

### **I. Purpose**

In an effort to prevent employee injuries and property damage, the City of Hendersonville has adopted this safe vehicle operation policy. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed at all times when operating a vehicle for city purposes including, but not limited to, cars, dual wheel vehicles, crew cabs, pickup trucks, police vehicles, fire vehicles and any other motorized unit (mowers, golf carts, etc.) used for City business. Supervisors will assure employees are thoroughly trained on the specific type of vehicle or equipment they will operate. Employees will inform their supervisors should they need additional training or direction as to the vehicle or equipment they operate.

Specialized equipment/vehicles, such as Fire and Police, may have further regulations concerning operations within their departments.

### **II. Pre-Movement**

Before entering, a "walk around" of the entire vehicle will be performed to be certain no obstacles are in the travel path (forward or backward) of the vehicle. This includes any time the vehicle is stopped, parked and entered again when allowed by traffic and feasible.

If designated by your department/division, a pre-trip inspection may be required and, based on your specific vehicle, this may need to be a written inspection. The employee performing the inspection will inform their supervisor immediately if the vehicle fails their inspection. The employee will not operate any vehicle that fails their inspection.

### **III. General Operations**

1. Employees operating vehicles will carry a current driver's license that is valid for the type of vehicle driven. Notify your supervisor if your license status changes.
2. Employees are required to practice defensive driving at all times. Avoid accidents by anticipating that someone may step from between parked cars, that a car may pull out from the curb without warning, or that the driver ahead may turn or stop suddenly. Be alert; concentrate on safe driving.
3. Employees shall drive courteously at all times and shall yield the right-of-way to other vehicles if there is any question as to which vehicle has the right-of-way.
4. No driver shall drive a company vehicle while their physical condition might impair their ability or judgment.
5. Only City employees may drive city vehicle/equipment.
6. Equipment operators shall obey all speed limit and warning signs, drive their equipment at reasonable and proper speeds with due regard for weather and traffic conditions, intersections, and type of equipment driven.
7. Vehicles provided with tail gates shall not proceed until the tail gate is secured.
8. Except for where specifically allowed by supervisors, employees will have their entire body inside the moving equipment at all times and shall not enter or exit from moving vehicles or equipment.
9. Employees will not ride in buckets, lift baskets, forks (of lift trucks), etc., not designed to transport personnel while the vehicle is in motion.
10. Seat belts will be used in all vehicles, except as permitted by North Carolina law for emergency vehicles and sanitation vehicles. The belt shall be fastened before moving the vehicle.
11. Loads shall be properly secured and protected before proceeding. All loads should be checked to prevent spill-off. All doors of cabinets and lockers must be latched before moving truck.
12. The driver shall inspect footwear before driving a vehicle and see the footwear is free of mud, excessive water, oil or grease, to prevent a slippery contact with brake and clutch pedals.
13. The severe application of brakes, especially booster brakes, shall be avoided except in an emergency. The operator must at all times have the vehicle under control so as to be able to bring it to a complete stop within the assured clear distance ahead.
14. No vehicle shall be parked on a hill or grade unless the front wheels are turned into the curb or the wheels securely chocked.
15. The number of employees in a vehicle is limited to the number of seatbelts.

16. When possible do not load and unload a vehicle from the street side of the load.
17. For employees entering a work zone or high traffic area, high visibility Class II or Class III vests must be worn leaving the vehicle. The Police and Fire Departments may have other requirements.
18. Workers will never cross or step behind a vehicle when it is backing up or when backup lights are on.
19. Workers walking along the leaf machine for leaf pickup will be aware of the movement of the truck /tractor pulling the leaf machine at all times and will not step/walk between the two pieces of equipment while the equipment is in motion unless the actual leaf collection process is being performed. Walking along the leaf collection machine is permissible up to 100' between leaf piles, the vacuum hose shall be attached to the machine for any distance greater than 100' of travel between piles.

#### **IV. Backing**

Annually, 37% of City vehicle accidents happen when backing. Adhere to these backing precautions

1. Before you start backing, make sure you can see where you are going. See that the way is clear. Get out and inspect the area immediately behind your vehicle.
2. After seeing that the way is clear, then back very slowly. Never back in a hurry.
3. Alert other drivers or pedestrians who may be in, or about to cross your path of travel by blowing your horn. Be careful. They may not understand your intentions. Extraordinary precautions shall be taken when driving motor vehicles near children.
4. All bi-directional machines, such as hoists, front end loaders, trenchers, and similar equipment shall have in operation a reverse signal alarm distinguishable from the surrounding noise level.
5. Back-up cameras are a great tool but should not be depended on in all circumstances.

#### **V. Spotter**

A spotter will be used whenever practical. A spotter is defined as a person who assists an employee in safely backing a vehicle by standing off to the side of a vehicle whether front or behind giving hand and or voice commands to the driver via the driver's direct sight or the driver's sight in a vehicle mirror.

Note: Even though there is someone directing, drivers are not relieved of their responsibility. It is still up to them to see that the backing operation is done safely.

1. The spotter's body must face in the direction of the driver at all times when signaling.
2. When parking equipment or backing trailers into stalls or equipment storage sheds, a spotter must be utilized.
3. A vehicle driver will stop backing immediately if visual contact is lost with workers on foot. Backing will only be resumed when visual contact with workers is restored.
4. Spotters will remain visible in the driver's mirrors and maintain a clear view of the driver's hazard area (blind spot).
5. The spotter must position themselves to observe the most immediate hazard to the truck. This may require stopping the truck and changing positions one or more times.
6. Wherever possible, the spotter should station themselves at the point where the backing maneuver is to end, so that they avoid the hazards of walking backward over the surfaces they do not see.
7. Spotters will stay clear of the vehicle's path and will never walk backward.
8. Spotters will be familiar with and use agreed upon hand signals to communicate with the driver. Suggested signals are:
  - Stop--Raise the right hand above the shoulder with open palm facing the driver.
  - Back--With palms inward, use both hands to "paddle" signal the vehicle back
  - Go forward--Raise the right hand above the shoulder and with the index finger pointing ahead, repeatedly move the hand in a forward motion.
  - Move to the right--Raise the right hand above the shoulder and with the thumb pointing to the right, make the repeated motions to the right.
  - Move to the left--Raise your right hand above the shoulder and with the index finger extended to the left, make repeated motions to the left with your hand.
9. Spotters will immediately signal the driver to stop if any person or object enters the area behind the truck.

**VI. Sanitation Vehicles**

1. Sanitation truck riders will use riding steps only when the vehicle is moving forward for short distances (0.2 mile or less) at slow speeds (10 mph or less).
2. Sanitation truck riders will only dismount the vehicle after it has come to a complete stop. Riders will step, not jump off riding steps.
3. Sanitation truck riders will wear slip resistant footwear.
4. Sanitation truck riders will not ride on the truck when it is backing up.
5. Sanitation truck riders will be extremely observant of the driver's blind spot behind the vehicle.
6. Sanitation truck drivers will wait for step riders to signal before putting the truck into motion.
7. Sanitation truck drivers will avoid sudden stops that could cause riders to be thrown from riding steps.

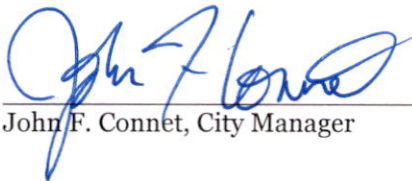
**VII. Cell Phone Use**

It is important both for safety and for the image of City drivers that common sense and courtesy be followed in using cellular phones while in City vehicles.

1. It is against the law in North Carolina to text while driving.
2. Whenever possible, use your cellular phone when parked or have a passenger use the phone.
3. If your position requires frequent cell phone use in a vehicle, you should have voice mail service and hands-free equipment for your phone and use both to avoid distractions.
4. If your phone rings when you are driving – especially during hazardous conditions -- let your cellular voice mail service take the call and listen to the message later when you are parked or pull over before answering, if traffic conditions permit.
5. Suspend conversations during hazardous driving conditions or situations.
6. Let the person you are speaking to know you are driving and that the call may need to be suspended at any time.
7. Do not take notes or look up phone numbers while driving. As a driver, your first responsibility is to pay attention to the road and safely reach your destination.
8. Attempt to dial and place all calls when you are not moving.
9. Learn and use the pre-programmed number dial features of your phone. Practice using this feature for commonly dialed numbers before driving so you are familiar with the procedures.
10. Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving as it can be distracting and potentially dangerous. If necessary, suspend the phone conversation.
11. Use your cellular phone to call for help or to help others in emergencies. Your cellular phone lets you be a "good Samaritan" in the community. If you see an auto accident, crime in progress or other serious emergency where lives are in danger, call 911 and give the exact location and information to fire, police or ambulance personnel.

Any violation of this policy by an employee may constitute grounds for disciplinary action including termination from employment.

The City's **Vehicle Use Policy** covers liability, distance and other issues with City vehicles.




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John F. Connet, City Manager

1-7-26

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Date of Approval

*Adopted by the Safety Committee 5.21.2020  
Reviewed on 12\_30\_2025*