

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

**NO.** 3544  
**SUBJECT** Fleet Management/Operation of state vehicles

**DIVISION/STAFF OFFICE RESPONSIBLE**  
Office of Fiscal and Administrative Services

**APPROVED BY COMMISSIONER**

**DATE POLICY ESTABLISHED/REVISED**  
11/10/2003;12/19/2003

**INTENDED AUDIENCE:** Managers/Supervisors, all employees

**BACKGROUND**

Minnesota Session Laws of 2003 (1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 1, Sec. 11, Subd. 2) required the Department of Administration to coordinate a policy related to the cost efficient use of vehicles by state agencies. The Department of Administration developed certain parameters for a sound fleet management policy and intends to assure the Legislature that each state agency has developed and implemented an appropriate fleet management policy following those parameters.

**PURPOSE**

Fleet management is a significant, ongoing expense for the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The divisions within the department are responsible to manage their own fleet, however, this policy will assist the department to build a fleet which best meets our mission in a cost effective manner.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all vehicles operated and owned/leased/rented by the Department of Public Safety. It is not meant to supercede laws, rules, or regulations imposed by federal, state, or local government.

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of each individual division within the department. It is the responsibility of each division to make employees aware of this policy, give employees guidance concerning this policy and take appropriate corrective action should it be necessary.

**DEFINITIONS**

Addition to the fleet	◆ The acquisition of a vehicle that will increase the fleet size
Automobile	◆ Passenger car or station wagon
Casualty Replacement	◆ Replacement of a vehicle prior to reaching the end of the assigned life cycle, generally due to physical or mechanical condition.
EPAct	◆ U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Policy Act of 1992
Fleet Manager	◆ The division employee assigned the responsibility of fleet oversight
Fleet Size	◆ The total number of vehicles in the fleet
Light Truck	◆ Any vehicle 7,000 to 15,000 pound Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) and vehicles of less than 7,000 pounds that are designed primarily for hauling cargo, includes pickup trucks, cargo vans, and some full-size passenger vans
Normal Replacement	◆ Replacement of a vehicle that has reached the end of the assigned life cycle, fleet size will not be increased
Specialty Vehicle	◆ A vehicle (not an automobile) less than 7,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR), designed for primarily transporting people, includes passenger mini-vans, most sport utility vehicles (SUVs), and some full-size passenger vans
Travel Management Division (TMD)	◆ A division of the Department of Administration which offers fleet services and travel services to state agencies and employees.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Department of Public Safety to own or lease a fleet of state vehicles for use by employees to conduct official state business. The management and operation of a decentralized fleet is the responsibility of the divisions and shall be cost effective, as outlined in this policy.

**ACQUISITION/REPLACEMENT OF VEHICLES**

**Fleet size** – Each division director will determine the size of their fleet. The individual business needs will be taken into consideration when determining the size including, but not limited to, division mission, geographic locations of staff, the

number of miles driven, immediate access to spare vehicles (State Patrol), current vacancies (and the expectations of filling them), budgetary constraints, and the timeliness of disposing of vehicles. It is recognized that the fleet size may temporarily fluctuate depending on these factors. Initial costs associated with vehicle acquisition and the ongoing costs associated with that vehicle will be carefully examined prior to acquiring any vehicle.

**Acquisition Criteria** – Vehicle assignments will not be made on the basis of status, tradition, or as a condition of employment. Instead, vehicles are to be assigned on the basis of need, as measured by the number of business miles driven or other qualifying use.

**Additions to the fleet** - All requests for new additions to the fleet will be presented with a written statement of justification for the vehicle acquisition, including anticipated costs. This justification statement will include alternative methods of transportation that have been considered, the benefit to the department and a cost justification for the acquisition and ongoing expense. This written statement will also be part of every applicable request to create new positions. The Deputy Commissioner and Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services will be responsible to approve additions to the fleet. The justification must be approved prior to beginning the purchasing process.

**Normal replacements of fleet units** - The fleet manager is responsible to monitor cost effectiveness of each vehicle. When routinely replacing existing vehicles, the division will review the vehicle type and use to ensure the selection of an appropriate vehicle. The division will review vehicle utilization and ensure that it will continue to be cost effective. If it is determined that an individual vehicle is not cost effective and the long term costs would justify replacement, the division director may approve early replacement. A written justification must be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner and Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services and approved prior to upgrading or significantly changing the vehicle type or option levels, unless current vehicle type has been eliminated/changed by the manufacturer. The justification must be approved prior to beginning the purchasing process.

**Casualty replacements of fleet units** - All casualty replacements will be examined, as vehicle replacements involve significant expense. Casualty replacements due to mechanical failure will be examined for cause and possible vehicle, vehicle life cycle, or operational changes that may be necessary to avoid future casualty replacements. Casualty replacements due to physical damage will also be examined, as potential exists for additional related expenses. All casualty replacements involving employee injury will be reported to the DPS Safety Officer for possible further investigation.

The Deputy Commissioner and Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services will be responsible to approve all casualty replacements, with the exception of law enforcement vehicles. Those divisions will address casualty replacements in their approved internal policy and procedures.

**Vehicle type selection** – Selection of an appropriate vehicle type is an essential part of cost effective fleet management. It is an objective of DPS to supply vehicles for employee use that are well suited to performing the work needing to be accomplished. Employee safety will be taken into account when acquiring vehicles. Manufacturer ratings, including load carrying capacity and trailer pulling capacity, will be followed when developing vehicle specifications for acquiring vehicles. Depending on intended use, law enforcement vehicles will be pursuit or police rated, as appropriate. All applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations will be followed concerning vehicle type selection. The Department of Administration's Travel Management Division can help answer questions related to State of Minnesota and/or U.S. EPA requirements regarding vehicle acquisition. The following are important links to reference when acquiring vehicles:

[Statute 16C.135 - Purchases of fuel and vehicles by state agencies](#)

[Alternative Fuel Data Center – Fleet Information](#)

[EPA Fleet Information and Regulations – U.S. Department of Energy](#)

**Vehicle life cycle selection** – Establishing an appropriate life cycle is an essential part of cost-effective fleet management. DPS recognizes the importance of establishing a life cycle for each type of vehicle at the time of acquisition. Parameters for a life cycle will be established by the division at the time of vehicle acquisition. This life cycle will include parameters for vehicle age as well as vehicle usage. This life cycle will take into account vehicle type as well as the work environment in which the vehicle will perform. This life cycle will be used in planning vehicle replacement as well as monitoring vehicle usage during the life of the vehicle. Division fleet manager will submit a life cycle plan for approval to the division director. This plan may change due to market conditions or other factors. Changes to the life cycle plan will also be approved by the division director.

Those divisions that lease vehicles from [Travel Management Division](#) (TMD) will follow their life cycle requirements.

**Financing considerations** – It is an objective of DPS to make cost effective financial decisions when acquiring new vehicles. Financial options including reimbursement of mileage for personal vehicle use, vehicle rental, vehicle leasing, and vehicle ownership will be examined when acquiring vehicles. The Office of Fiscal and Administrative Services will review vehicle acquisition requests with the division to assure the appropriate consideration is given to all available financing options.

**Agency acquisition approval process** – A [vehicle acquisition request form \(DPS-APM3544-1\)](#) must be completed and approved prior to beginning the vehicle purchasing process. The Deputy Commissioner and Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services will approve (signature approval) all vehicle additions, as well as all casualty replacements (with the exception of law enforcement vehicles). Division directors will approve (signature approval) all normally scheduled vehicle replacements to the existing fleet.

**Acquisition process** – All vehicles will be acquired in accordance with Minnesota state law and the EPA Act. All purchasing laws, rules, and procedures will be followed. Approved vehicle acquisition request form must be submitted to appropriate Accounting Officer prior to entering order. [Department of Administration's Materials Management Division](#) can help answer questions concerning purchasing requirements.

## **OPERATION OF VEHICLES**

The division director will assign to an employee the responsibility of fleet oversight. Each DPS division will develop, maintain and enforce specific internal policies and procedures for responsible acquisition and operation of their vehicles. Employees who violate these policies may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Compliance with state and federal requirements** – All state vehicles will be operated pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes 16B.55, Use of state vehicles: compensation for use of personal vehicles](#) and other applicable laws, rules and regulations set forth by local, state, and federal government.

M.S. 16B.55 prohibits the personal use of a state vehicle for other than authorized state business or specified, authorized commuting. This means that any other use of a state vehicle for personal benefit is strictly prohibited.

By statute, use of a state vehicle for commuting to and from an employee's residence is also prohibited except under very limited circumstances. A state vehicle may be used by a state employee to travel to and from the employee's residence under the following circumstances:

- ◆ On a day when it may become necessary for the employee to respond to a work-related emergency during hours when the employee is not normally working.
- ◆ If the employee has been assigned the use of a state vehicle for authorized state business on an extended basis, and the employee's primary place of work is not the state work station to which the employee is permanently assigned.
- ◆ If the employee has been assigned the use of a state vehicle for authorized state business away from the work station to which the employee is permanently assigned, and the number of miles traveled or the time needed to conduct the business will be minimized if the employee uses a state vehicle to travel to the employee's residence before or after traveling to the place of state business

Personal use of a state-provided vehicle includes commuting and local and out-of-town personal travel. The value of the personal use of a state-provided vehicle under one of the specifically permitted situations must therefore be reported on the [Employee's Biweekly Time Report](#) and included as wages as reported on the employee's W-2, Wage and Tax Statement form.

Unauthorized personal use of a state vehicle may be grounds for disciplinary action.

The Department of Administration's Policy 99.1 provides guidance and requirements relating to personal use of a state vehicle and reporting for tax purposes. All employees and contractors authorized to use a state vehicle must possess a valid driver's license (see [DPS administrative policy no. 4062](#)).

All vehicles will be operated in accordance with [traffic laws and safety regulations](#), unless exempt under [Minnesota Statutes 169.03](#). Citations, fines and/or penalties resulting from improper use of a vehicle are the sole responsibility of the vehicle operator and he/she will notify their immediate supervisor. Disposition of any violation is to be made only through proper channels.

Special consideration will be given to the operation of commercial vehicles. [Commercial vehicle laws, rules, and regulations will be followed](#). Employees will consult their fleet manager [concerning licensing and/or operational questions regarding commercial vehicles](#).

**Ethical use** – Employees will operate vehicles using the [highest ethical standards](#). It is the intent of DPS to present a public image that is above any ethical question (e.g. stopping to conduct personal business). Ethical misconduct will not be tolerated in the Department of Public Safety. Suspected or alleged ethical misconduct will be investigated by each division with the assistance of Internal Affairs. Ethical misconduct will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Employees should consult their immediate supervisor concerning any questions in this area.

**Vehicle utilization** – Monitoring vehicle utilization is a key component in cost effective fleet management. Each division will monitor vehicle usage on an ongoing basis to ensure vehicles are being utilized in a cost effective manner consistent with expectations established at the time of vehicle acquisition. If it is determined individual vehicles are not cost effective and the long term costs would justify replacement, the division director may approve early replacement.

**Vehicle markings** – Vehicles owned or leased by DPS will be clearly marked as DPS or State of Minnesota vehicles, unless specifically exempted from marking requirements by state law. All vehicle license plates will be identified with Minnesota State Vehicle tax exempt license plates unless specifically exempted by [M.S. 168.012](#). The following are other important links concerning vehicle markings:

[Central Motor Pool Establishment](#)

[Distinctive Tax Exempt License Plate and Vehicles exempt from tax or license fees](#)

**Suitability for work use** – Vehicles will be used in a manner that is consistent with the intended use of the vehicle. Vehicles will be operated in accordance with the manufacturer ratings and guidelines including load capacity and trailer pulling capacity. Employee and public safety are to be primary considerations when determining vehicle operational practices, however, there may be extenuating circumstances based on the health and safety of the public at any given time.

**Fuel** – Vehicles are to be operated on the type and grade of fuel recommended by the manufacturer. [E85 will be used in flex fuel vehicles when it is reasonably available and the price is comparable to gasoline](#), unless exempt from the federal Energy Policy Act of 1992, which includes law enforcement and emergency vehicles. The grade of gasoline purchased for vehicles operated by DPS employees will be consistent with the manufacturers' recommendations. Employees will use self-service pumps, whenever possible.

Drivers are provided with a fuel credit card for authorized purchases. Drivers must immediately report lost or stolen cards to their fleet manager, or TMD for leased vehicles, and submit required forms for replacement.

**Maintenance/Mechanical repair** – It is an objective of DPS to keep all vehicles maintained in safe operating condition. Employee and public safety are prime considerations in making vehicle maintenance and repair decisions. Employees will bring vehicular defects to the attention of their fleet manager, designee, or TMD according to their procedures. Safety related concerns will be addressed prior to continued use of the vehicle.

The DPS Safety officer, in coordination with department safety committees will review safe vehicle operating practices and follow up accordingly.

**Physical damage** – DPS vehicles should present a positive reflection of the department to the public. Drivers will report any collision on a public roadway to the Minnesota State Patrol or local law enforcement. In addition, damage or theft should be reported to their immediate supervisor and fleet manager. For any incident involving physical damage over \$500.00, the fleet manager will coordinate with TMD or the [Department of Administration Risk Management Division](#) for reporting, repair, and/or subrogation procedures, as determined by individual division policy. [See Department of Administration, Travel Management Division website for claim forms.](#)

If an accident results in an injury to the employee, it should also be reported to the DPS Safety Officer. The employee should submit a copy of the [MN Motor Vehicle Accident Report](#) to the Safety Officer for review of workers compensation issues and follow up investigation/coordination with Risk Management. In addition, the immediate supervisor will complete a [First Report of Injury](#) for worker's compensation issues.

Drivers will deliver to their fleet manager or designee every summons, complaint or paper of any kind relating in any way to an accident or theft.

**State Liability** – Vehicles will be insured for liability utilizing the program provided through the Department of Administration, Risk Management Division. The Risk Management Division will assist the department in handling vehicular

related liability expenses. Employees will not aid or encourage the filing of any claim against the State of Minnesota as a result of any accident and will cooperate fully with the State's insurer in investigating and defending any claim or lawsuit.

## REPLACEMENT/DISPOSAL OF VEHICLES

**Retirement/Disposal** – Vehicles reaching the end of their life cycle will be reviewed for condition. Vehicles with useful life remaining will be made available for alternative department use when appropriate. [DPS will follow the laws, rules, and regulations concerning disposal of state property when retiring vehicles from service.](#) This may include making surplus vehicles available for use by other agencies or governmental units. Retirement/disposal, as part of normal replacement, may cause a temporary increase in the fleet size while waiting for auction or other retirement method.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Deputy Commissioner/Director, Fiscal and Administrative Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Approve additions to the fleet</li><li>◆ Approve upgrading or significantly changing vehicles in the fleet</li><li>◆ Approve casualty replacement of a fleet unit, with the exception of law enforcement vehicles</li></ul>
Division Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Appoint division fleet manager</li><li>◆ Approve normal replacement of fleet units</li><li>◆ Submit written justification (vehicle acquisition request form, DPS-APM3544-1) to the Deputy Commissioner and Director of FAS for additions to the fleet, casualty replacement, and upgrading of vehicles in the normal replacement process</li><li>◆ Approve vehicle life cycle plan</li></ul>
Fleet Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Discuss financing considerations with Accounting Officer</li><li>◆ Examine all casualty replacements for cause and consequences</li><li>◆ Establish life cycle for each type of vehicle</li><li>◆ Develop internal operating procedures</li><li>◆ Monitor vehicle utilization</li></ul>
Safety Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Retire/dispose of vehicles following surplus state property regulations</li><li>◆ Review reports of casualty replacement of fleet vehicles that may affect employee safety</li></ul>
Supervisor/Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ In coordination with safety committees, review safe vehicle operating practices</li><li>◆ Work with Risk Management regarding accidents that involve personal injury</li><li>◆ Assign vehicle to employee on the basis of need, as measured by number of miles driven and other qualifying use</li></ul>
Division Purchaser Accounting Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Enforce this policy and internal operating procedures</li><li>◆ Ensure purchases are processed according to policy and procedure</li><li>◆ Review vehicle acquisition form and discuss financial options with division including mileage reimbursement of personal vehicle, rental/lease/ownership.</li></ul>
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Comply with MS 16B.55</li><li>◆ Operate state vehicles in accordance with traffic laws and safety regulations.</li><li>◆ Operate, service and maintain vehicle in accordance with policies and procedures set forth by the division, or Department of Administration Travel Management Division</li><li>◆ Notify fleet manager of vehicular defects</li><li>◆ Report accidents to local law enforcement, fleet manager, DPS Safety Officer and Risk Management</li></ul>