

CHAPTER 33

VEHICLE USE AND

DRIVER SELECTION AND SAFETY POLICIES

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SECTION 1: Purpose

- 1.01** In 2019, in the United States, a vehicle crash occurred every five seconds. In those crashes, an injury occurred about every 12 seconds and approximately every 15 minutes someone died. Nearly one-third of these incidents occurred during the Monday thru Friday, 8 to 5 workweeks (CrashStats, 2019). Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for all ages. Crashes on and off the job have far-reaching financial and psychological effects to the employee as well as their family, their coworkers, and their employer. The implementation of a driver safety program in the workplace can greatly help reduce the risks faced by employees and their families while protecting the County's interests.

Reasons for a Driver Selection and Safety Program:

- To save lives
- To reduce the risk of life-altering injuries within the workforce
- To protect the County's human and financial resources
- To guard the County against potential liability claims associated with crashes involving employees driving while conducting County business

The Driver Selection and Safety Program should work to keep the driver, as well as those with whom he/she shares the road, safe. If necessary, the program has the capability to change driver's attitudes, improve behavior, and increase skills to build a "be safe" culture. Instructing employees in safe, basic driving practices and then rewarding safety-conscious behavior helps employees and their families avoid tragedy.

Employees are an employer's most valuable assets. Workplace driver safety programs not only make good business sense, but are also a good employee relations tool, demonstrating that employers care about their employees.

- 1.02** The Bay County logo on the County's vehicles makes them easily identifiable and creates a traveling billboard seen by many Bay County citizens. Relationships with the public, while operating County vehicles, can influence opinions or perceptions in a positive or negative way. Drivers exhibiting courteous, considerate, and safe driving habits can enhance and help develop positive relations between the County and its citizens.
- 1.03** The establishment and enforcement of the following policies and procedures reduce the chance of vehicle accidents, create a safer working environment, control losses and liabilities, and determine driver eligibility.

SECTION 2: General

- 2.01** The Bay County Finance and Purchasing Departments maintain all vehicle records for the County.
- 2.02** All County vehicles should be equipped with the following:

- An official County license plate.
- A County identification number.
- A No Tobacco Use sticker.
- Vehicle registration paper.
- A current Insurance card.

2.03 The utilization of vehicles shall be in accordance with the Bay County Vehicle Usage Assignment Policy. Personally owned vehicles are not to be used while conducting official county business.

2.04 The driver and the passenger(s) are required to wear a safety belt at all times during the operation of the vehicle. Violators may be subject to disciplinary action. Safety Belt/Seat Belt violations will be included in the semi-annual Motor Vehicle review of the Driver Selection Policy.

2.05 Employees should note that the Florida's Workers' Compensation Law, Section 440.09 (5) Florida Statutes, provides for a reduction of normal compensation by twenty-five percent (25%) if an employee is injured as a result of his/her knowing refusal to use safety appliances or to observe a lawful safety rule.

2.06 Exception of Eligibility – It is recognized that there may be extenuating circumstances that create a situation where someone other than the approved driver will have to operate a fleet vehicle. These exceptions would include such things as disability or illness of an eligible driver, valet parking, and operations by an employee of an auto repair facility. The Safety Advisory Committee will review any situation resulting in an accident on a case-by-case basis.

2.07 Termination of Driver's Eligibility – The County reserves the right to revoke an eligible driver's privilege to operate a County vehicle. The County also reserves the right to limit an eligible driver's operation of a County vehicle to business use only and/or to a specified operating area. Circumstances that might motivate such action would include, but not be limited to:

- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Moving violations.
- Multiple preventable accidents.
- Damage to the appearance or mechanics of the County-owned vehicle due to driver neglect.

SECTION 3: DRIVER SELECTION

3.01 Risk Management shall conduct, at the request of the insurance carrier, a periodic check of employees' Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checking for driver's license validity and driving citation history to determine driver eligibility.

3.02 Eligible employee drivers – Eligibility for assignment of a County vehicle is based upon job description and maintaining an approved driver status.

3.03 Eligibility approval – A current Florida driver's license and a driving history that will

meet County standards and the underwriting guidelines of our County insurance provider are all driver eligibility requirements.

3.04 Minimum MVR standards for drivers shall include no major convictions. For examples, see the following included, but not limited to, listed infractions:

Driving while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Failure to stop or report an accident.

Homicide manslaughter or assault arising out of the operation of a motor vehicle.

Driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Reckless driving.

Possession of an opened container of alcoholic beverage while driving.

Exhibition of speed, drag racing, or attempting to elude a law officer.

Making a false accident report.

Driving while impaired.

Per general guidelines, drivers having three or more motor vehicle violations within the latest three-year period, or who have had a major adverse violation, shall present an unacceptable exposure to the County. As such, they may be subject to the provisions listed in the *Personnel Policies for the Employees of Bay County Board of County Commissioners, Section 3: Employment Guidelines and Expectations, Driving Records* or be allowed probationary use only.

3.05 Alternative Disciplinary Process for Driver Eligibility

In certain circumstances where a current employee's motor vehicle record (MVR) would render them ineligible under Section 3.04, the County may, at the discretion of Risk Management and the employee's Department Head, implement an alternative disciplinary and training process in lieu of immediate disqualification. This option may be considered when:

- The violations are not classified as "major adverse violations" under Section 3.04;
- The employee's job duties critically require driving; and
- The employee demonstrates a willingness to correct unsafe driving behavior.

The alternative process may include, but is not limited to:

1. Mandatory Defensive Driving Course: Completion of a County-approved course within 30 days.
2. Probationary Driving Period: Temporary assignment of driving duties under closer supervision or restricted travel areas.
3. Monthly MVR Monitoring: Risk Management will check the employee's driving record monthly for six months.
4. Written Warning or Last Chance Agreement: A formal written agreement outlining expectations and consequences of further violations.
5. Ride-Along Evaluations: Supervisor ride-alongs or spot-checks during the probationary period.
6. Suspension: Employee to be suspended up to three shifts without pay and must complete options 1 and 3 in addition.

Failure to comply with these conditions or any additional incidents during the probationary period may result in immediate disqualification from County vehicle operation privileges.

SECTION 4: Preventable Vehicular Accidents (PVA)

- 4.01** The Safety Advisory Committee reviews vehicular incidents for prevention. Employees involved in preventable incidents shall be required to attend additional drivers training conducted by the Risk Management Department at the discretion of their immediate supervisor.
- 4.02** Risk Management will schedule, coordinate, and/or conduct the Driver training. The training shall consist of a one-day class involving classroom instruction and hands-on driver training.

SECTION 5: Alcohol – Drugs – Tobacco Products

- 5.01** The County prohibits the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products while acting as a driver or as a passenger in a county vehicle, or while operating a county apparatus.

SECTION 6: Employee Responsibility / Traffic Violations

- 6.01** **As a condition of employment, employees shall notify their supervisor in writing immediately or no later than the beginning of their next scheduled work day of any moving traffic violations (during personal time or work time). This includes, but not limited to, license denials, suspensions, revocations, or a major adverse violation as described in this document under Section 3.04 for review of that driver's continued eligibility.**
- 6.02** Authorized drivers of County vehicles must carry a proper and valid Florida Driver's License at all times while operating a County vehicle. Suspension or loss of driving privileges may be subject to the provisions in the *Bay County Policies for Employment of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners, Section 3 - Employment Guidelines and Expectations, Driving Records.*

- 6.03** If incurred, employees shall be solely responsible for the payment of traffic fines for moving or parking violations.
- 6.04** Employees shall strictly obey posted speed limits.