



Syracuse University

Fire and Life Safety Services Office
Campus Safety and Emergency Services

Vehicle Safety Policy and Guidelines

Effective April 1, 2019

Syracuse University
Vehicle Safety Policy and Guidelines

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I. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform Syracuse University (University) program which shall:

1. Maximize the safe operation of University owned or leased motor vehicles.
2. Maximize the safety of drivers, passengers, and the public.
3. Minimize losses, damages, and claims against the University.

II. **Scope**

This University policy and its associated programs apply to all drivers who may be engaged in the operation of any University owned or leased motor vehicles (“University Motor Vehicles”) on either public or private property. This policy stipulates requirements in addition to those of other established programs such as campus traffic regulations and pedestrian safety, motor vehicle maintenance, parking and enforcement. This policy also identifies certain requirements for employees desiring to drive certain vehicles rented on a short-term basis for University business.

In order to meet the objectives of this policy, all drivers of University Motor Vehicles shall have their drivers’ licenses and driving records reviewed prior to employment and after employment commences upon reasonable suspicion of driving infractions and under other circumstances at the University’s discretion, and shall successfully complete the University’s driver training program in accordance with procedures established by this policy.

All full time and part time employees, including student employees, who may be authorized to drive University Motor Vehicles must possess a current, valid driver’s license. Eligibility to receive departmental authorization to operate a University Motor Vehicle is dependent upon a prospective driver’s driving record and successful completion of the Fire and Life Safety Services driver training program. All drivers of University Motor Vehicles must comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning the operation of motor vehicles.

Notwithstanding the criteria set forth in this policy, the University reserves the right to revoke or deny (temporarily or permanently) authorization to any driver, at any time and in its sole discretion.

University Motor Vehicles are only to be used in the performance of officially authorized University business. Such vehicles are to be kept on University premises when not in use unless the officially authorized University business purpose requires the vehicle to be kept off premises.

This is the University's Motor Vehicle Policy. This policy is intended to be read in conjunction with other University policies, as applicable.

III. Background

The University is currently responsible for the operation of a fleet of over 230 University Motor Vehicles distributed among 30 departments (consisting of approximately 500 drivers), as well as additional University Motor Vehicles which may be leased as needed.

Driver safety training classes will be provided by the Fire and Life Safety Services Office without charge and at regularly scheduled times. Each driver training program will be scheduled and structured with flexibility to facilitate attendance. The training consists of both classroom (or, if applicable, on-line training (see Section X. below)) and in-vehicle training, to combine comprehensive instruction with hands-on experience. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office, prior to employees obtaining University driving privileges, shall review driving records. University supervisory personnel are responsible for conducting evaluations of each driver's performance on a periodic basis, consistent with University performance evaluations and personnel policies.

IV. Procedures and Responsibilities

A. **Requirements for all drivers**

In order to receive authorization to operate a University Motor Vehicle, an employee must:

1. Possess a current valid driver's license **for two (2) consecutive years** and be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
2. Apply for University Motor Vehicle driving privileges using Attachment No. 1, "Application for University Driving Privileges," and be accepted in accordance with the University's MVR Standard (see Section V.).
3. Successfully complete the University's safe driver awareness training program as required by the Fire and Life Safety Services Office.
4. Agree to operate University Motor Vehicles in accordance with the operational requirements of this policy. (This agreement is found on the bottom portion of the Application for University Driving Privileges, and must be signed by the driver prior to the time eligibility is conferred).

5. Report any convictions and any change in license status (i.e., suspension, revocation, or expiration) to his or her supervisor immediately. In addition, the University has adopted the NYS LENS program to receive notifications of status changes on its employees who drive. The status changes for which the University will receive notifications are license suspension, revocation, expiration, restoration, and endorsement. The University's receipt of such notices does not in any way relieve an employee of his or her obligation to notify the University of changes in licensure status as required by this paragraph. As noted in Section II., the University reserves the right to suspend an employee's privilege to operate a University Motor Vehicle at any time, for any reason.

B. Operational Requirements

1. Seat belts must be used by all drivers, and passengers when they are provided in a University Motor Vehicle.
2. Employees shall operate University Motor Vehicles in accordance with the manufacturer's user manual, all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, rules, regulations and ordinances, and University policies. The payment of all fines, surcharges, penalties or other similar amounts resulting from traffic or parking violations and/or citations will be the sole responsibility of the driver.
3. Drivers must not allow unauthorized persons to operate University Motor Vehicles.
4. University Motor Vehicles may be used solely for authorized University-related activities. Personal use of University Motor Vehicles is not permitted under any circumstances.
5. Drivers may only transport University employees, students, or other authorized individuals in University Motor Vehicles.

C. Departmental Responsibilities

1. Individual Departments

Each department which uses a University Motor Vehicle is required to maintain, at a minimum, the program procedures outlined below. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office may exercise, at its discretion, the right to request copies of each specific department's written procedures for review. If any department fails to ensure that University driving policies are followed, the University reserves the right to require that department to bear the University's cost of any accident or loss that the University determines may have been prevented or mitigated if policies had been followed.

- a. Each department shall implement means for ensuring that only those individuals who have been determined to be eligible under this policy operate a University Motor Vehicle.
- b. Each department must establish an ignition key control system and sign in and out procedure which includes the following:
 1. Maintaining a current list of all persons within the department who are eligible to receive a supervisor's authorization to operate a University Motor Vehicle and verification of the following:
 - a. Name of the eligible driver requesting authorization to use a University Motor Vehicle.
 - b. If the University Motor Vehicle is to be used outside of Onondaga County, trip destination and estimated duration.
 - c. Activity being attended or reason for use.
 - d. Verification that the University Motor Vehicle will be used for official University business only.
 2. Maintaining a log showing the date and time each University Motor Vehicle was signed in and out, in addition to the information required above.

3. Maintaining and issuing ignition keys in such a manner so as to prevent unauthorized use of University Motor Vehicles.
- c. Each University Motor Vehicle must be properly maintained according to the motor vehicle manufacturer's recommendations and, when applicable, Facilities Services' preventative maintenance schedule.
- d. Departments are responsible for ensuring the materials listed below are maintained in each University Motor Vehicle:
 1. Vehicle Registration
 2. Insurance Cards
 3. Emergency and Accident packet including the following:
 - a. Vehicle accident report form
 - b. Fire extinguisher (supplied and maintained by the department)
 - c. Emergency reflector triangles or Department of Transportation approved road flares (for $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trucks)
- e. Development of the specific procedures described above (e.g., "ignition key control" and "motor vehicle sign in and out," etc.) are the responsibility of individual department heads and/or chairpersons. Additional policies or procedures may be developed by department heads and/or chairpersons as they may determine are necessary, based on circumstances within their department, provided that they are consistent with this policy. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office may be consulted for advice relating to additional departmental procedures.
- f. The University prohibits employees and departments from purchasing, renting, or using 15-passenger vans for or on University business.

2. Department of Public Safety

- a. In the event of an accident on campus involving a University Motor Vehicle, the Department of Public Safety shall:
 - 1. Take action as detailed in its departmental manual.
 - 2. Notify Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance at 443-4011 or riskadmin@syr.edu of the accident and forward the accident investigation report to the Fire and Life Safety Services Office.

3. Fire and Life Safety Services Office

- a. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office is responsible for reviewing accident investigation reports, identifying preventative measures, and recommending the implementation of accident prevention measures to appropriate parties. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office may take other action when necessary.
- b. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office will respond to and when practicable, photograph the scene of accidents involving University Motor Vehicles that occur on campus or off campus within Onondaga County.
- c. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office is responsible for providing the driver training required by this policy.
- d. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office is responsible for verification and/or review of drivers' qualifications and driving records.
 - 1. Validation of an individual's eligibility to operate a University Motor Vehicle will be sent to the employee.
- e. The Fire and Life Safety Services Office is responsible for scheduling Post Accident Testing as explained in Section VII.

4. Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance

- a. In the event of an accident, Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance shall coordinate any claims made by or against the

University with the University's insurance carrier and the involved department.

V. MVR Standard

- A. All drivers must have their Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) reviewed by the Fire and Life Safety Services Office prior to driving a University Motor Vehicle.
- B. Before an employee may drive a University Motor Vehicle, three (3) years of the person's driving history will be evaluated. The three (3) year period must be the three (3) year period immediately preceding the date of evaluation. The driving history must be evidenced by an official MVR record kept by an appropriate governmental authority. Employees are responsible for providing whatever permission may be necessary to enable the University to obtain their records.
- C. Any employee who wishes to operate a University Motor Vehicle must have a current, valid driver's license (from his or her home State).
- D. No one will be allowed to drive a University Motor Vehicle with a "probationary," "court-restricted," "junior," "graduated" or international (excluding U.S. territories (e.g., Puerto Rico)) license.
- E. No University Motor Vehicle should be used unless the vehicle passes periodic inspection as required by this policy.
- F. To be approved to operate a University Motor Vehicle, an employee must meet all of the following criteria:
 - 1. No more than two (2) moving violations (e.g., speeding, failure to yield, violating a traffic signal, failure to stop, improper turn, improper lane change, careless driving, following too closely) in the past three (3) years; and
 - 2. No more than two (2) safety belt violations in the past three (3) years; and
 - 3. No more than two (2) accidents in the past three (3) years; and
 - 4. No more than one (1) moving violation plus two (2) safety belt violations within the past three (3) years; and

5. No more than one (1) accident plus two (2) other violations in the past three (3) years; and
6. No more than six (6) points on an applicant's license under New York law; and
7. No more than two (2) nonmoving violations (e.g., failure to comply with lawful order or disobeying traffic device) in the past three (3) years.

Additionally, an employee shall not be allowed to drive a University Motor Vehicle if convictions involving any of the following (regardless of statutory terminology) appear in the employee's MVR within the past three (3) years:

- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Reckless driving
- Driving under the influence of, **or with ability impaired by,** alcohol or drugs
- Hit and run
- Vehicular homicide or assault
- Participating in an unlawful speed contest
- Eluding or attempting to elude a police officer

VI. **Accident Procedures for Drivers**

In the event of an accident the following procedures must be followed:

1. If an accident occurs on-campus, immediately notify the Department of Public Safety (711) or (315-443-2224) so an accident report can be filed. Also notify Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance of the accident at (315-443-4011) or riskadmin@syr.edu.
2. If an accident occurs off-campus, immediately contact the Police Department to file a report. Make sure that Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance is notified and receives a copy of the police report (obtain the number of the police report).
3. Obtain the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and insurance information of all other drivers and, as applicable, witnesses.
4. Complete the accident report form (and accident questionnaire, if necessary) located in the University Motor Vehicle glove box. Do not make any statement

concerning assumption of liability. Give out only information required by authorities.

5. Report the accident to your supervisor. Failure to report an accident is in violation of the University Vehicle Safety Policy and Guidelines and also may jeopardize appropriate insurance coverages when liability is involved.

VII. Post-Accident Testing

Employees will be tested following an accident where:

1. A life is lost
 - a. Reasonable judgment has to be used in making determination if a life will be lost if the injured party is not pronounced dead at the accident scene. In cases where there is a reasonable probability of a loss of life, employees will be post-accident tested.
2. The driver was cited for a moving violation and the accident involved:
 - a. Bodily injury to any person who, as a result of injury, immediately receives medical attention away from the scene of the accident.
 - b. Disabling damage to one or more motor vehicles as a result of the accident, requiring the motor vehicle(s) to be transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other motor vehicle.

VIII. Rental Drivers

In order to receive authorization to use a motor vehicle having a capacity of greater than six passengers rented in the University's name, a University employee must meet the eligibility and approval standards set forth in Sections IV. and V. of this policy.

Employees shall operate all vehicles rented in the University's name (regardless of capacity) in accordance with the operational requirements of this policy (including but not limited to those set forth in Section IV.B.), shall be responsible for all fines, surcharges, penalties and similar amounts arising out of the operation of such vehicles as described in Section IV.B.2. of this policy, and shall comply with the accident procedures and be subject to the post-accident testing requirements described in Sections VI. and VII. of this policy, as applicable, in the event of an accident involving such a vehicle. In addition, the Department of Public Safety, Fire and Life Safety Services Office, and Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance shall comply with their respective obligations under this policy with respect to the operation of such vehicles by University employees.

Additional departmental procedures or policies for drivers of rental vehicles may be developed by department heads or chairpersons as they deem appropriate, provided that they are consistent with this policy. Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance may be consulted for advice relating to additional departmental procedures.

Rental vehicles covered by this Section VIII. are those rented on a short-term basis from a commercial rental company. Vehicles leased on a long-term basis and comprising part of the University's vehicle fleet are not covered by this Section VIII., and are instead considered University Motor Vehicles within the meaning of this policy.

IX. Gem Cars/SMV/Golf Carts

In 2003 Syracuse University acquired several "SMV" or "GEM" Cars, commonly called Golf Carts. These vehicles are used by different departments across campus for a variety of uses. All such vehicles are approved for use on public roadways with a maximum speed limit of 35 mph. All applicable NYS laws apply.

Any department and any employee using a Golf Cart vehicle are required to maintain and abide by all applicable terms of this policy.

X. On-Line Driver Course

Syracuse University developed an on-line driver training program for employees.

Any employee driving a University Motor Vehicle with a capacity of six passengers or less has the option of either attending class room training or taking the on-line driving class training.

Any employee driving a University Motor Vehicle with a capacity of greater than six passengers, driving a commercial vehicle, or driving with a CDL license must attend the class room training.