

## **FOI Request - Council Vehicle Use – 101003663558**

### **THE MORAY COUNCIL**

#### **POOL CAR SCHEME**

##### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Council's pool car scheme has been established following consideration of the financial cost of employee mileage claims and is primarily intended to be used for business journeys within the Moray area.

The fleet of pool cars are low emission, fuel efficient vehicles which contribute towards the Council's carbon reduction targets. Pool cars have comprehensive insurance and are taxed and maintained by the Council and used by employees to carry out their day to day work related journeys.

##### **2.0 SCOPE**

The pool car scheme is intended to apply to all employees although the deployment of pool cars is being implemented in phases. Employees will be consulted when they are to be included in the scheme. There may be some groups of staff, at some work locations where it is deemed financially inefficient or unfeasible to give access to pool cars. In such circumstances existing travel arrangements will apply.

Pool cars are primarily intended for work related journeys within Moray although it will be possible for employees to use a pool car for longer journeys should they wish to do so and if a pool car is available.

In the following circumstances employees will not be required to use pool cars:

- In services where pool cars have not been introduced
- When a pool car is unavailable
- If a health condition and/or disability leads an employee to require a specifically adapted, or specific type of vehicle and this is not available
- In emergency situations where speed of reaction is essential

##### **3.0 RULES OF THE SCHEME**

###### **3.1 General use**

Pool cars should be used for business journeys within Moray, when public transport is not an available or feasible option. Employees are able to claim mileage for using their own vehicle when public transport is unfeasible and a pool car is unavailable or the employee is not within scope (para, 2.0).

For journeys outwith Moray, public transport should be used where practical. Where this is not the case, employees have the option of booking a hire car. There is no reason why a pool car cannot be used for such journeys, if an employee wishes to do so, provided a suitable vehicle is available.

Employees are encouraged to share pool cars with colleagues when it is practical to do so, for example when attending a meeting in the same location. The online booking system will enable employees to view existing bookings in order to make arrangements to share cars.

### 3.2 Booking system

The online booking system, using the MS Outlook scheduler system, allows employees to view vehicle availability and book online. If you do not have access to this you should contact your Line Manager to seek authorisation. Your Line Manager is required to email the pool cars help desk to request your access to the Electronic Booking System - Pool Cars Help Desk: [poolcars@moray.gov.uk](mailto:poolcars@moray.gov.uk).

Pool cars can be booked up to a month in advance for a maximum of three days at a time. If bookings are required further in advance or for a longer time period, employees should contact the booking service (using the details shown above).

Employees are asked to cancel pool car bookings as soon as possible if a vehicle is no longer required. When using the online system employees will be able to cancel a booking online by logging onto the MS Outlook scheduler system. In the meantime, the booking service should be notified of any cancellations (using the details shown above).

### 3.3 Collecting and returning

Car parking spaces will be allocated for pool cars in various locations. Employees will be required to collect the keys for the car and walk to where the car is parked. There will not always be available parking immediately adjacent to each work building but pool cars will be parked as near as possible to ensure that employees are not required to walk unreasonable distances to collect the pool car.

Arrangements for this will differ between locations and employees will be advised, by their line manager, of the particular arrangements for their location.

Pool cars, and keys, should generally be returned to the collection points. If an employee wishes to make alternative arrangements, this should be agreed at the time of booking.

If an employee is unavoidably delayed and seeks to extend the booking time, they are asked to contact the booking service and advise of the situation. Employees should plan their work diary to minimise this type of occurrence. In the event of a pool car not being returned in time for the next booking, attempts will be made to source an available pool car from an alternative location.

### 3.4 Before driving

It is the driver's responsibility to check a vehicle is roadworthy prior to driving it and as such employees are required to carry out basic checks of the pool car before starting a journey. In this respect, employees' responsibilities are no different when driving a pool car than when driving their own vehicle.

A simple checklist, highlighting the types of checks to be carried out, is included in each vehicle for reference. In addition, any employee who requires further familiarisation with a pool car will be able to access this service by contacting Fleet Services.

### 3.5 Fuel

Employees are required to re-fuel the vehicle they have been using if the fuel level has fallen below  $\frac{1}{4}$  capacity as indicated on the vehicle fuel level gauge. All pool vehicles have low emission diesel engines, other than the electric vehicle. Each vehicle will be supplied with a Moray Council refuelling key fob which allows the vehicle to be re-fuelled at the following Council sites:

- Ashgrove Depot, Ashgrove Road, Elgin, IV30 1UU  
Open 07.30 – 17.00 Monday to Friday
- Waterford Depot, Waterford Road, Forres, IV36 OTN  
Open 24 hours, 7 days a week
- Keith Depot, Bridge Street, Keith, AB55 3HJ  
Open 07.30 – 16.00 Monday to Friday
- Freuchny Depot, Cunningholes, Buckie, AB56 2DA  
Open 07.30 – 16.00 Monday to Friday

In certain circumstances, a fuel card may be issued so that fuel can be purchased at designated petrol stations although this is more costly than fuel provided at a Council depot.

### 3.6 Breakdown

Pool car vehicles all have breakdown cover and there is a Council employed mechanic on standby throughout the year. Each vehicle will have instructions about what to do in the event of breakdown, accident, loss of keys etc.

### 3.7 Insurance, tax, maintenance

The Council is responsible for insuring, taxing and regularly maintaining the fleet of pool cars.

Employees must report any damage to a pool car to their line manager and Fleet Services as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. If the damage causes an immediate safety concern, or there is any doubt that this may be the case, employees should not drive the vehicle but should contact the number provided in

the accident/breakdown pack within the pool car. Employees are also required to advise Fleet Services if they are stopped for the police for any reason, e.g. speeding.

Employees are not liable for any damage that may be caused to the pool car. However, employees have a responsibility to inform any personal car insurance providers of any accidents they have had, regardless of the vehicle they were driving at the time.

### 3.8 Home use

There is no reason why a pool car cannot be taken home if an employee wishes to make this arrangement for their own convenience in the event of a late evening or early morning meeting. However, pool cars are for business use only and should generally not be used for non-work related journeys.

### 3.9 Passengers

Pool cars are intended for work related journeys. Employees are able to carry passengers in a pool car provided the car is being used in this context. If an employee is taking a car home and would normally collect/drop off passengers (e.g. school children) on the way, this is permissible provided this is within a reasonable distance of the route being taken.

### 3.10 Equipment

The pool car fleet includes a range of different sized vehicles to allow for the transportation of equipment that employees need to carry out their work. Pool cars will be parked as near as possible to offices / depots to make the transfer of equipment as convenient as possible.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. When will pool cars be available in my section?**

Pool cars are being implemented in two phases – phase one in October/November 2010 and phase two in early 2011. The locations to be included in each phase will be communicated prior to the implementation date and employees affected will be consulted. Employees will be advised by their line manager when this process is starting in their section.

### **2. What types of vehicles are in the pool car fleet?**

For the implementation of phase one, there will be 5 two seat (two-door) cars, 14 four seat (five-door cars), 10 small vans and 1 electric powered small car. In phase two, up to a further seventy vehicles will be introduced.

### **3. Why is there a range of different types of vehicle?**

It is recognised that there will be cases where drivers are only licensed to drive automatic vehicles or where passengers and/or bulky equipment has to be transported. As such a range of different types of vehicle is required.

### **4. What do I do if I need to book a pool car for longer than 3 days at a time or for more than a month in advance?**

Contact the booking service on 01343 557317/ [poolcars@moray.gov.uk](mailto:poolcars@moray.gov.uk)

### **5. Can I claim mileage for using my own vehicle?**

Pool cars should be used when they are available. There are occasions where an employee is able to use their own vehicle and claim mileage:

- In services where pool cars have not been introduced
- When a pool car is unavailable
- If a health condition and/or disability leads an employee to require a specifically adapted, or specific type of vehicle and this is not available
- In emergency situations where speed of reaction is essential

Employees should consult with their line manager if they feel using a pool car is not appropriate.

### **6. If I'm using a pool car for a period of time that covers lunch am I able to drive to a shop / café during my break?**

Pool cars are for business use only. However, employees who are not at a work base over their lunch break have to be able to access alternative arrangements. It is permissible to stop at a shop or café to purchase lunch provided this is within a reasonable distance of the route being taken.

**7. Can I use my pool car to travel home at lunchtime?**

Pool cars are for business use only and in most cases an employee would not be able to use a pool car to travel home at lunchtime as this would not be considered a work related journey. However, it is permissible for an employee to stop at home for lunch provided this is within a reasonable distance of the route being taken (see Q6)

**8. I will need to use a car for work purposes outwith normal working hours. Can a pool car be used in these circumstances?**

Yes.

**9. Can animals be transported in a pool car?**

No, with the exception of guide dogs supporting passengers/ clients.