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Operating Procedure # O - V - 1

Subject: Vehicle Procedure

Effective Date: July 1, 2015

Procedure Statement:

This procedure provides direction on the authorized use of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) vehicles. All DNR vehicles will be operated within these policies and procedures and are to be used only for official business and in the best interest of the Department.

Definitions:

Authorized Guest: A passenger, riding with a Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (PRHS) employee, who is participating in department activities (i.e. contractors working on department projects, government officials, consultants, program participants, visitors needing assistance, etc.).

Procedure:

A. Authorized Motor Vehicle Utilization

1. Authorized Drivers of Department of Natural Resource Vehicles

- a. Departmental Employees – State of Georgia Auto Liability Program provides coverage to employees operating state vehicles and other vehicles when on state business
- b. Registered PRHS Division Volunteers – Volunteers that are registered in the Division volunteer program are covered by the State of Georgia Auto Liability Program under the same provisions as a state employee with the exception of coverage of their own personal injuries. State employees' personal injury coverage is through Worker's Compensation, while volunteers have limited secondary coverage through the division volunteer insurance policy provided that the person is a registered volunteer and purchased the coverage.

2. Authorized Passengers of Department of Natural Resource Vehicles

- a. State Employees (can be from a different state agency)
- b. Registered PRHS Volunteers

- c. Authorized Guest(s) of the State on official business on or off site (**off site** transport must be approved by the Region Manager, Section Chief, or the Director's Office. Authorized guests **on site** may be approved by the park/site manager.)
- d. Spouses may only travel in a DNR vehicle with prior approval from the Region Manager, Section Chief, or Director's Office. This includes spouses who are registered volunteers and acting in that capacity. Under certain circumstances a blanket approval via a memorandum to the site file may be granted.
- e. Any circumstances not covered by the above examples should be approved in advance following the approval process identified above.

B. Unauthorized Motor Vehicle Utilization

- 1. Personal use of DNR vehicles is prohibited. State employees or volunteers operating a state vehicle while on personal business **ARE NOT** covered by the State of Georgia Auto Liability Program even if they are using the vehicle for state business and make side trips. Examples of personal business include: trips for shopping, picking up children, going to the bank, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTE: the purpose of the trip determines the coverage by the State of Georgia Auto Liability Program. The coverage follows the driver not the vehicle. If a state employee departs from their office in a state vehicle to conduct legitimate state business and during the course of the trip abandons their official duties to make personal side trips (bank, school, shopping), they are considered to be conducting personal business and are not covered. If state employees have an accident while conducting personal business in a state vehicle, they could be held personally liable. The financial effect on the driver, the supervisor and the agency could be catastrophic.

- 2. Unauthorized Drivers of Department of Natural Resources Vehicles
 - a. Independent Contractors
- 3. Unauthorized Passengers of Department of Natural Resource Vehicles
 - a. Minors under the age of 18, with the exception of transporting as participant in a departmental program.
 - b. Minor children of departmental employees with the exception of transporting as a participant in departmental program.
 - c. Family members of departmental employees, with the exception of adult family members that are registered volunteers or being transported as a participant in a departmental program.

C. Other Vehicle Policies

- 1. All drivers of state vehicles are required to follow the Standard Operating Procedures #030 located on the Administrative Services page of the DNR Intranet <http://dnrnet.dnr.state.ga.us/fs/standardoperatingprocedures>.

2. All drivers should give special attention to DNR Administrative SOP #030 Attachment #2 – Driver Safety Tips and in particular adhere to speed limit laws.
3. Authorized Minors are not allowed to ride in the uncovered bed of a pick truck (OCGA 40-8-79.)
4. Care should be taken when allowing adult passengers to ride in the uncovered bed of a pick-up truck. Vehicle operators should ensure that all passengers remain fully inside the bed.

D. Decommissioning Law Enforcement Vehicles

1. Radios and light bars must be professionally removed from law enforcement vehicles.
2. Law Enforcement lettering must be removed from the vehicle.
3. The green and tan stripes on the vehicle must be professionally removed from the vehicle.
4. An employee who is not certified as a Peace Officer may temporarily use a law enforcement vehicle if the light bar is properly covered with a light bar cover and the law enforcement lettering is properly covered with the color-matching magnetic strips.
5. Resource Management Unit personnel are approved to have red lights mounted in their Type 6 Fire Engine.

Authority:

DNR RULES: SOP #030

O.C.G.A. 40-8-79 – Unlawful for minors to ride in bed of pick-up

Attachments:

None