

Vehicle Fuel Conservation Policy

A. General

Orange County's "Environmental Responsibility in County Government" goal includes the objective: "Initiate policies and programs that conserve energy, reduce fuel/utility/resource consumption..." In support of this goal, the County has adopted this Vehicle Fuel Conservation Policy.

Costs for gasoline and diesel fuel for County vehicles and motorized equipment are significant. Beyond this, fuel consumption for vehicles and motorized equipment has significant environmental impacts. As a result, it is both necessary and beneficial for the County to adopt a policy of fuel conservation and efficiency.

Energy and water conservation for County buildings are addressed in a separate policy.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the County government's vehicle fuel consumption, wherever possible; improve fuel efficiency; and maximize the use of alternative fuels for that fuel that must be used to operate Orange County vehicles and motorized equipment, consistent with the need for safe, and reliable County vehicles and motorized equipment.

C. Policy Goals

1. Establish the policy foundation of responsibilities, planning, programs, standards, performance measures and the like to manage the County government's vehicle fuel use and conserve fuel.
2. Manage vehicle and motorized equipment fuel consumption to minimize use to the greatest extent possible while maintaining safe and reliable vehicles and motorized equipment.
3. Provide for the use of alternative fuel (which may include compressed natural gas, bio-diesel, hybrid gas/electric, or the like) vehicles and motorized equipment, unless service needs cannot be met with an alternative fuel vehicle or motorized equipment – as determined by the County Manager.
4. Purchase vehicles and motorized equipment that meet service delivery needs with the greatest fuel efficiency possible whether alternative or traditional fuel.
5. Achieve a reduction in average fuel consumption per mile annually for vehicles and per hour of operation for motorized equipment.

6. Support change to State agency policies that fosters monetary incentives to make fuel efficiency and alternative fuel efforts economically attractive and to streamline program justification requirements so that projects can be executed within a timely interval, and savings quickly realized.

D. Scope

This policy applies to all County owned and leased vehicles and motorized equipment and the operators of these vehicles and equipment.

E. Responsibilities

1. Energy Water and Fuel Conservation Management Team

The Energy, Water and Fuel Conservation Management Team (“Management Team”) provides direction, counsel and oversight as to implementation of the Vehicle Fuel Conservation Policy. As necessary, the Management Team addresses questions of policy interpretation and adherence.

2. Finance and Administrative Services Director

The Finance and Administrative Services Director manages the vehicle acquisition or replacement process as provided in this policy.

3. County Manager

The County Manager’s advance approval is required for purchase of any new or replacement vehicle or motorized equipment.

4. Asset Management Services Department

The Asset Management Services Department is responsible for:

- Performing preventive and corrective maintenance for County vehicles and motorized equipment to ensure maximum fuel efficiency is achieved.
- Preparing the annual vehicle replacement report as part of the annual budget process.

5. Department Heads

Department Heads are responsible for:

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- Communicating the County's fuel conservation goals and policies to staff, providing guidance and promoting adherence.
- The assignment of departmental vehicles to departmental staff.
- For vehicles not assigned to a single individual, designating one operator and one backup operator to monitor use and schedule preventive maintenance service as needed.
- Communicating and justifying any request for new and replacement vehicles and motorized equipment as part of the annual budget process.
- Monitoring employee conformance with requirements for vehicle and motorized equipment maintenance, including scheduling of preventive maintenance service.

6. Employees

Employees who operate County vehicles and motorized equipment are responsible for ensuring that:

- Tire and fluid inspections for vehicles are performed (by self, or by Motor Pool staff) according to published directions from the Asset Management Services Department.
- The assigned vehicle is scheduled and delivered to Asset Management Services for preventive maintenance service within time and/or mileage intervals identified by Asset Management Services.
- Corrective maintenance is scheduled with Asset Management Services as soon as possible when a problem with the vehicle is encountered or identified.
- Vehicles are operated according to all applicable laws and rules of the road. This increases fuel conservation and safety.
- Fuel for County vehicles and equipment is acquired through the system operated by the Asset Management Services Department, according to identified standard operating procedures. Information about fuel transactions is provided by operators of County vehicles according to Asset Management Services Department identified procedures.

F. Vehicle Operation

1. Vehicles are to be operated in keeping with manufacturers' recommendations and specifications, and applicable County policy.

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2. To maximize fuel efficiency, vehicles are to be serviced at intervals identified by the Asset Management Services Department.
3. To meet department specific service levels while achieving the highest fuel economy, departments, where applicable, use geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS) or other industry tools and standards to design and implement efficient vehicular routes/schedules and deployment strategies/schedules.

G. Fuel Conservation Action Plan

1. Asset Management Services, in consultation with the Energy, Water and Fuel Conservation Management Team and others involved, coordinates the development of an annual "Vehicle Fuel Conservation Action Plan." The annual action plan includes recommended charge back rates to departments for vehicle operation costs and recommendations for the annual "Vehicle Replacement Report."
2. The annual plan identifies specific actions to be implemented, proposed and estimated time lines and responsibilities for implementation.
3. The action plan is submitted to the Board of Commissioners as part of the annual budget process.
4. The action plan is reviewed and updated annually along with evaluation of the previous year's performance during the annual update and scorecard report. .

H. Charge Back Rates

As part of the annual budget process, vehicle cost charge back rates to departments are set each year. Among other things, these take account of fuel and repair costs and are designed to promote the use of alternatively fueled and fuel efficient vehicles.

I. Vehicle Acquisition

1. The Asset Management Services Department develops, communicates and maintains a written process for the systematic consideration of vehicle acquisition needs (whether additional or replacement vehicles) and the decision-making as to the type of vehicle to be purchased, including whether it is an alternative fuel vehicle (which may include compressed natural gas, bio-diesel, hybrid gas/electric, etc.). Among other things, this process provides for the following:
 - Determination as to whether the vehicle needs to be acquired or replaced.

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- Determination as to whether an alternative fuel vehicle will meet the service needs.
 - Whether an alternative fuel vehicle that will meet the needs is available on State contract; or if not available on State contract otherwise available; or whether a retrofit of a standard fuel vehicle is an option.
 - Analysis of the purchase and operating costs of the alternative vehicle versus standard fuel vehicle.
 - Report and recommendation to the County Manager on vehicle acquisition and replacement.
 - County Manager decision as to the specific vehicle to be acquired.
2. As part of the Item I process, Asset Management Services prepares an annual "Vehicle Replacement Report" which includes recommended priorities for vehicle replacement. This report considers the following factors in prioritizing vehicle replacements:
- Miles driven to date (odometer reading).
 - Mileage (miles per gallon) compared to baseline/industry standards for comparable vehicle.
 - Repair and maintenance cost per mile for most recent 12 months, compared to baseline/industry standards for comparable vehicles.
 - Vehicle use (front-line emergency response vehicle versus passenger transportation vehicle).
 - Overall mechanical assessment by Asset Management Services staff.
3. Vehicles identified for replacement are removed from service within one month of the replacement vehicle being placed in service, except with the written approval of the County Manager for the vehicle to continue in service.

J. Monitoring and Reporting

1. The Asset Management Services Department fuel management system provides records of all fuel transactions, whether at the County's fuel station or retail outlets. These data are used to create performance reports.
2. Information is used to benchmark performance:

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- From year-to-year for total miles driven and average miles per gallon.
- Compare to results for similar vehicles/vehicle use in other local governments.

In addition to actual vehicle fuel performance, the County reviews other benchmarks such as reducing reliance on fossil fuel vehicles.

K. Programs

To support the vehicle fuel conservation policy, the County implements a variety of programs including:

1. Employee Awareness

The County conducts communications programs to promote employee awareness of the need for fuel conservation. This includes activities such as distribution of the Vehicle Fuel Conservation Policy, reminders via pamphlets, e-mails, Orange Alive, coverage in new employee orientation, and opportunities at employee events to reinforce the conservation ethic.

2. Incentives

Incentive programs will be developed to improve compliance and acceptance by employees who operate County vehicles. These may include department versus department contests, financial incentives, preferred parking and the like.

3. Preventive Maintenance

Preventive Maintenance procedures are used to obtain optimal fuel-efficient operation of all equipment.

4. Repairs

Repairs/replacement of all vehicles and motorized equipment take into consideration the most cost-effective solution over the life of the repair/equipment. This includes future maintainability, improved operation, improvement in fuel efficiency, requirement for additional or reduced preventive maintenance, and the like.

Innovative Strategies

The County considers and pursues innovative strategies that may reduce the need for gasoline consumption such as video conferencing, "smart travel" with other departments and County car pooling, including educating employees about these.