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## INTRODUCTION

Criterion Four of the Green Communities Program states that communities must purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable. The purpose behind this criterion is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by municipal vehicles, which has a positive impact on the environment and saves municipalities money.

As background, the US Environmental Protection Agency's Green Vehicle Guide states that:

*Vehicles with lower fuel economy create more carbon dioxide - the most prevalent greenhouse gas - than vehicles with higher fuel economy. Every gallon of gasoline your vehicle burns puts about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere because air has weight and mass, and it takes a lot of it to burn a gallon of gasoline. One of the most important things you can do to reduce your contribution to global warming is to buy a vehicle with higher fuel economy. The difference between 25 miles per gallon and 20 miles per gallon can amount to the prevention of 10 tons of carbon dioxide over a vehicle's lifetime. Buying a more fuel-efficient vehicle will also help to reduce our nation's dependence on fossil fuels. And of course, you will save money by having to fuel up less often.*

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## COMPLIANCE

To meet this criterion, municipalities need to adopt by action of the local official or body with authority to enact municipal policies a written Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy that requires municipal departments and divisions to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (**See Appendix A, model policy**). Both general government and school districts are required to enact a fuel-efficient vehicle policy for a municipality to meet this requirement, and letters documenting adoption must be provided and signed by the appropriate municipal authorities, as noted below. Letters from other municipal officials are not acceptable.

For letters from the general government and school district:

- **General Government** – The general government must provide a letter from the Chief Executive Officer of the city or town stating that it has adopted the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy.

The Chief Executive Officer is defined as the manager in any city having a manager and in any town having a city form of government, the Mayor in any other city, and the Board of Selectmen in any other town unless some other officer or body is designated to perform the functions of a Chief Executive Officer under the provisions of a local charter or laws having the force of a charter.

- **Public School Districts** - For a municipality to meet this requirement, its public school district must provide a letter from the School Superintendent stating that it has adopted the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy. Please note that even if the school has no vehicles, or only has vehicles that are exempt from the Policy, adoption of the Policy by the school must be provided since the school may acquire non-exempt vehicles in the future.
- **Regional School Districts** – Regional School Districts are not required to be part of a municipality’s Green Communities designation application. However, for regional school districts that wish to be part of a municipality’s Green Communities designation (with approval by the municipality), the regional school district must also adopt the Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy and provide a letter from the Superintendent stating that it has adopted the Policy.

Sample adoption letters are provided in Appendices B and C.

In addition, the municipality is required to develop and maintain a vehicle inventory for all four-wheeled vehicles, both exempt and non-exempt. A plan for replacing non-exempt vehicles with vehicles that meet the fuel efficiency ratings below must also be developed and maintained. This inventory of all vehicles and replacement plan for non-exempt vehicles must include school vehicles. The fuel efficiency ratings are set to ensure that at least five or more automatic transmission models of mass production are available for sale in Massachusetts (all from affordable brands; no luxury brands). Based on 2019 EPA data, vehicles are to have a combined city and highway MPG no less than the following:

- 2 wheel drive car: 30 MPG
- 4 wheel drive car: 29 MPG
- 2 wheel drive van 22 MPG
- 4 wheel drive van 20 MPG
- 2 wheel drive pick-up truck: 21 MPG
- 4 wheel drive pick-up truck: 18 MPG
- 2 wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 24 MPG
- 4 wheel drive sport utility vehicle: 21 MPG

Hybrid or electric vehicles in these vehicle classes will meet these criteria.

***To inform your purchasing decisions, information on makes and models of vehicles, including fuel economy comparisons, can be found at: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov> We encourage use of this valuable resource for informing decisions.***

***In addition, many vehicles that meet the above criteria can be found on statewide contract VEH110, “VEH110 - Light and Medium-Duty Vehicles,” located in [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com)***

(Also see [VEH110 Contract User Guide](#))

**\*NOTE:** The EPA maintains a database on vehicle fuel efficiency that is updated occasionally throughout the year, as new models are released. As increasing numbers of fuel efficient vehicle models are released, the minimum combined MPG requirements of Criterion 4 will be revised upwards. **Thus, cities and towns must check the Criterion 4 Guidance for updates prior to ordering new vehicles.**

In order to encourage efficient driving practices, municipalities should implement a monitoring system to record miles driven, fuel consumption, etc. for each vehicle in every department. A monitoring system will help facilitate the municipality's reduction in aggregate energy consumption. If a municipality provides fuel for fleet vehicles, it should consider using a universal fleet card that provides a monitoring system for tracking fuel use.

## VEHICLE RECYCLING

Recycling of vehicles – i.e., moving a previously purchased and used vehicle from one municipal department to another municipal department in need of a vehicle is only allowed if the vehicle being recycled to a new department is more fuel efficient than the vehicle it is replacing.

## EXEMPTIONS

Vehicles that are exempt from the municipal Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy include off-road vehicles, motorcycles and heavy-duty vehicles. Heavy-Duty vehicles are defined as having a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds. Examples include fire engines, ambulances, and some public works vehicles.

In addition, police cruisers are currently exempt from this criterion due to market availability. **While these vehicles remain exempt from the policy, municipalities are encouraged to consider acquiring hybrid and zero-emission models as they replace existing cruisers.** Police and fire department administrative vehicles **MUST** meet fuel efficient requirements.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If a vehicle is found on [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov), then it has a GVWR of less than 8,500 pounds, is **NOT** a heavy-duty vehicle and is **NOT** exempt.

## ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

If a municipality has a vehicle fleet composed of all exempt vehicles (e.g. heavy-duty vehicles and/or police cruisers), it must propose alternative means of reducing vehicle fuel consumption in order to comply with this criterion. Examples of Alternative Compliance include having in place policies and programs that reduce vehicle fuel consumption such as: the installation of idle-reduction devices on police cruisers and/or trucks, installation of electric vehicle charging stations, after-market hybrid conversion of existing vehicles, fleet right-sizing, adoption of an anti-idling policy, and/or use of alternative fuels such as biodiesel blends from B-5 to B-20 for heavy duty fleets. While DOER encourages policies such as these for all municipalities, cities and towns that do not have any vehicles in their fleet subject to the MPG criteria **MUST** provide some form of Alternative Compliance. In addition, a municipality must note that, should it

acquire non-exempt vehicles in the future, it is committed to purchasing non-exempt vehicles that meet the most recent guidance for Criterion 4 published by the MA Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division. See Appendix D for a model Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy for Alternative Compliance.

An inventory of all vehicles must be provided.

**Please note:** Even if a municipality has only one non-exempt vehicle, it must have a Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy in place. Alternative Compliance for meeting Criterion 4 can only be used if ALL vehicles in the fleet are exempt.

#### **APPLICABILITY**

All communities seeking Green Communities designation must adopt a fuel efficient vehicle policy that reflects the most recent MPG criteria published in this Guidance. If a municipality has adopted a policy that reflects old MPG criteria, it must have done so within the six months immediately preceding issuance of revised Guidance in order to qualify for credit under this criterion when applying for designation.

**All designated Green Communities must review their Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy on an annual basis and ensure that their policies reflect DOER's most recently published MPG minimums. The Annual Reporting required of Green Communities will include this information.**

#### **Future Financial Considerations**

Contingency language regarding potential future budgetary constraints in Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policies will not be accepted. DOER recognizes that predicting and committing future budgets is difficult and will work with municipalities on a case-by-case basis should they encounter difficulty complying with their Fuel Efficient Policy due to a budget issue in a particular year.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

#### **Websites:**

[www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities](http://www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities)

[www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov)

Statewide contract **VEH110 - "Purchase of Light and Medium-Duty Vehicles"**

located on [Commbuys](#)

[Contact GC Coordinator](#)

## APPENDIX A

*This model policy was prepared to assist cities and towns in developing a fuel efficient vehicle policy. This model policy is intended for illustration purposes. Communities are free to utilize the format provided.*

Municipality / School District	
FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLE POLICY	
Effective Date	
Revisions	
Board of Selectman Approval Date	
School Superintendent Approval Date	

## DEFINITIONS

**Combined city and highway MPG (EPA Combined fuel economy):** Combined Fuel Economy means the fuel economy from driving a combination of 55 percent city and 45 Percent highway miles and is calculated as follows:

$$= 1 / ((0.55 / \text{City MPG}) + (0.45 / \text{highway MPG}))$$

**Drive System:** The manner in which mechanical power is directly transmitted from the drive shaft to the wheels. The following codes are used in the drive field:

- AWD = All Wheel Drive: 4 -wheel drive automatically controlled by the vehicle power train system
- 4WD = 4-Wheel Drive: driver selectable 4-wheel drive with 2-wheel drive option
- 2WD = 2-Wheel Drive

**Heavy-duty vehicle:** Vehicles with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds

## POLICY STATEMENT

In an effort to reduce the (city/town/school district/other local entity)'s fuel consumption and energy costs the (policy making body) hereby adopts a policy to purchase only fuel efficient vehicles to meet this goal.

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## PURPOSE

To establish a requirement that the (city/town/school district/other local entity) purchase only fuel efficient vehicles for municipal/school use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.

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## APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all divisions and departments of the (city/town/school district/other local entity). It applies to road-worthy passenger vehicles, pick up and utility trucks, and SUVs. It does not apply to specialized equipment or off-road vehicles.

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## GUIDELINES

All departments/divisions shall purchase only fuel efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.

The (city/town/school district/other local entity) will maintain an annual vehicle inventory for ALL vehicles and a plan for replacing any non-exempt vehicles with vehicles that meet, at a minimum, the fuel efficiency ratings contained in the most recent guidance for Criterion 4 published by the MA Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division.

It is the responsibility of the (city/town/school district/other local entity) to check the Green Communities Division's Guidance for Criterion 4 for updates prior to ordering replacement vehicles.

### ***Exemptions***

- Heavy-duty vehicles: examples include fire-trucks, ambulances, and some public works trucks that meet the definition of heavy-duty vehicle.

### ***Inventory***

The following information shall be included in a vehicle inventory list and said list shall be updated on an annual basis and provided to the Green Communities Division:

Model	Make	Model Year	Year/month Purchased	Drive System: 2 WD, 4WD or AWD	> 8500 pounds? (Y or N)	Exempt or non-exempt	MPG Rating	Vehicle Function
Ford	F250	2016	08/2017	4WD	Y	Exempt	N/A	DPW - Maintenance

Ford	Focus	2014	07/2014	2WD	N	NE	32	Assessors
International	Dump Truck	2011	09/2011	RWD	Y	Exempt	N/A	Sander/Snowplowing

NOTE: Departments/Divisions may use EPA combined MPG estimates or actual combined MPG.

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## **FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN**

All non-exempt vehicles shall be replaced with fuel efficient vehicles that adhere to the most recent Green Communities Criterion 4 Guidance. Vehicles shall be replaced when they are no longer operable and will not be recycled from one municipal department to another unless the recycled replacement is more efficient than the vehicle it is replacing. In addition, when replacing exempt vehicles, the function of the vehicle will be reviewed for potential replacement with a more fuel efficient vehicle, including a fuel efficient non-exempt vehicle.

(city/town/school district/other local entity) will review on an annual basis the Vehicle Inventory, along with the Green Communities Criterion 4 Guidance, to plan for new acquisitions as part of planning for the new fiscal year budget.

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## **QUESTIONS / ENFORCEMENT**

All other inquiries should be directed to the department/division responsible for fleet management and/or fleet procurement. This policy is enforced by the Chief Administrative Officer and/or his/her designee(s).

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## **Appendix B**

### Sample town adoption letter

Letter must be on Town Letterhead

MA Department of Energy Resources  
Green Communities Division  
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 1040  
Boston, MA 02114

{date of letter}

At a public Board of Selectmen meeting held on [DATE], the Board of Selectmen voted to adopt the attached Fuel Efficiency Vehicle Policy.

Thank you.

Signature and Typed Name of Chair

## **Appendix C**

### Sample School Adoption Letter

Letter must be on School letterhead

MA Department of Energy Resources  
Green Communities Division  
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 1040  
Boston, MA 02114

{date of letter}

Please be advised that the Public Schools of [Town] hereby adopted the attached Fuel Efficiency Vehicle Policy.

Thank you.

Signature and Typed Name of Superintendent of Schools

## Appendix D

*This model policy was prepared to assist cities and towns in developing an alternative compliance fuel efficient vehicle policy. This model policy is intended for illustration purposes. Communities are free to utilize the format provided.*

(city/town/school district/other local entity name) **Alternative Compliance Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy**

FEVP Effective Date	
Date of Municipal Approval	
Date of Board of Selectmen Approval	
Date of School Superintendent Approval	

## INTRODUCTION

Criterion Four of the Green Communities Program states that a Green Community must purchase fuel efficient vehicles for municipal use, including schools, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable. (city/town/school district/other local entity name) currently owns XX vehicles for municipal use. All vehicles fall into the exempt status according to the Green Community's Criterion 4 guidance. (city/town/school district/other local entity name) has adopted this Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy (FEVP) to purchase the most fuel efficient vehicles for all departments/divisions whenever they become commercially available.

This policy is established to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, which in turn will have a positive impact on the environment and save tax dollars. Under this policy (city/town/school district/other local entity name) hereby establishes a monitoring system to help facilitate the municipality's reduction in vehicle consumption. (city/town/school district/other local entity name) XX will establish and oversee the monitoring system in conjunction with the town and school officials and staff as appropriate.

## ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

(city/town/school district/other local entity name) has all exempt vehicles (see attachment A, vehicle inventory). Therefore, (city/town/school district/other local entity) is seeking Alternative Compliance for Criterion 4 based on the following actions (must select at least two):

- 1) The annual miles driven (or hours used) and total fuel consumption will be determined starting in the municipal fiscal years of 20XX, beginning on July 1, 20XX. (city/town/school district/other local

*entity*) will review this information in September of each year for potential ways to reduce consumption, including: reducing vehicle miles traveled, replacing exempt vehicles with fuel efficient non-exempt vehicles, replacing exempt vehicles with more efficient exempt vehicles.

- 2) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* has adopted an anti-idling policy, in accordance with MGL chapter 90, Section 16A (see Attachment B) applicable to all municipal vehicles to reduce vehicle fuel consumption and emissions. All town employees who drive municipal vehicles have been given this policy.
- 3) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* commits to using biodiesel blended fuels in light, medium or heavy duty fleet vehicles.
- 4) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* commits to installing a Level II charging station at a publicly accessible location.
- 5) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* will pursue after-market conversion of existing vehicles, which includes modifying a vehicle or engine to operate using a different fuel or power source that which it was originally designed for. Many conventional vehicles can be converted to run on fuels like electricity, propane or natural gas, helping to reduce petroleum consumption and GHG emissions and often significantly increasing the fuel efficiency of the vehicle.
- 6) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* will install vehicle parts and/or equipment to conserve fuel. There are many technologies available that, when added to existing vehicles, can help save fuel, reduce emissions, and save money. This includes engine idle management systems, telematics, cab and/or engine block heaters, auxiliary power units, and using synthetic oils.
- 7) *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* commits to fleet right sizing, which refers to striking the optimal balance between fleet composition and operational requirements such that each asset within a fleet is not only fully utilized but the right size and type for the job. Right sizing is a management practice that can help vehicle fleet managers build and maintain sustainable, fuel efficient fleets. Fleet inventories often grow over time to include vehicles that are highly specialized, rarely used, or unsuitable for current applications.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

In an effort to reduce *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)*'s fuel consumption and energy costs, *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)*'s hereby adopts this policy to purchase the most fuel-efficient vehicles to meet this goal.

## **APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all divisions and departments of *(city/town/school district/other local entity name)*.

## **GUIDELINES**

All departments/divisions will purchase the most fuel efficient vehicles for municipal use (including police, fire and highway) whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.

*(city/town/school district/other local entity name)* will maintain an annual vehicle inventory for all vehicles and a plan for acquiring any non-exempt vehicles that meet, at a minimum, the fuel efficiency ratings contained in the most recent guidance for Criterion 4 published by the MA Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division. The fuel efficiency ratings contained therein are based on the most recently published US Environmental Protection Agency combined city and highway MPG ratings for vehicles. The most recent Green Communities Guidance for Criterion 4 will be checked for updates prior to ordering replacement vehicles.

### **Exemptions**

- Heavy-duty vehicles: examples include fire-trucks, ambulances, and some public works trucks that meet the definition of heavy-duty vehicle.
- As of the adoption date (above) police cruisers are exempt from this criterion. However, starting on July 1, 2023, police cruisers are no longer exempt and must adhere to the fuel efficiency ratings listed in the Criterion 4 guidance. Police and fire department administrative vehicles are NOT exempt and must meet fuel efficient requirements.

### **Inventory**

An inventory of all Town vehicles is contained in Attachment A and shall be updated on an annual basis.

### **FUEL EFFICIENT VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN**

Vehicles shall be replaced when they are no longer operable and will not be recycled from one municipal department to another unless the recycled replacement vehicle is more efficient than the vehicle it is replacing. In addition, when replacing exempt vehicles, the function of the vehicle will be reviewed for potential replacement with a more fuel efficient vehicle, including a fuel efficient non-exempt vehicle.

The Vehicle Inventory will be reviewed on an annual basis along with the Green Communities Criterion 4 Guidance to plan for new acquisitions as part of planning for the new fiscal year budget.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Combined City and Highway MPG (EPA Combined fuel economy): Combined Fuel Economy means the fuel economy from driving a combination of 45 percent city and 55 percent highway miles and is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Combined City and highway MPG} = \frac{1}{\left(\frac{0.45}{\text{CityMPG}}\right) + \left(\frac{0.55}{\text{HighwayMPG}}\right)}$$

Drive System: The manner in which mechanical power is directly transmitted from the drive shaft to the wheels. The following codes are used in the drive field:

- AWD = All Wheel Drive: four-wheel drive automatically controlled by the vehicle power train system
- 4WD = 4 Wheel Drive: driver selectable four-wheel drive with 2-wheel drive option
- 2WD = 2-wheel Drive

**Heavy-duty vehicle:** A vehicle with a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds.

## QUESTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

All inquiries should be directed to the department/division responsible for fleet management and/or fleet procurement. This fuel Efficient Vehicle Replacement Plan is enforced by the Chief Administrative Officer and/or his/her designee(s).

## ATTACHMENT A

(city/town/school district/other local entity name) MUNICIPAL VEHICLE INVENTORY

Make	Model	Model Year	Date Purchased (month/yr.)	Drive System	GVWR> 8,500 pounds? (Y or N)	Exempt or Non-Exempt (E or NE)	MPG Rating	Function
Ford		2004	11/04	4WD	Y	E		Ambulance
GMC	Yukon	1999	12/10	4WD	N	E	14	Fire Chief – emergency response
Ford	Crown Vic	2018	8/17	2WD	N	E	16	police cruiser

**ATTACHMENT B**

*This sample policy was taken from the MA DEP's idling reduction toolkit, found at <http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/community/depirkit.doc>.*

(city/town/school district/other local entity name)**ANTI-IDLING POLICY**

This policy applies to [Insert target audience: residents, municipal fleet, school] vehicles operated by or within the town/city of [name of municipality].

**OBJECTIVES**

- 1) To eliminate unnecessary idling of vehicles in order to reduce the community's exposure to exhaust from gasoline and diesel engines.
- 2) To educate and inform municipal employees and residents about the health and environmental effects of gasoline and diesel exhaust.

**PURPOSE**

Idling vehicles pollute the air and present several health and environmental hazards. Gasoline and diesel vehicles produce carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). Carbon monoxide causes respiratory distress and in high concentrations can be lethal; carbon dioxide is a primary contributor to global warming; and VOCs and NOx form ozone, ground-level smog and impair lung function. In addition, diesel exhaust contains fine particulate matter, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated as a likely carcinogen. The elderly, chronically ill and children are all particularly vulnerable to these health effects because their lung function is respectively decreased, impaired or still in development.

In addition, Massachusetts General Law (MGL Chapter 90, Section 16A) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) idling reduction regulation (310 CMR 7.11(1)(b)) both prohibit unnecessary vehicle idling by stating that the engine must be shut down if the vehicle will be stopped for more than five minutes. Exemptions include: 1) the vehicle is being serviced and the idling is required to repair the vehicle; or 2) the vehicle is making deliveries and needs to keep its engine running (to power refrigerators, for example); and, 3) the vehicle's accessory equipment needs to be powered, such as a fork lift or a truck's rear dump bed, or a wheelchair lift in a bus or van. To provide additional protections for children, MGL Chapter 90, Section 16B further restricts unnecessary idling in school zones.

In order to reduce the health and environmental effects of vehicle exhaust, comply with the state's idling reduction regulation and law, and decrease our use of fuel by reducing unnecessary idling, the following actions shall be implemented to the maximum extent practicable:

*[Municipality would insert specific actions it will implement in its Idling Reduction Campaign such as: posting of signs in public areas, educating municipal employees and residents, establishing best management practices for municipal vehicle operations, etc.]*

This policy is hereby approved by the [Governing Body], this [date], to eliminate unnecessary idling.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Authorized Official**