

**GRIMES COUNTY, TEXAS**



**VEHICLE OPERATIONS MANUAL**

**Effective June 16, 2025**  
**Revised Version March 18, 2026**

GRIMES COUNTY  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
FOR THE  
VEHICLE OPERATIONS MANUAL

**Contents**

ASSIGNMENT AND USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES POLICY ..... 4

I. PURPOSE..... 5

II. AUTHORITY..... 5

III. SCOPE..... 5

IV. CONSTRUCTION..... 5

V. DEFINITIONS..... 5

VI. GENERAL POLICY..... 6

VII. AUTHORIZED OFF-DUTY USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES..... 6

VIII. GENERAL ASSIGNMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES..... 7

IX. ASSIGNMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES; TAKE-HOME..... 7

X. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY; MONITORING..... 8

XI. USE BY OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS..... 8

XII. COUNTY VEHICLE USE..... 8

XIII. TRAINING AND SAFETY..... 9

XIV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR MISUSE..... 9

XV. POST-INCIDENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROCEDURES ..... 10

XVI. VEHICLE USE AGREEMENT FORM..... 10

XVII. FRINGE BENEFITS TAXATION..... 11

XVIII. SEVERABILITY..... 11

VEHICLE USE AGREEMENT ..... 12

FLEET MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES ..... 13

I. PURPOSE:..... 14

II. SCOPE:..... 14

III. DEFINITION:..... 14

IV. MANAGEMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES..... 15

    A. Driver Responsibilities..... 15

    B. Vehicle Evaluations..... 15

    C. Vehicle Utilization and Minimum Use..... 16

    D. Vehicle Acquisition, Replacement and Disposal Guidelines..... 17

E.	Vehicle Fleet Preparation .....	18
V.	MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF COUNTY VEHICLES. ....	19
A.	Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.....	19
B.	Care of Vehicle. ....	19
C.	Roadside Assistance. ....	20
VI.	VEHICLE MONITORING.....	20
A.	Monitoring Systems. ....	20
B.	Applicability. ....	20
C.	Privacy. ....	20
D.	Access/Use to the Vehicle Monitoring System. ....	21
E.	Responsibilities. ....	23
F.	Sharing/Releasing of GPS Data. ....	24
G.	Device Tampering.....	24
H.	Unauthorized Vehicle Use.....	24
I.	Reporting. ....	25

GRIMES COUNTY



**ASSIGNMENT AND USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES POLICY**

Effective April 16, 2025

Revised June 16, 2025

GRIMES COUNTY  
COUNTY VEHICLE USE POLICY

- I. **PURPOSE.**  
To establish a consistent County-wide Policy for the use of County vehicles, as defined herein.
- II. **AUTHORITY.**  
The Commissioners Court assigns the responsibility and authority to implement a consistent County-wide Policy for the use of County vehicles to the County’s elected and appointed officials or Department Heads consistent with this Policy.
- III. **SCOPE.**  
This Policy shall apply to every employee who works for Grimes County and operates a Grimes County vehicle. The term “employee” means only those employees covered by this Policy, as defined herein. The Grimes County Human Resources Department shall inform all employees of this Policy.
- IV. **CONSTRUCTION.**
  - A. The interpretation and implementation of these provisions after the effective date of this Policy shall be interpreted and implemented in conformity with applicable authority including, but not limited to, State and federal statutes.
  - B. To the extent that State and Federal laws, regulations or contract provisions apply to this Policy’s provisions, the requirements of those laws, regulations or provisions shall be followed. To the extent that said laws, regulations, or provisions conflict with this Policy’s provisions, the requirements of those conflicting laws, regulations or provisions shall control.
  - C. The use of masculine pronouns shall be understood to apply to male and female persons.
- V. **DEFINITIONS.**
  - A. “Appointed official” shall mean any constitutionally or statutorily created Office that is filled by appointment of more than one elected official acting together.
  - B. “Authorized Person” shall mean a person who is authorized to supervise a County employee in the performance of the employee’s duties.
  - C. “Bodily Injury” shall mean pain, illness or any impairment of physical condition.
  - D. “County Employee” shall mean a person who is employed by the County.
  - E. “County vehicle” shall mean any motor-driven vehicle that is owned, leased, or rented by an Office or Department of Grimes County, Texas.
  - F. “Emergency” shall mean an unforeseen event that reasonably requires immediate attention for the safety of a person, or the protection of County property.
  - G. “Off-duty” shall mean any time when an employee is not expected to be on duty, but can be expected to act as if they were if they are directed to do so by an authorized person.
  - H. “On-duty employment” shall mean any time when an employee is expected to be on duty performing their assigned work and responsibilities.
  - I. “Use in the conduct of County business” shall mean the use of a County vehicle

by an employee in the performance of their on-duty employment.

- J. "Vehicle Incident" shall mean a collision involving a County vehicle that results in bodily injury to any person and/or damage to tangible or real property requiring repair to restore the property to its pre-collision condition.
- K. "Mobile device" shall mean a hand-held mobile telephone, tablet, MP3 player or other handheld music player, electronic reading device, laptop computer, pager, personal communication device, global position device or navigation system, electronic game device or portable computing device.
- L. "Use of mobile device" shall mean the employment of a mobile device in any capacity, including the following:
  - 1. Dialing or ending a phone call;
  - 2. Speaking into or listening to a mobile device;
  - 3. Viewing, taking or sending images on a mobile device;
  - 4. Accessing, retrieving, viewing, browsing, sending or receiving electronic mail or text messages;
  - 5. Utilizing a global positioning device or navigation system including entering coordinates, addresses or locations or changing coordinates, addresses or locations;
  - 6. Utilizing or viewing applications (apps); or
  - 7. Playing games on mobile device.
- M. "Operation of a county vehicle" shall mean that a vehicle is powered on and not engaged in the "Park" position.

#### VI. GENERAL POLICY.

- A. These provisions shall govern the use of County vehicles. An Employee shall use, or permit the use of, a County vehicle only for the conduct of on-duty employment.
- B. Except for unmarked vehicles, all other County vehicles shall prominently display the official emblem of Grimes County.
- C. Except for any department symbol authorized by the Commissioners Court, the County's official emblem shall be the County seal.
- D. The County Sheriff, Sheriff Department Chief Deputy, Criminal Investigators, Undercover Officers, Jail Administrator, Jail Transport, Crime Victims Coordinator, District Attorney and Crime Victim Liaison are authorized to use unmarked vehicles for law enforcement purposes.
- E. Any Employee who is assigned a County vehicle shall comply with the Grimes County Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedures.

#### VII. AUTHORIZED OFF-DUTY USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES.

- A. An elected or appointed official and department head may authorize an Employee to use a County vehicle when said employee is off-duty only if the vehicle has been appropriated to the use of the elected or appointed official or department head by the Commissioners Court, and the Employee's duties are such that:
  - 1. They are expected to use the vehicle to perform their on-duty tasks at a time other than their on-duty hours; or

2. ***For Law Enforcement Officers Only:*** said use will increase their off-duty ability to respond to public safety and/or law enforcement emergencies, or will increase the operational efficiency of Grimes County as determined and approved by the Sheriff's or Constable's Offices. There shall be no off-duty jobs beyond a thirty (30) miles radius from Grimes County unless such off-duty work is at the request and aid of an outside law enforcement agency operating in the proposed area.

#### VIII. GENERAL ASSIGNMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES.

- A. The Commissioners Court shall be responsible for the acquisition and assignment of County vehicles through its budgeting process. County vehicles will be assigned only to officials and employees who must have access to a County vehicle to carry out their duties. The Elected Official or Department Head will annually provide the County Auditor with lists of all County vehicles and an identification of who or how said vehicles are assigned. Additions and deletions to the driver list shall be provided to said Office prior to the change.
- B. County vehicles which are assigned to non-law enforcement employees may be taken to the employee's primary residence only if the following criteria apply:
  1. The elected or appointed official has approved the vehicle assignment,
  2. The vehicle is essential to the employee to perform their on-duty work, and utilized during normal working hours ; and
  3. The authorization of a county vehicle for take-home use serves a public purpose which benefits the County.
- C. The Commissioners Court shall review each assignment of a County vehicle to an individual to ensure that it meets the criteria included in this Policy, and shall report any inconsistency to the elected or appointed official who shall be responsible for addressing said report.

#### IX. ASSIGNMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES; TAKE-HOME.

- A. The following guidelines will apply to all County vehicle assignments when the vehicles are driven to an official's or employee's residence:
  1. Each Department Head and Elected Official shall maintain a list of those employees authorized to take a County vehicle home, and shall furnish Commissioners Court with a copy of the listing.
  2. County vehicles may be used only for official County business, including commuting to and from work, except in an emergency.
  3. While performing official business in a County vehicle, an official or employee will be covered by the County's insurance program, and will not be required to carry supplemental insurance. All County vehicles not assigned as take-home vehicles must be parked on County property at the end of each day as designated by the employee's supervisor unless otherwise temporarily assigned by the supervisor for the purpose of travel or emergency response.
- B. A County vehicle shall never be used for personal gain, personal business, to drive to a place of secondary or part-time employment for the purpose of engaging in any employment unrelated to County business. However, this is not applicable to County law enforcement personnel who have approval from their Elected Official

or Commissioners Court for law enforcement related jobs in accordance with Section VII(A)(2).

- C. The only passengers allowed in County vehicles are:
  - 1. Anyone in the care and/or custody of a law enforcement officer or an officer of a court;
  - 2. Another employee(s);
  - 3. Non-employees as authorized by the elected or appointed official or department/division head; or
  - 4. A probation officer with probationers under the supervision of Community Supervision, and who work for a Grimes County Office or Department; or
  - 5. A qualified participant in a State or federal aid program administered by a Grimes County Department.

X. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY; MONITORING.

- A. Each elected or appointed Official and Department Director shall monitor the use of County vehicles, and shall take appropriate corrective measures in the event of abuse and/or a Policy violation.
- B. Each elected or appointed Official and Department Head shall notify the Grimes County Human Resources Department of any change in an Employee's employment in said Official's or Department Head's office.

XI. USE BY OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS.

- A. With the approval of the official to whom a County vehicle has been assigned, that vehicle may be loaned to another County office or Department for County business.
- B. The Department from which the County vehicle was loaned shall make a record showing the name of the Department using the vehicle; the purpose for the loan; the beginning and ending date and time of the loan; the beginning and ending odometer reading; and the name of the employee who will operate the vehicle in that Office or Department.

XII. COUNTY VEHICLE USE.

- A. County vehicles used for travel outside the State shall have authorization from the Commissioners Court, excluding only law enforcement usage to transport prisoners, perform investigations, or to facilitate the prosecution of felony cases.
- B. Only an employee who possesses a valid Texas Driver's license with a classification that allows for the operation of the assigned vehicle can operate a County vehicle. A photocopy of that license shall be provided to the Grimes County Human Resources Department prior to or at the time of vehicle assignment. It shall be the responsibility of the driver's supervisor to verify the copy. If during the course of a vehicle assignment, an employee loses their driver's license due to suspension or non-renewal, they shall immediately notify their supervisor of that fact, and shall discontinue use of any County vehicle until the driver license is reinstated or renewed, and a copy thereof is again provided to the Grimes County Human Resources Department.
- C. A County vehicle may not be operated if its registration has expired or if, in the judgment of the employee to which it was assigned or released by an authorized person, it is considered to be unsafe for use.

- D. An employee is not authorized to routinely take home a County vehicle outside Grimes County unless authorized by the elected official, appointed official or Department Head and approved by the Commissioners Court.
- E. To facilitate a prompt emergency response after hours, an elected or appointed official or Department Head may authorize an employee under their supervision to take home a County vehicle.
- F. Confiscated vehicles stored on County property shall not be removed therefrom except in the course of the vehicle's scheduled or necessary maintenance.
- G. An Employee shall not lend a County vehicle to another for personal use.
- H. A County vehicle operated under a grant or State or Federal program shall be operated according to the provisions of that grant or State or Federal program, in addition to the provisions of this Policy. If a vehicle use provision of the grant or State or Federal program conflicts with a provision of this Policy, the more-restrictive provision shall control.
- I. An Employee, while performing the functions of their on-duty employment, or off duty, shall not operate a county vehicle while using a mobile device. Use of a mobile device is permissible when operating a county vehicle via a hands-free system (i.e. Bluetooth, voice activated communication system, headphones) or when the county vehicle is engaged in the "park" position.
- J. Employees operating a county vehicle and using a navigation system or global positioning device shall enter the desired address or location prior to the start of the trip or at any time when the vehicle is engaged in the "park" position.
- K. County employees classified as emergency personnel or law enforcement are limited to using a mobile device for the purposes of fulfilling their designated duties.

XIII. TRAINING AND SAFETY.

- A. A driver of a County vehicle shall comply with all applicable State and federal laws respecting the vehicle's maintenance and operation.
- B. Any driver involved in a vehicle incident while driving a County vehicle shall attend driver safety training, provided by the County, within sixty (60) days from the date of said incident. A copy of verification of completion of the course must be provided to the driver's supervisor and to the Grimes County Human Resources Department.

XIV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR MISUSE.

- A. An Employee who uses a County vehicle for a purpose other than County business or in other violation of this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment. An Elected or appointed Official shall be responsible for the disciplinary actions within their respective offices.
- B. An Employee whose position is partially or wholly funded through a grant or State or Federal program shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination if they violate the vehicle use provisions of that grant or program or otherwise becomes ineligible to operate the vehicle under the provisions of that grant or program, provided that the employee's job description

requires the use of a vehicle.

**C. AN EMPLOYEE WHO MISUSES A COUNTY VEHICLE SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE COUNTY FOR THE ACTUAL COST RESULTING FROM ITS MISUSE.**

D. Improper use of a County vehicle shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Department Director, Supervisor, or the elected or appointed official consistent with departmental policies, not to exclude termination. Improper use shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Having three (3) or more moving violations in a County vehicle over a one-year period.
2. Driving a County vehicle while intoxicated or under the influence of an illegal drug.
3. Violation of any provision of this Policy.
4. Using a County vehicle to transport alcohol or a controlled substance, unless they were lawfully possessed or seized by the employee or another person; and/or
5. Deliberate abuse, reckless use, or racing of a County vehicle.

XV. **POST-INCIDENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROCEDURES**

A. An employee shall submit to drug and/or alcohol testing if they are involved in a vehicle incident, whether or not they receive a citation for a traffic violation arising from the incident.

B. The Grimes County Human Resources Department shall inform all employees of this Policy.

C. If a driver has been involved in a vehicle incident, they shall immediately notify an appropriate law enforcement agency of the incident (if one has not already been notified) and shall thereafter notify their departmental dispatch office or supervisor that an incident has occurred. If on duty, the driver shall submit to drug and/or alcohol testing within twelve (12) hours of the incident or earlier following approval to leave work from the driver's Department Head, Elected or Appointed Official. Additionally, an employee that is off-duty when the vehicle incident occurred in a County Vehicle must submit to drug and/or alcohol testing as if they were on-duty at the time of the incident. Single vehicle incidents with livestock or wildlife are exempt from this section, unless directed by the driver's Department Head, Elected or Appointed Official that the driver submit to such testing.

D. All drug and alcohol test results collected in accordance with this subsection shall be provided to the Grimes County Human Resources Department.

E. All drug and alcohol test results and medical information furnished during the testing process shall be treated as confidential medical information, and will be released only as required by law. Any tested employee has the right to request a copy of their test records.

XVI. **VEHICLE USE AGREEMENT FORM.**

All employees to whom a County vehicle is assigned shall sign a Vehicle Use Agreement Form, and shall return the completed form to the Grimes County Human Resources Department prior to using the vehicle.

XVII. FRINGE BENEFITS TAXATION.

Employees who utilize county vehicles for any personal purposes (including driving county vehicles to commute to and from work) will be subject to taxation in accordance with the Internal Revenue Services (Publication 15-B) “Commuting Rule” guidelines. The Personal Use of County Vehicle Log shall be turned in to the Grimes County Treasurer’s Office at the end of each quarter, excluding law enforcement

XVIII. SEVERABILITY.

If any clause or provision of this Policy is illegal, invalid or unenforceable under present or future laws effective during its term, then and in that event, it is the intention of the Commissioners Court that the remainder of this Policy shall not be affected thereby, and it is also the intention of the Commissioners Court that in lieu of each clause or provision that is illegal, invalid or unenforceable, there be added as a part of this Policy a clause or provision as similar in terms to such illegal, invalid or unenforceable clause or provision as may be possible and legal, valid and enforceable. The caption of each paragraph hereof is added as a matter of convenience only and shall be considered to be of no effect in the construction of any provision or provisions of this Policy.



**GRIMES COUNTY, TEXAS**



**FLEET MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES**

**Effective June 16, 2025**  
**Revised Version March 18, 2026**

## **FLEET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

To establish the guidelines and specific requirements for maintenance, operation, repairs, surplus, and capital purchases to ensure we maximize our production and protect the life of our assets. The county makes transportation available to the various county departments through the operation of Grimes County Vehicles. Additionally, the purpose of this policy is to establish criteria for the installation, access, and use of GPS monitoring devices on Grimes County Vehicles. Employees and other authorized drivers may, in the course of their employment, be asked to drive County Vehicles that are equipped with GPS. GPS allows the department or elected/appointed official, where applicable, the ability to access vehicle data, including speed, location, routing, idling, utilization and maintenance of such vehicle. GPS may also be used for other County business-related purposes, including, but not limited to, locating stolen vehicles, managing resources effectively, budgeting, or ensuring that employees are following their routes or assignments.

### **II. SCOPE:**

This Policy applies to all Grimes County owned and operated vehicles. Leased vehicles may have different or additional reporting requirements than County Vehicles, per their applicable lease terms. All County Vehicles to include Law Enforcement, emergency, and heavy commercial vehicles are subject to all requirements of this Policy. Vehicles purchased with non-appropriated funds (such as grants) are subject to all requirements of this Policy, plus any grant specific requirements.

### **III. DEFINITION:**

“County Vehicle” means a vehicle that is owned, leased, or operated by Grimes County, Texas.

“Department” means any, and all County departments or offices, including those reporting to a department head, elected official, and appointed official.

“GPS” means Global Positioning System using satellite location or other location technology.

“GPS device” means an electronic global GPS device that is attached to a vehicle and transmits or records its location using a combination of GPS, mobile phone, wireless, telematics, and Internet technology. It can include dedicated GPS tracking devices or other location-based technologies and may observe, monitor, or collect information for the purpose of identifying, diagnosing, or monitoring functions related to the potential need to repair, service, or perform maintenance on a County Vehicle. It may also capture information on user driving behavior, including speed, location, routing, idling, and utilization.

“Vehicle Monitoring System” means all units and components of the County’s Maintenance monitoring and GPS system, including all GPS devices.

“Maintenance Monitoring Data” means all data specific to the maintenance of a county vehicle, to

include but not limited to engine fault codes/diagnostic codes, fuel usage, engine hours, vehicle battery health, system of electrical system malfunctions, tire pressure and temperature, idling reports and ABS braking malfunctions. This does not include real time GPS tracking data of the vehicle.

#### **IV. MANAGEMENT OF COUNTY VEHICLES**

##### **A. Driver Responsibilities.**

*See the Grimes County Vehicle Use Policy.*

##### **B. Vehicle Evaluations.**

- 1) Perform a Vehicle Replacement Evaluation. Departments will evaluate their fleet vehicles to determine which vehicles need to be replaced in accordance with established County replacement policies. Departments should evaluate their entire fleet of assigned County Vehicles to identify vehicles meeting the County established replacement criteria, or vehicles with excessive repair, maintenance, or operating costs. Departments should utilize all available data on their assigned vehicles, including internally tracked data in evaluating vehicles for replacement.
- 2) Conduct Fleet Right Sizing Evaluation. Departments will perform a fleet “rightsizing” or optimization evaluations to help determine their appropriate fleet size and composition. Factors to consider in sizing a department fleet (in terms of both overall number of vehicles and vehicle type) are the Department’s mission and whether the need will be short-term (perhaps met by “pool” units) or long-term (perhaps met by lease or purchase). When conducting a “rightsizing” or optimization evaluation, one of the main factors considered should be whether current vehicles are being fully utilized; if it is not, then the vehicle should be considered for reassignment or disposal.
  - a) In analyzing fleet composition, Departments should evaluate the vehicle application, number of passengers typically carried, special needs of the operator, and any limiting factors (i.e., towing, payload, seasonal use) of current vehicles.
  - b) The fleet composition shall be provided to the Commissioners Court and Grimes County Auditor’s Office annually with such Department’s budget questionnaire (provided by the Auditor’s Office).
- 3) Develop a Fleet Assessment Report. Commissioner’s Court in conjunction with the Auditor’s office will document findings derived from the Vehicle Needs Evaluation and Right Sizing Evaluation in a report. The report should outline recommendations for replacement, realignment or disposal of existing fleet vehicles and any identified needs for new fleet vehicles. The report should include details of the analyses performed, and policies, criteria and/or best practices used in developing recommendations.

- 4) Develop a Fleet Replacement Plan. Commissioners Court will develop a vehicle replacement plan that addresses both short and long-term replacement needs of each Department to help the County to prevent and/or eliminate backlogs of deferred replacements and provides management with a predictable level of annual funding requirements.

**C. Vehicle Utilization and Minimum Use.**

- 1) Vehicle Assignment. *See the Grimes County Vehicle Use Policy.*
- 2) Minimum use. This section applies only to vehicles with a primary assignment to one person or one Department, and are established to ensure Departments are getting the optimal use for their vehicles. The minimum mileage target for vehicles (sedans, pick up, carryalls, vans and other vehicles intended primarily for carrying passengers to include Law Enforcement) is 5,000 miles annually. The Auditor or the Commissioners Court designee shall develop and distribute department-specific annual reports, based on reported fleet data, to flag vehicles that have accumulated less than the minimum mileage for the designated reporting period. This minimum mileage amount may be amended by the department head or elected/appointed official with Commissioners Court approval. The intent of this requirement is to call attention to vehicles that may not be fully utilized. It is not to direct departments to drive vehicles solely for the purpose of putting mileage on them to attain a minimum mileage level. An annual report will assist Departments in evaluating their vehicle utilization to ensure that all vehicles are being effectively used and assist Commissioners Court with vehicle budgetary decisions.
- 3) Exempt Vehicles. The following vehicles are exempt from minimum use criteria: Vehicles with a manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds, heavy equipment (Road and Bridge), special purpose vehicles (Road and Bridge), vehicles purchased with federal, state or local grants; and vehicles granted waivers with Commissioners Court approval. Departments will have 60 days from the end of fiscal year report date to submit written justification for retaining vehicles that fail to meet minimum mileage criteria. Extensions may be granted for Departments to justify special use vehicles not identified in the exemptions list.
- 4) Vehicle Idling Policy. The County has a no excessive idling policy. With few exceptions traffic accident, on-shift law enforcement units, apprehensions, approved off-duty work, approved Road & Bridge units. Gasoline powered vehicles will idle no more than 5 minutes. Diesel powered vehicles will idle no more than 10 minutes year round to allow for engine warm up and air brake system charge. On average, a vehicle burns about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a gallon of fuel per hour of idling. Excessive vehicle and equipment idling is bad for the vehicle/equipment, the Department and County financially; and harms the environment.
- 5) Vehicle Fueling. The County will utilize the most cost effective means available to procure fuel for fleet vehicle including, but not limited to, managed bulk fuel

locations, other local government managed fuel locations, or retail fuel establishments which accept the County fuel card and do not charge state tax.

- a) Unless specifically prohibited by manufacturer warranty or recommendations, all County Vehicles operating on gasoline shall use regular unleaded gasoline. Higher octane blends (marketed as premium, super-unleaded, plus, etc.) should be used only when recommended by the vehicle manufacturer or to reduce/eliminate engine clatter on older vehicles to prevent engine damage.
- 6) Pools Vehicles. Departments shall make use of pool vehicles whenever possible. Pools are not necessary when such Department's regular duties require work in locations other than departments headquarters, and who regularly require a vehicle for ongoing daily duties. Departments shall review, on an annual basis, the use of all vehicles and implement opportunities for reduction/consolidation or establishment of pools or other sharing mechanisms. Such methods are enacted to increase vehicle use and improve the efficiency of the County Vehicles.

#### **D. Vehicle Acquisition, Replacement and Disposal Guidelines.**

##### 1) Vehicle Acquisition.

- a) Departments and Auditor's Office will identify the specifications of the vehicle needed and seek to acquire that vehicle in the most cost effective manner available. Options for acquisition include:
  - i. Purchase through State Contract or other approved method
  - ii. Purchase of surplus or seized vehicles
  - iii. Purchase of GSA/ Rental Agencies vehicles
  - iv. Acceptance of a donated vehicle.
- b) The County should consider alternatives to vehicle acquisition including:
  - i. *Leasing of vehicles*. Vehicles leased shall be subject to all data collection and use requirements of the Plan.
  - ii. *Rental of vehicles*. It is highly recommended that rentals be used only to meet temporary, short-term, and/or seasonal requirements. Departments should consider vehicle acquisition if the requirement for transportation is on-going. Vehicles rented by departments for short term requirements (generally shorter than one month or for a specific requirement, e.g. contingency operations) are not subject to data collection and Plan requirements.
  - iii. *Vehicle Pooling*. Departments should engage with other Departments within the County that utilize vehicle pooling, to determine if such Department's vehicle needs can be met through the inclusion in the pooling system.
  - iv. *Outsourcing special purpose vehicles*. It may be more cost effective to outsource special purpose vehicle (e.g. forklift) through a contracted vendor on an as-needed basis rather than to own such a vehicle.
  - v. *Mileage Reimbursement*. Mileage reimbursement for the use of personal vehicles when this option is more cost effective.

- 2) Vehicle Replacement. The following guidelines provide criteria for routine vehicle replacement. Replacement following these guidelines is intended to minimize fleet capital and operating costs.
  - a) Passenger vehicles should be evaluated for replacement when they reach ten (10) years of service or accrue 225,000 miles.
  - b) Patrol vehicles should be evaluated for replacement when they reach 5 years or accrue 95,000 miles.
  - c) Buses, Heavy Cargo vehicles and Construction vehicles should be evaluated when they reach 12 years of service or accrue 300,000 miles.

The department head or the elected/appointed official may make exceptions to the replacement guidelines on a case-by-case basis, with Commissioners Court approval. For example, vehicles may be replaced sooner if they incur excessive maintenance or repair costs or may be retained longer if they have unusually low maintenance costs. Specialized equipment, such as heavy highway construction equipment, may require the use of customized replacement guidelines.

- 3) Disposal of County Vehicles. Departments shall dispose of vehicles through standard County surplus and salvage property disposal means as directed by the Commissioners Court. Once disposal is approved by Commissioners Court, such vehicle shall be sold within sixty (60) days or as otherwise designated and approved by Commissioners Court. A leased vehicle is not subject to these requirements at the termination of the lease period because it is not a purchase or capitalized asset. Certain grant funded vehicles will have unique disposal requirements, per the applicable grant requirements. Departments will turn in all fuel card(s) associated with a County owned/operated vehicle to the Treasurer's Office; that has been turned in for disposal.

#### **E. Vehicle Fleet Preparation.**

- 1) Receive Vehicle into Fleet. Department personnel must inspect and submit a request for Commissioners Court to accept vehicle into the County fleet. Special care should be taken to make certain that the vehicle meets all specifications requested during acquisition process prior to accepting the vehicle.
- 2) Register Vehicle. Departments are required to keep Department assigned vehicles properly registered with the State. The Grimes County Auditor must submit paperwork to the local titling authority, based on assigned location, to obtain title and license plate. The Department must coordinate with the Auditor's office to ensure that the vehicle is added to the County vehicle insurance policy prior to placing the vehicle into use. Most County Vehicles are required to obtain exempt plates. Commissioners Court grants the County Auditor to register unmarked law enforcement County Vehicles for exempt license plates.
- 3) Prepare/Retrofit Vehicle. Prior to placing vehicles into active use, Departments should make the vehicle ready for service by installing any required aftermarket equipment required by the County thru the approved vendor. Then apply all County and department required logos, per Texas Transportation Code Section 721.004

(inscription required on county owned motor vehicles and heavy equipment) on all vehicles and equipment with exempt plates. Certain unmarked Law Enforcement vehicles and vehicles with non-exempt plates are exempt from this requirement. Marked Law Enforcement vehicles have their unique templates, per their respective Departmental Policies.

**V. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF COUNTY VEHICLES.**

**A. Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.**

Departments are required to properly maintain and repair County Vehicles as necessary to keep fleet vehicles in proper working condition. Proper maintenance and repair of vehicles includes the following:

- 1) Scheduled/Preventive Maintenance. Departments will maintain a scheduled/preventive maintenance schedule for all vehicles in accordance with manufacturer's recommended service intervals and/or Commissioners Court's directives, and will coordinate scheduled/preventive services to those vehicles. Including but not limited to:
  - a) Rotate tires at manufacturer-recommended intervals and require drivers to check tire air pressure monthly. Properly inflated tires last longer and contribute to fuel efficiency. Read owner's manual for proper inflation guidelines.
  - b) Replace brake pads and shoes before they wear disks or drums.
- 2) Warranty Service. Departments will maintain warranty information on all vehicles and vehicle parts to achieve maximum savings on maintenance and repairs. Departments should coordinate all warranty service required during the life of each vehicle warranty or each parts warranty.
- 3) Unscheduled Maintenance and Repair Services. Departments will coordinate service for all vehicles in cases of unscheduled breakdown or in cases where the vehicle requires repairs due to collision. Departments should utilize the most cost effective means available to maintain fleet vehicles including, but not limited to, County owned and/or managed maintenance shops (motor pools), contracted vendors, or other retail maintenance facilities.
  - a) Department employees are **NOT** authorized to perform their own vehicle repairs; the performing of minor repairs (changing a flat tire, adding oil and wiper fluid) is authorized.

**B. Care of Vehicle.**

- 1) The driver of a County vehicle shall decide that the vehicle is in proper operating condition. Any damage and/or malfunctions should be reported immediately to their supervisor. Maintenance of the vehicle is the responsibility and obligation of the office or department for which said vehicle is assigned. Each employee that is assigned a vehicle for use shall maintain such vehicle in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. All maintenance work on County Vehicles should be first sourced within Grimes County unless otherwise approved by Commissioners Court.
- 2) The driver of a county vehicle is responsible for the clean condition of the vehicle's interior and exterior after they have used it. All detailing and cleaning of

County Vehicles should be first sourced within Grimes County unless otherwise approved by Commissioners Court.

- 3) **The use of tobacco products and/or alcohol by a county vehicle occupant is not permitted.**

**C. Roadside Assistance.**

Department personnel should contact the current County contracted towing vendor when operating County owned or operated vehicle, and in need of roadside assistance. Department personnel should inform the vendor that you are a County employee and operating a County owned/ operated vehicle.

**VI. VEHICLE MONITORING.**

**A. Monitoring Systems.**

All County Vehicles will be monitored with a maintenance monitoring and GPS tracking device to ensure Grimes County vehicles are functional, safe and dependable for county operations. Maintenance monitoring will register all aspects of the County Vehicle including the need for and confirmation of repairs, preventative, general, and vendor maintenance.

- 1) Installation. All County Vehicles shall have a Maintenance monitoring and GPS device installed/maintained by the Grimes County IT Department, unless the installation is prohibited by federal or state law or contract/grant with a federal or state agency.
- 2) Data Analysis and Reporting. The Grimes County Auditor and Commissioners Court will periodically review related vehicle data and utilize this data in an effort to evaluate vehicle utilization and efficiency.
- 3) Monthly Mileage Reporting. Departments are required to submit monthly end of month mileage kilometer/hours to the Grimes County Auditor if the data cannot be gathered from the vehicle monitoring system or the vendor provided monthly fuel report.

**B. Applicability.**

This policy applies to County Vehicles. County Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with all applicable state, and local laws, ordinances, County policies, and, where applicable, department policies. Any violation with the provisions of this policy, other Grimes County policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**C. Privacy.**

***THE VEHICLE MONITORING SYSTEM IS THE SOLE PROPERTY OF GRIMES COUNTY, TEXAS. ALL ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM IS FOR AUTHORIZED USE ONLY. ALL USERS AND DRIVERS, WHETHER***

***AUTHORIZED OR UNAUTHORIZED, HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY, EITHER EXPLICIT, IMPLICIT, OR OTHERWISE.*** At all times, there should be an expectation that a GPS device has been installed in all County Vehicles and equipment and are being monitored.

**D. Access/Use to the Vehicle Monitoring System.**

- 1) Access to the Vehicle Monitoring System data will be restricted. The Director of the Grimes County IT Department will manage access to the Vehicle Monitoring System data in accordance with the following: (1) GPS and Maintenance Monitoring Data for departments that report to the Commissioners Court, and (2) **only** Maintenance Monitoring Data for offices that report to an Elected or Appointed Official. A GPS Access Form (“Access Form”) must be completed and submitted to the Director before access to any Vehicle Monitoring System data may be granted, except for the Director of IT and the Commissioner Court Liaison Administrator for this program as outlined herein. The Director and Liaison may access the Vehicle Monitoring System to perform their administrative duties set forth in this policy without an Access Form. The Access Form must contain the following:
  - a. The identity of the requestor (including the department/office);
  - b. A description of the Vehicle Monitoring System data sought;
  - c. Acknowledgment of the request from the commissioners’ court, department head or the elected/appointed official for which vehicles the Vehicle Monitoring System data access is sought for;
  - d. The applicable section of this policy under which the requestor seeks access; and,
  - e. A certification that the requestor will comply with the confidentiality provisions of the GPS policy, including the provisions on sharing and releasing Vehicle Monitoring System data.
  
- 2) The following may have access to Vehicle Monitoring System data as described below:
  - a. **Limited Access (vehicles).** Limited access (vehicles) means that the persons listed cannot get access to all County Vehicle GPS device data, but are limited to accessing data for specific vehicles described below:
    - i. The following may have access to GPS device(s) data for County Vehicles used/operated by their department, office, or departments/offices under their statutory authority:
      1. Elected Officials or their designee
      2. Department Heads or their designee
    - ii. The following may have access to a County Vehicle GPS device data on a specifically identified County Vehicles to:
      1. assist in an investigation involving allegations of misconduct, violation of law, or misuse of County Vehicle; or, defend a claim/suit against the County:

- a. Grimes County Attorney,
  - b. Grimes County Sheriff Criminal Investigation Division, or
  - c. Grimes County District Attorney
- b. **Limited Access (scope) For Departments that Report to Commissioners Court.** Limited access (scope) means that the persons listed below can get access to all County Vehicle Monitoring System data, but **only if** they seek the Vehicle Monitoring System data for the authorized purpose described below:
  - i. **Auditor.** The Auditor is allowed access to Maintenance and GPS data reports for purpose of county finances. The Auditor may access GPS data reports pertaining to the use of County Vehicles in aid of the auditor's fiscal examination and reporting duties.
  - ii. **Commissioners and County Judge (“Budget Officers”) Evaluation.** The Budget Officers are allowed access to Maintenance and GPS data reports for purpose of County fiscal operations and budget, including but not limited to exceptions to policy report, run idling reports, daily fuel exception reports, and other reports deemed necessary to ensure cost savings and efficiencies in the use of County Vehicles.
  - iii. **IT Director.** The IT Director or his/her designee is allowed access to Vehicle Monitoring System to:
    - 1. manage the installation and maintenance of any GPS device;
    - 2. administer the Vehicle Monitoring System; or
    - 3. running idling reports, daily fuel exception reports, and other reports at the request of a authorized user and within their scope outlined herein.
- c. **Limited Access (scope) For Offices of Elected or Appointed Officials.** Limited access (scope) means that the persons listed below can get access to all County Vehicle Monitoring System data, but **only Maintenance Monitoring Data (not GPS location data)** for the authorized purpose described below:
  - i. **Auditor.** The Auditor is allowed access to Maintenance reports for purpose of county finances and to aid the auditor's fiscal examination and reporting duties.
  - ii. **Commissioners and County Judge (“Budget Officers”) Evaluation.** The Budget Officers are allowed access to Maintenance Monitoring Data reports for purpose of County fiscal operations and budget to ensure cost savings and efficiencies in the use of County Vehicles.
  - iii. **IT Director.** The IT Director or his/her designee is allowed access to Vehicle Monitoring System to:
    - 1. manage the installation and maintenance of any GPS device; or
    - 2. administer the Vehicle Monitoring System at the request of a authorized user and within their scope outlined herein.

- 3) ***Third-Party Access.*** County Vehicle GPS device data may be provided to the police or other law enforcement authority if:
  - a. requested for law enforcement purposes; and
  - b. authorized by the Commissioners Court.
- 4) ***Other Access.*** Unless listed herein, no other Grimes County employee/officer/elected official may gain access to Vehicle Monitoring System data without a waiver from the Commissioners Court, for an authorized purpose, within the Grimes County employee/officer/elected official statutory or constitutional duties.
- 5) ***Confidentiality Notice.*** Law enforcement Vehicle Monitoring System data shall be stamped “Confidential” prior to sharing with an authorized person under this Policy.

#### **E. Responsibilities.**

- 1) **Director of IT Department.** The Director or his/her designee are responsible for the following:
  - a. Overseeing the Administration of the Vehicle Monitoring System.
  - b. Process access requests upon approval in accordance with this policy.
  - c. Administering the Vehicle Monitoring System.
  - d. Upon request, running and distributing idling reports, daily fuel exception report, and other reports deemed necessary to ensure efficiencies and cost savings.
  - e. Adding/revising/editing Vehicle Monitoring System users in accordance with this policy.
  - f. Providing training or assist in training GPS users.
  - g. Promoting the Vehicle Monitoring System.
  - h. Assigning appropriate personnel for GPS installation and maintenance.
- 2) **Commissioner Court Liaison.** The Commissioner Court Liaison is responsible for the following:
  - a. Assigning appropriate personnel to the department to manage and operate the Vehicle Monitoring System.
  - b. Running and reviewing reports authorized under this policy and deemed necessary to ensure efficiency and cost savings for the use of County Vehicles.
  - c. Fulfilling periodic reporting obligations to the Commissioners Court in accordance with Court liaison reporting practices.
- 3) **Elected Officials/Department Heads.** Elected Officials/Department Heads with employees driving a County Vehicle with a GPS device or their designee are responsible for the following:
  - a. Ensuring the correct operation of this Policy within their area of responsibility;
  - b. Ensuring the requirements of this policy are understood and followed by their employees/users/drivers.
  - c. Designating the department representative authorized to access the Vehicle

Monitoring System data on behalf of the office/department and notifying the Director of IT in writing of any changes in user access (termination, internal moves, or removal of access).

- d. Taking appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions for drivers who exhibit poor driving behavior that has been recorded and reported by the GPS device.
  - e. Attending or seeking training in proper use of GPS reporting, alerts, and/or use.
  - f. Timely reporting any problems with the GPS equipment in their vehicles to the Director of IT Department.
  - g. Providing any reports of concerns about violations of this policy to, where applicable, the Commissioners' Court, Auditor, Liaison, or Sheriff CID.
- 4) Employees. Employees who drive County Vehicle with a GPS device are responsible for the following:
- a. Complying with all the provisions of this policy.
  - b. Operating County Vehicles in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, County policies, and, where applicable, department policies.
  - c. Using County Vehicles for County business purposes only. *See, Grimes County Vehicle Use Policy.*

#### F. Sharing/Releasing of GPS Data.

- 1) Confidentiality. Any employee/elected official/officer provided access to Vehicle Monitoring System data is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the GPS data, as required by County policy and state or federal law.
- 2) Public Information. GPS information may be sought through a public information request, subpoena, or court order. All Vehicle Monitoring System data should be deemed *confidential* and *shall NOT be released* to any requestor, **you shall notifying the (1) Elected Official/ Department Head assigned the vehicle for which the request is made and (2) County Attorney's Office for handling.**

*Note: GPS data on a law enforcement vehicle may reveal driving habits and route, law enforcement home address, information concerning the investigation of a crime, including witness address, and other sensitive law enforcement information whose disclosure may violate the law. CAUTION shall be exercised to maintain the confidentiality of GPS data of law enforcement vehicles, including within Grimes County internally.*

#### G. Device Tampering.

Any tampering, attempts to remove, jamming, or disabling of the GPS equipment is prohibited. Any person who knowingly and purposefully modifies, damages, manipulates, or disrupts the performance or proper functioning of any GPS device is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

#### H. Unauthorized Vehicle Use.

GPS transmit daily activities, which include speed, idling, stop locations, and traveling locations. Drivers shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, County policies and, where applicable, department policies when using/operating a County Vehicle. A department head/elected official may use information collected from the Vehicle Monitoring System as part of a disciplinary investigation or to discipline their employee for violation of the County's or Department's vehicle use policies. Any unauthorized use of County Vehicles is strictly prohibited. *Also see, Grimes County Vehicle Use Policy.*

### **I. Reporting.**

GPS tracking device will transmit data every two-minute intervals. GPS reports may be generated by the department/elected official or designee in accordance with this Policy. The Director of the IT Department may generate GPS data reports at the direction of the authorized users set out in the policy and in accordance with the users authorized access. The list below is GPS key areas of reporting. These reports enable Grimes County or departments/elected officials, where applicable, to generate information and notifications regarding use, location, driver behavior, and financial impacts.