

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1. PURPOSE

The Bedford Regional Water Authority (“Authority”) realizes that proper driving, operating, inspections, and maintenance of the Authority’s vehicles and/or equipment is crucial to ensuring the safe and dependable operation of these resources; vehicles and equipment play an essential role in meeting the Authority’s responsibility for providing services to the community. It is the objective of this policy to ensure that the Authority is able to provide appropriate vehicles, equipment, training, and supervision for employees that operate vehicles and/or equipment.

Section 2. AUTHORIZED USE OF AUTHORITY VEHICLES

- A. Travel between the place where the Authority vehicle is dispatched and the area where Authority business is performed.
 - 1. Employees may make stops before or after work hours at places for personal business if these stops are on the route to or from their home and these stops do not go against the Authority’s Drug and Alcohol policy.
- B. Travel within Bedford County where Authority business is performed.
- C. Authority vehicles are allowed to leave Bedford County under the following circumstances:
 - 1. Out-of-town or out-of-state travel to attend an approved meeting, training course, seminar, conference, or other approved Authority business.
 - 2. Employees assigned a vehicle that may be taken home as part of job requirements to maintain an “On Call Status” may take the vehicle outside of Bedford County provided that it is the primary residence of that employee.
 - 3. Travel within 10 miles outside of the Bedford County border.
 - 4. Authority business outside 10 miles of the Bedford County border as approved by Management.
- D. Other uses as approved by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

Section 3. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF AUTHORITY VEHICLES

- A. Employees are prohibited from using Authority vehicles for:
 - 1. Personal purposes other than within the guidelines listed above.
 - 2. Travel or tasks which are beyond the vehicle’s rated capability.
- B. Employees are prohibited from operating Authority vehicles and equipment:
 - 1. When under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol.
 - 2. When the operator’s driver’s license is suspended, disqualified, or not correctly licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - 3. In a manner that may result in an accident due to reckless or dangerous driving.
- C. Unless approved by the driver’s Manager, Authority vehicles may not be used for transporting:
 - 1. Non-employees or individuals not working directly with the Authority.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

2. Any cargo which has no relation to the performance of official Authority business which may cause damage to Authority vehicles and/or equipment and/or may increase the Authority's liability.
3. Acids, explosives, weapons, ammunition, alcohol, or highly flammable material.
4. Any item or equipment projecting from the side, front, or rear of the vehicle in a way that constitutes an obstruction to safe driving or a hazard to pedestrians or other vehicles.

Section 4. DRIVERS' AND OPERATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Employees must:

1. Have in their possession the appropriate classification of a valid Virginia driver's license for the vehicle(s) they will drive.
2. Possess and maintain an acceptable driving record as determined by review of their Motor Vehicle Record ("MVR").
3. Notify their Manager of any citations, infractions, suspensions, or revocations that will be or have been posted to their driving record; this notice to the Authority must take place the next working business day and prior to operating any Authority vehicle or equipment.
4. Notify their Manager of any citations they receive in an Authority vehicle immediately.
5. Possess a valid Virginia Commercial Drivers License ("CDL") as required by Virginia law when operating a vehicle over 26,001 pounds gross weight.
6. Inspect and maintain the vehicle and/or equipment in accordance with Authority policies.
7. Reserve resource vehicles by utilizing the calendar resource feature in Outlook.
8. Ensure the resource vehicle's fuel level is filled above half a tank when returning the vehicle to the office.
9. Comply with the Smoking Policy while operating a motor vehicle and/or equipment.
10. Pay any taxes required by the Internal Revenue Service for any authorized personal use. Finance will manage the tax implications with the affected personnel.
11. Operate Authority vehicles and equipment:
 - a. In a safe manner at all times and obey the traffic laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - b. Wear a seatbelt when the vehicle or equipment is equipped with one. Seatbelt use is mandatory for vehicle drivers and all occupants while operating an Authority vehicle or equipment no matter the distance traveled. If found in violation, it may be grounds for disciplinary action and the denial of any workers' compensation claims that may be made if an accident occurs.

B. Employees are prohibited from operating Authority vehicles and equipment:

1. Unless assigned or granted permission to do so by their Manager.
2. When known or suspected safety defect(s) exist; any defect(s) shall be reported immediately to the Maintenance Manager.

C. Cellular and Smart Phone use while operating vehicles and equipment:

1. Employees shall minimize the use of phones while driving and operating equipment.
 - a. Employees must use a handsfree device when talking on the phone and driving; there are to be no exceptions to this requirement. If an employee does not have a handsfree device, then a cellular phone should not be used when driving.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

- b. Drivers and operators need to recognize that cellular phone use may create a distraction from safe driving.
 - c. Whenever possible, drivers and operators should pull over or park/stop the vehicle or equipment when using a cellular phone.
 2. Employees shall not use anything other than hands-free voice commands to dial phone numbers, use contact lists, or otherwise initiate phone calls while the vehicle is moving; if hands-free voice commands are not available for use, employees must bring the vehicle to a complete stop to use the device.
 3. Texting, emailing, video conferencing, or using any application other than a voice call on a cellular phone or smart phone is strictly prohibited while driving a vehicle or operating equipment. These distractions are extremely dangerous, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
 4. While driving a vehicle or operating equipment, it is important for employees to focus their attention on safety on the road and/or use of the equipment they are operating; ensuring safety should always take precedence over the use of any handheld electronic device.

Section 5. MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Managers, with the support of Human Resources, are required to implement and enforce all of the provisions contained in this policy.
- B. Managers reserve the right to conduct "spot checks" or inspections of vehicles and/or equipment to determine potential problems.
- C. Managers may opt to take a ride-along to evaluate driving and offer the opportunity for correction.
- D. The Risk & Safety Manager will investigate all Authority vehicle and/or equipment accidents that involve Authority vehicles, equipment, and/or drivers. An incident summary will be completed and provided to the appropriate Manager to review with the employee.
- E. Managers, Human Resources, and the Risk & Safety Manager will evaluate employees driving and/or operating performances by monitoring the following:
 1. Accidents and/or moving violations.
 2. Citizen complaints.
 3. Vehicle and/or equipment maintenance.
 4. Overall attitude of the employee towards safe driving.
- F. Managers must verify that vehicles assigned to their departments are being properly maintained in accordance with this policy.

Section 6. VEHICLE CONFIGURATIONS

- A. The Authority Logo:

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

1. Vehicles that are used for on-call personnel will be equipped with non-removable logos.
 2. Vehicles that are used by personnel typically assigned with field duties will be equipped with non-removable logos.
 3. Resource vehicles, which are not assigned to particular personnel, may or may not have logos at the discretion of management.
- B. Warning Lights :
1. Vehicles that are used for on-call personnel or staff assigned field duties will be equipped with non-removable warning lights.
 2. Warning lights on vehicles and equipment should only be used as necessary or as working conditions require. Four-way flashers or warning lights are not to be used inappropriately, such as to gain right-of-way, break traffic laws, etc.
- C. Global Positioning System (GPS) Equipment: Any Authority vehicles may have GPS equipment installed on them at the discretion of management. Unplugging, disabling, or tampering with a vehicles GPS system is not allowed and may result in disciplinary action.

Section 7. MAINTENANCE

- A. Vehicles:
1. Drivers are responsible for the vehicles or equipment they operate. Vehicles and equipment should be visually inspected prior to operation to ensure they are in proper working condition. Any issues with tires, lights, wipers, or other vehicle equipment should be reported to the Maintenance Manager.
 2. The Maintenance Administrative Support Technician will track and schedule all routine maintenance and repairs of vehicles.
 3. Any mechanical or maintenance issues found through daily operation or routine inspections should be immediately brought to the attention of the Maintenance Manager or the Assistant Maintenance Manager.
 4. All repairs and services are to be conducted by the Bedford County Garage unless authorized by the Maintenance Manager.
 5. Any items purchased for vehicles must be pre-approved by the Maintenance Manager before purchasing.
 6. All invoices for maintenance or repairs should be delivered to the Maintenance Administrative Support Technician immediately after picking up the vehicle.
 7. All vehicles should be cleaned at least once monthly (inside and out). Vehicle cleaning should be noted in the asset management system.
 8. All fuel added to vehicles should be noted in the asset management system.
 9. Managers will visually inspect vehicles to assure their cleanliness.
 10. Engine fluid levels should be checked at least every time the vehicle is refilled with fuel.
- B. Equipment:
1. All equipment should be pressure washed periodically as assigned by the Maintenance Manager.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

2. Routine maintenance will be tracked and scheduled by the Maintenance Administrative Support Technician.
3. All equipment subject to freezing must be winterized or stored in a warm place prior to sub-freezing temperatures.

Section 8. REPORTING AN ACCIDENT

- A. If an accident occurs while operating an Authority vehicle, or while operating a personal vehicle on Authority business, the employee driver should follow the procedures outlined in Policy 21.01 - Accident Reporting and Investigation Program.

Section 9. MOTOR VEHICLE RECORDS (MVR's)

- A. Motor Vehicle Records (“MVR”) will be reviewed at the time of hire and then annually on all employees who operate or may operate Authority vehicles, or who may use their personal vehicle for Authority business. HR receives real-time updates from DMV when a change is recorded on a MVR. Reviews will be completed by Human Resources and be maintained in the employee’s personnel file.
- B. Employees with unacceptable driving record standards will have their driving privileges revoked or be placed in a driving probation status. An employee’s driving privilege will remain revoked until their driving record returns to an acceptable status.
 1. Revoked Driving Privileges
 - a. A driving record will be considered unacceptable and the employee’s driving privileges will be revoked if any of the following convictions or conditions occur:
 - i. DUI or DWI conviction within the past 3 years
 - ii. Hit and Run conviction within the past 3 years
 - iii. Eluding police conviction within the past 3 years
 - iv. Racing conviction within the past 3 years
 - v. Currently revoked or suspended license
 - vi. Driver’s license points balance drop to negative six (-6) or less (eg. negative seven - 7, negative eight -8, etc.).
 2. Probationary:
 - a. Probationary Status: A driving record with any of the following convictions or conditions will place the employee in a driving probationary status:
 - i. A driver’s license points balance between negative two (-2) and negative six (-6)
 - ii. Multiple moving violation conviction that occur in an Authority vehicle.
 - iii. Reckless driving or excessive speeding conviction in the past 2 years.
 - iv. Passing a stopped school bus conviction in the past 2 years.
 - v. The twelve (12) months following the reinstatement of a license after it has been suspended or revoked for any reason.
 - b. Employees placed in a probationary driving status will:
 - i. Lose the ability to take any Authority vehicle home
 - ii. Driving will be restricted to only include mandatory travel to perform Authority tasks. Travel to events/conferences or to run errands will not be allowed.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

- c. An employee will remain in the probationary status until their driving record returns to an acceptable status or other agreed on conditions are met.
- C. If an employee has their driving privilege revoked, they will not be able to use their personal vehicle for Authority business. If driving is a necessary part of an employee's job duties, revoking their driving privilege could result in other employment actions.
- D. Employees who operate Authority vehicles and/or equipment must comply with the Drug and Alcohol policy.
- E. Employees who have their driving privileges revoked or are placed in a probationary status will be routinely monitored for driving improvement by their Manager and Human Resources. Their status can be changed upon the completion of the requirements and the improvement of the MVR to meet the improved classification.
- F. The status of an employee's driving record will be a factor in the employee's performance review if driving is an essential aspect of their job duties.
- G. DUI/DWI: If an employee receives a DUI/DWI citation they are required to notify their Manager and Human Resources the first day back at work or prior to operating any Authority vehicle. If this occurs the employee will be placed in a non-driving role if available, until the citation's final disposition. A final determination on the employee's driving status will be made at that point.

Section 10. REVISIONS

- A. This policy was approved and adopted by the Authority's Executive Director on February 26, 2013 effective July 1, 2013.
- B. This policy was modified as follows:
 - 1. Approved September 1, 2023, effective October 1, 2023:
 - a. Grammatical changes were made throughout the policy.
 - b. Section 2.A.1 was added to provide clarity on stops.
 - c. Section 3.C was updated on the items that must be approved by a Manager.
 - d. Section 4.A.4 was updated about citation notification.
 - e. Section 4.A.11.b was updated about distance and disciplinary action.
 - f. Section 4.C.2 was updated to include hands-free commands.
 - g. Section 4.C.3 was updated to include video conferences.
 - h. Section 5.D & E was updated to include Human Resources.
 - i. Section 6.B was updated with more information about Warning Lights.
 - j. Section 6.C was updated to include disciplinary action about tampering.
 - k. Previous Section 7 "Inspection" was deleted.
 - l. Section 7.A.1 was inserted to address inspections.
 - m. Section 7.A.10 about Vehicle Maintenance Records was deleted.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT

- n. Section 8.A was updated about procedures for reporting an accident.
- o. Section 9 was rewritten about MVR's, driving records, and DUI/DWI.
- 2. Approved January 9, 2025, effective January 20, 2025:
 - a. Section 4.A.3-4 was updated with details about staff's responsibility for notifications.
 - b. Section 5.A.d & e was updated to include the Safety department.
 - c. Section 8.A was updated to reference Policy 21.01.
 - d. Section 9.A was updated to include MVR notifications from DMV.
 - e. Section 9.B.c.ii & iii was updated to clarify probationary status.