WARREN COUNTY MOTOR VEHICLE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The following regulations, effective October 1, 1992, are issued for the guidance of officials and employees of the departments, agencies and institutions of the County of Warren, New Jersey. All questions arising in connection with these regulations shall be addressed to the County Administrator. These regulations supersede any previous regulations and/or policies, both written and oral. The Warren County Administrator expects all officials, department heads, constitutional officers, and County personnel to provide such cooperation as is necessary to abide by the Warren County Motor Vehicle Policy.

PURPOSE

To clearly communicate the Policy of the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders on the assignment and utilization of vehicles owned, leased or contacted to Warren County.

SCOPE

This vehicle Policy is applicable to all departments, agencies, institutions, officials, constitutional officers, and employees of Warren County; it also affects all Vehicles titled, leased or contracted to the County of Warren.

CRITERIA FOR USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES

County vehicles are to be used only for purposes related to the necessary and proper conduct of official County business. Personal use of County vehicles is prohibited. Passengers, aside from County employees or individuals directly associated with official County business, are prohibited. It shall be the responsibility of all department, agency and institution heads to ensure that County vehicles operated by their employees or assigned to their department on a 24-hour basis are used for County business purposes only. Failure to abide by this Policy will be cause for disciplinary action or other appropriate administrative sanctions for the employee and/or department head.

The driver of a County vehicle on official County business must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license. The driver of said vehicle shall be fully responsible for his/her actions pursuant to highway laws and must, at all times, obey traffic laws and cooperate with law enforcement officials in all jurisdictions. Warren County assumes no responsibility for violations of traffic regulations and laws. County employees shall not be reimbursed for monies paid due to parking or moving violations incurred in any jurisdiction. County employees who are guilty of moving violations; observed in violation of traffic regulations and laws; or operating vehicles in a reckless or unsafe manner shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Drivers of County-owned vehicles are personally responsible for vehicles assigned to or operated by them. The County prohibits smoking in all County vehicles, which includes drivers and passengers in these vehicles.

CRITERIA FOR USE OF THE MOTOR POOL

Warren County operates a central motor pool located in the Belvidere garage. Motor pool vehicles are a significant resource and their use by employees for official County business should be maximized by department heads as an effective means to reduce the overall fleet of County vehicles. Department heads may authorize the use of a vehicle from the central motor pool on a day-to-day basis, as needed for County business.

A Motor Pool Authorization form (*see Appendix B*) must be signed by the department head and submitted to the motor pool prior to the issuance of a vehicle. The daily check-out and return time, as well as the beginning and ending mileage, must be recorded on the form. Motor pool vehicles shall be used only for authorized, official County business by officials/employees possessing a valid motor vehicle operator's license and having a proof of insurance form on file (*see Appendix B*).

CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES TO DEPARTMENTS

The Board of Chosen Freeholders shall adopt a Vehicle Allocation Plan which will identify the number of vehicles to be assigned to each department. The number of vehicles so assigned cannot be increased without the authorization of the Board Of Chosen Freeholders as provided for in the Vehicle Allocation Plan. The Vehicle Allocation Plan will be developed by the County Administrator, reviewed and revised on an annual basis, and submitted to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for adoption by May 1 of each year. The number and type of vehicles, including vehicle identification number, assigned to a department/agency/institution will be made on the basis of the following considerations:

1. The nature of the service provided by the department
2. The frequency of field assignments, including but not limited to:
    a. inspections
    b. meetings
    c. investigations and security purposes
    d. serving of warrants
    e. emergency response
    f. inmate transport
3. The vehicle is essential to the performance of required work.

The department head is responsible for assigning the day-to-day use of vehicles assigned to a department. Such vehicles are not to be used on a 24-hour basis unless the employee is authorized in accordance with this Policy. The department head must first seek authority from the County Administrator to assign a vehicle to an employee overnight. The department head must also insure that all vehicles are returned at the end of the working day unless official County business necessitates evening or overnight use. The department head shall be responsible for the maintenance, safe operation and security of any vehicle assigned on a 24-hour basis to that department. The department head shall also be responsible for recording an employee's use of a County vehicle in a manner consistent with Internal Revenue Service requirements.

CRITERIA FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES TO INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES ON A 24-HOUR BASIS

Vehicles may be assigned to individual employees on a 24-hour basis only through the approval of the Vehicle Allocation Plan, which is recommended by the County Administrator and approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Such assignment shall only be authorized when it is justified and absolutely necessary because of the nature of the Individual employee's responsibilities. Employees eligible for consideration for 24-hour vehicle assignments include certain department/agency/institution heads; certain employees covered by collective bargaining agreements and employees involved in investigations; security and law enforcement; and employees who are on 24-hour call.

Vehicles so assigned are permitted to be used by the individual for traveling to and from work. In such instances, the individual employee is encouraged, if practical, to find other County employees to commute to work with each day. Any employee authorized to utilize a County vehicle on a 24-hour basis must adhere to the criteria for use of a County vehicle. Any violation of said criteria shall be justification for the termination of 24-hour use, disciplinary action and/or appropriate administrative sanction against the employee and/or the department head.

The use of a 24-hour assigned vehicle can be terminated at any time and without justification by the department head, County Administrator or the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Any change in such assignment must be reported to the County Administrator. All employees assigned a vehicle on a 24-hour basis must provide the required proof of insurance and a valid motor vehicle operator's license and must provide the documentation required by the payroll department for compliance with Internal Revenue Service requirements.

As a result of the passage of the 1984 Federal Tax Act, the use of a County vehicle for commuting to and from work must be treated as income and taxed as such to the employee. The personal-use value of a County vehicle and gasoline and oil provided by the County is taxable income. When the Board of Chosen Freeholders authorizes the use of a County vehicle for commuting by adoption of the Vehicle Allocation Plan, the employee will be assessed a valuation of $3.00 for each day of commuting. The total valuation is considered taxable income and thus subject to all applicable taxes. The total annual calculation for commuting use will be included as wages on the employee's W-2 Form at the end of each year.

When the vehicle used to commute is one of the following, the IRS has ruled commuting use to be a non-taxable event:

1. A clearly marked police vehicle
2. Certain unmarked police vehicles if used for officially authorized uses by law enforcement officers.

In order to qualify for either of the above exceptions, the department/agency/institution head must certify to the Board of Chosen Freeholders that the employee is required to take the vehicle home and that all personal use is prohibited. For unmarked law enforcement vehicles, the authorized uses would include undercover work, reporting directly from home to a surveillance site, and response to emergency situations. The exception must be approved by the County Administrator and the Board of Chosen Freeholders by means of adoption of the Vehicle Allocation Plan. The request for exemption form (see Appendix B) is to be utilized only in the event an employee utilizes a vehicle as defined by Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations.

CRITERIA FOR USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

The use of a privately owned vehicle for the discharge of official County business is permitted only when a County vehicle is not available from the central motor pool and the travel is authorized, prior to the actual use of the vehicle, by the department head. Each employee who uses a privately owned vehicle in the performance of official County business must be registered with the office of the County Administrator and the motor pool and demonstrate compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and insurance requirements as established by Warren County.

An employee shall be entitled to a mileage reimbursement for the use of a privately owned vehicle only if such reimbursement has been authorized by the department head and the departmental budget must have available sufficient travel funds to cover the cost of reimbursement. No official or employee will be reimbursed for mileage considered commuting mileage. Mileage between the employee's home and his/her routine place of business is considered commuting mileage. Reimbursement shall be in the amount approved by the employees' bargaining unit. Where no bargaining unit exists, the employee personnel policies manual shall be consulted for the mileage reimbursement rate. There will be no reimbursement for gasoline purchases. When two or more employees are traveling on County business to the same location and returning to the same general point of departure, only one vehicle is eligible for reimbursement by the County.

All travel shall be by the most direct, economical and usually traveled route. In case a person travels by an indirect route for his/her personal convenience, the extra expense shall be borne by him/her and reimbursement for expenses shall be made only on such charges as were actually incurred by the most direct, economical and usually traveled route.

The driver of a private vehicle on official County business must possess a valid motor vehicle operator license. The driver of said vehicle shall be fully responsible for his/her actions pursuant to highway laws. Drivers must, at all times, obey all-traffic laws and cooperate with law enforcement officials in all jurisdictions. Warren County assumes no responsibility for violations of traffic regulations and laws. County employees shall not be reimbursed for monies paid due to parking or moving violations incurred in any jurisdiction County employees who are guilty of moving violations; observed in violation of traffic regulations and laws; or operating vehicles in a reckless or unsafe manner shall be subject to disciplinary action.

The driver of a private vehicle on official County business must supply a certificate of insurance which indicates the insured possesses insurance with the following minimum amounts: $15,000 on account of injury to or death of one person in any one accident; $30,000 on account of injury to or death of more than one person in any one accident: and $5,000 for damage to property in any one accident (NJSA 39:6A-3). A copy of the certificate will be maintained on file in each department, the motor pool and in the office of the County Administrator. Drivers are required to submit a copy of the Proof of Insurance and Motor Vehicle Operator's License form *(see Appendix B)* to the department head and the County Administrator. The loss or revocation of a valid motor vehicle operator's license or the loss of insurance must be reported immediately to the department head and the County Administrator.

VEHICLE ALLOCATION PLAN

There is hereby established a Vehicle Allocation Plan. The purpose of this Vehicle Allocation Plan is to set forth the number of vehicles that will comprise the County's vehicle fleet. The Vehicle Allocation Plan shall apply to all automobiles, vans, utility vehicles, pickup trucks and any similar vehicles which are used in the same manner as passenger vehicles. Such vehicles may be assigned to the central motor pool or to a department, agency or institution. It is the policy of the Board of Chosen Freeholders to encourage the use of central motor pool vehicles by County employees to reduce the overall number of County vehicles.

The Vehicle Allocation Plan adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders is incorporated by reference in this document. It specifies the number of vehicles assigned to the central motor pool and to all departments for which the County Administrator is directly responsible.

Each year the County Administrator will solicit from department, agency or institution heads requests for changes in the Vehicle Allocation Plan. The County Administrator will review all requests from department heads and individuals for special consideration due to hardships, special circumstances and other matters which relate to the assignment and use of vehicles covered under this Policy. The County Administrator will then prepare the Vehicle Allocation Plan and present it to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for adoption prior to May 1 of each year.

Any increase in the number of vehicles assigned to a department by the Vehicle Allocation Plan must be requested in writing by the department head to the County Administrator and must be authorized by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Upon approval by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Vehicle Allocation Plan will be revised to reflect the increase. The Board of Chosen Freeholders may at any time and without justification reduce the number of vehicles allocated under this plan.

It is the responsibility of the department head to assign the use of vehicles allocated to their department by the Vehicle Allocation Plan. It shall be the responsibility of the County Administrator to maintain a current and accurate Vehicle Allocation Plan and administrative procedures consistent with these policies. Department heads must notify the County Administrator of any changes in the assignment of vehicles within their department. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and/or administrative sanction.

The County Administrator will ensure that the policies, departmental vehicle allocations and related administrative requirements are properly administered and that the vehicles assigned are sufficient to permit the various departments to carry out their duties and responsibilities. The County Administrator is authorized to establish procedural requirements as necessary to implement the -Vehicle Allocation Plan. The Belvidere garage shall provide the necessary maintenance, safety, records, and licensing of all County vehicles. On a monthly basis a listing of all new vehicles, vehicles removed from the County fleet and any other changes in use assignment will be reported to the County Administrator.

BELVIDERE GARAGE

The responsibilities of the motor pool are as follows:

1. Preventive Maintenance: The motor pool is responsible for the establishment and administration of an effective preventive maintenance program for all County vehicles. Vehicles are to be brought into the garage for preventive maintenance upon notification of the department by the motor pool. A loaner vehicle will be provided by the motor pool whenever possible with one week's notice.

2. Routine & Emergency Repair: All repairs to County vehicles will be performed by motor pool staff at the Belvidere garage. If a vehicle becomes inoperable on the road, the

Belvidere garage will be called. The vehicle will either be repaired at the location of the disabled vehicle or the garage will tow the vehicle to Belvidere. Employees who are assigned the use of a vehicle to Belvidere. Employees who are assigned the use of a vehicle shall operate and care for the vehicle in a responsible fashion. Problems with the performance of a vehicle, accidents, or other issues relating to the vehicle shall be reported immediately to the department head who shall report immediately to the motor pool.

3. <u>New Car Purchase:</u> The motor pool will prepare specifications for the purchasing department for all vehicles authorized in the current fiscal year operating budget. The motor pool will inspect all new vehicles upon receipt to ensure vendor compliance with the specifications.

4. <u>New Car Preparation:</u> The new vehicles will be prepared for use on the road. The County seal, a car number and other lettering as required wi l l be applied. A copy of the vehicle Policy, an insurance identification card and the vehicle' s registration card will be placed in the glove compartment of each vehicle. When the car is returned to the motor pool for maintenance, the glove compartment will be checked and any missing items replaced.

5. <u>Annual Evaluations:</u> Each August, prior to preparation of the County's operating budget, the motor pool will evaluate all vehicles as to their mechanical condition, body condition, mileage and annual cost of repair. The motor pool is encouraged to offer recommendations to improve County policies and regulations concerning the use, maintenance and replacement of the County vehicle fleet.

6. <u>Reporting of Accidents:</u> Each department is responsible to report all accidents to the office of the County Administrator and to the motor pool immediately. A copy of the accident report must be submitted to both departments within 24 hours. The vehicle must be returned to the motor vehicle pool within 24 hours for inspection. The motor vehicle pool will have sole responsibility for determining whether or when the vehicle will be returned to duty.

7 <u>Record Keeping:</u> Copies of valid motor vehicle operator's licenses for all officials/ employees who drive on official County business will be maintained and updated annually with a complete set of copies provided to the County Administrator by September 1 of each year. Proof of Insurance forms and supporting documentation shall also be maintained and updated, with copies of the files sent to the County Administrator by September 1 of each year.

Each department, agency and institution using County vehicles will be charged $.14 per mile regardless of the place of assignment (individual, department or motor pool). The motor pool will submit to the treasurer, on a monthly basis, the mileage and extended cost for each department, agency or institution. The treasurer will then charge the appropriate account. The motor pool charge will be reviewed annually by the roads division to determine the appropriate level of charge. Recommendations for a charge revision shall be made to the County Administrator by September of each year.

Vehicles purchased with grant funds and used by an agency not directly associated with County government will be maintained by the granted agency. The maintenance programs must correspond and be at least equal to the quality and level of maintenance programs instituted in the motor pool. The grant agency will guarantee the proper insurance as required by the County and will be responsible for all damages due to accidents including the deductible. Vehicles which are leased to a grant agency will be charged at $.14 per mile and shall follow the same criteria as outlined for regular County vehicles.

DISPOSAL OF COUNTY VEHICLES

Vehicles will be removed from the County fleet by a determination made by the County Administrator based on reports provided by the Belvidere garage. The administrator shall give consideration to removing those vehicles which are oldest, have highest mileage or high operating costs, and the general condition of the vehicle. When a new vehicle is purchased and assigned to a department, the department head must return a vehicle to the motor pool prior to picking up the new vehicle. Any vehicles removed from the County fleet shall be disposed of at public auction or sale or in any other manner provided in accordance with the provisions established by the department of purchasing. Such auction(s) or sale(s) shall be held a minimum of once a year.

AFFIRMATIVE DUTY TO REPORT EVENTS

An employee is required to report any and all motor vehicle accidents, damage, equipment malfunction, tickets, summonses, convictions and violations involving the employee which are incurred while operating a County vehicle and/or while on County business to his/her department head and the County Personnel Director. Any employee whose job responsibilities include the operation of a motor vehicle must report any license suspension or revocation to his/her department head and the County Personnel Director. All supervisors and department heads aware of such events involving their subordinates must report these events to the County Personnel Director. Failure to fully report an event by the next business day may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

EFFECTIVE DATE

All vehicles owned, leased or contracted by the County of Warren and all newly acquired vehicles, regardless of assignment, are subject to the policies contained herein, effective October 1, 1992.