



# Private Vehicle Use Policy

**INTRODUCTION** Hunter Region Landcare Network often requires employees to use their own vehicles for work purposes. Safe vehicle use and operation is a priority for Hunter Region Landcare Network, along with the safety of our people and community.

**PURPOSE** This policy governs the use of private vehicles for authorised Hunter Region Landcare Network business. This policy outlines the matters to be considered when using a private motor vehicle for Hunter Region Landcare Network business travel and the procedures to claim reimbursement for such use.

**CODE OF CONDUCT** While driving vehicles for work purposes, staff must comply with traffic legislation, be conscious of road safety and demonstrate safe driving and other good road safety habits. The following actions while driving vehicles for work purposes will be viewed as serious breaches of conduct and dismissal may be a consequence:

- Drinking or under the influence of drugs while driving;
- Driving while disqualified, or not correctly licensed;
- Reckless or dangerous driving causing death or injury;
- Failing to stop after a crash;
- Demerit points leading to suspension of a licence;
- Any actions which warrant suspension of a licence.

## **POLICY** I. RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EMPLOYEE

Staff who are driving their own vehicles for work purposes will:

- Ensure they hold a current driver licence for the class of vehicle they are driving;
- Immediately notify the Network Committee if their driver licence has been suspended or cancelled, or has had limitations placed upon it;
- Be responsible and accountable for their actions when driving vehicles;
- Display the highest level of professional conduct when driving;
- Assess hazards while driving and anticipate 'what if' scenarios;
- Comply with all traffic legislation when driving a vehicle;
- Follow the crash procedures outlined in this policy;
- Ensure the vehicle they are driving is registered and fully insured; and
- Provide the Network Committee with current driver's licence,

registration and insurance details whenever details change.

## **POLICY CONTINUED:**

In addition, it is required that all drivers:

- Take regular and adequate rest breaks;
- Stop when tired;
- Plan the journey, taking into consideration pre-journey work duties, the length of the trip and post-journey commitments;
- Stay overnight if driving time and non-driving duties exceed 10 hours in one day;
- Take breaks every two hours;
- Use daytime running lights on the open road.

## **II. RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EMPLOYER**

The employer will be responsible for maintaining up-to-date records including:

- All relevant driver's licence information including class, expiry date and licence number;
- Current residential address and telephone number;
- All relevant vehicle registration details including date of expiry;
- All relevant third party and comprehensive insurance details including; insurance company, policy numbers and expiry dates.

The employer will not require staff to drive under conditions which are unsafe and/or likely to create an unsafe environment, physical distress, fatigue, etc.

The employer will encourage safe driving behavior by:

- Not paying staff speeding or other infringement fines;
- Discouraging the use of mobile phones in vehicles;
- Encouraging the use of trains, taxis and buses whenever necessary.

The employer will require that all staff who use vehicles in the course of their work carry a Type C First Aid Kit.

## **III. REQUIREMENT FOR PRIVATE VEHICLE TO BE COVERED BY INSURANCE**

Staff should ensure that their vehicle is legally registered, roadworthy and appropriately insured.

- Hunter Region Landcare Network will only reimburse a staff member for use of a private vehicle for business travel where the staff member certifies, at the time of submitting their claim, that the vehicle is covered by Comprehensive Insurance and Compulsory Third-Party Insurance policies.
- If a private vehicle is damaged whilst being used for Hunter Region Landcare Network business purposes any 'normal' excess insurance charges prescribed by the insurer will be reimbursed by Hunter Region Landcare Network unless they include an amount prescribed by the insurer as 'punitive' excess charges.
- Hunter Region Landcare Network will only reimburse excess where a claim has been made on the insurer and the insurer has

- deducted an excess at settlement.
- All claims are to be submitted in writing to the Chairperson and must be supported by evidence of excess deduction applied by vehicle insurer.
- Hunter Region Landcare Network will not accept any claims for damages other than in respect of insurance excess.

#### **IV. REIMBURSEMENT FOR USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLE**

- Hunter Region Landcare Network applies the Australian Taxation Office's 'cents per kilometre' rate for motor vehicles which from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 is 66 cents per kilometre. Any changes to the rate per business kilometre are available on the Australian Taxation Office's website.
- All claims must be submitted on a Motor Vehicle Allowance Claim Form and be approved by Hunter Region Landcare Network.
- Claim forms should be submitted within one month of the vehicle usage being claimed.
- When claiming at the ATO's "cents per kilometre" rate or below PAYG tax is not deducted and the amount will be shown as an "allowance" on the staff member's annual Payment Summary.
- Whilst PAYG is not deducted at this rate, the allowance will be assessable for taxation should the total annual kilometres reimbursed exceed 5000kms. It is the responsibility of the staff member to keep their own records.
- If employed under an Award which specifies an allowance greater than the ATO rate, then the equivalent to that rate is tax free but the balance is to be taxed.

#### **V. PREVENTING WEED SEED DISPERSAL**

- When visiting a landholder's property, drive the vehicle to the landholder's house or other agreed meeting place only.
- Discuss with the landholder whether they would prefer to drive you around the property in their own vehicle to minimise weed seed spread from the lease vehicle onto the property and to avoid picking up seeds around the property.
- If a wash-down facility exists on farm, use the facility to remove weed seeds.
- Where this is not possible, use the nearest wash-down facility to rid the lease vehicle of weed seeds.

#### **VI. ACCIDENTS**

At the scene of an accident, employees should call an ambulance if any person is seriously injured. Dial 000 or, if using a mobile phone, dial 112.

The police should also be notified immediately in the event of personal injury or fatality, if all drivers do not provide personal details, if any of the motor vehicles need to be towed from the scene of the accident, or if damage to vehicle or property is estimated to be

over \$2500. If the police are unable to attend at the scene, the employee should report to the nearest Police Station and make a written statement.

Record the full names, addresses, workplace details, telephone numbers, insurance and registration of all drivers, passengers, witnesses and the other vehicles involved in the accident. No discussion should be entered into whatsoever as to the negligence of either party. Where the vehicle is to be towed, ensure that the tow truck operator supplies you with documentation confirming the tow and the details of where the vehicle will be taken.

The Supervisor of the employee should be advised as soon as possible after the accident so that the necessary insurance arrangements can be made. An Incident Report Form & a Motor Vehicle Damage / Accident Form must be completed and returned to Hunter Region Landcare Network as soon as possible. This notification must be made irrespective of which party was at fault.

An insurance claim form must also be completed and returned to the employee's Supervisor.

#### **VII. FINES AND TRAFFIC INFRINGEMENTS**

Parking and other traffic fines associated with the use of company owned vehicles are the responsibility of the employee using the vehicle at the time the infringement occurs. However, in the event that the fine is imposed due to the un-roadworthy condition of the vehicle and the employee was unaware of the vehicle's condition, the employee will not be held liable.

The employee that is driving the vehicle is to admit to any infringement and be responsible for the payment of the fine. Fines unallocated to a specific driver are charged to Hunter Region Landcare Network and this is considered to be an act subject to disciplinary action.

Any outstanding fines that are paid by Hunter Region Landcare Network will be deducted from the employee's pay.

**RESPONSIBILITIES** It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that the requirements of this policy are complied with.

These policy and procedures shall be reviewed every year by the Committee.

**AUTHORISATION:**

This version was approved on: 19/04/2018  
This version takes effect on: 19/04/2018  
Authorised by: The Network Committee  
Chairperson: Leslie Pearson  
Chairperson signature:

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of June 2014. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Landcare NSW or the user's independent advisor.

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Department of Primary Industries

