

13.04.99.R1 Student Travel Rule

Approved December 6, 2001
Revised June 9, 2008
Revised August 18, 2014
Next Scheduled Review: August 18, 2019



Rule Statement

Texas A&M University-Commerce is supportive of student activities both on and off campus but also recognizes that the safety of its students is of utmost importance.

Reason for Rule

The safety guidelines in this rule apply to students who travel more than 25 miles from campus to an activity or event that is organized, sponsored, and/or funded by A&M-Commerce. This applies to those using a vehicle owned or operated by the institution (or vehicles rented by the University through commercial agencies); or travel that is required by an organization registered with A&M-Commerce. Students traveling on behalf of A&M-Commerce must obtain approval through the sponsoring department and, for student organization travel, through the Sam Rayburn Student Center.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1 TRAVEL SAFETY GUIDELINES

During travel situations described above, students must abide by the following guidelines.

- 1.1 In accordance with State law, drivers must use seat belts or other available safety restraints and require all passengers to do likewise.
- 1.2 Drivers, passengers and their luggage should not exceed the official maximum capacity of the vehicle used.
- 1.3 Drivers shall possess a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the classification of the vehicle being driven.
- 1.4 Drivers should consider operator fatigue, and on lengthy trips, alternate drivers should be used to avoid fatigue.

2 TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS AND PLANNING

Departments responsible for arranging the trip must take steps to assure all travel is in compliance with this rule. A travel itinerary and passenger list shall be filed with the University Police Department and the sponsoring department prior to the start of the trip. Large groups who wish to travel in the same vehicle may be required to obtain a commercial carrier. A carrier must be in compliance with Texas Department of Transportation rules and regulations.

3 SAFETY ISSUES RELATED TO STUDENT TRAVEL IN UNIVERSITY OR RENTAL VEHICLES

Drivers must be recommended by the department head/director of the division/department that is arranging the trip and meet the following requirements:

3.1 Any student, who may be required to drive a university or rental vehicle, shall have a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check and shall be assigned a driver rating. With an acceptable rating as described in Appendix A, an applicant's name & driver's license number shall be added to the approved driver's list. The Safety Office obtains the MVR and maintains the list of approved drivers. Safety personnel shall provide the names of the approved drivers to the Motor Pool Coordinator. Persons who drive vehicles shall have attended a safety orientation, and perform successfully on a test drive every three years. The test drive shall be with an orientation supervisor in an appropriate vehicle type. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to safely operate the vehicle. The supervisor may reject the applicant if he/she cannot demonstrate safe operation of the vehicle. The applicant must acknowledge (with signature) that he/she was informed of the extreme differences in driving a high occupancy vehicle as compared to a four-passenger vehicle.

4 OPERATOR CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 All drivers must comply with all applicable traffic laws and regulations.

4.2 Before departure the driver must make certain the passengers are aware of the posted load limits, passenger seat belt requirements, and smoking restrictions.

4.3 The Trip Manifest and Itinerary must be delivered to the University Police Department immediately prior to the group's departure and signed immediately upon the return to campus.

4.4 The driver shall confront rowdy or disorderly behavior by the passengers that may cause driver distractions.

4.5 Smoking or driving while under the influence of impairing drugs or alcohol is prohibited.

4.6 Use of radar/laser detection devices is prohibited.

- 4.7 Use of headphones, cell phones (including texting) or earphones is prohibited when driving.
- 4.8 The number of occupants in a vehicle shall not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle or the posted Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). Travel bags and other storage items are not permitted on the tops of passenger vans.
- 4.9 The maximum number of consecutive hours that a driver may drive is four. The driver shall safely stop the vehicle immediately if, at any time during the four-hour driving period, the driver becomes fatigued.
- 4.10 Travel outside the contiguous United States must conform to Appendix B.

5 IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

Follow the procedures in Appendix C.

6 PROCEDURES FOR CAMPS

- 6.1 Transportation to and from camp is the responsibility of each individual camper, and personal vehicles are not covered by A&M-Commerce's vehicle insurance.
- 6.2 Field trips related to the content of the camp reinforce the concepts taught during the camp, and during these field trips, campers are required to utilize the transportation provided by A&M-Commerce to and from any off-campus field trips. In the unlikely event of an emergency, the Camp Sponsor will contact the University Police Department and emergency services, if necessary. Any expenses incurred for medical transportation and/or treatment of the camper are the responsibility of each individual camper.

7 RULE REVIEW PROCESS

- 7.1 Prior to the submission to the President of any revision of the rule, a draft copy shall be forwarded to the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association Senate for their timely advice and comment. All advice and comments shall be reviewed by the contact office for possible inclusion in the revised rule.
- 7.2 Departments may have their own specific guidelines for student travel in addition to the above requirements. These guidelines should be easily accessible to all students and should be coordinated through the appropriate departments.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy [*13.04 Student Travel*](#)

Suspends University Procedure 13.04.99.R1.01 Student Travel Procedure

Appendixes

Appendix A – The Texas A&M University System Guidelines for Drivers of TAMUS Vehicles

Appendix B – Travel Outside Continental United States

Appendix C – Accident Reporting

Contact Office

Department of Safety & Risk Management
903.468.3091

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
GUIDELINES FOR DRIVERS OF TAMUS VEHICLES

- A. All TAMUS employees, student workers, etc. who may be required to drive a TAMUS vehicle should have a Motor Record (MVR) check and should be assigned a driver rating as indicated below (Article 6687b, Section 37, V.A.C.S.).

An acceptable rating to drive a TAMUS vehicle shall be a 2 or above. An employee with a rating of 3 should attend a driver's training refresher class before being returned to an approved status. Any employee with a rating of 4 or 5 should not be eligible to operate a TAMUS vehicle.

Rating (based on last 3 years of driving experience).

- 1 Superior – no traffic citation or motor vehicle accidents.
- 2 Good – no more than 1 moving traffic citation and 1 motor vehicle accident (not at fault).
- 3 Marginal – no more than 2 moving traffic citations, 2 motor vehicle accidents (not at fault) or 1 at-fault motor vehicle accident.
- 4 Probationary status – anything in excess of marginal rating. A six-month watch is indicated and MVRs checked at six-month intervals.
- 5 Unacceptable – any driver whose MVR shows any one of the following records is not acceptable:
 - Three or more accidents (regardless of fault) in the last three years.
 - One or more Type A violations in the last three years.
 - Any combination of accidents and Type B violations which equal four or more in the last three years.
 - An operator's license that has been suspended or revoked within the past three years.

Type A Violation:

1. Driving while intoxicated.
2. Driving under the influence of drugs.
3. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle.
4. Operating a motor vehicle during a period of suspension or revocation of an operator's license.
5. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony.
6. Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.
7. Operating a motor vehicle without the owner's authorization.
8. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive.
9. Reckless driving.
10. Speeding contest.

11. Hit and run (bodily injury and physical damage) driving.

Type B Violations:

All moving violations not listed as Type A violations.

- B.** An MVR should be obtained on all employees whose job duties would include driving a TAMUS owned vehicle.
1. Prior to employment or immediately upon employment if such has been extended subject to an allowable driver rating.
 2. At least every three years thereafter.
 3. If the employee has been involved in an accident.
 4. If the employee receives a moving traffic citation.
- C.** Driver training should be required for each regular TAMUS driver on a periodic basis in addition to counseling/training for any TAMUS driver involved in a motor vehicle accident or who has received a moving traffic citation.

Driver training can include, but is not limited to:

1. Defensive driving.
 2. One-day seminars on driving improvement.
 3. Driver training videos on specific driving skills in which the driver may be deficient.
- D.** An individual report on each driver should be maintained by the department head or director at each institution including the individual's MVR. The Driver History Record should include under the "History" section, notations regarding:
1. Training/counseling the driver has received, including the date.
 2. Notations regarding any misconduct with the vehicle, any reprimands concerning his/her driving.
 3. Any positive remarks regarding his/her safe driving.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

1. Anyone planning to travel outside the contiguous United States in a University vehicle must have written authorization from the President of the University. The letter of authorization will state the name(s) of the person(s) traveling, purpose, destination, and estimated date of return.
2. When crossing international borders, a letter from the property officer responsible for the vehicle, authorizing the taking of the vehicle out of the country and a notarized copy of the vehicle title must be available for inspection. The dispatcher will provide the letter and title at the time of vehicle pick up.
3. Insurance shall be purchased prior to leaving the borders of the contiguous United States. The cost to purchase and maintain insurance is the responsibility of the using department. Coverage must include damage to the University vehicle, recovery of the vehicle to the United States side of the border and all third party property damage. Proof of this insurance will be maintained until return to the United States.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

The following procedures should be followed whenever a University vehicle is involved in an accident, regardless of the extent of damage:

1. Stop immediately - notify local police so that an official report can document the accident.
2. Take necessary steps to prevent another accident.
3. Call a doctor, ambulance, or emergency medical team if necessary. Render aid to the injured until help arrives.
4. Get the names and addresses of all witnesses.
5. Give your name, address, place of employment, and name of your supervisor to the police officer. While at the scene of the accident, secure information needed to complete the Motor Vehicle Accident Report, (System Form 9) located in the glove compartment. The police officer will assist in providing the necessary information. Do not leave blank spaces. Submit the form directly to the office of Safety & Risk Management within 24 hours of the accident. A copy should be mailed to the Texas A&M University- Commerce, Safety & Risk Management, PO Box 3011, Commerce Texas 75429-3011.
6. It is the responsibility of the using department to obtain a copy of any and all police reports for all off-campus accidents. This report will be submitted to the office of Safety & Risk Management immediately upon receipt. A copy will be submitted to the Motor Pool Coordinator.
7. DO NOT make any statement, oral or written, as to WHO was at fault, since any admission may impair the insurer's ability to defend a case of questionable legal liability. Fault or liability will be decided by appropriate legal authority. While your signature is required, if a traffic citation is issued to you, your signature does not constitute an admission of guilt.
8. If the vehicle is inoperable and within the Commerce area call the Fleet Office for wrecker service. If outside the local area have it towed to the nearest dealer of the make of the vehicle involved. In the event more than one University vehicle is involved, they should be towed to one location regardless of make.
9. Remove log book, keys and all property which may be stolen. Secure the vehicle by locking. Deposit the keys with the shop manager of the dealership or garage.
10. Report the accident to your department head and to the Fleet Manager, (903-886-5475) or 903-886-5868.
 - A. Give the extent of damage.
 - B. Personal injuries.
 - C. Location of Injured hospital, "etc."
 - D. Your intentions to continue or return

11. All accidents within the State of Texas which involve the injury or death of a person or damage of property exceeding \$250 must be reported to the Texas Department of Public Safety. This report must be made within ten days after the accident by means of a Driver's Confidential Accident Report (Form ST-2) provided by the police officer. The liability insurance policy number, which is necessary to complete the form ST-2, can be obtained by calling the office of Safety & Risk Management (903-468-3091).