

PART 2018 - GENERAL

Subpart G - U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Instructions

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PART 2018 - GENERAL

Subpart G - U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Instructions

§ 2018.301 General.

This Instruction states policies and procedures on the operation of Government-furnished vehicles (GFVs) and Government-owned vehicles (GOVs) by employees in order to properly carry out assigned official duties. This Instruction supplements the Federal Travel Regulations (FTRs) and the Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATRs) which are available in each Rural Development office. The Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), the Agriculture Property Management Regulations (AGPMR), and Departmental Regulations (DRs) 2600-1 and 5400-5 which are referenced in this Instruction are available in each Rural Development State Office.

§ 2018.302 Coverage.

(a) This Instruction applies to Rural Development employees who operate GFVs or GOVs as part of their duties and need the vehicle on a continuing assignment basis or on a trip-by-trip basis when it is best for the Government. Such employees are considered incidental operators.

(b) The use of GFVs or GOVs for official transportation is generally advantageous to the Government; however, some situations warrant use of employees' privately-owned vehicles (POVs). Guidance for determining the travel circumstances for utilization of POVs and authorized reimbursements is contained in RD Instruction 2036-A.

§ 2018.303 Requirements.

Rural Development employees operating GFVs or GOVs shall have a valid State drivers license in their possession issued by their state of residence. Costs associated with obtaining the drivers license are the employees' responsibility.

§ 2018.304 Responsibilities.

(a) Assignment and control. State Directors, the Director, Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD), St. Louis, and the Director, Support Services Division (SSD), National Office, can request vehicles from the nearest General Services Administration (GSA) motor pool.

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Notify the Director, SSD, if the motor pool cannot make a monthly assignment of vehicles. If the office urgently needs a vehicle, you may lease a vehicle commercially on a short-term basis. Submit requests for commercially leased vehicles in excess of 60 consecutive days to the Director, SSD, for submission to the Department for approval. Supervisors are responsible for seeing that all GFVs and GOVs under their custody have full use. State Directors and the Director, PSMD, shall provide SSD a list of vehicles assigned to their offices at the beginning of each fiscal year.

(1) Air conditioning may be requested from GSA in areas having 70 or more degree days during the 4 hottest months. Approval is needed from the Director, SSD, before installing any other special purpose equipment in GFVs or GOVs. Cellular phones (if used) should be portable and not permanently wired into the vehicle.

(2) Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees under their supervision are fully acquainted with the requirements governing the proper care, operation, maintenance, and protection of GFVs and GOVs.

(b) Authorized use. Employees shall use GFVs and GOVs for only official purposes. Official purposes do not include transportation of employees between their residences and places of employment unless authorized in accordance with DR 5400-5 and properly documented in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.

(1) Employees who willfully use or authorize the use of GFVs or GOVs for other than official purposes are subject to disciplinary action ranging from suspension without pay for not less than 1 month to removal from office.

(2) Official purposes include:

(i) Between official stations and temporary duty locations;

(ii) Within the confines of employees' official duty stations;

(iii) From common carrier terminals at temporary duty stations to place(s) of business;

(iv) From common carrier terminals at temporary duty stations to places of lodging;

§ 2018.304(b)(2) (Con.)

(v) From places of lodging to places of business at temporary duty stations where reasonable public transportation is not available or where the use of GFVs or GOVs for such purposes would be advantageous to the Government;

(vi) To obtain goods and services necessary for the health and well-being of employees while in an overnight travel status, such as restaurants, barbershops, beauty shops, religious services, drugstores, and laundries, when such services are not available without transportation and no public transportation is reasonably available.

(vii) While traveling outside the official duty stations, but not in an overnight travel status, only for the purposes cited in paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (vi) of this section and to obtain lunch when such services are not available without transportation and no public transportation is reasonably available.

(viii) To obtain emergency medical services.

(ix) Employees shall not transport members of family, friends, or other unrelated persons in GFVs or GOVs.

(c) Using GFVs or GOVs for home-to-work transportation. Rural Development employees shall not use GFVs or GOVs for home-to-work transportation unless:

(1) His or her job series is listed in Appendix A of DR 5400-5, and

(2) Only when the employees are actually engaged in field work which requires their presence at various locations that are a distance from the official duty stations' commuting areas or at remote locations accessible only by Government-provided transportation IF the efficiency and economy of the Government is increased; and

(3) Approved Forms AD-728, "Request and Authorization for Home to Work Transportation," are on file in the employees' State Office(s).

(i) Requesting employees shall submit Form AD-728 to the Rural Development State Office by the first day of the beginning of each quarter of the fiscal year for consideration.

NOTE: Home-to-work transportation is not an entitlement nor a right simply because the employees' job series are included in Appendix A of DR 5400-5.

(ii) State Directors will review and approve the AD-728s for employees who meet the criteria in paragraphs (c)(1) and (2) of this section. Forward all other AD-728s to SSD for action.

(iii) Submit, within 5 days of approval, one copy of all Forms AD-728 to SSD.

(iv) State Offices will maintain appropriate logs and vehicle usage records in accordance with DRs 5400-5 and 2600-1.

(d) Liabilities and responsibilities.

(1) Employees are liable for fringe-benefit taxes if they use GFVs or GOVs for commuting between home and work more than 1 day a month;

(2) Responsible for maintaining vehicle usage records; and

(3) Responsible for providing usage records and documentation for reporting automobile commuting use to their supervisor(s) for inclusion in time and attendance reports as required by DR 2600-1.

(e) Smoking policy. Smoking is prohibited in all GFVs and GOVs. This prohibition applies to all tobacco products. If violated, the office to which the vehicle was assigned will be charged by GSA for the cost of cleaning the affected vehicle.

§ 2018.305 Criteria for verification of need and use.

Employees who need a vehicle on a continuing assignment basis and average more than 1,000 miles per month or on a trip-by-trip basis when it is in the best interest of the Government will use GFVs and GOVs.

(a) Incidental operators are responsible for:

§ 2018.305(a) (Con.)

- (1) Completing and submitting Form RD 2018-1, "Vehicle Commitment and Authorization Form," to the appropriate official by July 15 each year (including employees who use their POVs). Field office employees will submit forms to the Administrative Program, Director.
 - (2) Notifying their supervisor immediately if their State drivers license is revoked, suspended, or not renewed.
- (b) The appropriate approving officials are responsible for:
- (1) Reviewing for accuracy their employees' Forms RD 2018-1.
 - (2) Retaining appropriate records, Forms RD 2018-1, other related materials, and files of motor vehicle operators under their supervision for 3 fiscal years.
 - (3) Reviewing mileage yearly to determine if use of a GFV, GOV, or POV is most advantageous to the Government.

§ 2018.306 Operating vehicles.

All State Offices, the Director, PSMD, and the Director, SSD, are responsible for issuing guidance to their respective employees to assure all incidental operators use care and are economic in the operation of GFVs or GOVs. It is mandatory that operators and all passengers in GFVs or GOVs use safety belts. Operators must adhere to all State and local laws and regulations and obey all speed limits.

- (a) Using self-service pumps. The use of self-service fuel pumps is mandatory for GFV or GOV operators who purchase fuel at commercial service stations where self-service pumps are available. The only exceptions to this policy are:
- (1) For GFVs, the nonavailability of self-service pumps at a service station under defense fuel supply center contract for fuel.
 - (2) For both GFVs and GOVs, the physical limitations of the vehicle operator.
 - (3) For GFVs, the refusal by a service station to honor the Fleet Credit Card. (Revised 12-01-06, PN 404.)

(b) Services and inspections. Arrange all maintenance repairs (except for on-the-road emergencies) and inspections of GFVs with GSA. Conduct all maintenance and repairs of GOVs through local service stations or dealerships. Have inspections of GOVs, if required by State law, conducted at official State inspection stations.

(c) Recordkeeping. All offices must keep adequate records of vehicles. At a minimum, adequate records for GFVs include: physical location, body type, tag number, mileage, and monthly rental costs of each vehicle. At a minimum, adequate records for GOVs are: the physical location; purchase price; the mileage; and fuel, oil, and maintenance costs. The fuel usage will be separated to include gasoline usage and alternative fuel usage. (Revised 08-22-07, PN 412.)

(d) Accidents or damage. Operators shall immediately report accidents or damage to GFVs or GOVs to their supervisors. If employees cause vehicle damage through misconduct, the Agency is financially responsible; however, employees may be held financially accountable. Misconduct includes vehicle operation under the influence of alcohol or narcotics and willful abuse or misuse of a vehicle. State, Finance, and National Offices are responsible for disciplining their employees who cause damage to GFVs or GOVs through misconduct.

(1) Operators' responsibilities. After an accident, operators must give aid to any injured person and give warning to other motorists of anything resulting from the accident that can have an effect on public safety. However, operators will not:

(i) Give encouragement to any person in an accident to make a claim against the Government or help in a claim that is made. (Refer to RD Instructions 2042-A and B.)

(ii) Give notice that any settlement will be made for damages or personal injuries.

(iii) Discuss any agreement of a claim for damages or personal injuries from an accident.

(iv) Write about a claim with a person other than a Government administrative official, unless specifically authorized by the Director, SSD.

§ 2018.306(d) (Con.)

(2) Reporting accidents or damage. GFVs have Operator's Packets which contain an accident reporting kit with instructions. For GFVs and GOVs, reports on accidents or damages must be made to State, County, or Municipal authorities as necessary by law and 41 CFR 101-38.601 and 101-39.4. Make investigations and reports on accidents in accordance with RD Instructions 2042-B and 2069-A.

(3) Responsibility for damage. GSA will charge all GFV repair costs to Rural Development including towing, making repairs, or replacement if a total loss. GSA will prepare and provide the Agency with an accident report and provide Form GSA 1594 (FL), "Interagency Motor Pool System." The office responsible for the GFV must complete the billing questions on the form and return to GSA. Based on information on Form GSA 1594, GSA will provide a bill to the Agency. After review, it should be forwarded to the National Finance Center for payment. The office having custody of the vehicle will be charged for all costs.

(4) Persons other than the operators of GFVs or GOVs at fault. Operators will provide a report (including accident reports, police reports, and data on the accident and its investigation) to their immediate supervisors for submission to GSA's Regional Counsel where the vehicle was issued. The Regional Counsel will take action for the recovery of the Government claim and will give the Agency copies of legal papers and reports on claim progress and final settlement.

(5) Theft of GFVs or GOVs. Operators shall notify their immediate supervisor, the local or State police, the nearest Federal Bureau of Investigation, the appropriate GSA motor pool chief, and the Director, SSD, of any theft of GFVs or GOVs, vehicle parts, or their recovery.

(e) Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs). Operators in states that have AFVs in their fleet are strongly encouraged to use alternative fuel stations if they are convenient. State by state locations for alternative fuel stations can be found on the Internet at <http://www.e85fuel.com> (click on "Find e85 Near You" button). (Revised 12-01-06, PN 404.)

(f) Text Messaging While Driving. Per the Executive Order entitled, "Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving," dated October 1, 2009, there is a Government-wide prohibition on the use of text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment. This is extended to cover Federal contractors as well. (Added 12-17-09, PN 435.)

§ 2018.307 Storage of Government motor vehicles.

Storage of GFVs and GOVs must be in safe facilities. Offices shall make every effort to obtain free storage at or reasonably near the office.

(a) Obtain commercial rental storage in accordance with procurement regulations if free storage space is not available.

(b) Vehicles shall not be stored at or near employees' private homes unless the employees' residences are their official duty stations of record.

(c) State Offices shall submit written requests to SSD for consideration on exceptions to either paragraph (a) or (b) of this section.

§§ 2018.308 - 2018.350 [Reserved]

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