

**Title 360 – General Manual**

**Part 420 - Safety and Health Management Program  
Subpart O - Safety Requirements for Incidental Motor Vehicle Operators**

420.150 General

(a) This subpart sets forth Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy relative to the approval required and control necessary to ensure that incidental motor-vehicle operators are properly licensed and responsible.

(b) All NRCS employees and all employees working under a cooperative arrangement with NRCS who are required to operate a government-owned or government-leased motor vehicle to carry out the duties of their position are covered by the requirements of this subpart.

*WA420.150 General*

*(b) Non-federal employees and volunteers working with NRCS are also covered by the requirements of this subpart and must comply with all provisions.*

420.151 Other Pertinent Regulations

Policy contained in this subpart and any supplements thereto must comply with the provisions contained in Subchapter 1, Chapter 930, of the Federal Personnel Manual (FPM), and Subpart 104-38.50 of Agriculture Property Management Regulations.

420.152 Responsibilities

(a) State conservationists, Caribbean Area Director, Pacific Basin Area Director, and national technical center directors are responsible for carrying out the provisions of this subpart within their administrative areas.

(b) The National Headquarters Administrative Officer is responsible for carrying out the provisions of this subpart for employees working out of National Headquarters.

*WA420.152 Responsibilities*

*(a) First-level supervisors (District Conservationist, Soil Survey Project Leader, Area Conservationist, SLT member, etc.) are responsible for approving/disapproving requests for authorization to operate a motor vehicle for their federal employees, as well as all non-federal vehicle operators (e.g., partners, and volunteers) under their jurisdiction. See Exhibit A.*

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1. Supervisors are responsible for revoking approvals when policy violations occur. Supervisors are to immediately document violations by forwarding a written summary to the State Administrative Office (SAO) through appropriate supervisory channels. A copy of this documentation will be provided to the affected individual.

2. Employees, and others, who are denied approval to operate government-owned or leased-vehicles may not operate personally owned vehicles in the performance of official duties except as specifically authorized by the SAO. Such approval will be obtained in advance, in writing.

3. Supervisors are assigned responsibility for enforcing the General Manual policy in relation to employees from other federal agencies and non-federal operators of government-owned or leased vehicles within their jurisdiction.

(e) Supervisors are to forward to Human Resources a copy of the Memorandum for Approval to Operate a Government Owned or Leased Vehicle (Exhibit B) for each new employee who operates a government vehicle. All requests must contain the following: verification that the individual possesses a valid driver's license, the state in which issued; list of citations or summonses for violation of motor vehicle laws (excluding non-moving violations) and convictions, if any; any suspensions or revocations of his/her state license or agency driver authorization within the past 5 years; and any motor vehicle accidents within the past 5 years.

(f) District employees should receive approval through the board of District supervisors or District Manager. Districts should also be reminded of the need to carry liability insurance. A current Agreement for Intermittent Use of Transportation Equipment is required for each District. In the absence of such an agreement, NRCS cannot authorize use of government-owned or leased vehicles. Districts are responsible for repairing or replacing NRCS vehicles which are damaged while being operated by district employees.

(g) Immediate supervisors shall retain the information obtained from new employees requesting authorization to drive a government-owned or government-leased vehicle in the employee personnel file kept in a secure location. A copy will be provided to the employee and Human Resources. District employee approval forms will be filed at the local level in the NRCS records; File Code 120-19-13. Approval memos are valid for not more than five (5) years from date of approval. The approving official shall note the expiration date at the time of approval.

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*(h) Government-owned or leased vehicles cannot be used by RC&D Council members or employees to conduct RC&D Council business. RC&D Council members and employees may travel with the coordinator in the government vehicle if the purpose is in support of NRCS business. Additionally, council members and employees may be authorized to use NRCS vehicles as Earth Team Volunteers. As Earth Team Volunteers they must be properly enrolled, position descriptions in place, identification cards issued, and time recorded in accordance with Volunteer program guidelines. While serving as volunteers, use of the NRCS vehicles may be authorized to perform NRCS business.*

420.153 Scope

(a) Immediately upon receipt of this subpart, all offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service will discontinue the use of Standard Forms 46 and 47 as well as Form AD-184.

*Earth Team Volunteers who operate a Government-owned or Government-leased vehicle must carry an identification card. Either the Earth Team Volunteer ID Card 360-001 form, or the USDA Government ID form AD-54 may be used for this purpose. ID cards must be clearly marked 'Volunteer' to indicate the holder is not a federal employee. See GM360, Part 428.2 for more information.*

(b) Responsible officials will issue a supplement to this subpart which will delegate responsibilities and provide additional guidance to supervisors and property-management officials in carrying out the requirements contained herein.

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420.154 Licensing Requirement

(a) All incidental operators are required to have a valid state driver's license.

(b) In addition, all incidental operators, while operating a government-owned or government-leased vehicle, must have in their possession an identification card or other document which identifies the driver as an employee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or as an employee working under a cooperative arrangement with NRCS.

*WA420.154 Licensing Requirement*

*(b) Possession of a current valid driver's license from the state where the employee or volunteer is domiciled or principally employed is required.*

420.155 Application Requirements for New Employees

(a) New employees who are to be incidental operators must request authorization to drive a government-owned or government-leased vehicle from their immediate supervisor. This request must be in the form of a memorandum and must contain the following:

1. Number of current valid license and state issued.
2. List of arrests or summonses for violation of motor vehicle laws (excluding non-moving violations) and convictions, if any.
3. Any suspensions or revocations of his/her state license or agency driver authorization within the past 5 years.
4. Any motor vehicle accidents within the past 5 years.

(b) Employing offices will provide instruction on filing of information obtained from new employees.

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*WA420.155 Application Requirements for New Employees*

*(a) "New Employee" is defined as a current NRCS employee transferring into the state of Washington from another state, or employees new to the NRCS rolls.*

*1. For new NRCS employees entering a position which requires the operation of a government-owned or leased vehicle, Human Resources will provide a blank Exhibit B as part of the pre-employment package. The employee will submit to their first-level supervisor as soon as possible. Failure to provide this information may result in revocation of the appointment.*

*2. Requests for authorization to drive a government-owned or government-leased vehicle will be made by use of Exhibit B, Memorandum for Operation of government owned or leased vehicles.*

420.156 Road Test Requirements

The Natural Resources Conservation Service waives the road-test requirements for incidental operators as provided in paragraph 1-8(b) of Subchapter 1 of Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) Chapter 930 when operating standard sedans and pickup trucks. Operators of trucks other than pickups and operators of any vehicle towing a trailer shall demonstrate to their supervisor the ability to drive under conditions they are expected to encounter.

420.157 Physical Requirements

(a) The Natural Resources Conservation Service waives the physical fitness inquiry for incidental operators as provided in paragraph A-5(b) of Appendix A to FPM Chapter 930.

(b) State or other employing offices will be responsible for establishing a procedure for ensuring that only authorized individuals operate government-owned or government-leased motor vehicles. Additionally, those offices must establish a procedure ensuring that any employee authorized to drive is physically able to operate the assigned vehicle without danger to himself/herself or others and that each authorized employee is in possession of a valid state driver's license. Established procedures must be communicated to supervisors and accountable property officers.

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(c) If a health problem is identified which would tend to impair an employee's capability to safely operate a motor vehicle, the supervisor or other responsible official should obtain a professional medical evaluation of the problem and submit the evaluation through channels to the Employee Relations Branch at National Headquarters. It will then be referred to the Department's medical officer for an opinion on whether or not authorization to drive should be continued.

*WA420.157 Physical Requirements*

*(b) Approving officials are responsible for ensuring that authorized individuals are physically capable of operating a vehicle without danger to themselves or others. Supervisors will notify the Human Resources Officer in the State Office, and their supervisor, immediately as they learn a member of their staff, or partner employee, is physically unable to drive or no longer possesses a valid driver's license. As appropriate, approving officials may immediately suspend driving privileges of employees or partners.*

*(c) When supervisors feel conditions of health or physical reasons may justify medical evaluation, the situation will be referred promptly to the Human Resources Officer through appropriate supervisory channels for guidance on action to be taken.*

420.158 Driving Record Review

(a) The Natural Resources Conservation Service will discontinue periodic reviews of driving records of incidental operators.

(b) In lieu of periodic reviews, all incidental operators are required to notify their immediate supervisor of any citation for moving-traffic violation as soon as practical after receiving the citation.

(c) Incidental operators also are required to notify their supervisor as soon as practical of the disposition to the citation, including suspension or revocation of the state driving license. Failure to make a timely report will result in disciplinary action against the offending employee.

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(b) In lieu of periodic reviews, all incidental operators are required to notify their immediate supervisor of any citation for moving-traffic violation as soon as practical after receiving the citation.

(c) Incidental operators also are required to notify their supervisor as soon as practical of the disposition to the citation, including suspension or revocation of the state driving license. Failure to make a timely report will result in disciplinary action against the offending employee.

*WA420.158 Driving Record Review*

*(b) Employees are to report accidents or citations for moving-violations to their supervisor within 3 working days of incidents, including any temporary restrictions that may have been imposed. Supervisors must notify the Human Resources Officer as soon as practical after receiving report from employees.*

420.159 Corrective Actions

(a) The following events will constitute sufficient cause for adverse or disciplinary action:

1. An employee is convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, or pathogenic drugs.
2. An employee is convicted of leaving the scene of an accident without making herself/himself known.
3. An employee is found not qualified to operate safely because of a physical or medical condition as determined by appropriate medical authority.
4. An employee's state license is revoked.
5. An employee's state license is suspended. Employees whose position description contains a requirement to operate a motor vehicle on public highways will be accommodated in their position for no longer than 30 days from the date of suspension. If the period of suspension exceeds 30 days, responsible officials will evaluate the work situation to see if the employee can be reassigned to a position which does not require operation of a motor vehicle on public highways. If no position is found, then appropriate action will be initiated to remove or suspend the employee. Loss of driving privileges for 6 months or longer will normally result in a proposal to remove.

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6. An employee receives a ticket for careless/reckless and/or unlawful speed while driving a government-owned or government-leased vehicle.

7. A supervisor or property-management officer fails to take appropriate action to determine the qualifications of an incidental operator or fails to properly authorize an employee to operate a government-owned or government-leased motor vehicle.

(b) The following events will constitute sufficient cause to relieve employees, for such period of time as may be necessary, from duties requiring the operations of a motor vehicle:

1. An employee who after investigation is found to be at fault in a motor vehicle accident while operating a government-owned or government-leased vehicle.

2. An employee is convicted of a moving violation while operating a government-owned or government-leased vehicle.

3. An employee improperly operates a motor vehicle assigned to her/him.

4. An employee fails to comply with federal administration orders relating to motor vehicle operations.

5. An employee is found upon medical examination to fail to meet the appropriate physical standards, but the diagnosed defects are considered by the Departmental medical officer to be of a temporary or remedial nature.

6. An employee is convicted of operating under the influence of intoxicating liquor.

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(WA 360 GM, Part 420, Subpart O, Supplement WA03, August 2008)

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Exhibit A

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this memorandum is to document that \_\_\_\_\_, an employee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conservation District (CD) is authorized to operate Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) owned or leased vehicles in the performance of official duties. The CD has entered into a cooperative agreement with the NRCS and an Agreement for Intermittent Use of Transportation Equipment. The CD has agreed to provide liability and property damage insurance for their employees operating NRCS transportation equipment.

This authorization is valid for a period not to exceed 5 years from the date of issuance and is void if the named individual is no longer employed by the named CD.

Approved by NRCS:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_ Area Office  
State Administrative Officer, Spokane, WA

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Exhibit B

MEMORANDUM FOR OPERATION OF  
GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR LEASED VEHICLES

DRIVER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print or Type)

1. Verification of current valid driver's license by: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date Expires:\_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name & Title of NRCS employee. Must match signature at bottom.)  
  
State Issued: \_\_\_\_\_
2. List of arrests or summonses for violation of motor vehicle laws (excluding non-moving violations) and convictions, if any (itemize) within last five years:
3. List any suspensions or revocations of your state license or agency driver authorization within the past 5 years (itemize):
4. List motor vehicle accidents, if any, within the last 5 years (itemize):

I certify that I am physically able to operate a vehicle without danger to myself or others and that I will notify my immediate supervisor if this situation changes.

I further certify that I will notify my immediate supervisor of any citation for a moving traffic violation and/or any vehicle accident in which I am involved within 3 business days, unless physically incapacitated, then as soon as practical, after the disposition of the citation/accident; and fully describe the disposition of each citation, including suspension or revocation of my state driving license.

I am aware that failure to make a timely report may result in loss of driving privileges and/or disciplinary action against me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Employee Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved

Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_  
(NTE 5 years from date of signature below)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Supervisor Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Original to Supervisor's File  
Copy to Employee  
Copy to Human Resources