Court.

### **E. Post Incident Drug and/or Alcohol Testing**

For detailed instructions, refer to the [Employee Policy Manual - Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policies](#)

#### F. Incident Review Committee

1. All Vehicle Incidents will be reviewed by Risk Management and assessed by the Incident Review Committee (IRC) for the review and determination of preventability and disciplinary recommendation. The Director of Risk Management shall select the IRC members.
  - a) Voting IRC Members include: County Manager, Fleet Division Director, Director of Risk Management, Loss Control Administrator, and Risk Claims Administrator
  - b) Non-voting IRC Members include: Assistant General Counsel and Sheriff's Office Representative
2. The appropriate level of recommended discipline will be determined based on the findings of the preventability review. For Authorized Drivers who are non-employees, a preventable incident may immediately remove their Authorized Driver status.
3. Discipline recommended by the IRC may range from corrective action to more serious measures, up to and including termination of employment. For Authorized Drivers under Civil Service, disciplinary recommendations will take into account any potential Civil Service impact.
4. Written notice of the IRC's conclusions and recommendations will be provided to the office/department.
  - a) **First Preventable Incident:**
    - (1) An Authorized Driver's Supervisor will meet with Risk Management to discuss the Authorized Driver's driving record and corrective and/or disciplinary actions recommended by the IRC. It will be the supervisor's responsibility to meet with the Authorized Driver and provide corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
    - (2) The IRC will require the Authorized Driver take a County approved Remedial Training within 90 days of the occurrence. The IRC may recommend additional corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
  - b) **Repeated Preventable Incidents:**
    - (1) For an Authorized Driver who continues to have preventable incidents in County Vehicles (2 or more in 24 months), the Authorized Driver's Supervisor will meet with Risk Management to discuss the Authorized Driver's driving record, corrective and/or disciplinary actions recommended by the IRC, and departmental policies or operations that could be contributing to the ongoing incidents. It will be the supervisor's responsibility to meet with the Authorized Driver and provide corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
    - (2) The IRC will require the Authorized Driver take a County approved Remedial Training within 90 days of the occurrence. The IRC may recommend the Authorized Driver be placed on driving restrictions for a specified period of time. The IRC may recommend additional corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
  - c) **Serious Driving Offense:**

The IRC will determine if Vehicle Incidents are considered serious driving offenses and will more closely scrutinize the severity of the event in order to determine the

appropriate recommended corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination regardless of whether it was a first incident for the Authorized Driver.

A serious driving offense includes but it is not limited to:

- (1) A hit and run or any other felony involving the use of a County Vehicle
  - (2) Driving a County Vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol
  - (3) Failure to report a Vehicle Incident to the appropriate personnel
  - (4) Allowing an unauthorized person to operate a County Vehicle
  - (5) A Vehicle Incident causing serious bodily injury or death
5. Offices/departments shall provide Risk Management, in writing, any corrective action taken with the driver involved.

**G. Request for Reconsideration**

If an office/department wishes to submit a Request for Reconsideration regarding a recommendation made by the IRC, this must be submitted to Risk Management within 10 business days of receiving the written decision notice. A Request for Reconsideration will only be considered by the IRC if it raises new information not previously provided to the IRC during the initial review.

**H.** The Commissioners Court authorizes the Risk Management Department to create and utilize any procedures and standards necessary to implement this Policy.

## Exceptions

Exceptions to the Vehicle Use Policy must be approved by the Williamson County Risk Management Department and/or the Commissioners Court.

## Related Statutes, Policies, and Authorities

[Williamson County Employee Policy Manual](#)

[Wilco Fleet Management Policy Manual](#)

[Asset Policy](#)

[Budget Order Policy](#)

[Chapter 546 of the Texas Transportation Code](#)

[Texas DPS Texas Driver Handbook](#) (online)

[Auto Incident Checklist](#)

Job Description

Departmental Policies

## Administrative Revisions

This Policy may be revised by the Responsible Office or Department as necessary to add, delete, and modify procedural or administrative elements, as well as typographical corrections, without reapproval from the Commissioners Court. All material changes to Policy scope, responsibilities, roles, intent, or other substantive changes must be formally approved by the Commissioners Court. The Responsible Office or Department may create any procedures or supplemental documentation

without Commissioners Court approval necessary to implement or administer this Policy, which may be updated or modified by the Responsible Office or Department from time to time based on business needs.

Any type of changes to this Policy must be posted to the County's Policy Management System and notes must be added to the Revision History section of this Policy.

## **Responsible Office/Department**

Williamson County Risk Management Office

### **Administrative Notes**

Policy Class:

Policy Family:

Policy:

Standard:

Control Reference(s):

## **Revision History**

Version	Date	Description
1.0	4/21/2026	Approval by Commissioners Court

## Vehicle Use Policy Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the **Williamson County Vehicle Use Policy** as a (check all that apply):

- Authorized Driver (Non-First Responder)
- Authorized Driver (First Responder)

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Policy, and I agree to comply with its terms. I also acknowledge and accept the roles and responsibilities assigned to me as outlined.

I understand that failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If I operate a **County Emergency Vehicle**, I agree to comply with **Chapter 546 of the Texas Transportation Code**, which governs the operation of authorized emergency vehicles.

I authorize Williamson County to obtain and review my driving record at its discretion for the purpose of determining my eligibility to operate County Vehicles.

**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_