



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH POLICY/PROCEDURE

SUBJECT COUNTY-OWNED VEHICLE CONTROL	POLICY NO. 904.01	EFFECTIVE DATE 03/30/2015	PAGE 1 of 14
APPROVED BY:  Director	SUPERSEDES 802.01 03/30/2015	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE 08/12/2001	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) 1

PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide guidelines for the usage of County-owned vehicles for authorized Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) staff who operate those vehicles.
- 1.2 This policy describes in detail the importance of knowing and complying with State and local laws as a driver and operator of motor vehicles. In addition, information regarding financial responsibility, traffic citations, and accident report procedures are included.

DEFINITION

- 2.1 **County-Owned Vehicles:** Automobiles, vans, and trucks that belong to the County of Los Angeles and which may be driven only by authorized LACDMH staff for the purpose of conducting County business.

POLICY

- 3.1 It is the policy of Los Angeles County to establish and enforce formal written procedures to control departmental usage of County-owned vehicles.
- 3.2 LACDMH will formalize in writing, the responsibilities of the Departmental Vehicle Coordinator, the Facility (local) Vehicle Coordinators, and the vehicle operators.
- 3.3 No County-owned vehicles may be driven outside of Los Angeles County without the express permission of the Director of LACDMH or his/her designee.
- 3.4 Overnight usage of County-owned vehicles is strictly prohibited.



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- 3.5 Whenever possible, mileage permittees will use their personal vehicles for County business. For details of exceptions, review LACDMH Policy No. 304.04, Transportation of Consumers and Their Family Members. (Reference 1)
- 3.6 Disciplinary procedures shall be applied in accordance with the LACDMH Employee Evaluation and Discipline Guidelines.
- 3.6.1 The driver of a County-owned vehicle is personally responsible for any parking or moving violations received during the time the vehicle is assigned to him/her. Failure to pay such tickets will result in disciplinary action.
- 3.6.2 The driver of a County-owned vehicle **MUST** report any accident and/or vehicle damage noted on the "County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident" (Attachment 1). The completed form must be delivered to the LACDMH Administrative Support Bureau (ASB) within 24 hours of the accident/occurrence at:
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Administrative Support Bureau
550 S. Vermont Avenue, 2nd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90020
- 3.6.3 The LACDMH ASB shall be responsible for processing vehicle accident reports through appropriate channels.

PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The LACDMH ASB is responsible for the management and control of vehicle keys, fleet repairs, enforcement of vehicle assignment procedures, and the preparation of related reports.
- 4.2 AUTHORIZATION TO DRIVE COUNTY-OWNED VEHICLES
- 4.2.1 No employee shall drive his/her vehicle for County business or operate a County-owned vehicle without a valid California Driver License of the



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Class (A, B, or C) associated with the type of vehicle. A proper driver license must be in the employee's possession when driving.

4.2.2 The Deputy Director, Bureau Chief, District Chief, Division Chief, or Facility Administrator of each Program or Division shall be responsible for keeping and updating a list of employees (with valid and **verified** California Driver Licenses) who are authorized to drive a County-owned vehicle. When establishing authorizations for drivers, consideration should be given to the designee's driving history and reliability with the County-owned vehicles. The name, employee number, driver license number, expiration date, and photo copy of the driver license of each authorized employee must be on file with the LACDMH ASB before keys can be issued. Use the Authorized County Vehicle Driver form (Attachment 2) for this purpose.

4.2.3 The Administrative head of each LACDMH organizational unit is responsible for submitting to the ASB a report of Authorized County Vehicle Drivers prior to July 1 of each fiscal year.

4.2.3.1 The Administrative head is responsible for updating the report as changes occur throughout the year.

4.2.3.2 The LACDMH ASB list of authorized drivers by location needs to be updated as changes occur.

4.2.3.3 A new authorization is required for each employee re-assignment.

4.2.4 Due to the limited number of pool vehicles, every effort should be made to consolidate the use of vehicles or use of Certified Mileage Permittee vehicles whenever possible.

4.3 DEPARTMENTAL VEHICLE COORDINATOR & LOCAL VEHICLE COORDINATOR

4.3.1 The Departmental Vehicle Coordinator shall be appointed by the LACDMH ASB Chief. The LACDMH Vehicle Coordinator has overall



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responsibility for the control and maintenance of the LACDMH's fleet of vehicles. This requires:

- 4.3.1.1 Maintaining the LACDMH master list of vehicles which shall include all LACDMH vehicle numbers, year, make and model information, facility assignment, facility coordinator name(s) and telephone number(s), and data on events such as repairs, accidents, and transfers;
 - 4.3.1.2 Maintaining the master list of authorized drivers which shall include all LACDMH authorized drivers' names, license numbers, license class numbers, and any restrictions;
 - 4.3.1.3 Assisting in the enforcement of safety violations/unsafe actions of vehicle drivers;
 - 4.3.1.4 Coordinating all vehicle transfers and repairs;
 - 4.3.1.5 Ensuring that appropriate forms are completed and filed for all vehicle transactions, repairs, and accidents; and
 - 4.3.1.6 Developing and distributing appropriate revisions to Departmental procedures or forms as required.
- 4.3.2 The Local Vehicle Coordinator shall be appointed by the local Facility Administrator. The Local Vehicle Coordinator is responsible for the controlling and maintaining of the vehicles assigned to that particular facility. This requires:
- 4.3.2.1 Maintaining a current listing of persons authorized to drive County-owned vehicles assigned to a specific location and submitting formal notice of all changes, including license cancellations, renewals, or driver restrictions;
 - 4.3.2.2 Maintaining a log of vehicle trips on a Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist (Attachment 3), including identification of the authorized user, vehicle odometer readings before and after



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each trip, date and time of vehicle in/out, and destination of all trips;

- 4.3.2.3 Securing vehicle keys to prevent unauthorized use of County-owned vehicles;
- 4.3.2.4 Ensuring that all assigned vehicles receive regular services and that each vehicle is washed at least once a month and is serviced every six (6) months or five thousand (5,000) miles, whichever occurs first;
- 4.3.2.5 Reporting all vehicles needing services to the Departmental Vehicle Coordinator including mechanical problems, thefts, body damage, tire wear, and/or problems noticed while operating the vehicle;
- 4.3.2.6 Instructing all authorized drivers regarding the procedures for emergency towing service and repairs; and
- 4.3.2.7 Establishing and enforcing procedures and responsibilities to ensure compliance with the requirements of local regulations.

4.4 DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.4.1 Persons authorized to drive County-owned vehicles are responsible for:
 - 4.4.1.1 Ensuring that County-owned vehicles are driven only for the purpose of conducting County business and that vehicles are driven in a safe, responsible, and prudent manner.
 - 4.4.1.2 Not driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Drivers who do are subject to disciplinary action.
 - 4.4.1.3 Knowing and complying with all state and local laws and regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle, including possession of a valid California Driver License for the type of vehicle being driven:



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- **CLASS C** - A basic license required to operate automobiles and other light vehicles. This license allows drivers to operate any two-axle vehicle weighing less than 26,001 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) and any three-axle motor home.
- **CLASS B** - The first of two levels of commercial driver license and allows drivers to operate any Class C vehicle, a bus (except a trailer bus) designated to carry ten (10) or more passengers, including the driver, a vehicle with three or more axles, or a vehicle weighing twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or more GVW. All drivers of passenger vans must possess a Class B driver license.
- **CLASS A** - The second level of commercial driver license which allows a driver to operate any Class B or C vehicle and two trailers over six thousand (6,000) pounds GVW or double trailers.

4.4.1.4 Know and comply with all Departmental policies and procedures regarding the operation, maintenance, and management of vehicles:

- Upon entering the vehicle, complete the Inspection Checklist provided on the Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist. Check the box for each item; write in "N/A" for any not applicable item.
- If a flat tire occurs during the time a vehicle is checked out, the employee must either call the LACDMH ASB or a vendor pre-approved by the Department to change all flat tires.
- Report any mechanical malfunctions or indications of need for servicing or repair to the Departmental Vehicle Coordinator who shall coordinate repairs with the Local Vehicle Coordinator and report the vehicle number and problem. However, if the following items are identified on the Safety Checklist portion of the Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist the vehicle is to be considered "non-operational" until such time these items are repaired and/or replaced: headlights, turn signals, windshield wipers, seat



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belts, brake lights, radio equipment, emergency reflector, and vehicle damage.

- All defects or malfunctions that would otherwise prevent the County-owned vehicle from being fully operational shall be corrected before the vehicle is used. These may include, but are not limited to, items listed under the “Safety Check List” section on the “Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist.”

4.4.1.5 Project positive images to the public in all situations by driving in a professional and courteous manner at all times and by keeping vehicles clean and free of litter. Upon conclusion of a thorough investigation, an employee found to be driving in an erratic, unsafe, and/or discourteous manner may be subject to disciplinary actions.

- See LACDMH Policy No. 904.02, “How am I Driving?” Program. (Reference 3)

4.4.1.6 Record odometer readings at the start and finish of vehicle use and identify the destination, vehicle time out/in, and register odometer readings on the vehicle Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist.

4.4.1.7 Secure vehicle to prevent unauthorized entry/use of County-owned vehicles.

4.4.1.8 Report any accident or vehicle damage noted on the County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident. Send the completed form to the LACDMH ASB within twenty-four (24) hours of the accident/occurrence. The LACDMH ASB shall be responsible for processing vehicle accident reports through the appropriate channels.

4.4.1.9 Ensure that the vehicle has no less than one-half (1/2) tank of fuel when returned to check-out station and remove all debris from the vehicle. Automated fueling systems are provided at:



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- ISD Headquarters, 1104 North Eastern Avenue, Los Angeles;
- 1055 Alameda Avenue, Los Angeles; and
- Hall of Administration/Mall Garage, 140 Grand Avenue, Los Angeles.
- **No fueling station is to be used by employees for their personal vehicles even if that vehicle is used for County business.** (Attachment 4 for additional fueling locations/stations)

4.4.1.10 Ensure the County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident form and the fueling site locations are in the glove compartment of the car.

4.5 VEHICLE ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

- 4.5.1 County-owned vehicles will be equitably assigned based on availability and program needs. Priority will be given to programs that require the transport of clients, i.e., Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams, Day Treatment, Socialization, Case Management, and Residential.
- 4.5.2 Each request to transfer a vehicle between facilities must first be noted and approved by the respective Program Managers. The approved requests for transfers should then be submitted to the Departmental Vehicle Coordinator. Vehicles cannot be officially transferred between facilities until final approval from LACDMH ASB.

4.6 FIELD-USE VEHICLES

- 4.6.1 Field-Use Vehicles are generally at County facilities and normally have specialized, non-portable equipment or instruments installed, or are built or modified to carry special materials to perform a specific job function for the Department. Some field use vehicles may be assigned based on a high volume of field work required for a specific position and may not have specialized equipment. These vehicles may be assigned to a specific individual but are garaged at County/government facilities designated by the Department Head or Chief Deputy Director.



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4.7 LACDMH SAFE DRIVING RECORDS

4.7.1 The LACDMH ASB will forward any report of negative action (e.g., tickets/accidents) to the appropriate Deputy Director and LACDMH Human Resources Bureau (HRB) for review, disposition, and resolution. Examples of actions taken may include removal of the employee from an approved driving status, or reassignment, and/or employee disciplinary action, if essential job duties require a current driver license. Such actions may only be temporary, i.e., until the driver license problem is resolved. If the employee's driver license has been suspended, the employee will be immediately removed from the master list of approved drivers for County-owned vehicles by the LACDMH ASB and from the approved Mileage Permittee Status List by the LACDMH HRB. The employee may reapply for Mileage Permittee status after he/she submits proof of a valid California Driver License to his/her management, after which the management will review the case based on all Safe Driving Records as outlined in this Departmental Policy. All disciplinary actions must be coordinated with HRB and must adhere to existing County and Departmental policies and procedures.

4.7.1.1 The driving record of an employee who drives on County business may be reviewed at any time, as deemed necessary by the Department. Appointments of new employees may be subject to license review and clearance. The appointing authority and/or the immediate supervisor must determine (for all Mileage Permittees or those who drive on County business) that the employee possesses a current California Driver License of the class appropriate to his/her assignment, plus any commercial driver certifications as required by law.

4.7.1.2 Failure of an employee to inform his/her supervisor of a suspended or revoked driver license, while continuing to drive on County business, is a violation of this policy and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action determined by existing County and Departmental policies and procedures and the Employee Evaluation and Discipline Guidelines.



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4.8 OBSERVANCE OF STATE AND LOCAL VEHICLE CODES, RULES, AND ORDINANCES

4.8.1 Each LACDMH employee must be familiar with, and observe all, State of California Vehicle Codes, and local traffic rules and ordinances, including traffic control signs, posted speed limits, parking restrictions, and County and Departmental rules and regulations governing vehicle operation. Such rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- LACDMH employees shall not use or operate a County-owned vehicle unless authorized to do so;
- LACDMH employees shall not operate his/her personal vehicle on County business unless he/she is authorized to do so and is a Certified Mileage Permittee;
- Employees shall not violate any parking law, local parking ordinance, or County Department or unit parking regulation;
- Non-County bumper stickers, window signs, and placards in and/or on County-owned vehicles are prohibited;
- The use of license plates other than those issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles is prohibited;
- Smoking is prohibited in LACDMH vehicles (Reference 2, LACDMH Policy No. 110.01, Smoking in Department of Mental Health Facilities);
- All engines shall be turned off before they are refueled;
- A motorcycle cannot be used on County business;
- Employees and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times when driving;
- Employees must obey all speed limit and other regulatory signs;
- Sharing the road safely with pedestrians and bicyclers; and all applicable laws;
- Drivers of County-owned vehicles are required to perform daily vehicle inspections before any such vehicle is used (Section 4.4.1.4);
- All LACDMH employees operating their own vehicles on County business must make sure that such vehicles are properly maintained and in good operating condition;



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- Maintenance or repair work, except for minor interventions by the employee or other non-County professional services (e.g., flat tire, jump start, battery service, locksmith services, tow truck services, etc.) on privately owned/non-County-owned vehicles on County premise is prohibited;
- Employees shall always operate vehicles with care;
- No one shall be standing immediately in front or in back of a vehicle while it is being started; and
- Each employee is responsible for maintaining constant awareness of traffic hazards while driving (e.g., darkness, extreme weather conditions, etc.).

4.9 SAFETY AND THE SAFETY BELT LAW

- 4.9.1 The Law (Vehicle Code, Section 27315, Mandatory Seat Belt Law) requires drivers and passengers to use available safety equipment, including safety belts, at all times when driving on County business. It is the responsibility of the employee to visually inspect a vehicle prior to its use to ensure that the vehicle is safe, clean, and in an operational condition (i.e., free of material/equipment that obstructs driver vision and/or may cause injury in the event of an accident). Drivers are responsible for exercising reasonable care in the use of County-owned vehicles, observing scheduled maintenance requirements, and for reporting any deficiencies to the ASB Fleet Management Unit.

4.10 HANDS FREE DRIVING LAW

- 4.10.1 LACDMH employees should refrain from getting distracted while driving. Hands Free Driving is a State Law (Vehicle Code, Section 23123, Hand Held Wireless Telephone: Prohibited Use, and Vehicle Code, Section 23123.5 Electronic Wireless Communication Device: Prohibited Use), which prohibits texting and cellular phone use without a hands free device. All LACDMH employees operating vehicles on County business are prohibited from placing phone calls while driving on County business. All emergency calls must be made while the vehicle is pulled over and safely parked. Incoming calls shall not be answered when hands free devices are not available. Additionally, drivers should avoid any kind of



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non-driving activities while driving (e.g., eating, drinking, changing CDs, playing with the radio, putting on make-up, using laptop computers, brushing hair, taking notes, or reading while your vehicle is in motion, etc.).

4.11 A DAILY TRIP FORM AND SAFETY CHECKLIST

4.11.1 Each employee/driver is responsible for completing a Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist (Attachment 3), on a daily basis or for each work assignment, whenever a County-owned vehicle is driven by any such authorized employee.

- A supply of "Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist" sheets must be retained by the Local Vehicle Coordinator and completed by the approved driver each time a vehicle is checked out for use;
- The destination, number of miles driven, and purpose of trip must be logged as they occur;
- All sections on the form must be filled in completely;
- Addresses of destination(s) must be listed, including the city;
- Starting and ending odometer readings must be given;
- The continuity of the trip can be broken by a personal trip only if it is a lunch stop or restroom use, and it must be clearly indicated as "personal";
- Fuel stops and number of gallons pumped must be indicated in the comments section;
- County-owned vehicles are only to be used during normal workweek hours/days, and within the scope of the driver assignment;
- The employee will route the completed Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist to his/her supervisor at any time the vehicle is sent in for repair;
- The Safety Checklist forms must be completed each time the vehicle is used. If any areas are not checked "Yes," employee and/or supervisor must take immediate action to get vehicle repaired prior to continued use;
- Safety Checklist forms must be stored (by vehicle number);



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- Total miles driven must be written in designated area on the last sheet, if more than one sheet is used; and
- Supervisor must approve the form ensuring all sections are completed accurately and the original forwarded to the Local Vehicle Coordinator and a copy to the ASB Fleet Management Unit for review and filing within ten (10) business days of the following month. Forms must be retained for two (2) years.

4.12 METRO EXPRESSLANES FASTRAK TRANSPONDER

- 4.12.1 Employees who use a County-owned vehicle for County-related travel are responsible for reporting on the Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist if a Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak transponder was checked out with the vehicle.
- 4.12.2 Employees who use a County-owned vehicle for County related travel are responsible for reporting the purpose for the use of the FasTrak transponder on the Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist.
- 4.12.3 Employees assigned a County-owned vehicle and a FasTrak transponder are responsible for the proper placement of the FasTrak transponder in the windshield and the setting of the FasTrak transponder to the number of occupants in the vehicle.
- 4.12.4 Employees who use a County-owned vehicle in the ExpressLanes without a FasTrak transponder are subject to a toll evasion penalty assessed by Metro, or a citation by the California Highway Patrol. As with other traffic fines, the County will not pay any ExpressLanes violation penalties and the employee will be required to pay the fine.
- 4.12.5 Program Head will review the monthly FasTrak transponder statements to verify (based on travel time/toll) the lanes were only used for County-related travel and were not used for travel to or from work, or for other non-County-related travel.
- 4.12.6 Misuse of County-purchased transponders is grounds for progressive disciplinary action.



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AUTHORITY

1. Los Angeles County Code, Volume 5, Title 15
2. Los Angeles County Code, Personnel Administration
3. State of California Vehicle Code
4. Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Policy Manual National Safety Council, Fleet Safety Program Guide

ATTACHMENT

1. County of Los Angeles Report of Vehicle Collision or Incident (Service Catalog)
2. [Authorized County Vehicle Driver](#)
3. [Daily Trip Form and Safety Checklist](#)
4. [Location of Fueling Sites](#)

REFERENCE

1. LACDMH Policy No. 304.04, Transportation of Consumers and Their Family Members
2. LACDMH Policy No. 110.01, Smoking in Department of Mental Health Facilities
3. LACDMH Policy No. 904.02, "How am I Driving?" Program
4. Auditor-Controller memo: Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak Transponder Policy

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

LACDMH Administrative Support Bureau