

University Policy: University Driving Program and Vehicle Policy

Policy Category: Operational Policies

Subject: Operation of University vehicles

Responsible Executive: Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Finance and Treasurer

Procedures: Application for Driving Privileges, Motor Vehicle Record Verification Disclosure, Driver Acceptability Guidelines

Related University Policies: Staff Personnel Policy Guide

I. SCOPE

While vehicle operation is an essential part of the services provided to the American University community, accidents, damage and abuse of vehicles represent a huge expenditure to the University. In many cases these costs are preventable. This University policy and its associated programs apply to all drivers who may be engaged in the operation of any University-owned or -leased motor vehicles on either public or private property. This policy stipulates requirements in addition to those of other established programs such as campus traffic regulations and pedestrian safety, motor vehicle maintenance, and parking enforcement. Responsibility and authority for the enforcement of this policy has been delegated to the Risk Management office.

The University is currently responsible for the operation of a fixed fleet of over 60 owned and leased motor vehicles distributed among seven departments (consisting of approximately 275 full and part-time students and employees), as well as additional motor vehicles that may be leased as needed. The University's automobile insurance coverage includes all University-owned or -leased motor vehicles and all authorized drivers with respect to property and liability claims.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform University-wide program that:

- ensures the safe operation of University-owned and -leased motor vehicles
- ensures the safety of drivers and passengers
- minimizes losses, damages, and claims against the University.

III. POLICY

All drivers (including full-time and part-time staff and faculty, students, work-study students, and interns) must be authorized to drive University-owned or -leased motor vehicles. Authorization is valid for the term of one year for students and three years for other authorized drivers. Authorization is completed through the Risk Management office with the review of driving records.

University vehicles are to be used for authorized business only. All drivers must comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning the operation of motor vehicles. University supervisory personnel are responsible for conducting evaluations of each driver's performance on a periodic basis, consistent with University performance evaluations and staff policies. The University maintains the right to suspend an employee or student's privilege to operate a University motor vehicle at any time and for any reason.

DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

In order to receive authorization to operate a University motor vehicle, an employee or student must:

- possess a current and valid United States driver's license issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles from his/her state of residence or the District of Columbia for at least two (2) years (International driver's licenses are not acceptable)
- fill out completely the Application for University Driving Privileges and submit to the Office of Finance and Treasurer
- fall within the "approved" or "approved on probation" status on the driver acceptability guidelines
- successfully complete the University's safe driver training program (annually for students and every three (3) years for employees who regularly operate University owned vehicles, or more frequently as required or deemed appropriate by supervisory personnel).

All drivers are expected to safeguard and maintain University vehicles. Improper attention to vehicle maintenance, safe operations, or violations of the University vehicle policy, may result in suspension of driving privileges. In addition to restrictions and requirements placed upon University vehicle drivers by individual departments, drivers must also:

- agree to operate all University owned vehicles within a 50 mile radius of Washington, DC
- keep safety and accident prevention foremost at all times
- comply with all traffic laws
- have a valid driver's license
- use University vehicles for authorized business only
- not permit any unauthorized person to drive the vehicle
- assume all responsibility for any and all fines or traffic violations and citations associated with his/her use of a University vehicle
- not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol

- not transport unauthorized passengers such as hitchhikers, family members, or friends
- use seat belts or other available occupant restraints and require all occupants to do likewise in accordance with state laws
- agree to operate University motor vehicles in accordance with applicable local and federal laws and University regulations, at all times, (this agreement is found on the bottom portion of the Application for Driving Privileges and must be signed by the driver at the time eligibility is conferred)
- turn off the vehicle, remove the keys, and lock the vehicle when it is left unattended
- drive the vehicle at posted speed limits or less depending on road conditions
- not drive the vehicle "off road" unless it is made for that use
- immediately report all accidents to University police at 202.885.3636
- immediately report any violations or change in license status (i.e. if your license has been suspended or revoked) to the supervisor and risk management office within five (5) working days of any such change (if the license is revoked, operating privileges will be temporarily suspended or terminated)
- return all vehicles in good clean condition, removing all garbage and food items
- be subject to applicable University disciplinary procedures for violations of University policy or rules
- before leaving the parking area or garage, inspect the vehicle for safety concerns, checking the tires, wipers, lights, and other safety equipment for observable defects, and report any defects immediately to the prescribed authority to determine if the vehicle is safe to operate
- follow the safety guidelines as discussed in the driver-training course
- not transport more than ten passengers
- be aware of the load and handling characteristics associated with the vehicles
- not use handheld communication devices such as cell phones, iPhones, Blackberries, etc. while operating University or University insured vehicles. This applies to holding conversations; or sending, typing, or reading text messages.

DRIVER TRAINING

All University drivers must complete a driver-training course. Students are required to complete the training each year and employees who regularly operate University-owned vehicles are required to complete the training every three years. The course, Coaching the Van Driver II, can be either a self-paced instruction, or classroom lecture depending on the needs of the department. The course is provided by the National Safety Council and covers driver safety and the unique safety considerations of University vans. The Risk Management office can provide the training materials and in some cases, provide the training. Deans, directors, and department heads may develop additional training as they deem necessary, based on the needs of their department.

Drivers should also receive an orientation of the vehicle that he will be driving. For more information, please see the Driving Program web page.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a minimum requirement, each department or group that may use a University motor vehicle is required to implement driving program procedures outlined on the Driving Program web page. The development of department specific procedures is the responsibility of individual deans, directors, or department heads. Deans, directors, or department heads may institute additional policies or procedures, as they deem necessary. The risk management office may be consulted for advice relating to additional departmental procedures and may exercise at its discretion, the right to request copies of each specific department or group's written procedures for review. Please see the Driving Program web page for detailed department responsibilities.

Athletic Department: *A full-time or part-time coach or departmental-appointed program supervisor must be in a van being driven by a student, or be with the traveling party of vans in which students are driving, at all times.*

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND DAMAGE

Vehicle maintenance is the responsibility of all departments and their drivers. The majority of the annual cost of vehicle body damage to the University is preventable. When there is damage to University vehicles, drivers should immediately report the damage to their department fleet coordinator who will in turn notify Facilities Management at 202.885.2350. Drivers should describe the incident that caused the damage in detail. If the damage was caused during an accident, the driver and department should follow the accident procedure described in this document.

In the event of any accident on campus or off-campus involving a University motor vehicle, the Department of Public Safety shall:

- take action as detailed in their departmental manual
- notify Tony Newman in the risk management office at 202.885.2706 of the accident and forward the accident investigation report as well as any photographs of the motor vehicles or accident scene to the risk management office within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Facilities Management shall provide the following services regarding University vehicles:

- routine preventative maintenance on vehicles
- registration and tag renewals
- emergency breakdown repairs
- manage vehicle inspection logs
- manage gas purchasing card program
- quarterly safety checks and yearly inspections.

ENFORCEMENT

Failure to comply with the procedures in this policy may result in disciplinary action comparable with the established University policy on conduct and discipline as specified in the University Staff Personnel Policies Manual, and may result in suspension or termination of motor vehicle operating privileges; please read the Levels of Offenses (comparable to University levels of offense).

In the event of an accident involving a University motor vehicle caused by a University driver while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or in the event of gross negligence, the University may have grounds to make a claim for the recovery directly against the employee or student. In such a situation, the University may pursue legal action directly against the individual. The University reserves the right to arrange a blood test and/or urine test for alcohol and /or drugs in the event a driver is involved in an accident while operating a University motor vehicle.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This policy was last revised November, 2010.