

**Title: Vehicle Safety Policy**

**Date:** December 2001, amended May 2016, March 2018, September 2018, Feb 2024, May 2024

**Rationale:** Southwestern University developed a proactive vehicle safety program that was implemented in December 2001. This revised risk management policy is designed to raise safe driving awareness, reduce the risk of vehicle accidents, personal injuries, property damage, lost productivity, workers compensation claims, and potential liability claims which may result from unsafe drivers or activities.

**Goal:** To create awareness, provide training to shape safe driving behaviors, and reduce the risk of losses while driving vehicles for University business.

**Policy:** All drivers (staff, faculty, students) who use a University-owned vehicle, rental vehicle, or personal vehicle for University business must be authorized to drive.

- This includes having an a driver's license check every three years
- complete on-line defensive driver training every three years
- complete on-line SU Vehicle Safety Policy module every three years
- For van drivers - applies to both SU Vans and Rental Vans: van driver hands-on road training (SUPD) is also required (one time). Drivers will only be authorized to reserve University-owned or 3<sup>rd</sup> party rented vehicles if they have met these requirements. It is the responsibility of each division administrator and individual driver to comply with this policy and ensure they are authorized to drive on University business. Department/Division administrators should request a division level training status report from Human Resources to ensure compliance with all their drivers. Human Resources will also run and provide quarterly, a campus-wide vehicle training status report and send to division administrators.
- SUPD will complete and provide a **MASTER DRIVER authorization form** when all steps are completed and refresh on a three year basis.

\*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT - see page 4 - **Insurance & Accidents - Damage Reporting Protocol**



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**Any person driving on University-sponsored or authorized business is required to follow the rules in this Policy** (*SU vehicle, rental vehicle or personal vehicle*).

## Driver Qualification & Authorization Process

- Driver's license record check (driver to contact: SUPD@southwestern.edu) every 3 years at no cost upon request by driver.
- A valid driver's license is required to operate institution vehicles, rental vehicles, or personal vehicles used for University business.
- A valid Texas driver's license is required after 30 days of residing in Texas.
- All drivers must be at least 20 years of age and have at least two years of driving experience with a driver's license not including time driving with a permit. [Driver's license record check must meet guidelines (point system, page 8) to be authorized to drive on University business. It is the responsibility of each driver to inform their supervisor and Human Resources if they have citations/violations which may affect their driver authorization].
- **MASTER DRIVER authorization form** will be completed by SUPD for all drivers when all steps listed below are completed. A copy will be e-mailed to each driver who requests authorization from SUPD. Individual drivers will retain the MASTER DRIVER authorization form. This form will be required to be uploaded in 25LIVE when requesting a [van reservation](#) (protocol - instructions).

### Drivers STEPS:

- Any person **driving any vehicle for University business** (including a personal vehicle or rental vehicle) is required to complete two training modules via Vector Solution:
  - **Defensive Driver** (3 years)
  - **Vehicle Safety Policy** (3 years)
- Any person driving a **12 to 15 passenger style van** (SU Van or Rental Van) will also need to add:
  - **Van driver training** (3 years)
  - **Hands-on van driving session** with SUPD (one time)

To help administer driver authorization status: Individual drivers will be responsible to maintain their driver status and submit course assignment requests to Human Resources (x1435). In addition: **DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATORS have overall responsibility to ensure all their drivers are authorized. First, individual drivers should contact their Division Head to request the training status report they receive from Human Resources. Division Heads (or assignee) should contact Human Resources (X1435) to request a division level training report (3 training record reports) so that Division or Department Heads can determine status of drivers in their division. Communicate results/status to your employees if they need training or refresher training. NOTE: \*\*\*Human Resources should automatically provide ¼ reports to all Division VP's and their executive assistant.**

## Vehicle Safety Policy

- Rentals – must be 21 years old to rent/drive a car. Many rental agencies require driver to be 25 years old to rent/drive a 12 or 15 passenger van.

### Insurance & Accidents - Damage Reporting Protocol

- Drivers should obtain and keep a copy of Southwestern's auto insurance ID card with them while driving rental vehicles. SU fleet vehicles should have a current copy of insurance cards in the glove box.
- Insurance offered by rental companies should be waived (declined). SU maintains auto coverage for domestic rentals.
- Insurance for vehicle rentals in foreign countries should be purchased. Insurance is not necessary in Canada.
- Report all accidents by using [vehicle damage form report](https://www.southwestern.edu/safety/programs-policies/) (found at bottom of safety office webpage) <https://www.southwestern.edu/safety/programs-policies/>. If using a rental - please e-mail a copy of your rental contract to Safety & Risk Management Office (delancem@southwestern.edu)
- Report all accidents/incidents/vandalism - damage to your department head. *Department drivers who are involved in an accident or incident resulting in damage to the vehicle and are reasonable determined to be at-fault - the department will be charged the auto policy deductible of \$500.00.* The University's insurance will pay the claim balance.
- **IMPORTANT PROTOCOL\*\*\*\*\***Be sure (when safe) to document, document, document for an accident or damage (any damage, cracked windshield or lights, hail, dents,etc.) with photos from all angles and distances. Gather information from other driver when application - driver information, license plate, insurance policy # and contact information. If a major accident, please contact local police for a police report. Conduct very careful rental car checkout process and note damage with notes on their form and photos before leaving rental garage.

### Trailers

- A walkthrough process must be completed prior to driving/towing a trailer to ensure trailer is properly and securely connected, tires are in good condition, and trailer lights are properly functioning. Towing a trailer adds challenges in safely navigating roadways and parking lots. Extra care and slower driving behavior is warranted. Taking very wide and slow turns is necessary to navigate around corners. To the extent feasible, it is a best practice to not try to back up while towing a trailer. The van driver is responsible to determine that maximum towing load and vehicle weight capacity is not exceeded.

### Car Theft Prevention Practices

- Keep the vehicle locked at all times, even when driving.
- When parked, never leave the keys in the car and close all the windows.
- Never leave the car running and unattended.
- Avoid leaving valuables in plain sight.
- Be cautious at night about where the vehicle is parked. Park in a well-lit area, if possible.

### Entering/Exiting Vehicle Safety Practices

- Check traffic before opening the door of the vehicle.
- Exit the vehicle on the curb side, if possible.
- Check traffic before exiting the vehicle on the street side.
- Check for bicyclists who often travel on the right-hand side of travel lanes.

### Rental Vehicle Protocols

- Be certain to very carefully visually inspect entire vehicle inside and outside and make notes on rental form and with agent **and** photo document any questionable pre-existing damage.
- If any type of damage occurs, whether at fault or not, act of nature, etc., document with rental agency and complete [SU vehicle damage report](#) and submit asap.

### Maintenance, Key Control, and Trip Request Procedures of University-Owned Vehicles

- Facilities Management will coordinate manufacturer's maintenance requirements with an authorized dealer/repair center and keep maintenance records.
- Facilities Management will periodically wipe down front windshield to eliminate grease/streaking on inside of windshield to significantly improve visibility (particularly in direct sunlight).
- In order for authorized drivers to utilize any SU fleet vehicles, the sponsoring department and/or driver should contact Helyne Knauth (1916).
- A Vehicle Trip Report Form will be filled out by the vehicle requestor and/or authorized driver and it should include beginning and ending mileage for accounting purposes.
- Drivers are required to sign for the vehicles, to include the vehicle binders and keys, in the Facilities Management building. Upon return from each trip, drivers are required to return these items as soon as possible.
- Drivers are responsible for conducting a pre and post vehicle inspection. The inspection, which is included in the Vehicle Trip Report Form, should include: tire inspection, windshield wiper operation, mirrors, turn signal operation, brake light operation, running lights, fuel level check, and seat belts check. If there are any issues, please report them immediately to the fleet manager prior to departure.
- Upon return the driver is to fill gas tank if low, ensure lights are off and the interior is clean, and report any problems encountered with the vehicle during the trip, to the fleet manager.

## Vehicle Safety Policy

- The vehicles are serviced and cleaned inside and out quarterly/every 3,000 miles. Service includes a general inspection of the vehicle, routine maintenance to include adding or replacing any fluids as well as cleaning.
- Fleet vehicles are safety inspected and registered annually as per Texas DMV laws.
- Vehicles are periodically driven and inspected by the Fleet Mechanic to ensure proper operation.
- All fleet vehicle keys are kept locked and secured by the fleet manager. Keys should be signed in and out only by authorized drivers and will be inventoried to maintain accountability.

### Safe Driving Rules

#### All Drivers:

- All drivers are prohibited from using electronic devices (cell phones, iPod, etc.) whenever there is a passenger in the vehicle. Use of headphones is prohibited. Use of electronic devices when driving alone is strongly discouraged. Eating meals, applying makeup, etc., while driving, is prohibited. Pull off the road to a safe location to safely conduct these types of activities. Avoid driving when on prescription medication that impairs driving (Rx warnings against driving).
- At times, use of a navigation device is necessary. Best practice is to program the destination before driving the vehicle, set up for voice directions and keep glances to the device at a minimum. It is recommended to use a dashboard holder for the mobile device whenever an on-board navigation system is not available. Having a co-pilot passenger to help navigate and look at the navigation screen is a best practice.
- Observe local ordinances restricting the use of electronic devices.
- Overdriving for extended periods can cause driver fatigue and higher risk of an accident. Car drivers are limited to a total drive time of nine (9) hours per 24 hour period. All drivers should take short rest breaks from driving at least every 3 to 3 ½ hours to help combat driver fatigue. Frequent restroom, food/drink stops may help to reduce driver fatigue.
- Driving after 2:00 a.m. is prohibited in an effort to reduce driver fatigue and related accidents and injuries.
- There is a zero tolerance policy on the use of alcohol or recreational drugs whenever used in conjunction with operation of a motor vehicle while on University business.
- Open containers of alcohol are not permitted.
- Require drivers and passengers to wear seat belts at all times while traveling. Driver is responsible to ensure all passengers are wearing their seat belts **prior to leaving or driving**.
- Check safety equipment prior to each trip and check tires, wipers, lights, horn, signals, and flashers.

#### Van/Bus Drivers:

- For van/bus drivers, if trip is more than five (5) hours long one way, more than one qualified driver is required to split the drive time. All drivers should take short rest breaks from driving every 3 hours to help combat driver fatigue. Frequent restroom, food/drink stops may help to reduce driver fatigue.

## Vehicle Safety Policy

- Van/bus drivers shall use extra caution (drive at slower than normal speeds) when turning, changing lanes, when on exit/entrance ramps, or when bad weather is present (raining, fog, dawn, dust, night time).
- Drivers shall not exceed speed limits at any time.
- Van/bus drivers - the number of passengers is related to manufacturers design and seating capacity.
- Packing equipment in van/bus, the equipment should be packed below rear window level to help keep a lower center of gravity.
- Roof racks or use of roof racks are not allowed in an effort to maintain a lower center of gravity.
- Do not park vans in parking garages due to risk of damage to roof. Park in lots with no overhead hazards.

**Note:** The above requirements apply to the use of outside rental agency 12 and/or 15 passenger vans as well.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

- Violations of the vehicle safety policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

### **Campus Sponsored Visitors**

- Encourage visitors to arrange/ provide their own transportation.

**Transportation Guide – Best Practice Advisory**

Each off-campus trip has unique circumstances. Use this best practice guide to help determine an appropriate mode of transportation for your off-campus event. With this information, consider each option to select the most appropriate for your specific circumstance. The level of risk for liability to the University increases from #1 to #4.

1. Allow students to arrange their own transportation for a field trip. Provide location and meeting time. This is a best practice for field trips.
2. Hire Charter Bus with certified driver.
3. Hire I.S.D. bus with driver. This option may be appropriate for short distance off-campus events with a large number of participants.
4. Provide transportation for students/employees with SU van/bus, 3<sup>rd</sup> party rental van or rental vehicle – follow SU Vehicle Safety Policy. Be certain our driver is van/bus trained and has successfully completed the drivers’ license record check process. This option is acceptable when other options are not feasible.
5. Provide transportation for yourself, students, or employees in your own personal vehicle. This option is allowed but *should be carefully considered* because it places your auto insurance policy as primary to respond to an accident/injury claim and liability coverage.
6. If deemed necessary, Departments may provide local transportation for visitors from their local hotels to campus. All available efforts should be made to arrange housing/hotels within the Georgetown area to avoid transportation risks on IH35.
7. Transportation of K – 8 students is prohibited. Transportation for 9 – 12 grade students should involve the best practice advisory # 1 – 3. Other transportation methods should be approved by VP for Finance and Administration.

**Motor Vehicle Record Guidelines**

- Southwestern University Fleet Safety Guidelines (gleaned from EIIA guideline) 12/02.
- Driver’s license record is confidentially reviewed by Southwestern University Police (from DPS records).
- A total of 7 points disqualifies an employee from being authorized to drive a University vehicle (van/bus/truck/car), rental vehicle, or a personal vehicle for University business. SU Police will notify department head and any employee who does not meet the “good driver” criteria in a confidential manner.

<i>Points</i>	<i>Violation</i>
7	DWI/DUI (past 5 years)
TBD	Suspended license* (past 5 years)
<u>Past Three (3) Years:</u>	
5	Reckless Driving



## Vehicle Safety Policy

3		Speed in excess of 20 mph above posted speed
3		Leaving the scene of an accident
3		Disregard traffic control device
3		Open container
3		Speed too great for conditions
3		1 <sup>st</sup> accident – at fault
4		2 <sup>nd</sup> accident – at fault
2		Following too close
2		Improper lane change/passing
2		Speeding
1		Seatbelt violation
1		All other violations

\* If warranted, special conditions/violations may be reviewed and a determination made on an individual case-by-case basis. Special conditions that reveal repeated violations or a history of violations (evidence of an at-risk driver) beyond 3 years may warrant driver elimination for use of Southwestern University vehicles, rental vehicles or sponsored trips. Cases will be confidentially reviewed by SU Police and Human Resources.

- Student drivers are exempted from Texas license requirement, but must have a valid license, pass the driver's license criteria check, be 20 years old, and have a minimum of two years of driving experience with a license (not time driving with a permit).

### Best Practices

- Use extra precaution while driving at night - depth perception and vision are compromised. Slow down.
- Drivers who are tired (driver fatigue) are strongly encouraged to pull off the road to a safe location and take a 30 minute nap.

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Southwestern University

Safety and Risk Management Office

Rental Car/SU Fleet Vehicle Damage Form

Date form completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Rental Car Company: \_\_\_\_\_ N/A: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: SU Fleet Vehicle / Rental: Make/Model/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Department renting vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle rented by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle driven by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Damage to vehicle occurred while in possession of: \_\_\_\_\_

Damage to other 3rd party vehicles or property? Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Loss: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Loss: \_\_\_\_\_ Loss Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of events leading to loss/damage:
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What factors do you believe caused or contributed to this incident/loss?
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who do you believe is responsible for causing this damage?: \_\_\_\_\_

Any personal injuries to SU employees/students or others involved? \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes

If Yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Police report? Incident# \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Police Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Process:

- 1. Report incident to Supervisor/Dept. Head and Safety & Risk Management Office as soon as practical.
2. Send Rental Car Agreement to Safety & Risk Management: delancem@southwestern.edu
3. Send completed damage form (scanned pdf) to delancem@southwestern.edu or via campus mail within three days of incident.

SV00 NEW FILE SYSTEM - PUT EVERYTHING HERE! \ACCS\Safety & Risk Management\RIK MANAGEMENT - EIA\CLAIMS - Accidents\CLAIMS\CLAIMS PROCESS
AUTO\_PROPERTY\Rental\_SU Car DamageForm.docx

## Frequently Asked Questions:

Why do we have a newly revised vehicle safety policy that now requires defensive driver training?

*Our risk management administrator recently conducted a best practice in depth review of all consortium members' vehicle safety policies. The revisions were made (2016) to fill gaps that were identified. This policy is considered a best practice policy that provides for and promotes safe driving behaviors, reduces the potential for serious injury and reduces liability for our institution. Most recent revisions were completed in February 2024.*

Is our vehicle policy consistent with other peer institutions?

*Yes, dozens of peer institutions have developed very comprehensive vehicle safety programs. Transportation accidents and injuries pose one of the greatest risks of serious injury and loss an institution faces. Our policy will help shape safe driving behaviors and reduce the potential for accidents and serious injuries as well as property damage and liability claims.*

Are students who are involved in a volunteer activity while driving a University vehicle or rented vehicle required to follow this policy?

*Yes, the same rules apply.*

Are students who are required to participate in off-campus volunteer events and drive their own personal vehicles (such as community engaged learning, student organization conference or similar event) required to follow this policy?

*No, but they are highly encouraged to follow our safe driving rules for their own safety and liability.*

If I only drive on University business (example - conference) once a year or less, and drive my own personal vehicle, am I still required to follow all the components of this policy?

*Yes, we look at institutional risk and our goal is to shape safe driving behaviors for all drivers. Consider a few hundred drivers who only drive once a year or so. From an institutional perspective, that is hundreds of road trips and risk of accidents, injuries and claims.*

Do employees who usually only make short duration trips to local stores on a routine basis to pick up University related supplies also need to follow this policy?

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*Yes. These trips from multiple employees add up over the course of a year for the institution and pose risk of local accidents, injuries, and claims.*

If I'm driving my own personal vehicle driving to or from work (campus), does this policy apply?

*No, you are not conducting University business while commuting. However, we strongly encourage all our campus community to engage in safe driving behaviors at all times and this policy highlights model behavior that can save your life or the life of others.*

Does this policy apply to all faculty and staff designations including (but not limited to) adjunct and visiting faculty, part time staff?

*If you are driving on University business, yes. Includes use of University vehicle, rented vehicle or personal vehicle while on University business.*

Are there some examples of drivers who may be exempt from the requirements of this policy?

*None that we can think of, this policy covers all University related travel.*

How do I report a vehicle accident that has occurred while on University Business?

*Go to [www.southwestern.edu/safety](http://www.southwestern.edu/safety), under "Safety Programs & Policies" scroll down to "Vehicle Safety Program" and complete the Rental Car/SU Fleet Vehicle Accident/Damage Form found in the policy document.*

Who do I contact about questions or clarification of the vehicle safety policy and driver certification?

*First, contact your safety committee representative or administrative staff member. If they are unable to address your question, they will contact the Campus Safety & Risk Management Office. This will help with uniform understanding and implementation.*

Why is my driving record checked every three years? Who has access to this information?

*Drivers license record check every three years is considered to be a base-line standard for most organizations. Information is limited to Human Resources and if necessary, the department head/supervisor.*

If I have received a traffic ticket, how does that affect my employment?

*As noted in the Driver's License Record Check section of the policy, "all drivers who drive for University business shall report any vehicle violation that represents 4 or more points on the motor vehicle record guideline..." The policy goes on to say that, "Special conditions that reveal repeated violations or a history of violations (evidence of an at-risk driver) beyond 3 years may warrant driver elimination for use of Southwestern University vehicles or sponsored trips. Cases will be confidentially reviewed by SU Police and Human Resources." If an employee is 'eliminated' as a suitable driver, and if driving is a primary duty of that employee's position, this may result in a temporary suspension from work-related driving, a temporary reassignment of driving duties to others (if available/reasonable), or in separation from employment.*

Why do I need to take a defensive driving course every three (3) years?

*Driving habits (good and poor) are learned over many years and many drivers have developed unsafe driving habits. By reviewing safe driving behaviors on a three year rotation, we believe our drivers will be more conscientious about developing long term safe driving behaviors. The goal is to create a culture of safe driving behaviors, safe driving expectations from all our drivers and to reduce accidents, injuries, and claims.*

What if I have an accident or incident that was my fault and a claim was filed for damage?

*Submit the accident report included in this policy as soon as possible. Upon review, it may be necessary for you to be assigned and complete a driver safety training on-line course.*