

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 (Operational 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

- a) **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 or another State's licensing authority;
 2. Non-US license holders must obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP) and hold a valid license from their home country (an IDP can be obtained from Automobile Association of America (AAA);
 3. Complete and sign the Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) Release form, authorizing the University to review his or her MVR whenever it is deemed necessary. A new MVR form is required to be submitted when driver changes state of licensure, at any time during employment with the University;
 4. Complete the MVR request via the University's background check vendor if necessary ([University Policy 2221](#));
 5. Maintain an acceptable MVR, as defined in Section G below;
 6. Self-report all moving violations to supervisor and Operational Risk Management within 3 business days of the violation;
 7. Notify Operational Risk Management upon termination of employment or change in assigned duties that no longer include operation of SOV;
 8. Have no medical condition that precludes the safe operation of a motor vehicle;
 9. Read the Vehicle Use Policy and sign the Employee Acknowledgment form;
 10. Adhere to the driving regulations required by law and as stated Section C below; AND
 11. Complete University Driver Awareness Training and repeat training every two years. New hires must complete training within 60 days of being hired. Failure to keep current with driver training requirements will affect the driver's authorization status.

B. Restrictions on Travel

(This does not apply to daily operations)

- a) 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.

- b) No students (excluding student wage employees) can operate an SOV outside a 300-mile limit (roundtrip) of George Mason University's Campuses without at least one (1) employee on the trip.
- c) No Driver shall drive for more than two hours without a break. It is recommended that a break last at least 15 minutes.
- d) Any trip that is longer than 300 miles, or four hours, must have at least two qualified Drivers assigned to drive the SOV.
- e) 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).
- f) 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

a) 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 and utilize back up cameras and sensors, if available. 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.

b) 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 Commonwealth of 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. Drivers of larger vehicles or vehicle with roof racks should be cognizant of height clearance requirements posted on parking garage entrances/exits.

c) Rental Vehicles

a. Reservations:

1. Rental vehicles reservations should be obtained through Parking and Transportation Motor Pool.
2. Allowable rental vehicle categories are; compact, economy or mid-size vehicle. Additional information regarding vehicle types and approval for larger vehicle rentals (i.e., minivan or Full-size SUV) is provided in the [Travel, Meals & Entertainment Manual](#).
3. Leasing, or accepting free upgrades to, the following vehicle types are not permitted and are not a reimbursable expense.
 - Luxury vehicles (Audi, Bentley, Jaguar, BMV, Tesla, etc.)
 - Heavy Duty (Super) trucks, campers, trailers, motorcycles, etc.

b. Insurance Coverage, breakdowns, and vehicle damage:

1. Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) Inside the U.S. - never sign for the additional insurance coverage. Outside the U.S. – ALWAYS obtain all available auto insurance coverages for out of country rentals.
2. Inspect all rental vehicles for damages prior to accepting the vehicle to include the inside and outside of the vehicle (roof of passenger vans).
3. Report vehicle breakdowns to the rental agency per the rental contract.
4. Avoid returning rental vehicles after-hours. After-hour returns should be inspected thoroughly and documented (pictures or videos).
5. In the event of a loss/accident the department will be responsible for the costs up to the insurance \$1,000 deductible.
6. Download accident packet from Operational Risk Management's website (auto loss form, insurance card and other related documents).

d) 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

- a) **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. Drivers must complete University Driver Awareness training prior to attending Van Driver Familiarization training.
 - a) Age restriction will apply outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia for Enterprise rental and other rental agencies (<https://transportation.gmu.edu/transportation-services/#MotorPool>).
- b) **Requests:** All requests for use must be made through Parking and Transportation Motor Pool.
- c) **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.
- d) **Safety:** 15 passenger vans should not exceed 12 passengers at any time. Cargo and passenger load should be distributed equally to lower vehicle's center of gravity and potential risk of rollover

E. Accidents

In the event of an accident, the Driver must:

- a) Assist anyone injured (avoid moving injured parties) and call for an ambulance, if needed. Take all necessary precautions to prevent further accidents at the scene.
- b) 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.
- c) Notify his or her supervisor and Operational Risk Management within 24 hours of the accident. 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.
- d) 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 Operational Risk Management as soon as possible following the accident.
- e) Complete an "Auto Loss Notice" form and forward to Operational Risk Management as soon as possible and no later than 3 days from the accident date. (Available in the insurance information packet of vehicles owned by the Commonwealth, or Operational Risk Management's website.)
- f) Complete an Employers' First Report of Accident form as soon as possible if an injury to an employee occurs.
- g) Do not make any comments 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 Operational Risk Management.

F. Roadside Assistance

1. University Owned Vehicles
 - a) Call the Facilities customer service at 703-993-2525 (24hrs) to coordinate towing and/or repair services after an accident or breakdown.
 - b) 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.
2. Rental Vehicles
Contact the rental agency for roadside assistance per the rental contract.

G. Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) Status

- a) **Authorization** – As a condition for authorization to drive a SOV, Drivers and prospective Drivers must provide their valid drivers' license to their supervisor and authorize Mason to obtain and review his or her MVR.
- b) **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.
- c) **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 employees' 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 restricted driving privileges, the employee will be required to successfully complete the university Drivers Training and/or Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) certified training. Refer to University Policy 1410, Accident Review Committee.

d) **University Driver Status** – The drivers' condition of eligibility to operate a vehicle on behalf of Mason.

- 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
- 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.
- 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, insufficient driving history, failure to complete the University's motor vehicle vendor request).

e) **Disciplinary Procedures** – An employee who drives a SOV for University Business and is placed on Restricted Driving Status may be subject to disciplinary action in alignment with DHRM and University Policy if driving a SOV is a condition of their employment. Departments should engage Human Resources to determine and execute appropriate next steps.

- NOTE: RESTRICTIONS ARE IMPOSED FOR THREE YEARS FROM THE COVICTION DATES OF THE VIOLATION (May be extended if driver received additional moving violations within the restriction period).

MVR GRADING GRID

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

***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.

H. Travel Waiver Procedure

In certain limited circumstances, Operational Risk Management may approve waivers from the travel restrictions listed in Section B. Vehicle Restriction waivers may be granted after considering the circumstances of each case. Submitting a waiver does not guarantee approval.

- Submit Vehicle Restriction Waiver form to risk@gmu.edu

I. Restricted Driver Appeal Process

In certain limited circumstances, Operational Risk Management and Human Resources may approve a restricted driver status. Submitting an appeal does not guarantee approval. Driver and department

head must:

- Submit a request on writing to risk@gmu.edu
- Include a reason for the request
- Include action for driving improvement

J. Forms

[MVR Request and Release Form](#)

[Policy Acknowledgement Form](#)

[Vehicle Restrictions Waiver](#)

K. Responsibilities

1. All Departments that own SOV must:

- Verify annually that all Drivers present a valid driver's license.
- Maintain a current list of Authorized Drivers for their department.
- Ensure all Drivers complete and submit an [MVR Request and Release Form](#) to Operational Risk Management.
- Require all Drivers read the Vehicle Use Policy and Procedures and sign the [Driver Acknowledgement Form](#).
- Ensure all Drivers meet the Driver qualifications as defined in the "Driver Qualification" (Vehicle Use Procedures section A.) before operating an SOV.
- Ensure all Drivers for the department take the mandatory Driver Awareness Training initially upon hire and every two years thereafter.

2. Operational Risk Management:

- Will administer and manage the Accident Review Committee (ARC) and claims handling process.
- Will submit renewal and maintain records of insurance coverage for all SOV, as reported by departments.
- Will conduct Driver Safety training and monitor policy compliance records.
- Will maintain a Drivers' database.
- Will monitor and review all MVR to include initial new hire MVR and annual MVR's for authorized drivers.
- May deny the use of an SOV to any individual who does not meet all conditions set forth in this policy. Violations of the conditions set forth in this policy may result in the suspension of the privilege to drive SOVs.

3. Human Resources:

- Will Submit MVR background check of candidates for hire with driving specifications to ORM for review before hiring offer is made.
- Will request MVRs for Drivers as requested by Operational Risk Management or the department.
- Will work with department and their restricted drivers and facilitate disciplinary actions as needed.

4. University Police Department:

- Will investigate all reported on-campus accidents involving SOV.
- Will notify ORM of all accidents involving an SOV.
- Will facilitate the training and familiarization course for 11-15 passenger vans.

5. Facilities Management:

- Will maintain vehicles owned by the University.

- b) Will annually inspect SOVs owned by the University.

6. Parking and Transportation:

- a) Will maintain and process rental vehicle request for University Travel.
- b) Will review driver status to ensure drivers are authorized to operate SOV or rental vehicles for University business.

7. Accident Review Committee:

- a) Chairperson will complete an initial review of each accident, with advice from Risk Management staff, and classify each accident as preventable, not-preventable, or an incident.
- b) Committee will review all accidents deemed preventable, or unable to be categorized during initial review.
- c) During an accidents' review, the committee will take into consideration all available documents, reports, testimony, or other relevant documents. As a result of the Committee's analysis of the accident, the Committee will assign the appropriate category (preventable, not-preventable, incident) to each accident.
- d) For those accidents which the Committee deems preventable, the Committee will recommend corrective actions, remedial training, disciplinary actions, fines, removal or driving privileges, etc., in partnership with driver's supervisor and employee relations when necessary.
- e) Accident Findings
- f) Any driver that disagrees with the classification or an accident may appeal in writing to The Director of Operational Risk Management within 30 days of notification from the committee. The Director will forward the appeal to the Department of State Police, which will review the facts of the case and provide a report and recommendation to the University.