

# Policy 1411: Vehicle Use Procedures

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# Policy 1411: Vehicle Use Procedures

The following Procedures outline the responsibilities of departments and individuals in complying with the Vehicle Use Policy.

Only authorized persons are permitted to drive a State Operated Vehicle (SOV). In certain limited situations approved by department heads or deans, such as athletic team travel, students may be allowed to drive.

Failure to comply with any of these Procedures may result in disciplinary action and may result in suspension or termination of SOV operating privileges. The university (Office of Risk Management (ORM)) reserves the right to revoke or deny (temporarily or permanently) authorization to any Driver, at any time and in its sole discretion.

## A. Driver Qualifications

1. **All Operators:** All drivers, must meet these minimum qualifications:
  - a. Students: must be at least 20 years of age and have possessed a valid driver's license for a minimum of two years;
  - b. Employees (including student wage employees): must be at least 18 years of age and have possessed a valid driver's license for a minimum of two years.
  - c. It is the responsibility of all Drivers to:
    1. Possess a valid driver's license, of the proper class and appropriate endorsement for the type of vehicle to be driven, that is recognized as valid by the Commonwealth of Virginia;
    2. Complete and sign the Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) Release form, authorizing the University to review his or her MVR whenever it is deemed necessary;
    3. Complete the MVR request via the University's background check vendor if necessary ([University Policy 2221](#));
    4. Maintain an acceptable MVR, as defined in Section F below;
    5. Self-report all moving violations to supervisor and the Office of Risk Management within 3 business days of the violation;
    6. Have no medical condition that precludes the safe operation of a motor vehicle;
    7. Read the Vehicle Use Policy and sign the Employee Acknowledgment form;
    8. Adhere to the driving regulations required by law and as stated Section C below; AND
    9. Complete University Driver Awareness Training and repeat training every two years. New hires must complete training within 60 days of being hired.

## B. Restrictions on Travel

(This does not apply to daily operations)

1. Vehicles owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia may not be used to travel outside a 300-mile limit (roundtrip) of George Mason's Fairfax Campus (waiver considerations can be requested via the [Vehicle Restriction Waiver Form](#)). Rental vehicles must be used to travel farther than the 300-mile limit.
2. No students (excluding student wage employees) can operate an SOV outside a 300-mile limit (roundtrip) of George Mason's Campuses without an employee in the vehicle.
3. No Driver shall drive for more than two hours without a break. It is recommended that a break last at least 15 minutes.
4. Any trip that is longer than 300 miles, or four hours, must have at least two qualified Drivers assigned to drive the SOV.
5. Driver(s) shall not drive to and from the destination between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (Some approved activities may fall outside of these hours).

6. Although obtaining meals and lodging are reasonable deviations, the trip must be along the most direct route between designated sites and not involve *ad hoc* side trips.

## C. Safe Driving Procedure

### 1. General

All Drivers must, at all times:

- a. Wear seatbelts and require passengers to wear seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion. (This does not apply to vehicles that are not required by law to have seatbelts, such as school buses).
- b. Only operate cell phones and other electronic devices with a hands-free device. Talking on a non-hands-free device, text messaging, and emailing are strictly prohibited when the gearshift is in drive and/or the vehicle is in motion.
- c. Not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any substance that may impair the ability to safely operate the vehicle ([University Policy 2219](#))
- d. Shut off the engine, remove the keys, set the emergency brake, and lock the vehicle before leaving an SOV unattended.
- e. No eating or smoking while in an SOV.
- f. Whenever work requirements make it necessary for an SOV to block or obstruct traffic, temporary traffic control should be set up in accordance with the [Virginia Work Area Protection Manual](#).
- g. When parked, an SOV should not obstruct access to fire lanes, fire hydrants, fire department connections for buildings, building exits, or handicap parking.
- h. If driving on pedestrian walkways, SOV speed shall not exceed 5 mph if it is safe to do so and shall be reduced if needed to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Right-of-way MUST always be given to pedestrians on walkways.
- i. Position their vehicles so as to avoid the necessity of backing up, when possible. When backing up is necessary, the Driver will check the rear clearance of the vehicle for other vehicles or objects before moving. If there is a passenger in the vehicle, he or she should get out and spot for the Driver.
- j. Note and report any defects or damage that affects the safe operation of the SOV to their supervisor or rental agency. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to arrange for University vehicle defects or damages to be corrected. Rental agency vehicle defects or damages should be immediately reported to the agency.
- k. Properly maintain, inspect and clean the vehicle after each use.
- l. Drivers of emergency vehicles may exercise those privileges granted to them under university policies and procedures and by the laws of Virginia. This provision does not relieve the Driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.

### 2. Passengers and Cargo

When transporting passengers or cargo, Drivers must:

- a. Not transport anyone other than Mason employees and students in a SOV, unless the person is being transported in connection with university business, law enforcement matters, or as authorized by a Department Head or Dean.
- b. Not allow anyone to ride on or inside any non-passenger compartment including running boards, fenders, hoods, tailgates, or in truck beds.
- c. Not permit hitchhikers or pets/animals to ride in any SOV (service animals are permitted).
- d. Ensure that all cargo items are properly secured to prevent shifting or falling from the vehicle. Never load anything on the top of vehicles.

- e. Ensure that the trailer hitch is securely latched, and that safety chains and other safety equipment are properly attached and operable when towing a trailer, dolly, or other equipment.
- f. Mark the end of any load that extends beyond the rear bumper of the vehicle with a red flag or other warning in accordance with Virginia motor vehicle laws.
- g. Not operate a SOV when it is so loaded that the Driver's view is obstructed and/or the load interferes with the Driver's control of the vehicle.

### 3. Rental Vehicles

When utilizing a rental vehicle:

- a. Reservations for rental vehicles should be obtained through Parking and Transportation Motor Pool.
- b. Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) **Inside** the U.S. - never sign for the additional insurance coverage. **Outside** the U.S. - obtain auto insurance coverages for out of country rentals without upgrades.
- c. Inspect all rental vehicles for damages prior to accepting the vehicle to include the inside and outside of the vehicle (roof of passenger vans).
- d. Report vehicle breakdowns to the rental agency per the rental contract.
- e. Avoid returning rental vehicles after-hours. After-hour returns should be inspected thoroughly and documented (pictures or videos).
- f. Upgrades to luxury vehicles, coverage may not apply. Damages to luxury vehicles that exceed \$35,000 in damages are subject to the approving department's reimbursement for damages (i.e. a luxury SUV, Mercedes, Bentley, BMW, Corvette).

### 4. Personal Vehicles

When utilizing personal vehicles for state business:

- a. Obtain permission from a department head or supervisor.
- b. Document mileage.
- c. Submit travel mileage to the Travel office for reimbursement.
- d. If an accident occurs, the owner of the personal vehicle's insurance will be primary.

## D. 11- and 15- Passenger Vans

1. **Driver Qualifications:** In addition to all of Section A above, hands-on training is required when operating a passenger van (<http://police.gmu.edu/programs-and-services/van-driver-familiarization-class/>). Drivers MUST complete Van Driver Familiarization training prior to transporting passengers and complete refresher training every two years.
2. **Requests:** All requests for use must be made through Parking and Transportation Motor Pool.
3. **Authorization:** Drivers are authorized to use 11- and 15-passenger vehicles only when smaller vehicles are not available or not practical. Minors who are not students at George Mason University must not be transported in 11- and 15-passenger vans.

## E. Accidents

In the event of an accident, the Driver must:

1. Assist anyone injured and call for an ambulance, if needed.

2. While the vehicle is at the accident scene, notify the State or Local Police (911) or, if the accident occurs on campus, George Mason Police (703-993-2810). This applies to any accident regardless of severity.
3. Notify his or her supervisor and the Office of Risk Management. The failure to make a report of a vehicle accident as required by the Vehicle Use Policy and the laws of the Commonwealth may result in disciplinary action.
4. Document the names, addresses, phone numbers, vehicle license numbers and insurance information of all persons and vehicles involved, including the information from any witnesses. Also document the names, phone numbers, and addresses of anyone injured or claiming to be injured. The Driver must provide this information to his or her supervisor immediately upon return, as well as to the Office of Risk Management as soon as possible following the accident.
5. Complete an "Auto Loss Notice" form and forward to the Office of Risk Management as soon as possible. (Available in the insurance information packet of vehicles owned by the Commonwealth, or the Office of Risk Management's website.)
6. Complete an Employers' First Report of Injury Accident form as soon as possible if an injury to an employee occurs.
7. Not comment or provide any statement indicating fault to anyone except Driver's immediate supervisor, a representative of the Commonwealth's Division of Risk Management, a law enforcement officer, or the Office of Risk Management.

## F. Roadside Assistance

### University Owned Vehicles

1. Call the Facilities customer service at 703-993-2525 (24hrs) to coordinate towing and/or repair services after an accident or breakdown.
2. Roadside assistance will not be available to Department owned SOV's that have been approved for use beyond the 300-mile round trip restriction. The Department will be responsible for any cost related to a vehicle breakdown, towing etc.

### Rental Vehicles

1. Contact the rental agency for roadside assistance per the rental contract.

## G. Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) Status

1. **Authorization** – As a condition for authorization to drive a SOV, Drivers and prospective Drivers must provide a valid drivers' license to their supervisor and authorize Mason to obtain and review his or her [MVR](#).
2. **MVR Request** – The Driver's MVR will be accessed annually by the University. A request will be made as deemed necessary by the Accident Review Committee ("ARC") for Drivers involved in auto accidents while driving State-Operated Vehicles (SOVs). New hires with driving responsibility directly related to their job function will have their MVRs assessed.
3. **Analysis of MVR** – Motor Vehicle Reports will be evaluated based on the criteria below, as a minimum standard. If an MVR is Conditional or Restricted, the University may require the Driver to take additional steps.
  - a. Acceptable MVR: includes zero to no more than one at-fault accident (excluding a major moving violation) and/or one minor driving violation in the past three years.  
Action: No further action is required.
  - b. Conditional MVR: includes no more than two at-fault accidents or two minor moving violations (excluding a major moving violation) in the past three years.  
Action: During this period, the employee may continue to operate a SOV and must self-report any moving violations to their supervisor and the ORM.

- c. **Restricted MVR:** includes three or more at-fault accidents or three or more minor moving violations in the past three years, or includes a conviction for a major moving violation in the past three years or a suspended or revoked license:

**Action:** The employee and department head or designated representative will be notified by the ORM of the restricted driving status of the employee. The employee may be required to complete a new MVR through the University’s background check vendor ([University Policy 2221](#)). Human Resources will provide the results of the MVR to the employee. Human Resources will also work with the department to determine if the driving restriction will impact the employee’s work at Mason. A restricted status may result in disciplinary action or termination if driving a SOV is a condition of the employee’s employment. Driving privileges for Mason will be suspended until the employee’s motor vehicle report reflects an Acceptable or Conditional status. Prior to reinstatement of suspended driving privileges, the employee will be required to successfully complete the university Drivers Training and/or Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) certified training.

- 4. **University Driver Status** – The drivers’ condition of eligibility to operate a vehicle on behalf of Mason.
  - a. **Authorized Status:** A driver’s MVR meets all requirements of being an authorized driver can operate a vehicle on behalf of Mason for Mason business
  - b. **Restricted Status:** A driver’s MVR fails to meet requirements of the policy and the driver is not allowed to operate a SOV on behalf of Mason.
  - c. **Non- Compliant Status:** A driver failed compliance requirements stated above in section A. “Driver Qualifications” above. Driver must correct compliance requirement before being allowed to operate a SOV (i.e., training expiration, not enough driving history).
- 5. **Disciplinary Procedures** – An employee who drives a SOV for University Business and is placed on Restricted Driving Status may be subject to disciplinary action through Human Resources if driving a SOV is a condition of their employment.

MVR GRADING GRID

Number of At-Fault Accidents				
Number of Violations	0	1	2	3+
0	ACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	CONDITIONAL	<b>RESTRICTED</b>
1	ACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	CONDITIONAL	<b>RESTRICTED</b>
2	CONDITIONAL	CONDITIONAL	CONDITIONAL	<b>RESTRICTED</b>
3+	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>
MAJOR VIOLATIONS	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>

\*\*\*Some major violations are:

- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Racing or excessive speed (20 MPH over speed limit)
- Reckless, homicide or manslaughter involving the use of a motor vehicle
- License suspension or revocation resulting from accidents or moving violations
- Attempting to elude a police officer officer.

## H. Definitions

**Accident-** means any crash involving the operation of a University vehicle (owned or rented) that results in bodily injury or property damage of any kind, regardless of extent.

**Authorized Driver-** A driver authorized to operate a vehicle for business on behalf of the University that has met all the requirements of the policy and section A. Driver Qualifications of the procedures.

**Collision Damage Waiver** – CDW is an optional service sold by a rental car company to cover in case of an accident or other event that causes **damage** to a rental car.

**Driver-** means a student, employee, volunteer, contractor or employee of contractor, or agent of the University authorized to drive an SOV on University Business.

**Motor Vehicle Report (“MVR”)-** means the record of a person’s driving history obtained from the Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles or another State’s licensing authority.

**Non-Compliant** – A driver that has not met or failed to stay in compliance with being an authorized driver (Training, age requirement or MVR not completed).

**State-Operated Vehicles (“SOV”)-** means any motor vehicle or trailer licensed for highway use, owned or leased by the University from the Commonwealth’s Department of General Services, and motor vehicles that are rented from rental car companies by Drivers travelling on University Business.

**University Business-** means activities that are performed on behalf of the University or authorized by the University, or in the course and scope of employment, or in one’s role as a volunteer, student, contractor, or employee of contractor.

**Valid Driver’s License-** a driver’s license recognized as valid by the Commonwealth of Virginia and of the proper class for the type of vehicle to be driven.

## I. Travel Waiver Procedure

In certain limited circumstances, the Office of Risk Management may approve waivers from the travel restrictions listed in Section B. Travel restrictions waivers may be granted after considering the circumstances of each case.

## J. Restricted Driver Appeal Process

In certain limited circumstances, the Office of Risk Management and Human Resources may approve a restricted driver status. Driver and department head must submit in writing, a request for appeal to the Office of Risk Management

## K. Forms

[MVR Request and Release Form](#)

[Policy Acknowledgement Form](#)

[Vehicle Restrictions Waiver](#)

## J. Responsibilities

**1. All GMU Departments that operate SOVs will follow these procedures:**

- a. Ensure all Drivers complete and submit an MVR Release form to the Office or Risk Management.
  - b. Maintain a list of Drivers for their department.
  - c. Ensure new employees that require an MVR complete their request and receive notification of the driving status before work begins ([University Policy 2221](#)).
  - d. Require that all Drivers read the Vehicle Use Policy and Procedures and sign an Acknowledgement form before authorizing use of a SOV. A copy of the acknowledgement form will be given to the Driver and the original filed in his or her departmental personnel file.
- 2. All GMU Departments that have a fleet of vehicles will:**
- a. Maintain a motor vehicle use log for all SOVs operated by the Department.
  - b. Maintain proper maintenance on all vehicles (contact Facilities Management for maintenance and repairs).
- 3. Office of Risk Management will:**
- a. Manage the ARC and claims handling.
  - b. Submit renewal and maintain records of insurance for all vehicles owned by the Commonwealth, as reported by Departments.
  - c. Conduct Driver Safety training and monitor compliance regarding successful completion.
  - d. Maintain authorized Drivers database.
  - e. Request initial hire and annual MVR screenings of all regular drivers as submitted by departments in conjunction with HR&P.
- 4. Human Resources & Payroll will:**
- a. Request MVRs for Drivers as requested by the Office of Risk Management or the department.
  - b. Manage the formal disciplinary action process for violations of these Procedures, along with the employee's supervisor.
- 5. University Police Department will:**
- a. Investigate all reported on-campus accidents involving SOV.
  - b. Notify ORM of all accidents involving a SOV.
  - c. Facilitate hands-on training and familiarization course for 11-15 passenger vans.
- 6. Facilities Management will:**
- a. Maintain vehicles owned by the University, as requested by Departments. Departments will be charged for all maintenance requests, which will be billed to departments fund and org.
  - b. Annually inspect SOVs owned by the University.
- 7. Parking and Transportation will:**
- a. Maintain and Process rental vehicles for University Travel.
  - b. Review driver status to ensure drivers are authorized to operate a SOV for University Business.