

Driver Safety Program

The University of Alabama

Effective: January 1, 2009

Revised: December 13, 2022

A. Program Description

The University of Alabama maintains a fleet of vehicles for the purpose of conducting University business and providing services to the campus community. It is essential that University vehicles be operated as safely and economically as possible. All operators of these vehicles and operators of personal vehicles on University business should meet University requirements, adhere to traffic laws and follow the procedures and guidelines contained in this program (hereafter the “Program”). For the purposes of this Program, a University vehicle includes all vehicles licensed for road use that are owned, leased or rented by the University, including vans and golf carts. Requests for exceptions under this Program must be made by the department head to the UA Director of Risk Management. Department heads, directors, managers and drivers involved in the operation of vehicles that require Commercial Driver’s Licenses (CDL) must be familiar with and comply with the Fleet Management Manual and this Driver Safety Program.

B. Driver Requirements

Any person operating a University vehicle or personal vehicle on University business must meet the following requirements:

- 1) **Minimum Age:** 21 years of age
- 2) **Minimum Age for On Campus Only:** Individuals who are 19 or 20 years of age are eligible for approval to drive on campus or within 5 miles of campus. They are limited to no more than 5 passengers and are prohibited from driving vehicles that require a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL).
- 3) **Driving Experience** – No less than 3 years.
- 4) **License Requirement** - A valid driver’s license, issued in the United States. The license must be appropriate for the type of vehicle the driver is seeking authorization to operate.
- 5) **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Review** – Any driver seeking to operate a University owned, leased or rented vehicle must submit his or her driver’s license information and authorize the University to access the driver’s MVR. In addition, MVR reports are required for all University employees who drive their personal vehicles on University business on a “Routine” basis. “Routine” means daily, weekly or regularly occurring. MVR reports are required for all University students, student employees and volunteers who drive their personal vehicles on University business regardless of frequency.
- 6) **Training Requirements** – Within 30 days of being approved, all drivers must complete the General Driver Safety Training. This training is found on the UA Risk Management website (riskmanagement.ua.edu).

Additional training is required for drivers prior to operating passenger vans (capacity of 9 or more including the driver) and golf/utility carts. Training is required on a one-time basis. Please contact a risk management professional for training access. Our contact information can be found on our website (riskmanagement.ua.edu).

- 7) **Physical Limitation or Restrictions** – Any person intending to operate a University vehicle or personal vehicle on University business should have the physical ability to do so without endangering themselves, their passengers, other motorists, pedestrians or any other person or property. Any restrictions (i.e., corrective lenses, not operating after dark, special controls, etc.) indicated on the license of an approved driver must be followed. With regard to any such license restrictions, Human Resources will provide assistance to employees and the Office of Disability Services will assist any students (not employed by the University) where a reasonable accommodation might be needed for the safe operation of a University vehicle.
- 8) **Commercial Driver's Licenses** – Vehicles that require a CDL must only be driven by drivers who hold a valid CDL. If a driver is not sure if a particular vehicle requires a CDL, the driver must not operate the vehicle without a CDL until the vehicle classification can be clearly determined. The Director of Automotive Services and the Director of Risk Management can assist with this determination.

C. Driver Responsibilities

- 1) **Compliance with Traffic Laws** – Drivers must comply with all traffic laws, traffic warning signs, speed limits, road markings, traffic control devices, railroad crossing signals, parking regulations, warning signals, pedestrian crossings, school bus stop requirements, etc. as set forth in the Alabama Rules of the Road (Ala. Code, Title 32, Chapter 5A.)
- 2) **Attention on Driving** - A driver must not engage in any activity that would distract from the safe operation of the vehicle. This includes controlling the actions and activities of passengers to prevent distractions and having the necessary focus on the safe operation of a vehicle. The driver should avoid eating, reading, or adjusting audio equipment. Cellular telephones or other wireless telecommunication devices (i.e. text message devices, PDAs, smartphones, tablets, voice-activated devices, etc.) may not be used by the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
- 3) **GPS Units** - GPS units are allowed in University vehicles to assist the driver in navigating a suitable route and locating destinations. However, the driver should remain focused on driving and not allow the GPS unit to distract from the safe operation of the vehicle.
- 4) **Audio Equipment** - Wearing audio equipment headsets/ear plugs while operating a vehicle is not allowed. The volume level of vehicle or other audio equipment must be kept at a level that allows the driver to hear horns, sirens, and other noise-making devices from emergency and other vehicles.
- 5) **Alcohol or Substance Use** – Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed by the driver or passengers while in a University vehicle or personal vehicle. No driver may operate a University vehicle or personal vehicle while under the influence of any substance, such as drugs or alcohol. Post-accident substance testing may be required as provided for in the Human Resource Policy Manual.
- 6) **Directional Signals** – The driver should use signals at appropriate times to inform others of his or her intentions to turn or to take other action where the use of a signal is either a suggested practice, courtesy to other drivers, or required by traffic laws.
- 7) **Emergency Parking** - Traffic cones, signs, emergency flashing lights and/or other appropriate warning methods should be used if the vehicle is parked in a travel or emergency lane to perform a special duty or if the vehicle becomes disabled.
- 8) **Vehicle Parking** - To protect University vehicles, park in an area where the vehicle will be safe while unattended. This typically means a parking lot with ample lighting and/or where the vehicle can be observed. Always remove the keys, close the windows completely, remove items prone to theft, and lock all doors. Do not hide the keys in the vehicle.

- 9) **Backing a Vehicle** – To help avoid an accident while backing a vehicle, walk around the vehicle and confirm that backing will not endanger pedestrians, other vehicles, other objects, or the vehicle being moved. Use both interior and exterior mirrors, checking both sides as backing occurs. Whenever possible while backing a trailer, one person should be on each side to confirm the area is clear and to provide direction to the driver. The driver should have clear sight of the people offering backing direction/assistance and they should never be in a blind spot or area where the driver's view is obstructed.
- 10) **Secure Cargo and Personal Items** – Provide for the safe transport of materials and goods by securely fastening all loads, regardless of weight or height, to prevent rolling, pitching, shifting or falling. No one should be allowed to physically “steady” the load while the vehicle is in motion. Tailgates are to be secured in an upright position before the vehicle or trailer is moving except when the load exceeds the length of the bed of the vehicle. If a load extends beyond the end or width of the vehicle, use caution and review Alabama Code Section 32-9-29 to determine if an escort or other precautions or permits may be necessary. Extended or wide loads should not be transported during periods of darkness or limited visibility. Loads of loose materials such as sand, gravel, or trash should be covered by a tarp or transported in an enclosed truck bed. If a vehicle is equipped with a load barrier to protect the driver and passengers from unsecured cargo, the barrier must be in sound condition and in place when carrying unsecured cargo. The vehicle shall not be loaded beyond the rated capacity for weight and/or number of passengers.
- 11) **Driver/Passenger/Occupant Safety** – Without exception, **all occupants must be seated and secured with seat belts** either designed and installed by the vehicle manufacturer or intended for aftermarket installation by a qualified mechanic. Drivers should not allow a passenger to ride in the bed or cargo area of the vehicle, sit on the tailgate or sides of a truck/utility bed, or allow passengers to extend their arms or legs beyond the vehicle while it is moving. Passengers may not ride in a trailer while it is being towed.
- 12) **Non-Smoking & Use of Tobacco Products** – Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products are not allowed in University vehicles.
- 13) **Weather Conditions** – The driver should evaluate weather conditions and determine what precautions are necessary such as stopping travel, reducing speed, increasing following distance, using headlights in limited visibility situations, etc. If necessary, a driver should cancel a trip, temporarily suspend travel or delay departure times until dangerous weather conditions have abated.
- 14) **Travel Time & Distance** – The driver should be rested and alert when operating a University vehicle. Fatigue behind the wheel of an automobile is dangerous and each driver should consider when rest breaks are needed or when driving responsibilities should be turned over to another approved and rested driver. The length of time behind the wheel before fatigue becomes an issue will vary by driver and may depend upon weather conditions, traffic, road conditions and the amount of rest prior to driving. At a minimum, a driver should consider taking a 15-20 minute break every 3-4 hours and avoid driving more than 8 hours without a rest period with at least 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
- 15) **Vehicle Inspection & Condition** - The driver must confirm the critical equipment and operating features (i.e., engine, transmission, steering, defroster, brakes, tires, mirrors, lights, signals, wipers, horn, etc.) are functioning properly before every trip. If a vehicle displays a warning light or alarm, the vehicle should be taken out of service immediately until the problem can be identified and repaired or it can be determined if the vehicle is safe to drive until repairs can be made. If a vehicle is unsafe to operate, notify Fleet Services (if rented from Fleet Services) and/or contact the vendor (refer to K.4.) engaged by Fleet Services to provide roadside assistance. If the vehicle is owned by UA, contact Automotive Services immediately. If unsafe to operate, the vehicle may not be used until repairs are completed. If a driver is uncertain how to check critical equipment, Automotive Services will provide a pre-trip inspection.
- 16) **Driving Violations & Convictions** – If an approved driver is cited for a traffic violation, the matter must be immediately reported to the driver's supervisor or in the case of a non-employed student or volunteer, the

appropriate contact. The failure to self-report a violation will be treated in the same manner as any other violation of University rule or policy. The driver is responsible for providing an immediate update on the status or outcome of the adjudication process for each citation.

17) Traffic & Parking Violations - Drivers are responsible for all fines, penalties, legal fees or other costs resulting from a citation or traffic/parking violation issued while operating a University owned, leased or rented vehicle. The driver may, at his or her expense elect to contest the citation or traffic/parking violation and have the matter adjudicated by the court assigned to hear such matters. The driver must adhere to the decision of the court and pay the fines, costs, interest or other charges levied by the court to conclude the matter. Should the court allow the driver to attend a driving school in lieu of a fine or penalty, the driver must pay the cost of the driving school in addition to any fines, penalties, court cost, etc.

18) Disciplinary Action – Any driver who fails to comply with any part of this Program is subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination. In addition, failure to comply with any part of this Program could result in the denial of liability insurance or self-insurance coverage for the driver.

D. Department Responsibilities

1. **Program Compliance** – Confirm with Risk Management that a driver meets the Program requirements and is authorized by Risk Management to operate a University vehicle or personal vehicle on University business.
2. **Policy Awareness** – Provide the authorized driver with a copy of this Program to understand his or her obligation to operate a vehicle in a safe manner, comply with traffic laws and practice defensive driving.
3. **MVR Review and Driver Approval** – All drivers not included in the exceptions in Section D-1 above must electronically submit the necessary information and authorization using the “Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Authorization” link on the Risk Management website (riskmanagement.ua.edu). Once the prospective driver has submitted the information and authorization, an email will be sent to the prospective driver’s supervisor, manager or person responsible for the driver (hereafter referred to as the “supervisor”). The supervisor should follow the instructions in the email and either approve or decline the submission.
4. **Monitor Training** – Every driver is subject to certain training requirements and the department must confirm completion of the following training programs:
 - ✓ All Drivers - Successfully completed the General Driver Safety Training Course offered on-line on the Risk Management website.
 - ✓ Van Drivers – Complete the required additional on-line driver safety awareness program arranged by Risk Management for passenger vans with a capacity for 9 or more persons including the driver.
 - ✓ Golf/Utility Cart Drivers – Complete the required additional on-line driver safety awareness program arranged by Risk Management for golf carts (including those of a similar design to accommodate passengers) and utility carts.
 - ✓ Vehicle Specific Training – Some specialty vehicles (e.g., bucket trucks, garbage trucks, buses, street sweepers, etc.) may require training for inexperienced drivers and/or drivers not familiar with the specific equipment on a particular vehicle. The department should contact Risk Management which will arrange training for each situation.
5. **Weather Conditions** - Confirm the safe operation of vehicles during adverse weather conditions including, but not limited to, monitoring weather forecasts, confirming the driver is aware of how to react in potentially hazardous conditions and to support the expense of trip delays when weather conditions warrant the need to delay or discontinue travel.

6. **Vehicle Maintenance** - Automotive Services provides routine preventative maintenance service on vehicles owned and leased by the University. Please refer to the Section L “Automotive Services” for specific details. If a vehicle is primarily used for brief intra-campus trips and is not routinely driven on interstate highways or on the open road, Automotive Services recommends, conditions permitting, taking the vehicle on a 30 minute trip at highway speeds every month to allow the engine to reach a peak operating temperature. This will prevent the build-up of moisture in lubricants and reduce carbon deposits, both of which can cause premature wear and reduced performance.
7. **Pre-Trip Safety Checks** - Confirm that a driver has reasonable knowledge to perform periodic safety checks. Garage Services is available for inspections if a driver is unfamiliar with the necessary elements of a routine safety check.
8. **Driving Violations & Convictions** – When an approved driver is cited for a traffic violation, the employee must report it to his or her supervisor. The supervisor must report it to Risk Management. Risk Management will review the situation in accordance with the Motor Vehicle Record Policy and re-evaluate the driver’s eligibility. The department should consult with Human Resources for guidance on how to respond to a situation involving employees. Employees are subject to job reassignment and/or disciplinary action including possible termination.

If the supervisor of a driver becomes aware of a situation where an approved driver fails to self-report a citation and/or conviction, this failure to self-report the citation or conviction is also a matter that should be discussed with Human Resources if the driver is an employee. In most but not all situations, the employee shall be given the opportunity to have his or her case adjudicated before any final action is taken. However, depending on the circumstances, an employee’s driving privileges may be suspended temporarily until the matter is fully adjudicated.

9. **Traffic & Parking Violations** - If a citation is issued to a University vehicle by a “red-light” camera, unmanned device or other parking/traffic enforcement officer, the department to which the vehicle is assigned must identify the driver at the time/date the citation was issued and require the responsible driver to respond as instructed in the citation notice.
10. **Commercial Driver’s Licenses** – Department heads, directors, managers and deans are responsible for identifying vehicles assigned to their areas which require CDL drivers. They are also responsible for insuring that only drivers who hold a valid CDL drive such vehicles. The Director of Automotive Services and the Director of Risk Management can assist with determining the appropriate classification of vehicles. The Office of Risk Management can verify that a driver holds a valid CDL.

E. Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Review & Approval

Every driver seeking approval to operate a University vehicle or personal vehicle on University business must authorize the University and others to review his or her motor vehicle record. The Office of Risk Management will review motor vehicle records and approve or deny driving privileges in accordance with this Program and the Motor Vehicle Record Policy.

F. Use of a Personal Automobile

Anyone operating a personal vehicle on University business must do so in a safe and lawful manner. Faculty, staff, and students choosing to operate their personal vehicle on University business do not have primary liability coverage under the University’s self-insurance or insurance programs. The University does not purchase auto physical damage coverage for these vehicles.

G. Vehicle Restrictions

The following uses of University vehicles are strictly forbidden:

1. Personal use, unless approved by a Dean, Department Head or other authorized University official.
2. Transporting family, friends or other passengers who are not on University business unless approved by a Dean, Department Head, or Director to accompany a University approved driver while traveling on University business.
3. Transporting students for purposes other than for University business, including, but not limited to, events or activities not sponsored, supported, and/or endorsed by the University.
4. Transporting items/materials that are not related to University business other than personal items such as clothing and other travel necessities.
5. Transporting animals except for personal assistance, law enforcement or for approved academic/research purposes.
6. Transporting any hazardous material including, but not limited to, chemicals, biological, and radioactive materials, unless prior written approval is granted by Environmental Health and Safety.
7. Radar detectors or jammers are not allowed in University vehicles
8. Vehicle safety equipment (e.g. seat belts, airbags, traction control, etc.) including warning light and audible alarms may not be altered, disabled or modified unless approved by the vehicle manufacturer.
9. Smoking (including use of smokeless tobacco products) and consumption of alcoholic beverages in a University vehicle by drivers and passengers are prohibited.

H. Auto Accident Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to operators of University vehicles following an accident:

1. If anyone is injured, call for help immediately. If you are on or near campus, call the UAPD at 348-5454. If you are off campus, call 911.
2. If there is no need for medical care, contact the appropriate law enforcement agency or if on-campus or in the campus vicinity, contact UAPD.
3. Do not admit fault or guilt to anyone.
4. Never offer to pay for any damage, medical bills, towing, rental cars, taxi service or any other charges incurred by another party resulting from the accident.
5. Exchange contact information with the other driver(s) involved and obtain contact information (name, address, phone number) of every witness.
6. If the vehicle is towed from the accident scene, determine where the vehicle will be taken and what may be necessary to retrieve the vehicle.

7. Ask the investigating law enforcement officer to provide the accident report number and how/where a copy can be obtained.
8. Driver of University vehicles who are involved in traffic accident may be subject to post-accident substance abuse testing in accordance with applicable University policy included in the Human Resources Policy Manual.
9. Contact Risk Management and report the accident within 24 hours. Contact information for Risk Management can be found on riskmanagement.ua.edu. The accident must also be reported to the driver's direct supervisor or manager. If the vehicle is provided by Fleet Services as a short-term rental or lease, the accident must also be reported to Fleet Services (205-348-4800).

I. Insurance Coverage

The University's self-insurance program applies to any vehicle owned, leased or rented by the University. The University's self-insurance program covers claims made by a third party for bodily injury or property damage against the University arising out of the operation of a University vehicle.

The University's self-insurance program does **not** provide primary coverage for an individual who is operating his or her personal vehicle on University business. The individual's personal auto policy must provide primary coverage. The University's insurance program does **not** cover the loss, theft or damage to personal property.

The University's self-insurance program extends to short-term rentals from rental agencies. The University also has a conventional insurance program to cover damage to short-term rental vehicles. The car rental agency's optional coverage should be declined or waived by the renter in accordance with the University's current travel policy, unless the rental is outside of the United States. The renter should always ask the rental car agency to include The University of Alabama on the rental agreement as confirmation that the rental is related to University business. Any deductibles will be the responsibility of the renter's department.

J. 12 & 15 Passenger Vans

1. No 15-passenger vans may be purchased or leased as of the original effective date (1/1/09) of this Program.
2. The short term rental (30 days or less) from a car rental agency of a 15 passenger van is allowed, but the driving distance for each trip one way must be less than 25 miles, and the van may not carry more than 12 passengers including the driver.
3. All 12 passenger vans purchased, leased or rented from a car rental agency shall be equipped with stability control (e.g. AdvanceTrac, Roll Stability Control-RSC, Stabili-Trak, and Electronic Stability Program-ESP) and anti-lock brakes.
4. Any University-owned or leased 15-passenger vans in operation after the original effective date (1/1/09) may only be used to haul cargo or for utility purposes and may be operated only for trips of 25 miles or less, one way.
5. In addition to the other rules and guidelines contained in this Program, the following suggested practices should be considered:
 - ✓ Any travel of more than four hours prompts the need for at least two qualified drivers to allow for rest periods after 3-4 hours behind the wheel.
 - ✓ Operating a van between 11:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. is discouraged.

- ✓ The van shall be loaded with passengers seated in the most forward positions to keep weight behind the rear axle at a minimum.
- 6. No cargo may be secured and transported on the van roof.
- 7. Unless authorized by Risk Management, towing trailers is prohibited.

K. Fleet Services – Vehicle Rental

For a charge, vehicles are available from Fleet Services and are limited to **official university business**. Personal use of these vehicles is strictly prohibited.

1. **Requirements** – A completed *Application for Use of a State Owned Automobile* form is required for vehicle pick up. The form can be accessed via the Fleet Services website: http://fleet.ua.edu/pages/vehicle_rental.html
Payment of the rental charge is only accepted through an established account number in UA Banner financial system.
2. **Roadside Assistance** – Vehicles provided by Fleet Services include a roadside assistance program. The program includes towing, jump starts, tire changes, lockouts, fuel/water delivery and simple roadside repairs. The roadside assistance program is available by calling 1-888-WEX-TOWS (939-8697) or 1-866-329-3471 (select option #4).

L. Automotive Services – Vehicle Inspection, Service & Repairs

Automotive Services is the primary source for routine vehicle maintenance and repair service for all University owned or leased vehicles located in the Tuscaloosa area.

If a vehicle is permanently assigned to a department, any routine maintenance or repairs can be arranged directly with Automotive Services by the department. If the vehicle is provided by Fleet Services, the routine maintenance and repairs will be arranged by Fleet Services.

In situations where a University vehicle is located 50 miles or more outside the Tuscaloosa area, the assigned driver shall contact Automotive Services (205-348-4809) for direction to a facility where routine maintenance or repairs can be made. Routine preventative maintenance must be performed at predetermined intervals and repair services are provided on an as-needed basis. Traditional passenger cars and light trucks are to receive preventative maintenance service on the following intervals:

- ✓ Diesel Engines – Every 90 days, 300 hours or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first
- ✓ Gasoline Engines – Every 120 days or 4,000 miles

Severe Duty and Specialty Vehicles (e.g. UAPD, Security Resources, Street Sweeper, Garbage Truck, Tree Trimmer/Bucket Trucks, etc.) will receive preventative maintenance based on either the recommendations of the vehicle manufacturer, past experience with similar vehicles, standard industry practices or as determined by the routine inspections performed by Automotive Services.

During the routine preventative maintenance service, in most cases, Automotive Services will perform the following:

- ✓ Fluid Change & Check – Oil/Oil Filter, Brake, Power Steering, Transmission, Wiper Fluid, etc.

- ✓ Tire Check – Wear, Balance, Rotation, Air Pressure and Replace Tires as Necessary (when showing 3/32” to 4/32” tread depth, dry rot, uneven wear, a build date of seven years or more, when the rated capacity of the tire is exceeded, evidence of damage, or a decrease in handling performance is detected).
- ✓ General Inspection – Lights, Horn, Air Filter, Brakes Wear/Operation, Battery, Reset Maintenance Warning Lights, etc.

Automotive Services will also arrange body work and arrange to secure bids for the work as required by University policy or Alabama law. If an insurer representing a non-University driver or vehicle owner who is responsible for damage to a University vehicle attempts to contact a University driver or department with directions to go to a specific body shop for an estimate or repairs, either contact Automotive Services immediately or ask the insurer’s claim representative to contact Automotive Services.

M. Contacts

Contact and other useful information can be found on the following websites:

Risk Management: riskmanagement.ua.edu

Fleet Services: fleet.ua.edu

Automotive Services: garageservices.ua.edu