



Vehicle Use and Safety Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the Township of Southgate (Township) employees, elected officials, or authorized personnel are safely operating both personal and corporately owned vehicles while conducting Township business and to ensure that corporate vehicles are being used by authorized individuals and the parameters for use of these vehicles.

2. SCOPE

This guideline applies to Township employees, elected officials, other authorized personnel, and passengers in vehicles used to conduct Township business.

3. DEFINITIONS

"Moving Infraction" means a breach of traffic laws which occurs while the driver's vehicle is in motion.

"Distracted driving" means the diversion of attention from driving as a result of the driver focusing on a non-driving object, activity, event or person. This diversion reduces cognitive awareness, decision-making or performance leading to increased risk of driver-error, near-crashes or crashes.

"Personal Usage" means driving a company vehicle for purposes that are not related to work, such as driving to and from home and driving for a non-work related purpose. An exception occurs when the employee is required to proceed directly from home to a point of call other than the employer's place of business to which the employee reports regularly, or to return home from such a point. Ex: taking a vehicle home while on call or for patrolling roads as part of the position.

4. GENERAL

- a. Employees or others must not, under any circumstance, operate any vehicle for Township business while impaired or if unable to operate the vehicle safely and effectively for any reason, including injury. Impairment can be caused by things such as illness, fatigue, alcohol and drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter medications).
- b. Employees or others driving any vehicle for the purpose of Township business must provide the Township with a copy of their driver's licence. For staff who operate Township-owned vehicles, the Township will conduct regular Driver's Abstract and/or Commercial Vehicle Operator Record Checks at the expense of the Township once employed by the Township. This will generally include a Driver's Abstract Check annually, and a Commercial Vehicle Operator Record Check every two years, if required.
- c. Employees or others driving any vehicle for the purpose of Township business must obey all applicable traffic, parking regulations and laws at all times. This includes wearing seatbelts at all times. Drivers of vehicles will be personally responsible for the payment of any fines or penalties resulting from operation of a vehicle to conduct Township business.
- d. The Township may require knowledge testing of this policy as well as a Driver Wellness program.



5. PERSONAL VEHICLES

- a. Employees who use a Township or their own vehicle for Township business must ensure that they have a valid driver's licence at all times.
- b. Employees who use their own vehicle for Township business must ensure that they have a valid vehicle ownership registration and insurance coverage.
- c. Anyone who uses their own vehicle for Township business is advised to notify their insurance company that the vehicle may be used for business purposes.
IMPORTANT: Failure to disclose this to an insurance company can result in claims not being covered.
- d. In the case of incident or accident, the employee's insurance policy will be primary coverage and respond to all damages and injuries. (The Township may reimburse the employee's insurance policy deductible to a maximum of \$1,000). Any other insurance policies that may respond on behalf of the Township will do so once the full policy limits of the primary policy have been reached.
- e. All employees who are required to change job sites or travel on Southgate business by way of use of their own vehicle during working hours will receive mileage. The Township of Southgate mileage rate will be equal to the "County of Grey Mileage rate" reviewed quarterly. This rate is intended to cover normal operating costs such as fuel, maintenance, repairs, depreciation, license, and insurance.

6. CORPORATE VEHICLES

- a. The Department Head and/or Supervisor will ensure all Township owned or leased vehicles are to be properly licensed and insured with appropriate documentation kept in the vehicle and copies retained in an office file.
- b. All Township owned or leased vehicles are to be properly signed with Township identification.
- c. All Township owned or leased vehicles are to be inspected and maintained according to regular inspection and maintenance schedules.
- d. Only Township employees, elected officials or authorized persons engaged in conducting Township business may ride in a municipal vehicle. Picking up or transporting other than those listed is not permitted. The Township shall not extend any liability or insurance to any driver or passenger other than those authorized to be present in the vehicle.
- e. Township vehicles may only be used for work-related purposes, except where approval is provided by the CAO. If the CAO approves the use of a Township vehicle for purposes not related to one's employment, this will be recognized as a taxable benefit for the employee. Travel from home to a point of call (such as responding to a call after hours) is not considered personal driving.
- f. All personal mileage must be tracked using Schedule A of this policy and submitted to the employee's Department Head monthly for approval and to forward to payroll to enter into the payroll system as a taxable benefit.
- g. The taxable benefit shall be calculated as outlined by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) subject to amendment from time-to-time. Where employees are concerned with the financial impact of the taxable benefit, it should be reviewed with their Department Head to determine if alternative arrangements can be made, such as leaving the vehicle at their work location.
- h. Employees will be allowed to take a Township vehicle home during off-shift hours provided the vehicle is used for "on-call" responses only.
- i. Employees are to ensure they take every precaution to avoid a collision when driving a Township vehicle.



- j. GPS systems in Township vehicles may be used to track driver location, speed, braking and other statistics for the purposes of ensuring safe driving and compliance.
- k. Unattended vehicles are to be parked safely, shut off, ignition keys removed, and secured (equipment put inside the vehicle, windows up, doors and cabinets locked).
- l. Municipal vehicles are considered part of the "workplace" and are subject to the same restrictions that exist in municipal buildings as legislated by the Smoke Free Ontario Act and Township of Southgate related policies.
- m. Employees are to keep vehicles clean and shall report any malfunction or damage to their supervisor immediately.
- n. Employees driving Township vehicles are responsible to ensure that any materials or equipment being transported in their vehicle is secure at all times. Covers, ties or other restraining devices can be requested from Supervisors as required.
- o. Employees driving Township vehicles are responsible to remove ice and snow build-up from the top or other surfaces of a Township vehicle prior to its use to ensure the safety of other motorists and the general public.
- p. Any conflict with respect to vehicle availability and usage will be resolved by the CAO.

7. CORPORATE VEHICLE STORAGE

- a. All Township vehicles will be kept at one of the following locations when not in use or at the end of the workday, unless otherwise specified in this guideline and/or approved by the Department Head and/or CAO.
 - i. Dundalk Arena Parking Lot
 - ii. Egremont Landfill Garage
 - iii. Fire Hall Parking Lot
 - iv. Library Parking Lot
 - v. Public Works Depot Parking Lot or Garage
- b. All corporate vehicles and compartments must be properly locked and secured when not in use.
- c. A municipal vehicle may be stored overnight at a private dwelling when the vehicle is to be used for on-call response or the following morning for out-of-town travel, subject to Department Head approval.
- d. The CAO may authorize staff to take a vehicle home for security or emergency purposes.

8. OUT OF TOWN TRAVEL

- a. All out-of-town travel must be approved by the Department Head.
- b. The method of transportation for out-of-town travel must also be approved by the Department Head and may include use of a Township vehicle or use of an employee's personal vehicle.

9. INFRACTIONS AND/OR LOSS OF CLASSIFICATION

- a. Any employee, elected official or authorized persons who operate vehicles to carry out Township business must notify their Supervisor immediately if:
 - i. Their licence is suspended or revoked; or
 - ii. Their licence class is downgraded; or
 - iii. They have received a charge causing a short-term loss of driving privileges; or
 - iv. They are impaired or unable to operate vehicles safely for any reason.



- b. The Township reserves the right to terminate employees who have been disqualified from driving Township vehicles or that require a valid driver's licence in order to conduct their essential job functions, if suspension of licence is in excess of three (3) months. If the disqualification is less than three (3) months, the situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- c. An employee who has lost their licence or had their licence downgraded, shall not be eligible to apply to any internal job posting requiring a driving licence, until re-instatement of the driver's licence has occurred. When an employee receives their re-instatement notice from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), they must send a copy to their supervisor, who will make arrangements to re-establish the employee's driving privileges through the Human Resources Department.
- d. Drivers will be disqualified from driving vehicles for Township purposes, either temporarily or permanently, for any of the following reasons:
 - i. More than one violation for driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. This will result in permanent suspension of driving privileges for Township purposes and may also result in termination of employment.
 - ii. Any criminal conviction that involves a motor vehicle (e.g., a felony, hit and run, negligent homicide) in the previous five years.
 - iii. Any combination of more than two moving violations and/or at-fault accidents in the past 12 months.
 - iv. Any of the following violations incurred in the previous three years:
 - 1. Any combination of more than three at-fault moving violations; or
 - 2. Any violation less than three years old for an alcohol or controlled substance-related driving offense; or
 - 3. Refusing to take a breathalyzer test; or
 - 4. Careless or reckless driving; or
 - 5. Passing a stopped school bus; or
 - 6. Leaving the scene of an accident without stopping to file a report; or
 - 7. Racing.
 - v. Incur more than 10 demerit points on your driver's licence.

10. DISTRACTED DRIVING

- a. Distracted driving is the diversion of attention from driving as a result of the driver focusing on a non-driving object, activity, event or person. This diversion reduces cognitive awareness, decision-making or performance leading to increased risk of driver-error, near-crashes or crashes.
- b. Staff and other authorized persons operating a vehicle for Township business are prohibited from distracted driving actions including but not limited the following:
 - i. Operating a cellphone
 - ii. Operating a computer / laptop, text messaging device, or Global Positioning System (GPS) tools and devices
 - iii. Reading (a book or newspaper, etc.)
 - iv. Personal grooming
 - v. Wearing a hood
- c. Vehicles must be safely stopped, pulled over, and put in park prior to any such activity.
- d. A driver may undertake activities listed below provided they do not reduce the driver's focus. Different driving environments and circumstances (e.g. a school zone at 3:05 p.m. compared to an open highway at 10:00 a.m.) better lend



themselves to undertaking the following without dangerously limiting the driver's ability to recognize and respond to hazards.

- i. Conversations with passengers
- ii. Adjusting the radio / music; it is advised that this activity be adjusted prior to driving
- iii. Adjusting vehicle climate controls or other accessories
- iv. Eating / drinking (it is advised that the vehicle be safely pulled over if eating or drinking must occur)
- v. Operating a two-way radio (only as necessary for resource road communication protocols)

11. DRIVER FATIGUE

- a. Driver fatigue can pose serious health and safety concerns. Staff should be mindful of the signs of fatigue and avoid driving when fatigued. Common signs of fatigue include:
 - i. Yawning
 - ii. Heavy, droopy or blood-shot eyes
 - iii. Slow reflexes and reaction time
 - iv. Impatience and irritability
 - v. Lack of concentration and motivation
 - vi. Inability to make decisions
- b. Drivers on the road for extended periods of time, or who are fatigued for other reasons, need to take regular breaks to get fresh air, stretch, rehydrate and refuel.
- c. Drivers must notify their supervisor immediately if they do not feel they can operate a vehicle safely.
- d. Supervisors must provide break periods for staff who are driving in a manner which reduces driver fatigue.
- e. Supervisors must also ensure that related legislation and regulations, such as the Ontario Regulation 555/06, Hours of Service under the Highway Traffic Act, are adhered to.
- f. Drivers who must stay on the road for long periods of time, such as snowplow operators during a snowstorm must be removed from the road and relieved after 13 consecutive hours of vehicle operation.
- g. If the Township declares a Significant Weather Event, staff may be required to work on shorter off time period in between shifts.

12. RELATED POLICIES

- a. Policy #43: Smoke Free Public Places Policy

13. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Employees who do not comply with this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

14. POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed at minimum every three (3) years and updated if required.



Southgate Personal Use Vehicle Log

Month of:

Year:

Day	Vehicle #	Purpose of Mileage	Trip #1		Trip #2		Total KM for Day
			Start Odometer	End Odometer	Start Odometer	End Odometer	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
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