



Fleet Administration Quarterly Newsletter

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Vehicle Security

by Brian Reynolds

When we hear vehicle security, most of us will typically think of checking the doors to make sure they are locked. Your vehicle may be a source for other security concerns that can be easily overlooked.

Electronics

Today's vehicles are equipped with an increasing amount of electronic equipment and options, including from the factory or as equipment added later. Have you ever considered the security of data on or in your vehicles electronic equipment?

Consider factory options such as Bluetooth or hands-free capability. Do you have your contact list loaded into your vehicle? Do you load the phonebook into a Smith County vehicle? That information may be available to others that use the vehicle or to service technicians that may access the vehicle for maintenance.

What about the map or GPS system that is available in the vehicle or can be linked via your phone? The risk of leaving an electronic trail of where you have been, or where you live, cannot be ignored in today's world. Leaving an electronic trail could be far more dangerous than leaving the doors to your vehicle unlocked.

Hard Copies

Another security risk is hard copies of paperwork. A glaring security issue that should never happen is leaving the vehicle title in the car. You could literally be handing a thief ownership of the vehicle unintentionally. But what about registration and insurance documents that have your address and personal information on them?

Security experts say in most cases, a locking glove compartment or storage deters most criminals, as they are typically seeking an easy opportunity. Another great option in today's technology driven world is to keep your insurance and registration documents on the smart phone that goes with you when you leave the car. Most states (including Texas) will accept electronic proof of insurance.

Disposal

It is crucial to check your vehicle for personal information prior to selling or disposing of it. Likewise, double check that rental or the county car and make sure the phone and GPS records are deleted before you turn it in. Do a double check for bank statements, credit card info, receipts or documents that may include your address or personal data.



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What is a Fleet Administrator?

by Brian Reynolds

Why does Smith County need a Fleet Administrator? What does a Fleet Administrator do? I get asked these questions regularly.

Fleet (vehicle) management or administration can include a range of functions, such as vehicle specifications, managing vehicle maintenance, budgeting, vehicle telematics (tracking and diagnostics), driver management, speed management, fuel management and health and safety management.

Fleet Management allows organizations which rely on transportation in their business to remove or minimize the risks associated with vehicle investment, replacement cycles, improving efficiency, productivity and reducing their costs, providing compliance with government legislation and more.

Fleet Administrators are required to work with many departments and communicate



with all levels within the organization. The work involves both people skills and business acumen. The Fleet Administrator will need to understand the agency hierarchy, goals, and structure and assists in meeting those goals.

The Fleet Administrator also needs to be connected in the automotive and related equipment industries with a good grasp of related technologies. Vendor relationships

and contract management are vital pieces in the Fleet Administrators role as well.

So, the Fleet Administrator needs to be a confident, organized, agent-of-change, flexible, negotiator, team player that loves what they do.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask. My contact information is included on page 4.

SMITH COUNTY FLEET ADMINISTRATION FAST FACTS

Over 330 vehicles. Estimated replacement value \$13 Million. Approximately 4.3 Million miles driven annually.



Picture credit LM Otero - AP

In Texas last year, distracted driving was blamed for **455** fatalities and more than **3,000** serious injuries.

Texting While Driving?

by ANNA M. TINSLEY (Excerpted from the Star-Telegram)

Just put the cellphone down when you're behind the wheel. That's the golden rule for Texas drivers now, since a [new law](#) went into effect Sept. 1, 2017 banning texting while driving.

That means no written communications at all when you're driving. No posting on Facebook. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp are out.

Emails? Text messages? Nope. Just put the phone down. The statewide ban on texting and driving was made law as of Sept. 1, 2017.

If you're driving, you can still use your phone to talk hands-free. You also can use it to play music, operate a GPS, report a crime and seek emergency help. But because of a spike

in distracted driving crashes — and deaths — law enforcers locally and across the state are watching and ready to issue tickets when needed.

Anyone who violates this law and gets a ticket faces a misdemeanor charge and a fine between \$25 and \$99, although penalties could be as much as \$200 for repeat offenders.

Anyone convicted of [texting and driving](#) who causes serious injury or death to others faces a fine of up to \$4,000 and as long as one year in jail. Under the new state law, there's no reading, writing or sending electronic messages while driving — unless the vehicle is stopped. Talking on your phone is OK (unless, of course, you're in an active school zone).



Picture from *The Onion*

5-MINUTE CAR CLEAN-OUT

by Brian Reynolds

Grab all the obvious trash first- receipts, empty coffee cups, etc...

Group like-things together. Have one place for pens, one place for phone cords, etc... Keeping a pen in the console, in the glove box, and in the cupholder, is exactly how clutter starts to happen.

Trade in over-preparedness for organization. If spring is heading your way, it may be time to ditch the cold weather gear for a simple umbrella. Keep those seasonal items in a crate in your trunk space so they are easy to

find. Pull out what you don't need, and store it away for next season.

Is your glove box full of items you "may need one day," but have yet to find a use for? Clear out the unnecessary for what's most important.

Glove Box Essentials Checklist-

- Registration (if not electronic)
- Proof of Insurance
- Tire Pressure Gauge
- Flashlight
- First Aid Kit

Safety Tip:

Trash or clutter in a car is not only unsightly, it can be a safety hazard. Items can roll or move under the pedals, distract the driver, or block visibility.

Temps and Tires

by Brian Reynolds

The Power of Air

Contrary to popular belief, tires don't hold up your car. The air pressure in the tires is what actually does the work. Proper tire inflation is critical to good traction, longer tire life, and a better ride quality.

Temperature

One reason to check air pressure regularly is the changing temperatures outside. This can be particularly important in areas like East Texas where temperatures can vary widely in a short period of time.

As air heats, it expands. When air cools, it contracts inside the tire. Most experts agree that the air pressure in a typical tire will change one or two pounds per square inch (PSI) for each 10 degrees of ambient air temperature change.

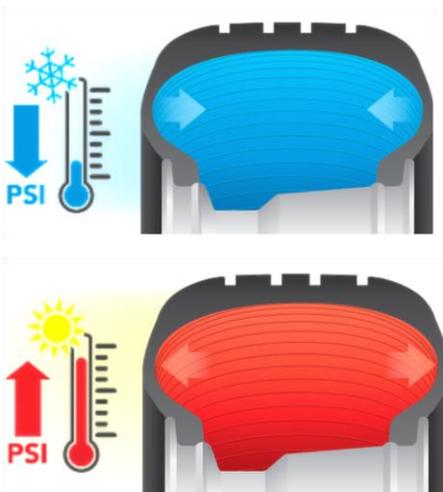
Pressure should always be checked when the tire is cold, before driving a significant distance, and should be filled to the recommended pressure on the door placard inside the driver's door frame. Never fill the tire beyond the maximum PSI listed on the sidewall of the tire itself.

Tire Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS)

Many newer vehicles have a TPMS system that will monitor for air pressure variations automatically. If a tire is low (or sometimes high) on air pressure the system triggers an indicator light on the dash, alerting the driver that a tire needs attention.

While this can be a good safety measure, many experts agree that it doesn't take the place of a regular check of the air pressure with a tire pressure gauge

Questions regarding tire pressure in the Smith County vehicles can be directed to the Fleet Administrator or the Road and Bridge shop staff.



POLICY NOTES

At no time may a County vehicle be used for personal gain, personal business, to drive to a place of secondary or part-time employment not related to County business, or for any other non-County-related use.

All drivers of County vehicles, and those using their personal vehicles on County business, shall comply with all applicable State and local laws. It will be the responsibility of the official/employee to pay any fines imposed for not complying with such laws.

Seat belts shall be worn and secured at all times when the vehicle is moving.

The use of tobacco is prohibited in all County vehicles.

The current Smith County Vehicle Policy can be found [here](#) on the Smith County website. Watch for updates.

They're Not Accidents. Call Them Crashes

by Brian Reynolds

The biggest factor that contributes to almost every Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) is one that can be controlled. Driver behavior. Repeatedly, studies have found over 90% of crashes are caused in some part by driver error.

Driver behaviors that result in a crash typically fall into three categories:

1. Failure to pay attention
2. Exceeding performance capabilities
3. Unsafe behaviors

Failure to pay attention is pretty simple. If you get in a vehicle and do not devote your full attention the act of driving that vehicle, you are making a decision to put yourself and others at risk. The result is not an accident, it is a predictable outcome.

Exceeding performance capabilities is also a decision. In truth, it's not the fog or rain or snow or ice that causes a crash. All are products of nature. By choosing to drive in such conditions, the responsibility to drive safely falls squarely on us.

Lastly, unsafe behaviors cause crashes. Driving while trying to read a text, eating while driving, speeding, and driving while under the influence are all examples of unsafe behaviors that can lead to crashes.

Safe driving is no accident.



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Facts

Over the last two years (for which data is available) the Texas fatality rate per 100 Million miles driven was 27.5% higher than the US average.

The number of traffic fatalities in Texas has risen every year for over 10 years.

<https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest>

Fleet Administration Quarterly Newsletter

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Smith County government is composed of 48 departments, including 26 headed by elected officials, with the county auditor having been appointed by the District Judges, and 12 appointees by the Commissioners Court. Smith County has approximately 800 staff positions.

County services and responsibilities include:

- Building and maintaining county roads.
- Operating the Judicial system.
- Registering voters and holding elections.
- Maintaining public records.
- Participation in economic development incentive and programs.
- Providing health and social services to the indigent.
- Assisting Veterans and their dependents w/ benefit/entitlement claims
- Providing law enforcement.
- Building and operating jails.
- Issuing vehicle registrations.
- Collection of property and sales taxes

Fleet Administration was formed as a department in 2017 to administer the Smith County fleet policies and manage the vehicle assets and related equipment. As a support department Fleet Administration is responsible to ensure that the delegated Smith County funds provide the vehicle resources that will help all departments serve the community with excellence.