Official Use of State Vehicles – Public Perception

Official Use of State Vehicles

California Code of Regulations §559.800, Use of State-Owned Vehicles – Definitions, limits the use of State vehicles to official use only.

Because it is difficult, if not impossible, to precisely and conclusively define "official business" Structure Construction (SC) must rely heavily on the good judgment and integrity of its employees. For instance, the use of State vehicles within the job limits during working hours is a clear-cut example of official use. However, the operation of State vehicles before and/or after working hours, or away from places directly or indirectly related to the job may under some circumstances be perceived by the public as private or personal use.

Employees will be permitted to drive a State vehicle from a jobsite to their dwelling under authority of an approved Home Storage Permit. See the following for additional information:

California Code of Regulations, Title 3 2, Article 15, Section 599.808
DD-28-R3, Vehicle Home Storage Permits
DD 111-R1, Use of State Vehicles
State Administrative Manual, Section 4109
Use of State Vehicle Guidelines
Vehicle Home Storage Permit (VHSP) Guidelines

It is recognized that employees assigned to construction projects, who are away from their place of residence and away from their means of private transportation, whether during or after working hours, need to obtain meals and occasionally other necessary items of personal use. Structure Construction sanctions the reasonable use of State vehicles to obtain personal necessities where State vehicles are the employee's sole means of transportation. Use of State vehicles for reasons other than to obtain personal necessities (as they may occur while the employee is dependent on a State vehicle) is not permitted.

Structure Construction employees are reminded that the use of State vehicles is subject to public scrutiny and that allegations of misuse will occasionally be made. Therefore, when possible, a State vehicle should not be operated when there is appearance of
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misuse, even though the employee is able to show that the use of the vehicle is legitimate.

According to Management Memo 06-06 State Vehicle Utilization Standards, in the section on Misuse of State Vehicles:

The operation of a State vehicle is a highly visible activity that deserves the attention of each State agency. The public’s awareness of these vehicles and their concern about proper use has been heightened by the current economic situation. Each State agency should maintain knowledge of the rules and regulations cited in the reference section of this memorandum, for example:

- State motor vehicles shall be used only in the conduct of State business.
- Commuting in State vehicles is allowed only in compliance with specific guidelines and all costs must be reimbursed.
- A “Home Storage Permit” is required if a State vehicle is frequently kept overnight at or in the vicinity of an employee’s home.
- Carrying in the vehicle any persons other than those directly involved with official State business is prohibited unless permission is obtained in advance for each trip by the employee’s supervisor.
- State agencies and employees are responsible for properly reporting personal use of State provided vehicles—considered compensation by the Internal Revenue Service and Franchise Tax Board.

State vehicles, must be locked at all times, when parked and left unattended.

Structure Representatives (SR) must make certain that all field personnel assigned to their projects are thoroughly familiar with the rules governing the proper use of State motor vehicles. Disciplinary action will be taken in cases of misuse of State-owned and leased automobiles. Employees are also liable to the State for any loss due to misuse of State-owned vehicles.