

Title: Safe Driving Policy

Resolution: 2023-0268 (Nov 27, 2023)

Special Notes/Cross Reference:

Revised:

Next Review Date:

PURPOSE: To provide our employees with a set of guidelines to ensure the safe operation of motor vehicles under the employ of Town of Westlock and to provide a set of procedures for acceptable use when operating Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicles, or while travelling on Town of Westlock business.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Any Town of Westlock employee that operates a Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicle while conducting Town of Westlock business is required to:

- Comply with this policy and its associated procedures;
- Know and abide by all driving laws in all areas where they operate vehicles while conducting company business;
- Hold a valid driver's license in good standing and the license held must be valid for the type of motor vehicle being used;
- Carry their license at all times;
- Acknowledge that the Town will pull a Driver's Abstract annually;
- Maintain the appropriate level of insurance;
- Notify managers of any health and safety concerns (unsafe or potentially hazardous) so that they may be dealt with promptly;
- Use appropriate safety equipment as required;
- Report any incident, injury or hazard;
- Conduct a walk around inspection prior to operating a vehicle
- Wear a seatbelt at all times, including all stages of pregnancy and ensure that passengers do the same;
- Drive with the headlights on at all times;
- Secure cargo inside or on Town of Westlock's vehicles;
- Adjust headrests so the top of the rest is level with the top of the drivers and/or passenger's head;
- Drive in a safe and courteous manner at all times; and
- Maintain cleanliness of the vehicle.



Town of WESTLOCK

POLICY No. P-99-2023

Only authorized employees of Town of Westlock or those with specific exceptions in insurance contracts are permitted to operate a Town of Westlock owned vehicle or a personal vehicle while conducting Town of Westlock business. If unauthorized personnel are caught driving a company vehicle, the authorized employee whose vehicle it is will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Take Home Vehicle

For an employee to be authorized for the take home vehicle use of a Town vehicle the employee must meet one of the following:

- The employee is subject to significant after hour's emergency call outs or other unscheduled work;
- The employee is subject to frequent after hour's callback and such call back arrangements are to locations other than the employee's normal duty station;
- The employee uses a special vehicle, tools or equipment that are required to perform after hours assignments and an unacceptable delay in the response would result from the employee's return to the normal duty station to retrieve the needed equipment;
- The employee resides within the Town of Westlock and goes home for lunch.

The payment of any taxes on any taxable benefit incurred as a result of this policy and reported on the employee's T4 is solely the responsibility of the employee.

Operators shall keep vehicles free of litter, debris, offensive odors and washed on a regular basis. Smoking and the consumption of alcohol in Town vehicles is prohibited.

2.0 Safe Driving Techniques

Drivers are expected to employ safe driving techniques at all times while operating Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicles or while operating personally owned vehicles while on Town of Westlock business. Examples of safe driving techniques include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a safe following distance between them and the vehicle in front of them using the 3-6 second rule depending on vehicle length;
- Checking blind spots and signaling in advance before changing lanes;
- Driving within the posted speed limit at all times;
- Operating the vehicle at speeds that are safe for the conditions, recognizing that, in some circumstances (eg. rain or fog) this may be below the posted speed limit;
- Avoiding risk-taking when driving;



3.0 Passengers

While using company vehicles, Town of Westlock employees are permitted to have passengers only if they are in the vehicle for Town related business or if approved by the CAO.

- Emergency vehicles and the Town of Westlock Community Assistance Bus are exempt.

4.0 Distractions

4.1 Use of Mobile Phones

Town of Westlock strictly prohibits the use of handheld mobile devices while operating Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicles or while operating a personal vehicle on Town of Westlock business. This includes using the device to talk, text, type, dial or email at any point when driving, including at stop signs or lights.

Drivers are permitted to use hands-free communication devices (unless exempt under the Traffic Safety Act) such as cell phone with an earpiece, headset or Bluetooth using voice dialling or while being plugged into a vehicle's sound system. Voice activated devices are the safest form of hands-free communication. However, if it must be turned on manually, drivers are only permitted to push a button to activate or deactivate the device's function. Button activated devices must be securely mounted in an easily accessible place that does not require the driver to adjust their position to reach.

If an employee is driving and must make a manual phone call, they must first pull over or stop in a safe area where they are not impeding traffic or are unlawfully parked. Employees are discouraged from stopping on the shoulder of busy highways, unless in the event of an emergency.

The only exemption from this policy is in the event that the driver must call 9-1-1 due to an emergency and where the driver cannot stop to make said call.

4.2 Display Screens

Town of Westlock strictly prohibits employees from viewing display screens which are unrelated to driving (eg. laptop or DVD screens). Drivers are never permitted to have their laptops open and/or in use while driving. Laptops should be shut off and safely stored. In the event that a laptop must be used, the driver must stop in a safe location which does not impede traffic or is an unlawful parking area.

- Emergency vehicles are exempt.

4.3 Global Positioning System (GPS)

Global Positioning Systems may be used only if the device is properly secured to the dashboard or windshield and is programmed at the beginning of the trip before the driver leaves the parking area. The device should not be touched again while driving.

If the GPS must be used during the course of the trip, the driver must stop or pull over in a safe location that does not impede traffic and is lawful for parking.

4.4 Music

Music may be used when in the vehicle but should be touched as little as possible and turned off if they are found to be a distraction to the driver.

Employees are permitted to use their music devices, provided that they have been set up proper to travelling and can be operated through the vehicle's entertainment system controls. Employees are strictly prohibited from touching their device directly during the trip.

5.0 Fatigue

Town of Westlock expects all employees to arrive at work well rested and ready to work. Workers who are fatigued may be adversely affected as fatigue reduces a worker's ability to perform mental and physical tasks, including driving a vehicle safely. Someone suffering from fatigue is more likely to:

- Have slower reaction times;
- Be unable to respond to changing conditions; and
- Take risks.

Employees experiencing fatigue are not permitted to drive and must notify their manager to determine an appropriate course of action (eg. arrange to have someone else operate the vehicle or where possible, stop and rest until recuperated). Employees who refuse to operate a vehicle until they have rested and are no longer suffering from fatigue will not be reprimanded provided that the refusal is based on the belief that operating the vehicle is unsafe work.

Employees who are required to drive for long periods of time should utilize the buddy system whenever possible to share the driving responsibility amongst staff and to allow everyone a rest period.

6.0 Alcohol, Drugs and Driving

Employees are not permitted to drive if unfit to do so (eg. under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, narcotics, medications or other drugs that are likely to affect your alertness or driving performance). Driving under the influence is against the law and will not be tolerated by the Town of Westlock. Employees must contact their direct supervisor if they are unsure about their fitness to drive.

7.0 Inclement Weather

During periods of inclement weather (eg. snow, fog, rain, ice, hail, high winds) drivers should reduce their speed and allow for increased stopping distances. Employees should be aware of hazards such as: Decreased visibility and traction and should change their driving to suit these challenges.

In the event that the inclement weather makes driving unsafe, or the roads are impassable, Town of Westlock employees are directed to stop their vehicle in a safe location and wait until it is safe to proceed. If they have not yet left for their destination, drivers are directed to inform their immediate supervisor and/or manager as soon as possible to alert them to the situation and their inability to travel safely.

8.0 Driving at Night

Drivers should exercise increased levels of caution while driving at night and take care to avoid "over driving their headlights". Note: If the distance needed to come to a complete stop exceeds the distance to which you can clearly see, you are over driving your headlights.

As with inclement weather, drivers should reduce their speed and drive in a safe manner.

9.0 Vehicle Maintenance

Town of Westlock employees that are required to operate a Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicle are required to complete a pre-trip safety check to ensure that the vehicle is up to date with maintenance and is in safe operating condition. In the event that a maintenance issue exists, employees are directed to fill out a vehicle maintenance form.

Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicles will be subject to regular vehicle maintenance.

10.0 First Aid Kits/Road Safety Kits

All Town of Westlock owned and operated vehicles contain a first aid kit and road safety kit for use in case of emergencies.

Where an employee operates their own personal vehicle for Town of Westlock business purposes, they are highly encouraged to carry a first aid kit and road safety kit.

11.0 In the Event of an Accident

In the event of a motor vehicle accident, Town of Westlock employees operating a Company owned vehicle must:

- Move the vehicle to a safe spot, out of traffic, if possible;
- Assess the situation and call the appropriate authorities where necessary (Ambulance, Fire Department, Police);
- Obtain the appropriate contact information from the other parties involved in the accident, including their insurance information, names and phone numbers;
- Share their appropriate insurance information and contact information with the other parties involved in the accident;
- Contact their immediate supervisor and/or manager to inform them of the accident and provide as much pertinent information as possible; and
- Use the first aid-road safety kit, where required.

In the event of an accident the driver is specifically directed not to reference or assume any responsibility for the accident. This direction is provided to permit the individuals conducting the investigation to make their determination based on all the evidence and factors influencing the incident which may not be available to the driver.

12.0 Withdrawal of Company Vehicle Privileges

The privilege of driving a company vehicle may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons:

- Abuse or misuse of the vehicle
- Failure to comply with the Town of Westlock's policies and procedures:
- A driver's abstract which becomes unsatisfactory during the course of operating a company vehicle; and
- Conviction or a guilty plea to driving a company vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol.


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