

# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES



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County Administrator

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SUBJECT: **PIMA COUNTY VEHICLE OPERATION PROCEDURE**

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DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: **Risk Management**

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## I. PURPOSE

This procedure establishes minimum requirements to be followed by all Directors, Managers and Supervisors regarding the selection and training of drivers who operate County vehicles as required by their job function. It also establishes a procedure for remedial driver training and progressive disciplinary action when it has been determined that the driver of a County vehicle has caused death, injury or property loss due to their negligence while operating a County vehicle or a privately owned vehicle when an employee is on official County business.

## II. SCOPE

This procedure extends to all County departments and outlines the standards for all drivers of County vehicles including permanent, intermittent and volunteer workers.

## III. DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

Employees shall ensure that they drive on County business in a safe and appropriate manner. Every driver is responsible to ensure that they:

- A. Maintain a valid driver's license. In the event of suspension, revocation, or invalidation, employee must notify direct supervisor.
- B. Maintain at least the state minimum level of liability insurance on any non-County vehicle drive on County business.
- C. Have attended the County's Defensive Driving Program and other required specialty driver training programs within the past three years.
- D. Are physically and mentally capable of safely operating a vehicle.
- E. Manage their environment so as to minimize distractions that could impact their ability to safely and appropriately operate the vehicle.
- F. Wear their seat belt and ensure that all passengers are buckled up.

- G. Follow all applicable State laws as they apply to operating a motor vehicle.
- H. Report citations and arrests which occur while driving on County business.
- I. Are unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs.
- J. Operate County vehicles while on official County business only.
- K. Are eighteen years of age or older.

Fatigue, distractions, an urgent sense of having to arrive somewhere within a specific period of time, and use of some of the tools that help us accomplish our jobs, such as maps, two-way radios, cell phones, and mobile data terminals, have contributed to auto collisions throughout the country. The primary responsibility of every driver is to drive defensively, no matter what the environment.

In addition to avoiding distractions, it is imperative that those of us who are operating vehicles on County business realize that we are an example to the taxpayers of Pima County. It is extremely important that we avoid the impropriety of being impaired by alcohol or drugs. Good judgement can be affected by even a minimal amount of alcohol, and good judgement is essential to your safety behind the wheel. Under no circumstances may alcohol or illegal drugs be transported in a Pima County vehicle.

#### **IV. DRIVER SELECTION AND TRAINING**

Responsibility: Directors, Managers and Supervisors. Procedures shall be established for selecting drivers whose job requires them to operate County vehicles. As a minimum, each driver must possess the appropriate state drivers license required to operate the type of vehicle driven while performing their duties. Supervisors must ensure their employees have a current drivers license if they operate County vehicles or their personal vehicle on County business.

Procedures shall also be established for periodic evaluation of County drivers. The evaluation intervals are to be determined by the amount of driving performed by the employee. At a minimum, there must be at least one annual evaluation. Evaluations must include observation of driving skills necessary to operate the type of vehicle the employee will be driving. If a driver is determined to be lacking in the basic skills and/or knowledge of transportation laws, they must be relieved from driving duties until the problem is resolved.

##### **A. Driver Training:**

1. **Defensive Driving:** Procedures shall be established to ensure that all drivers attend the Defensive Driving Class as soon as practical after their hire date, but not to exceed 60 days and then every three years thereafter.
2. **Van Drivers:** All employees who may be required to drive a van that is designated to carry 8 or more passengers are required to attend a "Van Safety

Driving Class". Drivers of commercial motor vehicles, including vehicles that are designed to carry 15 passengers plus the driver, must possess a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) prior to operating the vehicle. Contact Risk Management at 740-5295 for information about training.

3. **Pre-Trip Vehicle Inspection:** Employees shall be trained on "pre-trip" inspection procedures required before operating County vehicles. Employees should be informed that pre-trip inspections are a valuable tool for identifying damage that may have been caused by a previous driver. This must include actions to be taken if the vehicle is found to be unsafe for operation.
4. **Collision Reporting:** Departments shall develop procedures to ensure that each employee understands the proper procedures for reporting collisions as outlined in **Section V**.

#### **B. Vehicular Loss Prevention**

1. All Pima County vehicles with the exception of those with undercover plates, must have a bumper sticker affixed to the rear bumper of the County vehicle. The bumper sticker will provide citizens with a telephone number to report employee driving.
2. When a call is received by Risk Management, all information will be forwarded to the driver's department. The department will be responsible for investigating the allegations to determine if the complaint is valid. If the department determines that it is valid, then appropriate corrective action must be taken to prevent reoccurrence of the incident.
3. The bumper stickers are provided by Risk Management and can be obtained by calling 740-5295.
4. The Pima County Sheriff's Department shall attempt to retrieve data from a County vehicle's sensing and diagnostic module if a collision involves significant injury or vehicle damage or if the vehicle's airbag deployed.

#### **V. COLLISION REPORTING**

A vehicular collision is defined as any impact occurring between a County vehicle and another vehicle, pedestrian or fixed object. This also includes a collision resulting in death or injury to a domestic animal if it results in damage to the County vehicle. Damage caused by debris in the roadway, damage due to tire blow outs, or damage due to acts of God are also included. Collisions involving privately owned vehicles used on official County business must also be reported.

It is the responsibility of each employee involved in a vehicular collision, whether on public or private property, to ensure that the appropriate law enforcement agency is notified; i.e. Police Department, Sheriff's Department or Department of Public Safety. If law enforcement does not respond to a private property collision, then every attempt must be made to gather as much information as possible. This is extremely important in view of the litigation potential existing in all collisions.

Under no circumstances shall County employees make any statements relative to County liability or express an assumption of fault at the collision scene or thereafter. A simple statement to the effect that the collision details are being reported to the County's insurance adjustor will suffice.

**A. Employees Responsibility In Case of an Collision**

1. The EMPLOYEE shall, if capable, take the following actions after a motor vehicle collision involving a County owned or leased vehicle or one rented for County business, or their own vehicle being utilized for County business.
  - a. Call 911 and provide first aid for all injured persons.
  - b. Notify immediate supervisor.
  - c. Complete the Risk Management Report form located in the glove compartment of every County vehicle and submit it to his/her supervisor. This should be done as soon as possible following the collision. This includes the yellow "exchange of information" card located in the County vehicle glove box.

**B. Supervisor Responsibility After An Auto Collision**

1. The SUPERVISOR of an employee involved in a vehicular collision is responsible for:
  - a. Thoroughly investigating and reporting the collision. If possible, conduct an on scene investigation and record pertinent findings such as complete information on the other driver, weather, road conditions, condition of drivers, etc. If the employee is at fault, follow disciplinary action in **Section VII**.
  - b. Submit the Risk Management report to the appropriate person within the department as outlined in the individual department procedures. **A copy of the Risk Management Report must be submitted to Risk Management within three working days.**
  - c. Ensure that each vehicle involved in a collision/incident is assigned a Risk Management case number. You can call Risk Management at 740-5295 or fax the report to Risk Management at 798-1407. Vehicle information must be faxed to Risk Management within the first twenty-four (24) hours of occurrence.
  - d. Ensure that the vehicle involved is taken to Automotive Services as soon as practical but no later than three working days following the collision. **Only service writer personnel are authorized to determine whether or not the damage is to be repaired.**

- e. Notify the Sheriff's Department, even if the collision occurred within another jurisdiction, if the collision involves significant injury or vehicle damage, or if an airbag deployed for retrieval of collision data.

## **VI. COLLISION INVESTIGATION/AT FAULT COLLISIONS**

Department directors/managers, and supervisors shall ensure that a through investigation is conducted for each vehicle collision to determine primary and underlying causal factors. The front of the Risk Management Report form must be completed and faxed to Risk Management within 24 hours of occurrence. The opposing side of the form which relates departmental findings must be completed and forwarded to Risk Management within three working days. Management must determine whether the collision was preventable. **A County driver is found "at fault" in a reportable collision, when the results in death, injury, or property damage due to the negligence of the employee. If there are any questions of what an at fault collision is, please contact Risk Management at 740-5295.** Risk Management shall ensure that each collision report is available for review by the County Administrator's Collision Review Board.

If the employee is found at fault, the employee must be scheduled to attend the Remedial Driver Program provided by Risk Management.

**Note: Departments may develop a Remedial Driving Program for their employees. The content of the program must be evaluated and approved by Pima County Risk Management.**

## **VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

If the investigation reveals that the County driver was responsible for an at fault vehicle collision, the department director/manager shall determine appropriate action. Drivers determined to be to be responsible for the collision shall be subject to the following guidelines:

- A. If an employee incurs two or more at fault collisions within a three year period, the individual shall be placed on a one day leave of absence without pay.

**Note: Employees who have exempt status under the County's Fair Labor Service Act (FLSA) System are to receive a week off without pay.**

- B. If an employee incurs two or more at fault collisions in a one year period the employee shall be placed on a three day leave of absence without pay.

**Note: Exempt employees shall receive a week off without pay.**

- C. Continued at fault collisions may result in termination of employment.

## **VIII. REASONABLE SUSPICION**

If the supervisor and/or investigator has reasonable suspicion that the County driver was under the influence of alcohol/drugs, the employee shall be required to undergo

alcohol/drug screening as required by Personnel Policy 7-114. Driving while under the influence is a criminal matter, whether on public or private property and must be investigated by law enforcement personnel. Drug or alcohol testing may be performed as required by investigating law enforcement personnel. The results of any such tests are available to Pima County for administration purposes.

**Note: For CDL operators, please refer to Administrative Procedure 30-9 for drug testing protocols.**

#### **IX. County ADMINISTRATOR'S COLLISION REVIEW BOARD**

A County Administrator's Collision Review Board is hereby established to review all collision reports submitted from County departments.

Review board membership shall consist of no less than five representatives from various departments throughout the County. The Board members shall consist of directors, managers, supervisors and Risk Management shall set the agenda providing the Board with all vehicle collision reports submitted from County departments on a monthly basis.

The Board shall review all collision reports to determine if;

- A proper investigation was conducted;
- appropriate remedial action was taken to assist in preventing reoccurrence;
- proper reporting procedures were followed and;
- discipline is consistent and in accordance with County procedure.

If it is determined that appropriate action was not taken, the Board shall forward their recommendation for action to the department director/manager involved to take such actions as are appropriate. A summary of the Board's findings/actions shall be compiled quarterly and the results submitted to the County Administrator.