



Georgia Department of Community Health

Use of State Property, Fax Equipment, Pagers, Vehicles, and Other Resources	Policy No. 418
Effective Date: May 16, 2000	Page <u>1</u> of <u>5</u>

- References:**
1. DCH Policy No. 410, Standards of Conduct
 2. State Travel Regulations

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of State property and resources.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Department of Community Health and attached agencies.

III. Policy

A. Use of State Property and Resources

The Department will only use state property and resources to accomplish state government purposes. Employees may only use state property and resources to accomplish work-related assignments. Employees who divert state property or resources for personal gain will be required to reimburse the Department and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

B. Removal of Equipment

Employees must obtain written approval from their division, office or board director before removing equipment from the Department. The approval must show decal number, make, model, and serial number of the items being removed. Employees are required to obtain a *PROPERTY REMOVAL FORM* from Support Services and sign for the equipment.

C. Activities Related to Personal Business

During work hours, employees will avoid activities related to personal business, or the sale of products, including but not limited to, cookies, candies, cosmetics, diet products, or jewelry.



D. Use of State Vehicles

State owned vehicles are authorized for use in the performance of all essential travel duties related to the completion of state business. They are not authorized to be used for personal trips unrelated to the state business for which they were assigned; to transport passengers who are not state employees; nor to attempt tasks which are beyond the vehicle's capabilities. When in doubt, the decision must be based on whether the vehicle's use in this task will serve the interest of the state rather than the driver, and whether it will be defensible in the event of public criticism, questions from a higher government authority, or an auditor's report. When driving a state vehicle, it is clearly marked and identifies the driver as a representative of state government. State employees have certain responsibilities, which include caution and discretion at all times. The following guidelines are intended to aid in using state vehicles responsibly.

1. Authorized Use of State Vehicles When on Official Travel Status is limited to:
 - a. Travel between the place where the state vehicle is dispatched and the place where the official state business is performed.
 - b. Travel between the place of state business and the place of temporary lodging.
 - c. When the distance is not within reasonable walking distance, between either of the above places and:
 - (1) Places to obtain meals.
 - (2) Places to obtain medical assistance, including drug stores.
 - (3) Places of worship.
 - (4) Cleaning establishments.
 - (5) Similar places required to sustain the health, welfare or continued efficient performance of the driver, exclusive of places of entertainment.
 - d. Transport of other officers, employees, or guests of the State when they are on official state business.
 - e. Transport of consultants, contractors or commercial firm representatives when such transport is in the direct interest of the State.



Policy No: 418

Page 3 of 5

- f. Transport of materials, supplies, parcels, luggage, or other items belonging to or serving the interests of the State.
- g. Transport of any person or item in an emergency situation.
- h. Travel between the place of dispatch or place of performance of state business to your personal residence when specifically authorized by the proper authority in your agency. Be aware that a recent federal government regulation now classifies such use of a vehicle as a taxable fringe benefit. If a state vehicle is regularly used to commute between home and work, pay special attention to Part C of this section.

2. Unauthorized Use of State Vehicle

Be advised that any unauthorized use of state vehicles will result in immediate disciplinary action taken by the operator's department. Such action may include suspension of all privileges to operate state vehicles, up to in some cases, dismissal. Further, be advised that state drivers are not covered by liability insurance when engaging in unauthorized use of state vehicles. The following uses of state vehicles are prohibited:

- a. Any use for personal purposes, other than commuting which has been authorized as specified in Item h) of Authorized Uses.
- b. Travel or tasks which are beyond the vehicle's rated capability.
- c. Transport of families, friends, associates or other persons who are not employees of the state or serving the interest of the State.
- d. Transport of hitchhikers.
- e. Transport of cargo, which has no relation to the performance of official state business.
- f. Transport of acids, explosives, weapons, ammunition or highly flammable material except by specific authorization or in an emergency situation.
- g. Transport of any item or equipment projecting from the side, front or rear of the vehicle in a way, which constitutes an obstruction to safe driving, or a hazard to pedestrians or to other vehicles.



- h. When on official state business yourself, transport of other employees from headquarters to restaurants, cafes, drugstores, or other places which are not in the service of state business.
- i. Attending sporting events, including hunting and fishing, which are not in the service of state business.
- g. Extending the length of time the vehicle is in your possession beyond that which is required to complete the official purposes of the trip.

3. Use of State Vehicles for Commuting to and from Work

Although some state employees may be authorized to use a state vehicle for commuting to and from work, such use is now considered to be a fringe benefit and is subject to federal income tax and social security tax. Employees must declare the use of these vehicles as additional non-cash personal income as a requirement of the Internal Revenue Code.

An employee who drives a state vehicle home only once or twice a month for the purpose of making a business trip the next day does not have to declare the value of those trips as a fringe benefit. However, an employee who routinely uses a vehicle for commuting from his or her residence to work headquarters is required to declare the value of commuting as a personal fringe benefit for income tax purposes. All employees who fall within this category should immediately get in touch with the payroll section of their department to find out the proper procedure for reporting their personal use of the state vehicle.

Be aware that these requirements are solely the result of the actions of the federal government through the Internal Revenue Service, and do not apply to filing or reporting for your state income taxes.

4. Use of State Vehicles for Political Activity

Employees using state vehicles are prohibited from transporting any political campaign literature or matter, engaging in soliciting votes, or transporting any person or persons soliciting votes in any election or primary. Privately owned vehicles upon which the State is paying transportation mileage may not display any political bumper stickers or campaign literature.

5. Obtaining a State Vehicle for Official State Business Use

DCH has two departmental vehicles that can be checked out by employees for official business use. The vehicles are checked out on a first come, first served basis by calling Support Services at (404) 656-4284. If a DCH vehicle



is not available, employees may contact the Department of Administrative Service's (DOAS) Motor Pool and check out one of their vehicles. Using a DOAS vehicle will require prior approval by the employee's division, office or board director.

E. Use of Facilities

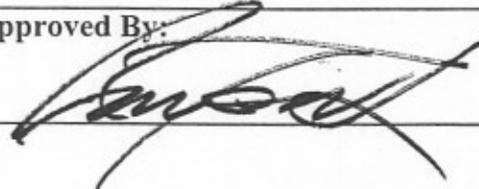
Employees are restricted from using facilities, space and equipment to accomplish non-work related or personal activities.

F. FAX Equipment and Pagers

Employees are prohibited from the personal use of State FAX equipment, paging services and equipment which will result in charges to the State.

G. Destruction of State Property

Destruction of State property is prohibited and may result in reimbursement, and disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Approved By: 	Date: 5-16-00
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