CITY VEHICLE SAFETY

You may be assigned to use a City vehicle to visit the worksite, make deliveries, attend meetings, pick up supplies, or to do a variety of other tasks. When driving is part of the job, like every other task, it has to be done safely.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death, based on data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Any crash, whether it happens while you're driving a fleet vehicle or during your daily commute, has a big impact on the workplace.

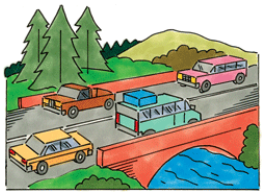
WHERE ARE THE REGULATIONS?

The City of Oviedo has issued guidelines for its employees to reduce motor vehicle crashes. The City of Oviedo's effective workplace driver safety program reduces the risks of crashes and injuries. The program can:

- Save lives and reduce injuries.
- Protect City resources (people and property).
- Reduce liability risks.

CITY VEHICLE SAFETY PROGRAM

The City of Oviedo vehicle safety program includes the following steps:



1. Management commitment and employee involvement. Management leads, supports, and enforces the program; but employee input is essential for the City's success.

2. Written policies and procedures. The program has policies for driver eligibility, vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, seat belt use, reporting collisions and moving violations, restricting alcohol, nicotine and drug use, etc.

3. Driver agreements. Drivers will sign an agreement that they are aware of, understand, and will follow the vehicle safety policies and procedures.

4. Motor vehicle record checks for each driver. Each driver's motor vehicle record will be periodically checked, preferably on an annual basis, for license restrictions, moving violations, accidents, etc. It is the employee's responsibility to report any of these to the Human Resources Department immediately as per Personnel Procedures & Rules Manual, Chapter VI, Section 11.5.

5. Crash reporting and investigation procedures. Drivers should know what to do in case of a collision, regardless of the severity. Investigations should identify what caused the crash and recommend preventive measures.

6. Vehicle selection, maintenance, and inspection procedures. The City will use vehicle crash test ratings to help select safe vehicles. The manufacturer's recommended vehicle maintenance program should be followed. Vehicles will have regular inspections, and drivers should know how to report defects. Repairs will be made by qualified mechanics.

7. Disciplinary actions for violations of the program's provisions are outlines in the Personnel Procedures & Rules Manual, Chapter XV. Under this fair progressive disciplinary program, a driver could lose his or her driving privileges for certain violations.

8. Driver training and communication programs. Periodic training can help establish safe driving habits.

9. Regulatory compliance. Vehicles and drivers must comply with all applicable highway safety laws.

VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Safe driving starts before you turn the ignition key. Always inspect the vehicle before you start your trip. Make sure:

- The vehicle does not have any visible damage that affects its safe operation.
- The tires are properly inflated (use the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations that are typically noted on a sticker inside the door, glove box, or trunk - the pressures stamped on the tire are not specific to the vehicle). Check the pressure when the tires are cold.
- Tires have sufficient tread depth (tread depth should be at least 1/16 inch).
- The vehicle's fluid levels are correct (oil, brake, transmission, battery, and wiper fluids).
- Belts and hoses are free of blisters, cracks, and cuts.
- The vehicle has plenty of fuel.
- The windshield wipers are in good condition and are functional.
- You are familiar with the location and operation of all the vehicle's controls; and the seat, steering wheel, and mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, and interior lights are working.
- The seat belt is properly adjusted, and it's in good condition.

- Loose objects are secured so they won't shift during a sudden stop or turn.

SAFE DRIVING TIPS

While it's important to understand the City of Oviedo vehicle safety program, as a driver, you have to put safe driving techniques into practice each time you get behind the wheel. The following safe driving strategies are under the driver's control:

- Make sure the vehicle is safe to operate.
- Bring supplies you may need in case of an emergency.
- Wear your seat belt.
- Drive defensively, not aggressively.
- Pay attention to your driving and avoid distractions.
- Only drive when you're alert and fully awake.
- NEVER drive under the influence of alcohol, medications, or illegal drugs.
- NEVER Text and Drive!

PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES

In case of a breakdown or accident, your first actions should be to move the car to a safe area, remain in the car (if there is no risk of fire or other danger), and call for help. Contact the Oviedo or local law enforcement agency (911) or Fleet services if you are only experiencing mechanical issues, and not an accident:

- Monday through Friday from 7am to 3:30pm - 407-971-5661
- After hours and Emergencies - 407-212-6596

Some basic provisions to include in an emergency supply kit can include:

- A phone and a list of emergency phone numbers.
- Roadside warning triangles or flares (follow instructions for their safe use).
- Raingear.

WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT

Seat belts are the single most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes. Safety belts save thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of serious injuries each year.

BE DEFENSIVE

It's best to always practice defensive driving techniques. Continually check your mirrors, leave enough following distance, and keep a cushion of space around the vehicle in case you need to quickly change lanes or go onto the shoulder.

Aggressive driving acts include:

- Speeding.
- Tailgating.
- Failing to signal lane changes.
- Running red lights or stop signs.
- Passing on the right.

Aside from being aggressive, taking these actions can result in getting a ticket. The best advice is to share the road - allow other drivers to merge as needed. Safely move out of an aggressive driver's way; don't become part of a conflict. When in a City of Oviedo vehicle, you are a representative of the City and its workforce.

STAY FOCUSED AND ALERT

Driving is no time to multi-task. Stay focused on the road. Drivers can be distracted by a variety of things:

- Conversations with passengers.
- Eating, drinking, or grooming.
- Tuning the radio.
- Reading maps or directions.
- Using electronic navigation systems.
- Using a cell phone.

Cell phones are one type of distraction that is becoming more and more common. Consider NHTSA's policy on using cell phones while driving:

"The primary responsibility of the driver is to operate a motor vehicle safely. The task of driving requires full attention and focus. Cell phone use can distract drivers from this task, risking harm to themselves and others. Therefore, the safest course of action is to refrain from using a cell phone while driving."

Drowsy driving is another problem. At 55 mph, a vehicle travels the length of a football field in 3.7 seconds. This is no time for a nap.

You can take steps to avoid drowsy driving:

- Get a full night of rest before driving.
- Stop and get out of the car to stretch and walk if you feel drowsy.
- Set a realistic goal of how many miles you can safely drive each day.
- Avoid taking medications that cause drowsiness. Refer to the Drug Free Workplace Policy for reporting prescribed or over the counter medication that may interfere in your ability to operate a motor vehicle.

The best remedy if you get drowsy behind the wheel is to stop driving. If you are too drowsy to drive, pull over and immediately advise your supervisor.

Alcohol, certain prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs can all affect a person's ability to drive safely. If you spot an impaired driver, stay a safe distance from the vehicle. Alert the police department, 407-971-5700 within City limits, or 911, that there is an unsafe driver on the road.

How do you spot a driver who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs? Watch for these driving behaviors:

- Weaving, swerving, drifting, or straddling the center line.
- Driving on the wrong side of the road.
- Driving at very slow or very fast speeds.
- Turning abruptly or braking erratically.
- Responding slowly to traffic signals.
- Driving with headlights off at night.

WORK AT WORKING SAFELY

Driving is a privilege; and as part of your responsibilities:

- Follow the rules in the City of Oviedo vehicle safety program.
- Prepare the vehicle for each trip.
- Plan for emergencies.
- Wear your safety belt.
- Avoid aggressive driving.
- Stay focused and alert while you drive.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and recognize the warning signs of drivers who do.