

## **BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS MOTOR VEHICLE POLICY**

### **1) Employee Credentials and Qualifications**

a) A valid driver's license is required for all positions within the Borough of Highlands which require driving of Borough vehicles or personal vehicles for the purposes of completing their position as an employee or volunteer.

i) Employees and Volunteers that operate a vehicle(s) for the purposes of completing their position as an employee or volunteer must maintain a valid New Jersey driver's license.

ii) Employees and Volunteers that operate a vehicle(s) for the purposes of completing their position as an employee or volunteer must notify their Supervisor and the Borough Administrator immediately if their driving privileges are suspended or revoked for any reason.

b) Insurability -- All positions that require the employee or volunteer to drive Highlands vehicles must meet the underwriting guidelines of our insurance carrier, as stated in the attached matrix. These positions include:

- i) Public Works Laborers
- ii) Public Works Supervisors
- iii) Public Works Mechanics
- iv) Police Officers
- v) Code Enforcement Officers
- vi) Fire Company Emergency Vehicle Operators
- vii) Fire Company Non-emergency Vehicle Operators
- viii) First Aid Emergency Vehicle Operators
- ix) First Aid Non-emergency Vehicle Operators
- x) All others as determined by the Borough Administrator

c) Failure to maintain a valid driver's license, and/or failure to maintain insurability for the above positions may result in the employees' termination if the employee's position with the Borough requires operation of a vehicle to complete their duties; or the prohibition of the volunteer from operating a Borough vehicle.

### **2) Policy for Leaving the Perimeter of the Municipality**

Vehicles owned by the Borough of Highlands shall be operated for the completion of Borough Business.

a) The Borough of Highlands and municipalities located within Monmouth County shall be considered the acceptable range of Borough vehicles to travel under normal circumstances.

b) Permission to extend the usage of vehicles beyond the limits of Monmouth County – verbal permission to leave Monmouth County, but remain in the state of New Jersey, shall be obtained from the Borough Administrator via telephone, e-mail, or in writing.

c) Permission to utilize Borough vehicles outside the state of New Jersey must be obtained from the Administrator in writing prior to leaving the state. A written request shall be provided from the individual requesting to remove the vehicle from New Jersey with the purpose and timeframe of the request included.

d) In the case of an emergency, response vehicles are not limited in their range of travel.

e) There may be occasions when employees or volunteers take personal vehicles for the completion of borough business. When this occurs, the employee or volunteer may be entitled to mileage reimbursement. All such instances shall be approved in advance by the Borough Administrator, which request and approval shall be in writing whenever practical. Abuse of this provision may lead to non-reimbursement.

### **3) Policy for Providing Fuel for Personal Use of Volunteer Vehicles**

a) Fuel shall be provided for the designated Borough vehicle to be utilized by the Chief of the Fire Company. This will allow the appropriate individual to respond to emergency situations in the leadership capacity they hold.

### **4) Minimum Driver's Requirements**

a) Upon hiring, employees with driving requirements and/or upon becoming a volunteer driver with the Highlands Fire Department, First Aid Squad, or Fire Police, volunteers must:

- i) Provide proof of a New Jersey Driver's License
- ii) Their driver's abstract must meet the underwriting guidelines for being insured by the Borough's carrier.
- iii) Have no major violations within 5 years.
- iv) Successfully completed all training requirements as adopted by the Department for Department vehicles or successfully completed a driver safety course offered by the Borough or alternate certified course.

b) All employees and volunteers who operate Borough vehicles in the course of Borough business must authorize regular annual and on-demand driver's abstract checks by completing the attached authorization form.

### **5) Physical condition**

a) Employees must be in good physical condition to drive, without deficits that would prevent them from operating Borough vehicles safely, in both normal and emergency driving conditions.

b) Employees using prescription or non-prescription medications that may impair their driving ability must complete a fitness to work evaluation.

c) Failure to comply with the above may result in termination or the prohibition of the volunteer from operating a Borough vehicle.

### **6) Vehicle Operations**

Note: Where there is a conflict between Section 6: Vehicle Operations and the adopted Standard Operating Guidelines or other adopted Rules and Regulations of a Department, or of any County or State Law Enforcement Guidelines, the provisions of this section are superseded by those standards or guidelines.

a) Employees must operate Borough vehicles with extreme caution and due regard for their own safety and the safety of others at all times.

b) Employees must check vehicles prior to use and ensure that:

- i) Tires, brakes, steering and mechanical systems appear to be in good operating condition.
- ii) Vehicles should not be driven if the operator believes there is a safety concern.
- iii) Any mechanical deficiencies noted should be brought to the attention of the Public Works Superintendent and/or Borough Mechanic. The Mechanic will make the final determination as to whether or not the vehicle is serviceable.

c) Seatbelts

- i) All employees, volunteers and passengers must wear seatbelts at all times when any Borough vehicle is in motion.
- ii) Those riding in the rear of ambulances are exempt from this provision as their role may require administering to patients.

d) Driving conditions - Inclement weather, time-of-day, prevailing traffic and roadway conditions should all be taken into account and speed and driving techniques adjusted to the prevailing conditions.

e) Parking at scenes

Whenever practical under the circumstances, the following should apply:

- i) When possible Borough vehicles should be parked alongside the curb and out of the roadway.
- ii) If it is impossible to park curbside, the Borough vehicle should be parked so as to avoid blocking the thoroughfare.
- iii) If there is not enough room for other vehicles to safely pass the Borough vehicle when parked in the thoroughfare, then the Borough vehicle should be parked in such a way as to completely block the thoroughfare, and operations should be conducted as expeditiously as possible.
- iv) Flashers should be used whenever the vehicle is parked in other than a standard parking spot.

f) Response to an incident:

- i) Borough vehicles must use "due regard" when responding to or from emergency assignments.
- ii) Lights and sirens must be used when responding to all emergency assignments, unless instructed otherwise.
- iii) Vehicles must come to a complete stop before proceeding through intersections and traffic control devices such as:
  - (a) Red traffic lights
  - (b) Stop signs
  - (c) Negative right-of-way intersections
  - (d) Blind intersections
  - (e) When the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection
  - (f) When any intersection is not completely clear of traffic or pedestrians
  - (g) When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing lights

- (h) At railroad grade crossings
- (i) When directed by a law enforcement officer

iv) Vehicles, including all outer compartments, must remain locked at all times when the vehicle is in motion, if locks are available, whether the vehicle is occupied or not. Whenever practical, doors should be unlocked only when access is needed.

## **7) Accidents**

a) The Department Head shall complete the appropriate paperwork, including the Borough supervisory report. Major accidents where vehicles have been damaged or totaled and/or significant injuries have been sustained require notification to the Borough Administrator and Department Head immediately.

b) Accident reports and all accompanying paperwork must be forwarded to the Borough's Insurance Carrier within 48 hours of the accident via fax or e-mail.

c) All employees or volunteers operating a Borough vehicle involved in a major accident where vehicles have been damaged or totaled and/or significant injuries have been sustained, at fault or not, must complete an alcohol and drug screening within one hour of the incident or as soon as practicable.

d) Positive results for illegal drugs or alcohol may result in termination or the prohibition of the volunteer from operating a Borough vehicle.

e) Positive results for prescribed and OTC medications will be handled according to paragraph 5. b) above.

## **8) Accident Investigations and Accident Review**

a) Accidents may be either "preventable" or not.

i) Management including the Administrator and members of the Safety Committee will review all accidents to determine whether or not an accident is preventable.

b) All accidents will undergo a Post Accident Review to determine the cause and preventability of an accident.

c) Post Accident Review Committee, which may consist of representatives from the Safety Committee, Traffic Safety Officer, and the vehicle operator(s).

d) The Department Head overseeing the Department under which the accident occurred, or his designee shall be a member of the Post Accident Review Committee.

e) The Committee will use the Post Accident Review Guidelines attached as evaluation criteria

f) Once the Committee has made a determination as to cause and preventability, they will forward their findings and recommendation to the Administrator and/or Mayor and Council for any corrective action (e.g. temporary or permanent denial of driving privileges, required attendance at training program, etc).

## **9) Responsibility for Compliance; Reporting Requirements**

a) All employees and volunteers subject to this Policy shall be responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this Policy and any Regulations adopted pursuant to the Policy.

b) All employees subject to this Policy shall immediately report all accidents involving a Borough vehicle or occurring during the course of Borough business, to the supervisor, and shall adhere to the Accident Reporting Policy prescribed by the Safety and Risk Manager.

c) All employees subject to this Policy shall immediately report the following to the supervisor who shall consult with the department head as to appropriate action:

- i) all license suspensions and revocations;
- ii) all traffic and motor vehicle related charges and convictions in Borough owned vehicles.
- iii) all felony traffic and motor vehicle related convictions in any vehicle while driving.

#### **10) Other Regulatory Requirements**

a) Borough operations shall be conducted in accordance with all federal, State and local laws and regulations pertaining to motor vehicles, including those applicable to employees possessing commercial driver's licenses.

Minor violations may be acceptable, depending on circumstances and review by the Employer.

Minor Violations: Any moving violation other than a major except:

- Motor vehicle equipment, load or size requirements
- Improper failure to display license plates
- Failure to sign or display registration
- Failure to have driver's license in possession (if valid license exists)

Major Violations are never acceptable.

Major Violations:

- Driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Failure to stop/report an accident
- Reckless driving/speeding contest
- Driving while impaired
- Homicide, manslaughter or assault arising out the use of a vehicle
- Making a false accident report
- Driving with a suspended/revoked license
- Attempting to elude a police officer

Since breach of this policy could place employees, passengers and civilian motorists in danger, any employee in violation of these procedures shall be subject to disciplinary action which could result in temporary or permanent loss of driving privileges, suspension, or termination.

## 6. Squeeze Plays and Shutouts

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver failed to yield right of way to avoid an accident.

## 7. Backing Accident

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver backed vehicle, causing accident, when such backing could have been avoided.
- b. Driver failed to get out of vehicle and check proposed path of backward travel.
- c. Driver failed to use a "spotter" if driver was in a position where the mirrors failed to show the hazard.

## 8. Accidents Involving Streetcar or Train

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver attempted to cross tracks directly ahead of train or streetcar.
- b. Driver ran into side of train or streetcar.
- c. Driver stopped on or parked too close to tracks.

## 9. Accidents While Passing

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver passed when view of road ahead was obstructed by hill, curve, vegetation, traffic, adverse weather conditions, etc.
- b. Driver attempted to pass in the face of closely approaching traffic.
- c. Driver failed to warn the driver of the vehicle being passed.
- d. Driver failed to signal change of lanes.
- e. Driver pulled out in front of other traffic overtaking from rear.
- f. Driver cut-in short returning to right lane.

## 10. Accidents While Being Passed

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver failed to stay in own lane, or hold or reduce speed to permit safe passing.

## 11. Accidents While Entering Traffic Stream

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver failed to signal when pulling out from curb.
- b. Driver failed to check traffic before pulling out from curb.
- c. Driver failed to look back to check traffic if driver was in position where mirrors did not show traffic conditions.
- d. Driver attempted to pull out in a manner which forced other vehicle(s) to change speed or direction.
- e. Driver failed to make full stop before entering from side street, alley or driveway.
- f. Driver failed to make full stop before crossing sidewalk.
- g. Driver failed to yield right of way to approaching traffic.

## 12. Pedestrian Accidents

### *Preventable if:*

- a. Driver did not reduce speed in area of heavy pedestrian traffic.

- b. Driver was not prepared to stop.
- c. Driver failed to yield right of way to pedestrian.

### 13. Mechanical Defects Accident

*Preventable if:*

- a. Defect was of a type which driver should have detected in making pre-trip or enroute inspection of vehicle.
- b. Defect was a type which driver should have detected during the normal operation of the vehicle.

### 14. All Types of Accidents

*Preventable if:*

- a. Driver was not operating at a speed consistent with the existing conditions of the road, weather, and traffic.
- b. Driver failed to control speed to be able to stop within assured clear distance.
- c. Driver misjudged available clearance.
- d. Driver failed to yield right of way to avoid accident.
- e. Driver failed to accurately observe existing conditions and drive in accordance with those conditions.
- f. Driver was in violation of Borough operating rules or special instructions, the regulations of any federal or state regulatory agency, or any applicable traffic laws or ordinances.

Once the Post Accident Review Committee has made a determination as to the cause and preventability of an accident, they will forward their findings as indicated below for appropriate action:

DISCLOSURE AND RELEASE

In connection with my application for employment/volunteer (including contract for services) and/or ongoing employment/volunteer with the Borough of Highlands. I understand that driver abstract reports, which may contain public record information, may be requested and obtained. These reports may include information related to my previous driving record including court actions, citations, license suspensions and revocations.

I AUTHORIZE, WITHOUT RESERVATION, THE NEW JERSEY MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION OR VENDOR THEREOF CONTACTED BY THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS TO FURNISH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INFORMATION.

I have the right to obtain information as to the name, address and phone number of any agency providing such information and further, may request of that agency, upon proper identification, the nature and substance of all information in its files on me at the time of my request, including all sources of information as well as the recipients of any reports on me which that agency has previously furnished within the two (2) year period preceding my request.

This authorization shall remain on file and shall serve as ongoing authorization for the Borough of Highlands procure Motor Vehicle Reports at any time during my employment, membership or contract period.

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(Signature) (Date)

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(Print Name)

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(Driver's License Number) (State)