STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR VEHICLE USE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Standard Procedure is to provide a uniform process governing Ohio Department of Transportation employees’ use of vehicles.

DEFINITIONS:

Construction Vehicle – Vehicles of all types owned by ODOT that are assigned to construction projects.

Driver License - Official Ohio driver license issued by the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Employee – Any person employed, full or part time, by the Ohio Department of Transportation.

EIMS – The Enterprise Information Management System is the database application that stores all ODOT’s vehicle and equipment information.

Long Term Vehicle Assignment– ODOT vehicle assignment to a specific ODOT employee in EMS (Equipment Management System) for longer than one week with proper forms filed with DAS. This rare usage requires prior written pre-approval from the Deputy Director and approval in writing from the Director. This is NOT a vehicle take home assignment.

Maintenance Call-Outs – The dispatch of workers with specialized equipment and knowledge that occurs during other than their normal working hours.

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

Operator – All ODOT employees operating an ODOT vehicle.

Personal Vehicle – Non ODOT vehicle used by an ODOT employee for official business approved in advance by their supervisor.

Place of Dispatch – The normal report location or authorized physical location where the vehicle is picked up for use by an ODOT employee.
Secured Location – Location approved in advance by the Deputy Director for overnight parking.

Short Term Assignment – The assignment of an ODOT vehicle to an ODOT employee for less than one week use.

Vehicle – All ODOT equipment requiring a driver’s license issued by the Ohio Department of Public Safety. This includes, but is not limited to, Pony vehicles, snow plow trucks, passenger vehicles, trucks, etc.

Vehicle Take Home Assignment – The assignment of an ODOT vehicle to an employee to be driven from place of official state business to an employee’s home with proper recommendation from the Deputy Director and pre-approval in writing by the Director.

The following items outline authorized use, unauthorized use, operator’s responsibilities, vehicle assignments, personal vehicles, and cell phone use:

I. AUTHORIZED USE OF ODOT VEHICLES:

1. Travel between the place where the ODOT vehicle is dispatched and the place where official state business is performed.

2. When on official travel status and not within reasonable walking distance, between the place of state business or the place of temporary lodging and places to obtain meals or medical assistance (including drugstore), exclusive of places of entertainment.

3. Transport of other officers, employees or guests of the state when they are on official state business. This includes students who shadow an engineer during scheduled event programs.

4. Transport of consultants, contractors, or commercial firm representatives when such transport is in the direct interest of the state.

5. Travel between the place of dispatch or the place of performance of state business to your personal residence when a vehicle take home assignment has been authorized in writing by the Director of ODOT.

6. Out-of-State travel shall be authorized in advance by the proper authority and granted upon completion and signatures of current State of Ohio and ODOT travel forms and procedures.
II. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF ODOT VEHICLES:

1. Any use for personal purposes, other than commuting as specified in Authorized Use.

2. The parking of an ODOT vehicle to the closest ODOT location to your home to reduce your daily commute in your personal vehicle is prohibited unless specifically required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement or an active MOU.

3. Travel or tasks which are beyond the vehicles rated capacity.

4. Transport of family, friends, associates or other persons who are not employees of the state or serving in the interest of the state.

5. Transport of alcoholic beverages.

6. Transport of any drugs not required to treat a medical condition.

7. Transport of hitchhikers.

8. Transport of items which have no relation to the performance of official state business. Reasonable exceptions are permitted, such as purses, briefcases, laptops and other customary and ordinary personal items associated with travel.

9. Transport of acids, explosives, weapons, ammunition or highly flammable material, except by specific authorization.

10. Transport of any item or equipment projecting from the side, front or rear of the vehicle in a way which constitutes an obstruction to safe driving, or a hazard to pedestrians or to other vehicles.

11. Attending any events which are not in the service of state business.

12. Extending the length of time the vehicle is in your possession beyond that which is required to complete the official purpose of the trip.

13. Operating a state vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

14. Operating a state vehicle with an expired, suspended, or otherwise invalid driver’s license, or without the proper type of valid license.
III. OPERATOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Operators must have a valid driver license and shall report any change in driver license status to their supervisor. The operator must obey all traffic laws.

2. Operators shall report any damage from accidents, abuse, vandalism or unknown sources.

3. Operators shall report any vehicle problems or maintenance issues to the proper authority.

4. Operators shall promptly report and pay all citations including parking citations.

5. Operators and all occupants shall always wear seat belts.

6. Operators and pool vehicle controllers shall schedule repairs and preventative maintenance.

7. Operators shall make their vehicle available to other operators for ODOT business when not in use.

8. Operators shall be responsible for keeping assigned vehicles free of trash, debris, etc.

9. Operators shall remove valuables and equipment from plain sight and secure in an area not visible from the outside when leaving vehicle unattended.

10. Operators, employees and others shall not smoke in any state vehicle.

11. Operators shall remove keys, roll up windows and lock vehicles, including cargo areas, when not in use.

12. Operators shall make every effort to locate a secure and well lit area for overnight parking.

13. Operator shall remain with the vehicle during the fueling process.

14. Operators shall use ODOT fueling facilities or a DAS fuel credit card at commercial gasoline stations.

15. Operators shall report to the supervisor or appropriate managers the parking location for the vehicle assigned to the project. If the parking location changes, the operator shall inform the appropriate manager about the change in parking location.
IV. VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT

1. For Long Term Vehicle assignments, the employee’s name will appear on the Long Term Vehicle Assignment List maintained by the Office of Equipment Management. By April 1st and October 1st each year, all Deputy Directors will be contacted to verify such assignments.

2. If vehicle take home assignment is approved by the Director, said approval must be forwarded to the Office of Equipment Management and the employee must comply with proper payroll and or Division of Finance instructions for the commute charge. This applies to all take home assignments, including Long Term and Short Term.

3. An ODOT vehicle is NOT to be used for commuting to and from your report-in location. Examples of prohibited uses:
   a. The parking of an ODOT vehicle to the closest ODOT location to your home to reduce your daily commute in your personal vehicle is prohibited.
   b. Signing out various pool vehicles to commute from your home and/or the closest outpost/garage then into your report-in location is prohibited. A repeated vehicle assignment on a week-by-week or day-by-day basis to circumvent the definition of take home vehicle assignment is considered “gaming” and is prohibited.

4. If vehicles for after hour call outs are approved by the Director, there will be a rotation of the assignment among maintenance supervisors or maintenance workers with specialized equipment (traffic signal electrician) so that only one vehicle per county is parked nearest their residence at a given time. The vehicle must reside in a secured area such as a construction project site or ODOT facility. Approval for after-hours call-out vehicles must receive prior written approval from the Director. Such approvals will be granted on a case-by-case basis, with the expectation that numerous call-outs typically warrant the creation of work shifts in lieu of either call out vehicles or the payment of standby time.

5. All construction vehicles will be parked at a secured location within the county or district closest to the project. All construction vehicles are to be assigned to the project, not to an individual, except for a short term assignment.

6. Employees while not on overnight stay will park their vehicle at their report-in location or maintenance facility nearest to their work assignment.
7. Short Term Vehicle Assignments to attend training or a short-term special project are exempt from the long term vehicle assignment requirements. These are monitored by your supervisor and based on operational need and for the need of efficiency and/or economy of the area. EXAMPLES:
   a. You are scheduled for training at Central Office and you are approved through your supervisor to take the vehicle for the evening and to park the vehicle overnight at a secure project or ODOT facility near your home due to the hours of the training class. This is an approved short term assignment.
   b. You are working on a special project assigned by your area that requires you to travel early or late to a location that is not your normal report-in location. With approval from your supervisor, you are approved to park the vehicle overnight at a secure project or ODOT facility near your home, since this is a short term assignment.

8. All revisions, additions, and removals of Long Term Assignments will be reported immediately to the Office of Equipment Management.

V. PERSONAL VEHICLE USE (IN LIEU OF STATE VEHICLE):

1. State vehicles shall be used in place of private vehicles whenever practical. Personal vehicles may be used only when a state vehicle is unavailable or is impractical, and when authorized by the Deputy Director or designee.

2. While on assignment away from their normal report-in location, employees shall be reimbursed in accordance with the applicable policies established by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

3. The annual reimbursement shall not exceed the amount as established by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

4. Employees are required to have their private vehicle insured under a liability policy that complies with Ohio Revised Code Section 4509.01.

5. Gasoline, vehicle service, damages and repairs to the employee’s private vehicle will be solely the responsibility of the employee.
VI. CELL PHONE USE:

The use of cell phones while driving a state vehicle is discouraged. Employees are required to observe any safety precautions issued by their cell phone provider, and to obey any ordinance regulating cell phone use while operating a moving vehicle. Employees are required to report any citations received in the same manner they are required to report other traffic citations received when operating a state vehicle.