

# **Shenandoah University Driver/Vehicle Safety Policy**

## **Introduction**

A basic component of an institution's risk management program is a driver/vehicle safety policy that establishes the safety guidelines for its authorized drivers when driving for institution business. The administration of the institution's driver/vehicle safety policy requires the consistent implementation of strong policies and procedures to ensure that drivers and departments know their responsibilities and carry them out. The following policy has been established to help Shenandoah University (the "University") control the operation of: (i) our institution's owned, leased or rented vehicles, including golf carts ("institution vehicles"); and (ii) personal vehicles driven on institution business. Violations of this policy will be reported to the relevant University supervisor, and will be taken into consideration during a faculty/staff member's evaluation.

## **I. Driver Qualification**

To help select only well-qualified drivers, we will adhere to the following procedures:

### **A. Minimum Requirements and Duty to Report Changes**

1. All University faculty, staff, students or volunteers ("Prospective Drivers") whose duties may require them to operate an institution vehicle, or a personal vehicle on institution business, must have a valid driver's license appropriate for the type of vehicle they will be driving as well as the minimum level of automobile insurance required under Virginia law.
2. Each Prospective Driver must provide a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance and complete an Authorized Driver Application. Only drivers whose application has been approved are allowed to operate institution vehicles, or personal vehicles for institution business.
3. The University will approve an Authorized Driver Application only for Prospective Drivers with good driving records. The University will determine in its sole and absolute discretion whether a Prospective Driver's driving record is sufficient to warrant approval of an "Authorized Driver" application.
4. Once initially approved, a driver's authorization to drive for University business will be renewed annually. A Prospective Driver and/or an Authorized Driver must report any changes in the status of their driving record to the University as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to report a change may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the University. The University will maintain a copy of the license and driving record of each Authorized Driver electronically.

## **B. Authorized Drivers List**

1. The Department for Administration and Finance will maintain a consolidated and current Authorized Driver List to maintain control of the ongoing driver authorization process.
2. The University reserves the right to revoke a driver's Authorized Driver status in its sole and absolute discretion at any time.

## **C. Assigned Vehicles**

Some vehicles may be assigned to individuals as part of their job duties, such as the President, a Department of Public Safety ("DPS") officer, Physical Plant employee or other specifically-designated individuals. These individuals should operate and maintain these vehicles as though they were their own.

Institution vehicles may be operated by approved faculty, staff, students or volunteers, depending on the need. Control of these vehicles will be maintained through the Physical Plant Office.

1. When a department wishes to use an institution vehicle for a specific purpose, the requestor will complete a Vehicle Use Request form and submit it to the Physical Plant Office as soon as possible. If the requesting department plans to provide the driver(s), the name(s) of the driver(s) must be provided with the Vehicle Use Request form and the drivers will be verified against the University's Authorized Driver List.
2. Institution vehicles will not be loaned, leased or rented to others.
3. The Physical Plant Office will notify the department of the approval and provide a time for the driver to pick up the keys.
4. When the driver arrives to pick up the keys, the appropriate staff in the Physical Plant Office will make a brief evaluation of the driver's condition. If the driver appears fatigued, ill or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they will be denied use of the vehicle. This decision will be based upon observable conditions and behaviors. The Physical Plant staff person will also verify that the driver has their valid driver's license in their possession.
5. No smoking, vaping or use of tobacco products is permitted in institution vehicles. In addition, no persons other than University faculty, staff or students are permitted to ride in institution vehicles except in a limited, emergency circumstance with prior approval from a University's VP or their designee.
6. All vehicles and keys must be returned to the Physical Plant Office, or key drop box within 30 minutes of returning to the campus.
7. The University's automobile insurance will be primary in the event of an accident involving an assigned institution vehicle.

**D. ADA vehicles/vans**

ADA van drivers must be trained in how to use the equipment, lifts, etc. All drivers of these vans need to be familiar with securements and making other necessary accommodations as needed as these vans might have wide doors and locks in the floor to secure wheelchairs. Vans are commonly used to transport the disabled and may have ramps or hydraulic lifts that need to be lowered or additional handrails that need to be accessed for safety. As the primary driver, you must be able to successfully operate the adaptive equipment and report any inconsistencies or repairs that need to be made to keep the vehicle safe and operable for its special uses. An ADA van driver must be physically able to assist the handicapped passengers, able to understand their needs, apply effective communication techniques, etc. in order to appropriately transport and assist the passenger. ADA van drivers must adapt their schedules to allow enough time to pick up and drop off passengers, securing the mobility equipment, etc.

**E. Personal Vehicles**

1. Drivers authorized to use personal vehicles on University business are subject to the same rules as drivers of institution owned, leased, and rented vehicles.
2. A driver's automobile insurance will be primary in the event of an accident involving a personal vehicle.
3. All personal vehicles used for institution business must be maintained per manufacturer's recommendations, in compliance with all state laws.
4. Only Authorized Drivers are eligible for mileage reimbursement while using a personal vehicle for University business.

**F. Student Drivers**

1. Any student whose duties may require them to operate an institution vehicle will meet the same criteria as an employee driver. Students should not drive personal vehicles on institution business without first obtaining prior written permission from a University Vice President.
2. The supervisor will initiate the driver application e-form for the student.

**G. Volunteer Drivers**

A volunteer authorized to operate an institution vehicle or a personal vehicle on University business must meet the same criteria as an employee driver. The volunteer driver must meet the following conditions:

- a. The volunteer must be 25 years of age or older.
- b. A volunteer agreement must be in place.

## **H. Driver/Vehicle Safety Policy**

This Driver/Vehicle Safety Policy will be posted online and be easily accessible to all Authorized Drivers.

## **II. Training**

### **A. Driver Training**

In order to understand the responsibilities and techniques for driving safely, all drivers must be able to demonstrate their skills in the operation of any assigned vehicle. If they are not able to demonstrate their driving skills, they will be trained in the appropriate techniques. For example, if a driver needs to be able to drive a van, they must be trained on that vehicle's operation. This training will be coordinated by DPS.

1. Training may include classroom, individual instruction and audio-visual methods, or <https://su-va.safecolleges.com/login> courses, as appropriate.
2. New University drivers are trained at the time of hire or initial authorization, if applicable, and regularly as established by their respective supervisor.
3. Authorized Drivers will be responsible for taking new courses as they become available.

## **III. Pre-Trip Safety**

### **A. Trip Forms – Institution Vehicles**

1. The driver and Physical Plant Office employee will complete and sign the Pre-/Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection form indicating that they have inspected the institution vehicle the driver intends to use. Each will maintain a copy of the inspection form for the post trip inspection upon return.
2. Headlights, taillights and windows must be clean before operating the institution vehicle.
3. The driver and Physical Plant Office employee should also verify that a copy of the accident report form and current insurance card are available in the institution vehicle.
4. Upon return from the trip, the driver will return the completed copy of the Pre-/Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection form to the Physical Plant Office when turning in the institution vehicle keys. The Physical Plant Office employee and the driver will again complete a brief institution vehicle inspection using the Pre-/Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection form and document any mechanical problems with the institution vehicle, service required, new damage, the amount of gas added, the number of miles driven and any service that may have been provided to the institution vehicle. The Physical Plant Office employee will return the signed copy of the Pre-/Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection form to the driver and retain the original copy along with the Vehicle Use Request form in the vehicle file.

## **B. Maintenance – Institution Vehicles**

In order for Shenandoah University institution vehicles to have a long and useful life, they must be maintained regularly. Accordingly, we have established a Preventive Maintenance Program to include all institution vehicles and equipment.

1. The Physical Plant Office will maintain a list of all institution vehicles. The list will include the manufacturer's recommended intervals for preventive maintenance services, as well as the dates/times and types of services that have been performed on the institution vehicles.
2. The Physical Plant Office will regularly review the list to determine which institution vehicles are due for maintenance services and will then designate a person to either perform that service or take the institution vehicle to the designated service provider.
3. For institution vehicles assigned to one person or department for their exclusive use, such as the President or DPS, the Physical Plant Office will notify that person or department when the service is due. That user will then be responsible for having the maintenance services completed and documented with the Physical Plant Office.
4. If an institution vehicle has operational problems while off-campus, the driver will notify the Physical Plant Office during normal office hours and DPS after hours. If the institution vehicle cannot be operated safely, the Physical Plant Office or DPS will make the necessary arrangements to bring the driver back to campus and have the institution vehicle transported to a designated service location.

## **C. Rental Vehicles**

1. When renting a vehicle to drive in the United States, its territories and possessions, and/or Canada on institution business, the University's automobile insurance will be primary in the event of an accident involving the rental vehicle. You need not purchase rental vehicle insurance (and the University will not reimburse for the expense).
2. When renting a vehicle to drive in countries other than the United States, its territories and possessions, and/or Canada on institution business, you **must** purchase rental vehicle insurance (and the University will reimburse you for the expense).
3. 15 passenger vans should not be rented unless the last seat in the van will be used for luggage and not to carry passengers.

## **IV. Trip Safety**

### **A. Seat Belts**

Seat belts are one of the most important pieces of safety equipment installed on a motor vehicle. The law states that all drivers/passengers must be restrained with a seat belt or other safety device and therefore, the University requires such restraint as well. All Authorized Drivers should follow the procedures listed below when driving an institution vehicle or a personal vehicle on institution business:

1. When going on a trip (even a short trip across town), ensure that there is a seat belt for every passenger. If not, limit the number of passengers to the number of seat belts available.
2. Before shifting from “Park,” the driver must secure their seat and shoulder belt and verify that all passengers are appropriately secured by their seat and shoulder belt.

**B. Alcohol and Drugs**

It is important for all drivers to recognize their responsibilities for operating a vehicle in a safe and sober manner. By completing the approved driver application, the driver pledges to comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations regarding drug and alcohol use, including University policies, when operating any institution vehicles, or any personal vehicles for institution business. No driver authorized by the institution should be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while operating a vehicle at any time.

**C. Cell Phones and Electronics**

Cell phone and other electronic device use while a vehicle is in motion is strictly prohibited. Cell phones may only be used to make calls through the assistance of Bluetooth or other hands-free devices. Headphones that reduce hearing should not be used. For navigation devices, program the destination before starting the vehicle, pull off the road to make changes and rely on the voice directions to guide you.

**D. Stowed Items**

1. Items that can become loose during travel should be properly secured and placed in proper storage areas or separated by a cage from the passenger area to prevent injury to passengers or damage to other vehicles.
2. Stowed items should not obstruct the driver’s view.

**E. Vehicle Theft**

1. To reduce the potential for theft and vandalism, the vehicle should be locked when left unattended, no valuables should be left in sight and the vehicle should be parked in a well-lit area at night.
2. The University is not responsible for personal items left in a vehicle.

**F. Extended Trips**

To reduce the possibility of fatigue-related accidents on extended trips, when the one-way distance to the destination will take six hours or more, at least two Authorized Drivers should be available to drive the vehicle. The drivers will rotate as a driving team every two hours. The “shot-gun passenger” will stay alert and act as co-pilot.

## **G. Restricted Drive Time**

Drivers may not operate an institution vehicle, or vehicles for institution business, between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and sunrise, excluding employees whose job duties may require it such as Maintenance and DPS, and excluding any trip between such hours authorized in advance by the driver's supervisor.

## **V. Post-Trip Safety**

### **A. Vehicle Accident Reporting Procedures**

Vehicle accidents can seriously impact the lives of those involved, both as drivers and as passengers. To minimize the long-term effects of those accidents and to ensure that they do not recur, the following policies and procedures are in effect:

1. If a vehicle is involved in a collision with another vehicle, object or person or a one-car accident, such as rolling over and going into a ditch, the driver should call the police and, if there are any suspected injuries to driver or passengers, request emergency medical assistance.
2. If the vehicle is being driven on institution business, or is an institution vehicle, the Physical Plant Office, or DPS after normal office hours, should be contacted at 540.665.4444 *after contacting the police*. The following information should be provided:
  - a. Driver's name and the vehicle involved
  - b. Location of the accident
  - c. Description of any injuries to driver, passenger(s) or occupant(s) of other vehicles
  - d. Indicate whether the police and/or ambulance been notified, and
  - e. Indicate the medical facility where injured people have been taken
3. After calling the appropriate office (i.e., Physical Plant or DPS), retrieve the current insurance card from the vehicle. This card shows evidence of insurance to police authorities and also provides the driver with basic information on the insurance company, their claim reporting phone number and the policy number.
4. The driver should begin to fill out the accident report form located in the vehicle. Be particularly careful to discuss the accident only with the police or the appropriate University official(s). Despite the fact that the driver may feel that they were the cause of the accident, the driver should not make any admissions of liability or assume any blame. There may be factors that the driver is unaware of at the time that could mitigate any responsibility.
5. The driver should take pictures of the accident scene, including all vehicles involved and at various angles as possible.
6. Exchange basic information with the driver of each vehicle involved. Only the following information should be provided:
  - a. Name, address and telephone number of the driver and any passengers

- b. Type of vehicle and license plate number
  - c. Insurance company name and policy number
7. The University may, in its discretion, require the University driver to undergo a drug/urine test following an accident.

**B. Accident Investigation**

DPS will coordinate the accident investigation. DPS will gather all information/reports and turn them into the Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance to turn into the insurance carrier. This will generally be within 24 hours of the accident.

**Summary**

A vehicle fleet presents many exposures for injuries and property damage. It is important for the University to critically examine these types of exposures and take effective steps to minimize them. Choosing qualified drivers, training and supervising them is the primary area where the Driver/Vehicle Safety Policy can be successful. Failure to act effectively can lead to death, injury and potentially very expensive lawsuits.

Approved by University Cabinet effective February 4, 2022