

## **Motor Vehicle Use Policies**

### **Important Information on the Use of University Vehicles**

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#### **I. General Information**

University Vehicles include all vehicles owned or leased by the University of Maine System (University), as well as any vehicles rented or borrowed for University use. All such vehicles fall under the authority of the designated campus Vehicle Administrator and the System's Risk Manager.

Driving a University vehicle is a privilege conferred by the University at its own discretion, and only University approved drivers are permitted to drive University vehicles. A University Approved Driver is a person who has requested the privilege to drive a University vehicle and the Vehicle Administrator has approved the request. No one else should drive the vehicle.

Failure to comply with the University's vehicle use policies may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension or termination of University vehicle driving privileges, and may have financial consequences.

Most of the information provided in this brochure is taken from Administrative Practice Letter IIB Motor Vehicle Administration and Guidelines ([www.maine.edu/system/oft/apls](http://www.maine.edu/system/oft/apls)). For more information on University vehicles, consult the Administrative Practice Letter.

#### **II. Permitted and Prohibited Uses**

- ▶ University Vehicles are to be used only for University business or related University approved activities.
- ▶ No one under 18 years of age shall be permitted to drive a University vehicle. Drivers under the age of 21 are not permitted to drive vehicles that are transporting more than 5 passengers, unless approved to do so.
- ▶ Enrolled students may be approved by the Vehicle Administrator to drive a University vehicle, but only for University related and sponsored business. Each student must have written authorization of a University faculty or staff person responsible for the activity and with the authority to approve such usage. The faculty or staff member approving student usage must be identified at the time the vehicle is signed out. Whenever possible, a staff or faculty member should be in the vehicle during usage. Students employed by the University are still considered students and not employees with regard to driving privileges.
- ▶ University vehicles must not be loaned, rented or leased to individuals or to organizations not directly affiliated with the University; and University vehicles must not be loaned, rented or leased to employees, students or others for non-University use or activities. Also, the use of University vehicles for personal gain, such as delivery of goods or services, is prohibited.

- ▶ No University vehicle may be kept overnight at someone's home without the authorization of the Vehicle Administrator.
- ▶ University vehicles are only to be used for their intended purposes; any off-road use should be approved by the Vehicle Administrator and be with a vehicle appropriate for such use.
- ▶ No one may drive a vehicle that is designed to carry 10 or more occupants, including the driver, without first having completed appropriate certified training.
- ▶ No one may purchase, rent or lease a 15 passenger vans. Contact the campus Vehicle Administrator for details on restrictions.
- ▶ Smoking or use of tobacco products, alcohol or illegal substances is prohibited in University vehicles.
- ▶ Use of any radar or other speed monitoring detection device in University vehicles is prohibited, except for administration-approved use by University Police or Public Safety.
- ▶ No modification of University vehicles shall be made without approval of the Vehicle Administrator. This includes but is not limited to affixing signs, stickers, antennas, ladder, bike racks, ski racks. Trailer hitches and towing for personal reasons are not permitted. Hauling loads with University vehicles that could damage the vehicle, or make driving unsafe, are prohibited.

### **III. Driver Information**

- ▶ Drivers must know and observe all applicable traffic laws, ordinances, and regulations.
- ▶ Drivers must use safe driving principles, practices, and techniques at all times. Drivers must drive in a manner so as to reduce the likelihood of accidents and assure the safety of employees, passengers, and the general public, and also so as to not damage public, private or University property. Safety should not be compromised or lives put in jeopardy for any reason.
- ▶ Prior to operating a University vehicle, drivers or the person responsible for signing out the vehicle should inspect the vehicle for safety concerns, such as checking tires, wipers, horn, lights and other safety equipment for observable defects. Any defects should be reported immediately to the Vehicle Administrator to determine if the vehicle is safe to operate.
- ▶ Drivers must protect University vehicles and property from theft or vandalism by parking in safe areas, and then turning the vehicle off, removing the key, and locking the vehicle. The University is not responsible for personal articles lost or stolen from a University vehicle.
- ▶ Drivers should be rested and not drive more than 8 hours per day. The University recommends that periods of uninterrupted driving not exceed 2 or 3 hours, separated by rest breaks.
- ▶ Vehicles should be driven at speeds that are appropriate for road conditions, and trips should be delayed or rescheduled if weather or conditions make driving the vehicle unsafe.
- ▶ No drivers, before or during trips, are permitted to use medications, alcohol, drugs or other substances that cause drowsiness or other physical or mental impairment. The driver of the vehicle must not be under the influence of illicit drugs and/or alcohol at any time.
- ▶ Drivers using cellular phones in vehicles should follow the University's safety and security guidelines; in most instances, it is safer to not use a cell phone while driving.

### **IV. Passengers**

- ▶ All passengers must be participating in University business or University sponsored activity or event at the time they are traveling in a University vehicle. Passengers should be limited to employees and students of the University, others on University business, individuals engaged in courtesies by or for the University, and certain family members if approved by campus administration and the Vehicle Administrator.

- ▶ No children under the age of eighteen are allowed as passengers in a University vehicle, except in instances approved by campus administration and the Vehicle Administrator. In the rare instance where a child is a passenger in a University vehicle, the child must be provided with a safety or booster seat when required by law. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that all children are seated correctly in the proper safety device.
- ▶ No driver shall transport more passengers than the vehicle is designed to carry.
- ▶ No University vehicle can be used to carry passengers for a fee. Such action may void the University's insurance.
- ▶ Hitchhikers are not permitted in University vehicles, except in emergency situations, such as if drivers choose to render assistance to disabled motorists. However, any such action should be done with extreme caution and only if the situation warrants it; contacting the police should be the first step.
- ▶ All occupants of University vehicles must wear seat belts whenever seatbelts are available. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that all passengers wear their seat belts. The driver should refuse to take any passenger who refuses to cooperate and may not operate the vehicle if passengers do not have seat belts properly fastened. Passengers should refuse to drive in a vehicle if the driver refuses to wear a seat belt.

#### **V. Cargo or Contents**

- ▶ No animals are allowed in University vehicles, except in instances where this is an appropriate intended use of the vehicle and transporting animal(s) has been approved. An exception is also made for Service Dogs (such as for the visually or hearing impaired) accompanying a passenger; however, proof of certification may be required.
- ▶ No hazardous chemicals, weapons, hazardous waste, or illegal drugs may be transported in University vehicles, unless with proper administration authorization, in writing. Alcoholic beverages may not be transported except for administration approved catering purposes.
- ▶ The University does not insure, nor does it assume responsibility for, driver's or passengers' personal property.
- ▶ No driver shall transport a heavier load than the vehicle is designed to carry.

#### **VI. Fines, Violations, Citations, Misuse**

- ▶ Drivers are personally responsible for fines or citations resulting from their actions. No University funds may be used. If a violation, suspension or revocation occurs during the period an individual is designated as an approved driver, it is the driver's responsibility to make the Vehicle Administrator aware of this prior to driving a University vehicle again.
- ▶ Any fines, violations or citations received while driving a University vehicle, including vehicles rented or borrowed, may also result in suspension or revocation of privileges to drive a University vehicle, as well as other disciplinary action.
- ▶ A University driver must report immediately to the Vehicle Administrator any change in license status, such as license suspension or revocation. Any citation or violation received while operating a University vehicle must also be reported. In addition, prior to driving a University vehicle, all moving violations and at-fault accidents must be reported, even if the violation or accident occurred while operating a vehicle other than a University vehicle. The Vehicle Administrator will determine if the violation or accident is significant enough to affect the driver's privilege to drive a University vehicle.
- ▶ Drivers misusing University vehicles may be held personally liable for damages to persons or property, as well their own legal expenses and defense, since the driver is acting outside the course and scope of permitted University business. Drivers misusing vehicles are also subject to disciplinary action by the University. Any misuse of a University vehicle, including vehicles rented or borrowed for University use, may result in suspension or revocation of privileges to drive a University vehicle, as well as other

disciplinary action. "Misuse" includes but is not limited to: violating University policy, damaging the vehicle through negligence, obtaining vehicle for use through misrepresentation.

## **VII. Insurance Coverages**

- ▶ Each University vehicle should contain a Liability Insurance Verification card in the event verification is needed at the time of an accident or by the police for a driving infraction or other reason.
- ▶ The University System provides Liability insurance coverage for University owned, leased or rented vehicles while used for University business.
- ▶ Physical Damage insurance coverage (collision or comprehensive) is provided by the University for University owned and leased vehicles. Coverage is not automatically provided for rented vehicles; it is the driver's responsibility to make sure physical damage coverage is obtained on the rental vehicle prior to operating. See Risk Management website for up-to-date details on rental car insurance coverage.
- ▶ The University does not provide Liability insurance coverage or Physical Damage insurance coverage for non-University vehicles. If an employee or student uses a personal vehicle for University related business, that person's own vehicle insurance will be responsible for any claims. The University will not reimburse an employee, student, or other private owner, or their insurer, for any deductible or liability claim paid by their auto insurance or for any damage to a personally owned vehicle.
- ▶ If a rental vehicle will be used for personal use, such as side trips to visit family or friends, then a vehicle should be rented in the individual's name and the rental contract paid by the individual; in such instances both Liability and Physical Damage insurance should be obtained by the individual. The University's insurance is not intended to cover personal use of vehicles; if a driver has any questions regarding whether usage is personal or business, contact the System Risk Manager.
- ▶ Travelers planning to rent a vehicle in a foreign country other than Canada should contact the System Risk Manager.

## **VIII. Accidents**

- ▶ The driver is responsible for following the University's procedures and State's laws regarding required actions in the event of an accident. Each University vehicle should contain a Motor Vehicle Accident Report Form which includes instructions on responding to an accident. The campus Vehicle Administrator can also provide copies.
- ▶ Preventable at-fault accidents may result in revocation or suspension of driving privileges, and/or driver testing and training, as well as disciplinary action.
- ▶ Any accident involving University owned, leased, or rented vehicles, or personally owned vehicles being used for University business, must be reported to the Vehicle Administrator as soon as possible and within 48 hours of the time of the accident. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for reporting the accident.
- ▶ In the event of an accident, follow these guidelines:
  1. Remain calm. Take immediate action to prevent further damage or injury. If anyone is injured, call 911 or signal for emergency assistance. Do not move the injured unless they are in immediate danger. Do not move vehicles unless necessary for safety reasons or damage is minimal.
  2. Call police to the scene so they can investigate the accident and complete a report. If a phone is not available, write down information on the other driver and vehicle and then walk or ride to the nearest phone. Return to the accident scene as soon as possible to wait for police. Do what is possible and seems most reasonable and safe given the circumstances.
  3. Complete the accident report form. Start by immediately completing the sections for the other vehicle, driver, injured persons, and witnesses. Other sections of the form, such as the information on you and your vehicle, can be completed afterwards. Do not leave the accident scene until you have obtained all the needed information. Write clearly. Take photographs if a camera is available.

4. Be courteous and factual. Do not argue or accept blame. Do not sign anything or discuss details of the accident with anyone other than your supervisor, police or the University's investigator. Share with the other party only necessary information, including your license, registration, and insurance information (provided on report form).

5. Turn in the completed accident report form immediately (within 48 hours) to the campus Vehicle Administrator, and to the System Risk Manager at the address shown on this form. Also provide a copy to your supervisor.

### **IX. Roadside Emergencies**

▶ A vehicle may become disabled during use, requiring emergency roadside assistance or service. A disabled vehicle may include mechanical failure, engine fire, a flat tire, running out of gas, or being locked out of the vehicle.

▶ In the event the vehicle becomes disabled, follow these guidelines:

1. Take what action is safest and seems most reasonable given the circumstances.

2. Pull the vehicle off the road as far as possible and turn on the vehicle's emergency flashers. Check the vehicle for an emergency roadside assistance kit or equipment and if available use reflective triangles and other items, as needed.

3. If you have a phone, call 9-1-1 if this is an emergency. If it is not an emergency, contact your campus Public Safety office for assistance to determine best course of action. Or, if it is during business hours, contact the campus Facilities department; or, if the vehicle is a rental, call the rental car agency. Also, if appropriate, call a friend or family member to make them aware of your situation and location.

4. Call any existing roadside assistance program available to you, such as AAA, the vehicle's manufacturer/dealer, or your own insurance company.

5. If a phone is not available, leave a note on the windshield and walk to the nearest phone or ask another motorist to make a call for you. Do not accept a ride from strangers. If you need to signal for help, raise the vehicle hood and tie something white or colorful to the radio antenna or hang it out the window. If it is safe to do so, remain in or near the vehicle until help arrives. If it is dark, turn on the interior dome light.

6. When calling for assistance, be prepared to describe the problem with the vehicle and pinpoint your location with as many landmarks as possible. You will also need to provide a description of the vehicle and, if alternative transportation is required, how many people are in the vehicle.

7. It is best to have a professional service the vehicle. In certain instances, this may not be possible due to the remoteness of the location or the inability to reach help; however, only if you are able to perform the work safely should you do any emergency repairs, such as changing a tire or jump-starting the vehicle.