



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 24, 2025

DATE: June 3, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Doreen Ertell, Senior Risk Analyst, Comptroller Department

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THROUGH: Cathy Hill, Comptroller Department

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve the updated Driver Policy. This policy establishes comprehensive standards for individuals operating vehicles on behalf of Washoe County, ensuring safety, compliance with legal requirements, and accountability. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, contracted drivers, and other Board-approved drivers, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a good driving record and adhering to safe driving practices. It also outlines procedures for training, monitoring, and addressing violations to mitigate risks associated with vehicle operations. The updated verbiage to the policy is adding the following:

- Washoe County follows Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines for the appropriate recognition of a possible taxable event associated with employees taking County vehicles home. The IRS lists the criteria necessary to be exempt from this reporting. If the criteria aren't met, employees may be taxed appropriately.
- Should an accident investigation result in the determination that an employee was involved in an accident while using a County vehicle for personal use; the employee may be responsible for all costs associated with an accident.

Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

The staff is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Driver Policy. This policy establishes comprehensive standards for individuals operating vehicles on behalf of Washoe County, ensuring safety, compliance with legal

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requirements, and accountability. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, contracted drivers, and other Board-approved drivers, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a good driving record and adhering to safe driving practices. It also outlines procedures for training, monitoring, and addressing violations to mitigate risks associated with vehicle operations.

The Driver Policy supports Washoe County's Strategic Objective: Stewardship of our Community.

By implementing robust guidelines for vehicle operation, the County aims to protect its employees, the public, and County assets while reducing liability and financial losses stemming from traffic-related incidents. This aligns with the County's commitment to fostering a safe and responsible work environment.

Anticipated questions from elected officials may include inquiries about the enforcement mechanisms, training requirements, and the scope of the policy's application. In response, it is important to note that the policy mandates defensive driving training for all County Drivers, periodic reviews of driving records, and clear procedures for addressing violations, including suspension or revocation of driving privileges when necessary. Additionally, the policy prohibits distracted driving, such as the use of electronic devices, and establishes criteria for exceptions under specific circumstances, ensuring operational flexibility while maintaining safety standards.

This report seeks approval to implement the updated Driver Policy, which reflects revisions recommended by the Washoe County Safety Committee and other stakeholders. These updates aim to enhance clarity, improve compliance, and strengthen the County's ability to manage risks associated with vehicle operations effectively. Approval of this policy will ensure alignment with federal, state, and local regulations while supporting the County's strategic goals.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On October 23, 2018, the BCC approved revisions to the Driver Policy as recommended by the Washoe County Safety Committee. These updates included expanding the scope of the policy to cover all employees, volunteers, and other BCC-approved drivers who may drive on behalf of the County. The revisions also clarified exceptions for sworn Sheriff's Office personnel and their volunteer affiliates, who are subject to separate procedures established by the Sheriff's Office. Additionally, the definition of "vehicles" was broadened to include off-road vehicles, industrial vehicles, and watercraft. The timeframe for reporting potential license suspensions or revocations was reduced from seven calendar days to before the next scheduled working shift.

On July 28, 2015, the BCC had approved an earlier revision to the Driver Policy, which included measures to improve driver training and record-keeping processes. This revision emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate driving records and implementing defensive driving courses as part of new employee orientation.

BACKGROUND

The Driver Policy for Washoe County has evolved significantly over time to address the critical need for safe and lawful vehicle operation by individuals conducting County business. The policy establishes comprehensive standards for County Drivers, encompassing employees, volunteers, contracted drivers, and other Board of County Commissioners (BCC)-approved drivers. Its primary intent is to mitigate risks associated with vehicle operation, including property damage, injuries, fatalities, and liability claims, while ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Historical Summary

The origins of the Driver Policy date back to the 1990s, with documented revisions occurring periodically to adapt to emerging challenges and operational needs. For example, in 1996, the policy was amended to extend the timeframe for completing driver selection forms from annually to once every three years. Subsequent updates in 1999 introduced enhanced training requirements and expanded the scope of the policy to include County Commissioners. These revisions reflect Washoe County's ongoing commitment to improving driver safety and accountability.

In recent years, the policy has undergone further refinements to address modern driving challenges, such as distracted driving and compliance with Department of Transportation regulations for commercial drivers. Notably, the 2018 revision expanded the definition of "vehicles" to include off-road vehicles, industrial equipment, and watercraft, ensuring comprehensive coverage for all modes of transportation used in County operations. The policy also introduced stricter reporting requirements for drivers whose licenses may be suspended or revoked, reducing the reporting timeframe from seven calendar days to before the next scheduled working shift.

Legal and Regulatory References

The Driver Policy aligns with several legal frameworks, including Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and federal Department of Transportation regulations. For instance, NRS 706A.290 prohibits drivers from consuming or being under the influence of intoxicating substances while providing transportation services, a principle mirrored in the County's policy. Additionally, NRS 706.8841 mandates that drivers possess valid licenses and meet specific qualifications, which are incorporated into the County's standards for County Drivers. The policy also adheres to Nevada laws prohibiting texting while driving, emphasizing the importance of minimizing distractions.

The County's policy further requires regular driving record reviews, consistent with NRS provisions that mandate the maintenance of accurate records for drivers operating in professional capacities. Risk Management oversees these reviews, ensuring compliance with state laws and internal standards.

Master Plans and Strategic References

The Driver Policy supports Washoe County's broader strategic objectives, particularly those related to community stewardship and risk mitigation. The policy's emphasis on defensive driving training aligns with the County's commitment to reducing traffic-related losses and enhancing public safety. Additionally, the integration of modern technologies, such as electronic trip sheets and GPS systems, reflects the County's efforts to streamline operations and improve accountability.

The policy also complements Washoe County's strategic focus on employee development by requiring regular training and evaluations for County Drivers. This includes mandatory defensive driving courses within three months of hire and periodic refresher training every three years. These measures ensure that drivers are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to operate vehicles safely and effectively.

Ethical and Community Considerations

Washoe County's Driver Policy incorporates ethical considerations by prioritizing the safety of employees, residents, and the broader community. The prohibition of distracted driving and substance use while operating vehicles underscores the County's commitment to responsible behavior. Furthermore, the policy's requirement for drivers to report license suspensions or other impairments demonstrates transparency and accountability. Community considerations are also evident in the policy's focus on minimizing risks associated with vehicle operation. By establishing clear standards and providing training, the County aims to protect public safety and reduce the financial burden of traffic-related incidents. These efforts contribute to fostering trust and confidence in County operations.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact with accepting the update to the County's Driver Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended The Board of County Commissioners approve the updated Driver Policy. This policy establishes comprehensive standards for individuals operating vehicles on behalf of Washoe County, ensuring safety, compliance with legal requirements, and accountability. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, contracted drivers, and other Board-approved drivers, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a good driving record and adhering to safe driving practices. It also outlines procedures for training, monitoring, and addressing violations to mitigate risks associated with vehicle operations. The updated verbiage to the policy is adding the following:

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- Should an accident investigation result in the determination that an employee was involved in an accident while using a County vehicle for personal use; the employee may be responsible for all costs associated with an accident.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be to approve the updated Driver Policy. This policy establishes comprehensive standards for individuals operating vehicles on behalf of Washoe County, ensuring safety, compliance with legal requirements, and accountability. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, contracted drivers, and other Board-approved drivers, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a good driving record and adhering to safe driving practices. It also outlines procedures for training, monitoring, and addressing violations to mitigate risks associated with vehicle operations. The updated verbiage to the policy is adding the following:

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