



Union

## Salem Housing Authority Vehicle Safety Policy

The Salem Housing Authority (SHA) maintains a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. The safe and responsible use and operation of SHA motor vehicles is important for the safety of employees, other individuals and property, reduction of insurance claims and avoidance of damage to SHA vehicles.

### **Procedures and Requirements:**

All drivers must possess a valid drivers' licenses issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and must carry it with them at all times during operation of an SHA vehicle.

This Policy grants the SHA the right to investigate an employee's motor vehicle driving record at any time. Employees must provide a copy of their current drivers' licenses annually each October. Employee driving records shall be ordered annually from the Registry of Motor Vehicles and reviewed by SHA management.

All drivers are subject to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Employees must be able to meet the driver approval standards of this policy. In addition, such employees must immediately inform the Maintenance Supervisor of any charges of violation of the motor vehicle laws of the Commonwealth, even those that occur after business hours

Only SHA employees may operate SHA vehicles. Use of SHA vehicles is limited to use for official SHA business only. Drivers operating SHA vehicles are acting as agents of the SHA. Employees who drive a vehicle on SHA business must exercise due diligence to drive safely and to maintain the security of the vehicle and its contents.

Employees are not permitted, under any circumstances, to operate an SHA vehicle, or a personal vehicle for SHA business, when a physical or mental impairment causes the employee to be unable to drive safely. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, circumstances in which the employee is temporarily unable to operate a vehicle safely or legally because of illness, medication, or intoxication.

Employees driving on SHA business may claim reimbursement for parking fees and tolls actually incurred. All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by written receipts and must be approved by the Executive Director or his/her designee.

Drivers required to use SHA vehicles on overtime assignment are strictly limited to using them for travel between their homes and the job site and for securing the basic necessities of food, fuel, and supplies while on duty.

This policy shall also be in effect during the use of any rental or temporary vehicles hired for use by the SHA.

When no SHA vehicles are available, employees may be requested to use their own vehicles for business purposes. Employees who use their personal vehicle for approved business purposes will receive the approved mileage allowance for the use. This allowance is to compensate for the cost of gasoline, oil, depreciation, and insurance.

At a minimum, drivers are **expected to**

- obey all traffic laws, regulations, and speed limits
- operate vehicles in a careful and non-aggressive manner
- use the utmost care and courtesy when operating SHA vehicles
- drive defensively as opposed to offensively
- maintain a safe distance between their vehicles and others
- adjust speed and driving depending upon weather and driving conditions
- yield to pedestrians
- wear seatbelts, including all passengers
- use mirrors
- follow doctors' or pharmacists' directions regarding driving vehicles while using prescribed or over the counter medications which may affect driving
- use directional lights when making turns
- back in and drive out whenever possible (This minimizes blind spots and having to back into traffic.) Backing accidents are frequent causes of bodily injury and property damage. Before backing up a vehicle always check for pedestrians and objects behind or alongside the vehicle. Back up slowly.
- participate in driver safety training programs and/or remedial driver training when directed by the SHA.
- Keep vehicles clean and in good safe working order.
- Park vehicles on designated SHA property when not in use.
- Report any problems found immediately to the Maintenance Supervisor.

Drivers are **forbidden from:**

- violating the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or this Vehicle Safety Policy
- operating vehicles under the influence of alcohol and/or non-prescription drugs
- transporting liquor or firearms
- picking up passengers other than SHA employees or business clients

- operating in a reckless or aggressive manner
- modifying SHA vehicles, unless authorized to do so
- smoking in SHA vehicles
- affixing bumper stickers, decals, etc. This excludes inspection stickers, oil change reminders, fleet vehicle numbering, etc. as required by law or authorized by the SHA.
- carrying loads or towing anything that has not been properly secured.

## **Vehicle Safety and Maintenance:**

Drivers should check the following items **regularly**:

Brakes, lights, horn, back up warning device (where applicable), windshield, mirrors, and seatbelts.

Report any changes in the sound or smell of the exhaust, vibrations or steering problems, strange noises, brake problems, transmission slipping, parking brake operation, etc.

Tire pressure, engine oil level, windshield washer fluid level, condition of tires, exhaust system, tailgate (where applicable), fire extinguishers & first aid kits, and body for damage.

To ensure that all vehicles are in proper working order, the Maintenance Supervisor shall perform vehicle inspections quarterly. The Maintenance Supervisor is responsible for the maintenance of all vehicles, including scheduling of all service, maintenance, repairs, state inspections, insurance adjuster inspections, etc. Maintenance shall be performed on a mileage and/or time basis determined by the Owners' Manuals and good judgment.

The Maintenance Supervisor shall keep records for all vehicles documenting oil changes, air filter changes, preventive maintenance, tire rotations and replacements, front end alignments, and any other repairs either mechanical or cosmetic.

## **Compliance:**

The Maintenance Supervisor shall:

- ensure that all SHA employees are in compliance with the Salem Housing Authority's Vehicle Safety Policy.
- investigate fully and report all accidents and/or violations of the policy and immediately forward all required information to the Executive Secretary and the Executive Director.
- schedule safety meetings annually to review safety procedures and policies and schedule driver education refresher courses at least annually and to perform ride along safety checks periodically.

## **In Case of an Accident:**

Employees must report any accident, theft, or damage involving an SHA vehicle or a personal vehicle used on SHA business to their supervisor, regardless of the extent of damage or lack of

injuries. The supervisor will in turn report it to the Executive Director and the Executive Secretary. Such reports must be made as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four hours after the incident. Employees are expected to cooperate fully with authorities in the event of an accident.

There are Vehicle Accident Packets in the glove compartment of all SHA vehicles. The information in these packets outlines the proper procedures to follow, information to gather, and forms to complete when drivers are involved in an accident. All employees must familiarize themselves with this information so that they are able to provide the required information in the event of an accident.

Drivers must take all necessary steps to protect their lives and the lives of others. Drivers should call the police immediately in the event of injury to any of the parties involved, if either of the vehicles is disabled, if the other driver or passengers are unruly, or in the judgment of the employees under any other conditions that the situation warrants. It is always better to err on the side of caution and drivers should call the police if they are unsure.

At the scene of an accident, drivers must not assume or admit fault. Others will determine liability and negligence after a thorough investigation. The only parties that employees should discuss an accident with are SHA officials, a representative of the SHA's insurance company, and law enforcement.

Information that must be gathered is detailed in the Vehicle Accident Packets. Employees must follow the directions in the Vehicle Accident Packet in their vehicles' glove compartments. Important information to obtain from the other driver and to give to the other driver is:

- Date, time and location of the accident
- Description of the accident (how it happened, parties involved, damage, injuries, your speed, driving conditions, etc.)
- Diagram of the accident
- Information on the occupants of both vehicles
- Response by emergency personnel, any citations issued, your vehicle number
- Description of the damage to vehicles and property
- Information from the other driver (full name, address, home, work, and cellular telephone numbers, license number, year make, color, and registration of other vehicle(s), and name of insurance carrier
- If the other driver is not the owner of the vehicle, get the same information about the driver.
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of any witnesses.

### **Violation of the Vehicle Safety Policy:**

Violation of the SHA's Vehicle Safety Policy and/or any Massachusetts General Laws will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination as outlined in Article 26 of the Progressive Discipline section of the Agreement By and Between the Salem Housing Authority and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 93.

Should an employee's record fall into our insurance carrier's guidelines of an unacceptable driver, his/her employment may be terminated.

Drivers shall be held personally responsible for any violations which occur, including written warnings, tickets, fines, towing, etc.

Drivers will be notified of all accidents reported to the Insurance Co. and the findings of such.

### **Types of Policy Violations**

The following are examples of some violations and the level of severity:

- **Type A**  
Includes but is not limited to:  
Driving While Intoxicated, Driving Under the Influence, Operating While Intoxicated, Operating Under the Influence, Refusing Substance Test, Reckless Driving, Manslaughter, Hit & Run, Eluding a Police Officer, any Felony, License Suspension, Driving While License Suspended and Failure to Report an Accident.
- **Type B**  
Includes at fault vehicle accidents.
- **Type C**  
Includes all moving violations not classified as Type A or Type B such as:  
Speeding, Improper Lane Change, Failure to Yield, Running Red Lights or Stop Signs, etc.
- **Type D**  
Includes all non-moving violations such as Illegal Parking, etc.  
Violation of any other requirements of this Policy.

### **Penalties:**

#### **Termination:**

- One or more Type A violation.
- Two or more Type B violations in preceding 24 months
- Two or more Type C Violations in preceding 24 months.

#### **Probation (6 months):**

- One Type B Violation in preceding 24 months
- One Type C violations in preceding 24 months
- Two Type D violations in preceding 24 months. The Executive Director, at her discretion, may place an employee on probation.

**Requirement to attend an SHA insurance company sponsored safe driving class if the employee experiences violations in the interim period of the annual safe driving refresher course . The employee shall attend such class on his/her own time at no cost to the employee.**

This policy will be reviewed by SHA management to ensure full implementation and compliance.  
This policy may be amended.

Ratified by AFSCME Local 93 Union on: April 22, 2008

Adopted by the SHA Board of Directors on: March 18, 2008

---

SALEM HOUSING AUTHORITY, Chairman  
John A. Boris

---

AFSCME AFL-CIO Council 93 Union President  
Richard W. Osgood

File: ac vehicle safety 1 policy union

3-18-08