



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

August 7, 2012

IOWA INSTRUCTION 120-395 – PROPER USE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

IA120.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this instruction is to provide all Iowa NRCS employees with guidance on the proper use of government vehicles.

IA120.1 SCOPE

These instructions will ensure that all USDA Government-Owned Vehicles (GOV) will be used only for official business as defined in the Federal Management Regulation, Subchapter B Personal Property, Part 102.34 Motor Vehicle Management, and Subpart D Official Use of Government Motor Vehicles.

IA120.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/> under the Iowa NRCS eDirectives System section.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Hubbert", written over a white background.

Jon Hubbert
Acting State Conservationist

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(IA Instruction 120-395 First Edition – August 2012)

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

IOWA INSTRUCTION 120-395 – PROPER USE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this instruction is to provide all Iowa NRCS employees with guidance on the proper use of government vehicles.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

These instructions will ensure that all USDA Government-Owned Vehicles (GOV) will be used only for official business as defined in the Federal Management Regulation, Subchapter B Personal Property, Part 102.34 Motor Vehicle Management, and Subpart D Official Use of Government Motor Vehicles. Government vehicles are provided to NRCS employees to assist in carrying out official duties as government employees. *Official duties or purposes include those functions that further the mission of NRCS.*

Current NRCS policy states that spouses or family members shall not ride in a government vehicle. Exceptions would include a family member who is acting in an official Earth Team Volunteer capacity. Non-federal individuals should not be transported in a GOV unless the trip is for official purposes (see the definition of official duties and purposes above). The following situations would constitute official purposes:

1. Transporting producers around their agricultural operations while conducting official business.
2. Partner or contract employees (Division of Soil Conservation, Conservation District, Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants Forever, etc.employees) driving and riding in a GOV while performing official duties.
3. District Commissioners and Assistant District Commissioners riding in a GOV while performing official duties.

GOVs must not be used by the districts and Pheasants Forever for any of their revenue generating activities, such as tree sales or equipment rentals.

GOVs may be used to pull district trailers or haul district equipment if the trip is for official purposes.

Personal items (such as recreational equipment, fishing tackle, firearms, etc.) not related to carrying out the employee's official duties should not be transported in a government vehicle. Employees must not use government vehicles to conduct personal business or to run personal errands.

Government vehicles are not to be used for transporting employees between their residence and their official duty station, unless the employee has been preauthorized in accordance with Department Regulation 5400-5. The Department Regulation covers situations where the employee's work requires the employee's

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presence at various locations. Requests for home to work authorization must be completed utilizing Form AD-728. The Form AD-728 must be approved by an Iowa Leadership Team Member. It will be used for a specific time period not to exceed 15 days (31 U.S.C. 1344).

Government vehicles are to be parked overnight at the employee's official duty station, unless the employee is in official travel status, or has received specific approval for temporary storage or basing of the vehicle from the appropriate Leadership Team Member on an AD-728. Parking at locations other than the official duty station should be rare and must demonstrate a true benefit to the agency.

While in official travel status, an employee may use a government vehicle for official purposes, which include transportation:

1. Between places of official business.
2. Between places of official business and temporary lodging when public transportation is unavailable or its use is impractical, or
3. Between places of official business or temporary lodging and restaurants, drugstores, barber shops, places of worship, cleaning establishments, and similar places necessary for sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee to foster the continued efficient performance of government business.

Employees shall exercise discretion to avoid any situation which may convey an impression to the public that the government vehicle is being used for anything other than official purposes.

If an employee is involved in an accident while using a GOV, the government would assume liability for the accident, as long as such travel was for official purposes and the employee was performing duties responsibly within the scope of his or her employment. The government is self-insured. When an employee is traveling on official business and performing duties within the scope of his or her employment, liability would not fall on the employee, but upon the government. Any claim arising from this situation would be handled under Federal Tort Claims Act procedures, using the SF95 form.

Privately-Owned Vehicles (POV)

Under federal travel regulations, an employee may use a personal vehicle at the government advantage rate for official travel if authorized by his or her agency. Use of a personal vehicle for official duties must be pre-approved by the supervisor. The most common reason for personal vehicle use is when a government owned vehicle is unavailable for use on official travel.

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If an employee is involved in an accident while using his or her POV when on official business performing duties within the scope of his or her employment, the government may be responsible for any tort liability (but not damage to the employee's personal vehicle since the mileage reimbursement by the government for use of POV includes costs for the employee's insurance to cover such occurrences). If an accident occurs during personal travel after work hours or on the weekend, the employee—not the government—would be responsible for any tort liability.



Approved By:

Date: 8/7/12

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