E-PME *Enlisted* PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

# Government Vehicle Usage 3.C.02

**Training Objective(s): OPERATE** a government motor vehicle.

## Why You Need to Know This

In the course of performing your official duties you may be required from time-to-time to operate different types of Coast Guard-owned motor vehicles. As the operator of these vehicles, it will be your responsibility to make sure you are familiar with all of safety and procedural requirements, to include all applicable regulations pertaining to the authorized and unauthorized use of government-owned vehicles in general. In addition, you should be aware that requirements for training and licensure vary depending on the type of vehicle you are operating. Therefore, it will also be up to you to find out what type of special skills and/or experience may be required before you attempt to operate a vehicle you may not be familiar with.

This lesson will provide information to help you understand YOUR responsibilities while operating official government-owned vehicles and equipment.

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## Topics Covered

This section will cover the following topics:

- Authorized Use of Government-Owned Vehicles
- Unauthorized Use of Government-Owned Vehicles
- License Requirements And Driving Privileges
- Safety Considerations
- Violations, Accidents, Mishaps and Damages

At the end of this lesson you will be required to participate in a learning activity. You are encouraged to first review the learning activity and the sign off requirements located in the "**You and Your Supervisor**" section of this lesson. Reviewing this information before you begin the lesson will allow you to take proper notes and focus on key learning points.

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## Authorized Use of Government-Owned Vehicles

Government-owned motor vehicles operated by employees or contractors shall be used **for official purposes only**. This includes transportation of government employees, documents, equipment, or supplies. Employees or contractors shall not authorize others to use government-owned motor vehicles for other than official purposes. Each employee or contractor is responsible for his or her own transportation to the work place.

- **Official Functions**. Transportation of military and civilian personnel may be provided to and from official functions (including those which occur in the evening) provided that such transportation begins and ends at the work place or other official duty stations. With the exception of the Commandant, under no circumstances would it be appropriate to use a government vehicle to pick up or return a passenger to any location other their workplace.
- **Use of a GV while on Temporary Duty (TAD) orders**: Employees may use GVs for TAD travel. Decision to allow this use is based on availability, economic feasibility, and unit Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The vehicle cannot be used for any local trips and employees cannot make unofficial stops enroute.
- **Use of GV other than mission related:** Limited support for non-mission related programs is permitted provided that operational readiness does not suffer. Transportation of non-government employee's is not authorized except for guest speakers at official CG functions and other official guests. Prior to using a government vehicle for a non-mission related activity, consult the servicing Legal Office.
- **Public Ceremonies**: Transportation may be provided for civilian and military personnel participating in or attending official public ceremonies, parades and other events that promote Coast Guard relations with the public.
- **Transportation of a spouse:** A government vehicle is permissible for the transportation of an employee and spouse together to and from the duty location (office) to an official function in which spouses were invited.
- **Government Contractor**: Use of GVs by government contractors depends on the terms and conditions of each contract.

**Unauthorized Use of Government-Owned Vehicles**

Unauthorized use of government-owned vehicles includes use for non-duty related purposes, unauthorized side-trips while on official business and transportation of civilians not on government business including family members of employees. Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:

- Luncheons and office functions - Use of the government vehicle is not authorized for such informal gatherings as luncheons and "send off" functions.
- Transportation of non-official passengers - This creates the possibility of tort claims and public criticism and shall be discouraged. Any such transportation must be without expense to the government and must not result in the delay of Government business by the taking of circuitous routes.
- Permissive TAD travel - The government is not obligated to provide transportation for members on permissive TAD orders. Therefore, use of government vehicles is not authorized
- Hitch-hikers - Picking up hitch-hikers or otherwise giving rides to strangers is prohibited when operating a government vehicle.

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**License Requirements and Driving Privileges**

The license requirements and driving privileges for the operation of government-owned motor vehicles is listed below:

- All operators shall have a valid state driver's license.
- No employee shall be authorized to drive a Coast Guard-owned vehicle while his/her state license or driving privileges have been suspended or revoked.
- Commanding Officers may revoke an employee's privilege to operate any or all government motor vehicles whenever they question the employee's ability to operate a vehicle safely.
- An OF-346, U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card, shall be issued when a member is required to operate a vehicle or vehicle trailer combination that requires special skills and experience.
- Before a member shall be allowed to operate a vehicle-trailer combination, he or she shall complete all specified training. In addition the member must complete the requisite Performance Qualification Standards (PQS) by demonstrated proficiency operating the required combination of vehicles and also obtain prior authorization from the command.

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## Safety Considerations

Safety should always be your first priority when operating any type vehicle. The list below contains several important safety considerations you MUST follow before, during and after operating a Coast Guard-owned vehicle:

**Before:**

- Determine if you'll need a special license or additional training.
- Visually inspect the vehicle for any obvious safety concerns, e.g.: badly worn tires, broken mirrors, missing or broken instrument controls, and/or fluid leaks.
- Find out how to fill the fuel tank, the type of fuel required and how and where to make the purchase.
- Identify who you'll need to contact  if I have any questions or concerns.

**During:**

- SEATBELTS must be worn at all times by the operator and all passengers.
- Text messaging and/or talking on a cell phone while operating a vehicle is strictly prohibited.
- Smoking is prohibited in all government vehicles at all times.

**After:**

- Upon return of the vehicle, you should top-off the fuel and clean out any trash or refuse items to be discarded.
- Report any problems/safety concerns directly to the vehicle manager or local motor pool manager.

## Violations, Accidents, Mishaps, and Damages

By law, an agency cannot use government funds to pay fines for traffic violations regardless of the circumstances.

Operators shall report any motor vehicle accident/mishap and/ or damage to vehicles and trailers, and/or loss of license plates, as soon as possible to motor vehicle mangers and their supervisors.

If you are involved in an accident you should immediately take the following actions:

- Check for injured persons
- Check for witnesses
- Notify your supervisor
- Call the police
- Obtain information from other drivers
- Secure the vehicle and its contents

If you are the DRIVER of a government vehicle during an accident, you MUST file a “motor vehicle accident report” form SF-91. In order to properly complete this form, you will need driver and vehicle information from all parties involved in the accident, such as name, address, driver’s license, and vehicle information. If you can take pictures, do so as it will help you document the event.

If you are a PASSENGER in a government vehicle during an accident you MUST fill out a “Statement of Witness” form SF-94.

A Coast Guard member or employee may be held personally liable for expenses incurred through his or her unauthorized use of a government motor vehicle including accident damage or damage to personal and/or government property.

Military members are subject to disciplinary action for unofficial use of government motor vehicles in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

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## Learning Activity

To complete this requirement you will need to check-out, operate and return a government vehicle to motor pool or your unit’s vehicle manager.

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## For You and Your Supervisor

In order to meet the sign-off requirement for this lesson **YOU** must first have a valid state drivers license to operate a motor vehicle and then perform the following:

1. Check-out, operate and return a government vehicle to motor pool or your unit's vehicle manager.

Before signing off on this requirement your **SUPERVISOR** must:

1. Verify member has a valid state or government driver's license.
2. Follows all safety precautions.
3. Obeys all local traffic regulations.
4. Returns the vehicle in proper condition.

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## References

The references used to develop this lesson can be found at CG Directives (CG-612), www.uscg.mil/directives:

- Motor Vehicle Manual, COMDTINST M11240(series)
- Coast Guard Safety and Environmental Health Manual, COMDTINST M5100.47(series)

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