The University of Mississippi

Motor Vehicle Policy
And Fleet Management
Guide

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Foreword

This guide contains the basic elements concerning the safe and legal use of vehicles operated by The University of Mississippi, whether they are university-owned, rented, or privately owned. The use of this guide will facilitate continuity across the IHL System with regard to elements addressed while allowing flexibility among member institutions as to how each element is addressed. The following elements are reflective of various state and federal laws and regulations, insurance industry standards, and safety standards. The following practices are designed to apply to motor vehicles that are licensed to operate on public roadways and the drivers of such vehicles, in compliance with IHL Board Policy 711.06.

General

Statement of Purpose: These policies and/or procedures exist to promote the safe, legal, and responsible use of university vehicles owned or operated for the benefit of The University of Mississippi. The protection of life, property, and the good stewardship of public resources is at stake.

Application: These practices apply to any and all vehicles used for the benefit of the University that are licensed for travel on public roads.

Enforcement/Consequences: University employees and student drivers are warned that failure to follow this policy will be addressed immediately and will subject the person violating this policy to disciplinary action, including possible immediate dismissal from the University.

Management

General: The university administration has fully endorsed this overall vehicle operations and fleet management policy / program, recognizing that first and foremost is the safety of employees, students, and the public. The benefits of this vehicle policy include wise stewardship of public resources, a good public image, conservation of budget, and responsibility to citizens. With consideration given to how vehicles are allotted, assigned, or managed, all levels of the university administration (faculty and staff) should be familiar with this master policy and fleet management program and are to be held accountable for the program’s development, management, and implementation.

All university vehicles belong to the University as a whole and are considered a single university fleet of vehicles. While most vehicles are managed as individual vehicles or as departmental vehicles, they are still part of the University’s fleet
and will be treated as such under this policy. Having a university vehicle to operate is a privilege, not a right.

**Safe and Courteous Operation:** University-owned vehicles affect the University’s image and so does the operation of those vehicles. The public expects safe and courteous drivers in the vehicles provided. Unsafe or aggressive driving, such as those acts listed below, can create negative public impressions and result in bodily injury, death, or property damage.

1. Speeding
2. Improper passing
3. Failure to yield right-of-way
4. Tailgating
5. Failure to adjust to road or weather conditions
6. Failure to use vehicle’s safety devices such as lights, wipers, turn signals, etc.
7. Improper gesturing, language, or use of horn or lights
8. Other violations of law or improper conduct

**Approval to Purchase New Vehicles:** The Institution’s Executive Officer (IEO) or his named “designee” must approve all vehicles purchased. Vehicle justifications in writing are required for the IEO’s or designee’s review and approval and must include the need for the vehicle as well as how the vehicle type is in line with the planned use of the specific vehicle.

**IHL Monthly Institutional Vehicle Summary Report**

Under IHL Board requirements, university departments that are currently operating vehicles are responsible for vehicle policy compliance including detailed record keeping on all fuel, miscellaneous repairs, tires, preventative maintenance including oil changes, annual inspections and the general appearance of each vehicle. In addition, it is a requirement of this policy that detailed written records for all mileage (travel logs) for in-state and out-of-state travel be recorded in a safe location in each vehicle. This information will be reported monthly to the Procurement Services - Property Officer for the IHL Monthly Institutional Vehicle Summary Report.

While the ultimate responsibility for departmental vehicles resides with the department head, it is recommended that departments appoint a departmental coordinator or liaison responsible for this record keeping responsibility. This information will be requested monthly by the University Property Officer on all university vehicles for inclusion in the IHL Monthly Institutional Vehicle Summary Report due at IHL on the 10th of every month. Departments will be notified on the 1st of each month regarding the required updated vehicle information, and will have until the 7th of each month to furnish the information to the property officer.
Failure to provide accurate, up to date, timely information on each vehicle by the university department head or assigned departmental vehicle coordinator to the property officer could result in the loss of the vehicle (department must surrender) or an administrative “block” on the acquisition of any future vehicle(s) for that department.

Risk Management

Liability Coverage: The University of Mississippi as authorized by the IHL Board carries auto liability coverage only on all vehicles that are licensed for street and highway travel. Current Insurance Cards, as proof of insurance, must be placed and kept in every university vehicle. Insurance cards can be downloaded from the Procurement Services website and new cards are required every July 1.

The MS Tort Claims Act provides liability protection for the driver and the University, and is the exclusive remedy under the law while the automobile is being used within the scope and course of one’s duties for the University. Within Mississippi, the limit is $500,000 per occurrence. When out of state, other state laws apply. There is NO liability protection coverage in force when a university vehicle is operated unlawfully or for other than official university business.

Accidents and Accident Reporting: Immediately report an accident involving a university-owned or rented vehicle to law enforcement, the department head, Human Resources, and the Director of Procurement Services. From the information provided, Procurement Services will fill out and process the Automobile Loss Notice. Copies of the reporting form will be sent to the University’s insurance company, IHL loss prevention office and to the university attorney’s office. Post accident drug testing is required by the university’s drug and alcohol testing policy. Always obtain the name, driver’s license number, tag number, and insurance carrier from the other person involved in an accident. Do not make statements except to answer questions asked by law enforcement officials.

Injured Employee: For injuries sustained in a work related automobile accident, Workers’ Compensation coverage will serve as the exclusive remedy to employees injured in a vehicle collision while engaged in the course and scope of one’s duties for the University. Your supervisor will need to contact UM Human Resources immediately to report the injury and to start the claim process.

Injured Passenger (non-employee): Nonemployee(s), including students not serving in an employment capacity, injured in an accident while traveling in a university vehicle currently have $10,000 of medical coverage per person, per accident and do not have workers compensation coverage. For this reason, non-employees should be discouraged from traveling in university vehicles.
Any and all injuries sustained from a UM vehicle accident shall be reported immediately to the employee’s supervisor, the head of the department, Human Resources and to Procurement Services.

Vehicle Use Policy

University-Owned Vehicle Official Use Policy: University-owned motor vehicles are authorized for use in the performance of all travel or tasks necessary to accomplish official university business that is within the rated design capability of the vehicle. Use is not authorized for unofficial travel or tasks, the transport of unauthorized persons or items, or the performance of tasks outside the rated capacity of the vehicle. University-owned vehicles should only be driven by approved, authorized drivers and only used for official university business. Some examples of unauthorized use are but are not limited to:

1. Sightseeing or trips for pleasure unless the trip is part of the official agenda for a business conference.
2. Transporting family members, dependants or friends to school, daycare, medical appointments, social events or other personal activities.
3. Conducting other personal business outside the employee’s scope of employment.

Only authorized passengers are permitted to accompany authorized drivers in university vehicles. Non-authorized individuals such as spouses, and children should not be passengers in a university vehicle unless they are involved in the conduct of business, which is in the scope of employment of the authorized employee operating the university-owned vehicle.

Operating a University-Owned Vehicle: University employees and other authorized individuals with a valid driver’s license may drive a university-owned vehicle for official university business only. All university departments that operate university-owned vehicles are required to have all drivers read and sign the Vehicle Use Agreement (see pages 25-26 of this document). The agreement contains a provision signifying that the driver has been given a copy of the fleet policies and procedures and that he/she understands and agrees to them. The Vehicle Use Agreement also contains space for the driver's license number and it informs the driver of his/her obligation to reveal changes in the status of that license. Departments shall forward a signed copy of this form to the Office of Procurement Services. This agreement should be read and signed by each driver on a periodic basis after the initial signing.

University employees and approved individuals who have an acceptable driving record may operate a university-owned vehicle. All drivers who use university vehicles may have their driving records checked annually by the university. Whenever a driver of a university vehicle has his/her driver's license revoked,
restricted, or suspended, the driver is required to immediately notify his/her supervisor.

Failure to provide a timely notification may result in immediate disciplinary action to the driver and any university personnel having knowledge of the suspension or revocation. Disciplinary action may include the loss of driving privileges of a university vehicle, suspension from work, and possible termination.

**At no time can an employee operate a university-owned vehicle to conduct university business with a suspended license.**

Departments shall avoid allowing employees to travel on university business using a university-owned vehicle due to an unacceptable driving record. If travel is unavoidable, such drivers may use their personal vehicles and be reimbursed at the state-approved mileage reimbursement rate.

**Drivers:** Employees and authorized drivers, including students (part time or full time) must be at least 18 years old to operate vehicles owned or rented by the University.

Personal vehicles are also included in this section when used in an official capacity because employees with a valid driver’s license are covered under workers compensation and tort liability while on the job. If an unauthorized person (does not have a valid driver’s license) elects to drive anyway, the Travel Office will not reimburse gasoline or mileage or for a rental vehicle. If traveling in a personal vehicle under these circumstances, the driver is assuming all risk associated with the trip.

The UM insurance policy requires drivers to have a valid driver’s license to be covered by the policy. Drivers must obey all traffic rules and regulations in the state where they are traveling. Tickets for traffic violation (speeding, failure to yield, and so on) will be paid by the driver of the vehicle and should be immediately reported to Procurement Services. Such traffic fines are not reimbursable from university funds to the individual and are considered personal expenses.

It is illegal for a driver to operate a University-owned or rented vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Smoking and smokeless tobacco are not permitted in university vehicles.

Due to the pedestrian traffic and vehicle congestion on campus, eating or drinking while driving on campus is prohibited. Making or receiving cellular telephone calls along with sending or viewing text messages while driving is strictly prohibited regardless of where the vehicle is being operated.
Daily Log: A daily log of all trips must be recorded for each university-owned vehicle. The log should include the beginning and ending odometer readings, total miles traveled and destination from and to the business location. Do not round up on the miles. Out-of-state mileage must be maintained as well as all in-state mileage.

Misuse of University-Owned Vehicles: University-owned vehicles are highly visible to the public and their use is scrutinized. Poor driving manners and inappropriate use reflect on all university employees. Operators must exercise the highest degree of prudence and courtesy. If misuse has occurred, it is the responsibility of the employee to immediately bring the misuse issue to the attention of the department head and/or the Director of Procurement Services. The director shall investigate all alleged misuse complaints received.

Donated Vehicles: This policy applies to vehicles donated to university departments. The University will not accept donations of 15 passenger vans. Vehicles given to university departments must follow all policy requirements of a vehicle purchased with funds controlled by the University.

Personal Use: Using university-owned or rented vehicles to conduct personal business is strictly prohibited by Mississippi Code 25-1-79. Drivers are prohibited from taking a university vehicle to their residence unless previously approved by the driver's supervisor. Only in extreme circumstances should this be approved because of the perception that a university vehicle is being misused for private purposes.

Privately Owned Vehicles: University officers and employees may be authorized to travel on university business using their private automobile. In these cases, drivers are typically reimbursed on a per-mile basis. Owners should have current proof of insurance in accordance with state law. Losses occurring to a third party while conducting official business with prior approval are subject to protections provided by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act. Having an approved travel authorization on file with UM Travel Office will confirm prior travel authorization for university business. University employees that are authorized to travel on official university business in their private automobile will be reimbursed at the same rate as federal employees, based on mileage determined by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration. All other operational and maintenance expenses are the responsibility of the owner.

The University will not reimburse for gasoline used in a personal vehicle regardless of the circumstances. University credit cards cannot be used to pay for fuel in a private vehicle. Only actual mileage may be reimbursed.
If authorized for official use, privately owned vehicles will be operated and maintained in accordance with the policies and procedures established for university-owned vehicles.

For those drivers utilizing their personal vehicles on university business, the following requirements apply:

- Must have a valid driver’s license and meet the same motor vehicle record (MVR) and accident criteria as drivers of university vehicles.
- Automobile liability coverage must be maintained by the driver as prescribed by state law. The university shall be provided with evidence of this insurance coverage, which clearly lists policy declarations and coverage limits, when requested.
- In case of an accident and subsequent claim, third party losses are subject to the protections provided by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act § 46-11-1 et.al. (Subject to all requirements and limitations only if the loss occurred while conducting official university business.)
- The vehicle must be maintained at owner’s expense, in accordance with state law.
- Drivers must comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.
- Motor vehicle records may be checked initially, and periodically thereafter. The driver's authorization to operate their personal vehicle for university business may be revoked by management if the motor vehicle record discloses any of the following:
  - The motor vehicle driver’s license is revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or denied
  - Operating outside the limitations of a restricted license
  - Driver refuses to undergo drug or alcohol testing in accordance with university policies or as required by applicable state or jurisdiction laws
  - A conviction for driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Regular occasional drivers (those being reimbursed more than six times per year for business use) may be required to attend driver safety training and meetings.

The University reserves the right to withdraw this privilege at any time.

**Vans (15-Passenger):** The University discourages the purchase of 15-passenger vans because of safety concerns for drivers and passengers. Rental of 15-passenger vans will be prohibited unless special permission is granted by Procurement Services.

If a department desires to order a 15-passenger van, Procurement Services will need a statement from the department head stating that he/she has read and will adopt the recommendations included in the **Mississippi Institutions of Higher**
Learning Safety and Loss Control Van Safety Recommendations which is located at the end of this policy.

Also, when the time is appropriate, the Safety and Loss Control Director of the IHL will come to campus and teach a 5-hour course on Coaching the Van Driver, available through the National Safety Council.

In addition to copies of all employee drivers’ licenses that are normally sent to our office, we will need the names of the drivers that will be operating the 15-passenger vans should your department choose to place an order for these vehicles. When we have accumulated several names of the 15-passenger van drivers, we will schedule the IHL Safety and Loss Control Director to come to campus to teach this class.

Fifteen-passenger/cargo vans in operation will continue to be used until such time the vehicle is sold or salvaged. The driver should obey posted speed limits but not exceed 65 mph regardless of posted speed limit. Luggage racks or hauling items on top of the van is prohibited.

Fifteen-passenger vans are not to be used for trips more than 350 miles one way. A bus or several smaller vehicles should be used for trips greater than 350 miles. Some exceptions will be made for special circumstances. In 15-passenger vans manufactured before 2009, the back seat is to be removed. Luggage, boxes or equipment inside the van must not be stacked higher than the back of passenger seats.

The driver must not operate a van continually for more than eight (8) hours and must take a thirty (30) minute break every four hours. Trailers or other vehicles must not be towed with a van. In 15-passenger vans manufactured prior to 2009, a maximum of 10 passengers, including the driver, is permitted with the number decreasing by one for every 170 lbs. of cargo. The exception is for vans operated on campus where the maximum passengers can be 15 including the driver.

Tobacco Use in University-Owned Vehicles: The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all university-owned vehicles.

Animals: Animals are not allowed in university vehicles unless they are transported in the conduct of university business or are required by a passenger’s disability.

Non-Official Decals: No decals, bumper stickers, commercial advertising, or political stickers of any kind may be placed on any university-owned vehicle. Only official marking as required by law may be placed on a university vehicle.

Firearms: Firearms are prohibited in university-owned vehicles unless they are required for the performance of the official job duties.
Seat Belts: Drivers operating university-owned vehicles are required by law to wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is being used for university business, in or out of the state. Front seat passengers also have this same requirement. University policy requires all passengers in a university vehicle to wear seatbelts at all times when the vehicle is being operated, especially on campus.

Personal Property: Personal property in university-owned vehicles is not insured for loss or damage by the State. Coverage for these items may be provided by the employee’s personal insurance. Drivers are encouraged to discuss such issues with their own insurance representative and should consider the addition of a “rider” on their own policy.

Vehicle Assignments: University-owned vehicles may not be used in a commuting capacity solely by virtue of an employee’s job title or position. A commute vehicle must be approved by the appropriate Vice Chancellor and a copy of the written approval must be on file with the Office of Procurement Services and the Property Officer. Before any approval for commuting in a university vehicle will be considered, at least one or more of the following conditions must exist: Law Enforcement or Twenty-Four Hour on Call.

Commuting Approval: Once agency approval has been given for an individual commuting assignment, the Vice Chancellor of each division shall be directly accountable for ensuring this procedure is followed. Under certain circumstances, a commute vehicle may be considered taxable income to the individual.

Policy Violations: University employees and student drivers are warned that failure to follow this policy will be addressed immediately and will subject the person violating this policy to disciplinary action, including possible immediate dismissal from their job.

Commentary: University-owned vehicle operators are charged with an ethical responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional and prudent business manner. An employee should not engage in any activity that would violate the obligation of trust given with the privilege of operating a university-owned vehicle. Inappropriate activities or misuse include but are not limited to:

1) Parking any university-owned vehicle at a compromising establishment for non-business activities.
2) Excessive speeding.
3) Failure to take proper care of the vehicle (washing, vacuuming, routine maintenance, etc.).
4) Using the vehicle for personal use out of the employee’s scope of employment.
Rental of Vehicles

The University will allow use of rental cars when there is a demonstrated cost saving over other modes of transportation and use of the rental car is not strictly for the traveler’s convenience. If an employee uses a rental car instead of a private vehicle for travel to their destination, state guidelines require documentation of the total rental expense compared to the total mileage expense for using a private vehicle. Reimbursement of the lesser expense shall be claimed on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher. Please remember that an intermediate size vehicle is normally the largest rental that will be reimbursed. Naturally, there will be occasions for which a larger vehicle is required. A waiver request form should be submitted for approval to the Office of Procurement Services prior to making any reservations.

Employees are prohibited from misrepresenting a rental arrangement with a state authorized rental car agency (i.e., Enterprise) for personal travel. The rented vehicle must be for official university business to request the state rate. Employees are prohibited from renting a vehicle and later filing a travel voucher that shows using a personal vehicle in order to receive a higher reimbursement rate.

Vehicles may be rented for university business in certain circumstances, such as:
- Out of town travel
- Replacement vehicle for one that is being repaired
- Transportation of guests
- Special events
- Unexpected shortage of transportation resources

While operating a rental vehicle on university business, all requirements of the vehicle safety program applies. This includes the following:
- Must have a valid driver’s license, and meet the same motor vehicle record (MVR) and accident criteria as all other drivers of university vehicles.
- Drivers must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Only authorized drivers may operate the vehicle.

Vehicle Rental Insurance: Current state contract rental agreements for both in-state and out-of-state rentals include free Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) insurance. CDW/LDW covers damage to the rental car, and IHL’s existing auto insurance covers third party damage/injuries at the fault of the university-authorized driver. The option to purchase insurance should always be declined when a vehicle is rented utilizing the state contract. Employees will not be reimbursed for insurance purchases when a vehicle is rented utilizing the state contract.
University employees must always be covered by insurance either provided by the contract or by purchase, should the employee utilize a vendor that is not on state contract. However, without proper justification, the employee may not be reimbursed for vehicle rentals if the vendor is not on state contract.

The UM vehicle rental policy and associated state contracts can be found on the UM Travel website.

**Rental of Buses:** The University has discontinued operating a bus service. Departments must make arrangements for renting a bus or buses and submit all needed paperwork to procurement for payment.

### Vehicle Records

**Vehicle Numbers:** In addition to the unique UM Asset Number (6 digits), each vehicle will receive a Unit Number (3 digits) to be used for quick and easy identification. The numbers are assigned by Procurement Services and the unit number will be placed on the vehicles by the Physical Plant Department after a proper work order notification has been authorized. The unit number will be used to identify the vehicle for reporting purposes and quick identification. The inventory number will be used when conducting a property inventory audit.

**Vehicle Titles:** Titles shall be titled as follows: The University of Mississippi, P.O. Box 8750, 1 Jeanette Phillips Drive, University, Mississippi 38677. The Office of Procurement Services will be the sole university repository for vehicle titles, which will be maintained with university-owned vehicle records. The Director of Procurement Services or his designee shall have sole authority to sign vehicle titles, order titles and apply for lost titles.

Title applications shall be handled by Procurement Services as well and will be used to secure a state-issued tag. If university-owned vehicles are purchased through any process other than through the state vehicle contract, it is the department’s responsibility to provide complete paperwork to Procurement Services for them to obtain the appropriate title.

**Vehicle Tags:** University vehicles will receive a “no charge” permanent state-issued tag that will remain with the vehicle throughout its useful life as a university vehicle. Procurement Services will order the tag and will affix it to the vehicle after verification that the vehicle is of the correct color and is properly marked with the required identification stickers / markings.

**Marking of University-Owned Vehicles:** All vehicles, owned or leased by The University of Mississippi, shall have a permanent decal or be painted on both sides of the vehicle in letters at least three (3) inches in height and on the rear in letters not less than one-half (1 ½) inches in height, stating the name of the
University. The marking must be in a color which is in contrast with the color of the vehicle. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to vehicles exempted as set forth in Section 25-1-87 of the MS Code.

Vehicle Colors: The standard color of university vehicles is dark navy blue. New vehicles ordered from state contract through Procurement Services should conform to this paint color whenever possible. Recognizing that not all vehicle manufacturers sell vehicles in dark navy blue, departments will need to work with procurement staff to identify the next closest acceptable color. When older vehicles are repainted, the standard fleet color must be used.

Maintenance

Maintenance and Care of Vehicles: Maintenance of university property is a vital responsibility when considering the best use of tax dollars. All departments are urged to establish a written policy which shall describe the planned maintenance program for its fleet. This policy shall include mechanisms to assure proper, timely preventive maintenance (oil changes, lubrication, etc.) as well as mechanisms to track costs to allow management to make proper decisions concerning the continued operation of the vehicle. At a minimum, departments should follow the manufacturer’s recommended maintenance schedule for each vehicle.

All maintenance and repairs performed on university-owned vehicles must be documented and retained for the life of the vehicle. All maintenance and repair information and costs should be entered into the IHL Monthly Vehicle Summary Report. The maintenance and upkeep of fleet vehicles is the responsibility of the department head and department to which the vehicle is assigned. The department head shall enforce the policies and schedules to ensure routine service is completed as scheduled.

Vehicle Appearance and Operation: The Physical Plant Department has the authority to park (impound) a university vehicle with mechanical problems if operating the vehicle could result in a hazard to other vehicles or pedestrians. The vehicle will remain impounded until such deficiencies are corrected. Each department should develop a checklist to be updated monthly to make sure the vehicle is in an acceptable condition to drive. An example of a checklist is included in this policy. Vehicles should be inspected monthly to ensure that the exterior appearance is kept at the highest standard. This is in reference to dents, paint damage, a vehicle in need of washing, and so on.

University vehicles should be road worthy, carry proof of insurance and emergency phone numbers. A state-approved service station or mechanic must approve the condition of a vehicle. University vehicles must have an annual
safety inspection and inspection stickers are available at the University Service Station located at the Physical Plant.

Departments are responsible for maintenance and repair to their vehicles. Small repairs to the vehicles may be charged against credit cards if payment can be made in this way.

**Vehicle Warranty Tracking:** Departments with vehicles should track vehicle and parts warranties to achieve maximum savings on maintenance and repairs. A good warranty tracking system can prevent departments from paying for repairs or parts that are covered under manufacturer warranties.

**Monthly Vehicle Checks:** Each department is responsible for monthly checks of the following:

1. Brakes  
2. Lights  
3. Tires  
4. Belts/hoses  
5. Windshield wipers/fluid  
6. Automatic transmission fluid level  
7. Engine oil  
8. Coolant  
9. Transmission  
10. Steering  
11. Battery  
12. Air filter  
13. Inspection sticker  
14. Seat belts  

The department head or other supervisor should monitor and sign off on this process.

**Routine Washing:** It is the department’s responsibility to ensure fleet vehicles represent The University of Mississippi appropriately. Vehicles should be cleaned inside and out as appropriate for the intended use of the vehicle. Passenger vehicles that are not used off road would need to be kept cleaner than a truck that is used off road on a daily basis. Common sense should rule. If in doubt, clean it. It is recommended that all passenger vehicles be cleaned inside and out at least once monthly.

**Annual Safety Inspection:** Each department shall schedule and complete the annual state inspection at a state-approved maintenance facility for each vehicle assigned to their department. For the university, this facility is the University Service Station located at the Physical Plant.
**Fuel Purchases:** All local gasoline purchases shall be obtained from the University Service Station using the approved fuel access key assigned to each vehicle. No fuel should be purchased from local gasoline dealers in the Oxford area.

Only regular unleaded gasoline or diesel from the self-service pumps located at the Physical Plant should be used. When on official university travel, no higher-octane gas above regular unleaded is to be purchased.

The University Service Station should also be used for small repairs, oil changes, oil filter changes, etc., whenever possible.

Each vehicle shall be issued a unique university fuel access key for that specific vehicle. Employees that are assigned vehicles shall be issued a personal identification number (SAP employee number) that is to be kept separate from the fuel key in the vehicle. When using this key, always enter in the **correct employee identification number and correct mileage.** If a fuel access key is stolen or lost, notify the Physical Plant immediately. A replacement key will be issued if needed. The fuel access key can only be used to purchase fuel from the University Service Station.

**Fuel Credit Cards:** When justified, departments that engage in official university travel outside of Oxford may request standard fuel company credit cards (Shell, B.P., Chevron, Exxon, etc.) though the Office of Procurement Services. When submitting fuel invoices for payment, all original pump receipts must accompany monthly statements. Failure to include the receipts will result in a non-payment of the statement. Vehicle unit numbers must be placed on all fuel invoices and corresponding pump receipts submitted for payment.

The total of all fuel transactions must be entered into the IHL Monthly Vehicle Summary Report as well as the total of all vehicle maintenance performed each month. This is a mandatory requirement for operating a university-owned vehicle.

**Under no circumstances, can a university department use a university-authorized fuel credit card (Shell, Chevron – Texaco, BP, Exxon, etc.) or a University Service Station fuel access key to place fuel into a personal vehicle. There are no exceptions.**

**Alternative Fuels:** The University encourages the use of alternative fuels, including, but not limited to, ethanol or biodiesel. Each agency is encouraged to purchase alternative fuel vehicles and use alternative fuels when it is determined that it would be cost effective and would not cause harm to the university-owned vehicle.
Classes of License and Endorsements

1. **Class R** – Regular License. No person shall drive or operate a motor vehicle other than a motorcycle upon the highways of the State of Mississippi without first securing an operator's license to drive on the highways of the state. A motorcycle endorsement may be issued to any person who holds a valid Mississippi driver's license and meets the other requirements for such endorsement contained in this chapter. A restricted motorcycle operator's license may be issued to any applicant who fulfills all the requirements necessary to obtain a Mississippi operator's license that may be applicable to the operation of a motorcycle. Such license shall entitle the holder thereof to operate a motorcycle, and no other motor vehicle, upon the highways of this state.

2. **Class A.** Any combination of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or more, provided the gross vehicle weight rating of the vehicle or vehicle being towed is in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds.

3. **Class B.** Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or more, and any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds;

4. **Class C.** Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of less than twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating not in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds comprising:
   a. Vehicles designed to transport sixteen (16) or more passengers, including the driver; and
   b. Vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials which are required to be placarded under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act.

5. **Class D.** All other vehicles or combination of vehicles which are not included in Class A, Class B, or Class C and for which a commercial license is required to be issued as provided by Section 63-1-43, Mississippi Code of 1972.

6. Commercial driver's licenses may be issued with the following endorsements and restrictions:
   a. "H" authorizes the driver to drive a vehicle transporting hazardous materials;
   b. "K" restricts the driver to vehicles not equipped with air brakes;
c. "T" authorizes driving double and triple trailers;

d. "P" authorizes driving vehicles carrying passengers;

e. "N" authorizes driving tank vehicles;

f. "X" represents a combination of hazardous materials and tank vehicle endorsements;

g. "S" restricts the driver to school buses being operated for the purpose of transporting pupils to and from school or to school related functions and/or to all other vehicles not requiring a commercial driver's license; and

h. "I" restricts driving which requires a commercial license to intrastate driving only

**Replacement Goals**

**Replacement Criteria:** The following guidelines provide minimum replacement goals for routine vehicle replacement. In general, most vehicles should be replaced when they reach 6 years (72 months) of service or 120,000 miles, whichever comes first. However, there may be circumstances in which vehicles may be replaced sooner (such as excessive maintenance or repair costs) or retained longer (such as unusually low maintenance costs or low yearly mileage). Department heads may make this determination on a case-by-case basis, using these guidelines as a starting point for their deliberations. Before disposal or sale of any vehicle, the Office of Procurement Services shall make a determination that the lifetime use and mileage of the vehicle has been maximized and it would not be feasible for another university department to use this vehicle. Procurement Services shall approve all disposals prior to disposal.

**Disposal Rules and Regulations**

**Procedures for Selling, or Transferring, University-Owned Vehicles:** Departments wanting to dispose of a vehicle must notify Procurement Services. Once the department and Procurement Services have established the best possible method for disposal, the proper paperwork will be started. If the department wishes to sell the vehicle and Procurement Services has approved such sale, the vehicle will need to be brought over to the vehicle disposal area at Procurement Services, where the state tag and all university decals will be removed at the department’s expense.

**Methods:** University-owned vehicles which become surplus to the needs of the university may be disposed of in any of the following ways:
(1) Traded
(2) Transferred
(3) Sold

Sale of a university-owned vehicle(s) may be accomplished by public auction, sealed bid, or private treaty negotiated sale.

**Trades:** University-owned vehicles, which no longer meet the needs of the University or become obsolete or inoperable but still have a residual value, may be traded as a part of the transaction to acquire new vehicles. This method of disposal may not be used when acquiring any vehicle from a state contract. The request for pricing, which includes a trade-in, must be made a part of the specification for the vehicle being purchased. The specification shall contain all pertinent information about the vehicle being traded (i.e., make, model, year model, mileage, the location where it may be seen, etc.).

**Transfers:** University-owned vehicles may be transferred to other state agencies (including transfers to the Office of Surplus Property). The transfer or sale of a vehicle from the University to another state agency or a transfer from the University to a governing authority does require approval from the Office of the State Auditor – Property Division.

**Sale of University Property - Sealed Bid:** When disposing of university-owned vehicles by sealed bid, the University is required to advertise the sale in the same manner as set forth in Section 31-7-13(c) of the MS Code. Such advertisement shall be made one time each week for two consecutive weeks and shall be made in a newspaper published in the county or municipality in which the University is located. Such advertisement should indicate where, when, and for how long invitations for bid may be obtained; generally describe the vehicle being sold; when and where the vehicle may be seen; and contain other pertinent information but is not required to include detailed specifications.

**University employees are prohibited by law from purchasing any surplus university property, including vehicles. There are no exceptions.**

**Auction:** Public auctions have long been an acceptable, as well as preferred, method of disposing of vehicles that is advantageous to the University. Vehicles sold at auction have historically brought more money than those sold by sealed bid. Auctioneers or auction companies and the selection of them provides for two options, which are:
(a) Auctions that are held on agency property; and
(b) Auctions held at auction company location

**Auctions Held on Agency Property.** For logistical reasons, UM does not use this option.
**Dealer Auctions:** There are several dealer auction facilities located throughout the state where vehicles may be sold; however, Rea Brothers Mid South Auto Auction is the approved primary auction dealer used by the state. To use the services of any of these facilities, the company must agree that the sale will be open to the public for university-owned vehicles and must agree that the fee charged the seller of university-owned vehicles shall be not more than $50 per vehicle. Auctions that are dealer-only sales (auctions that do not allow public participation in the auction process) cannot auction university-owned vehicles.

Presently, state-owned vehicles are being sold at the state auction on the first Thursday of each month. Any agency wishing to dispose of vehicles in this manner may do so by delivering the vehicles along with a signed (undated) title to the auction company not later than the Thursday, one week prior to the sale, before 5:00 p.m. This will allow the auction to properly advertise the sale of the state vehicles. If vehicles cannot be delivered by this cut-off date, the vehicles will be held for the next month’s sale and so on. If vehicles show up at auction, after the cut-off date, they can be stored on auction premises until the next sale date, or the owning agency can pick up the vehicles and re-deliver them by the next month sale cutoff. The vehicles need to be thoroughly cleaned, and have all decals and lettering removed prior to sending them to auction.

Once vehicles are delivered and set for sale at the state auction, no sale may be made to the public or to any dealer before crossing the auction block at least one time. When vehicles have sold, the auction company will be responsible for collecting proceeds from buyers and will provide, to the agency, all documentation (bill of sale, mileage certification, etc.). The auction company will deliver, within 10 working days, a check for the net proceeds to the selling agency. Any auction company handling vehicles owned by state agencies shall be bonded as required by law.
Monthly Vehicle Inspection Checklist

Department: _______________________________________________________

Vehicle No: ___________ Date___________________

Driver’s Name (Printed): ______________________________________________

Inspected by (Name): ________________________________________________

List Problems
[ ] Brakes (Pedal Pressure) _________________________________________
[ ] Both Tail Lights _________________________________________
[ ] Windshield Wipers _________________________________________
[ ] Windshield Defroster _________________________________________
[ ] Horn _________________________________________
[ ] Mirrors (Adjust before driving) _________________________________________
[ ] Turn Signals _________________________________________
[ ] Backup Lights _________________________________________
[ ] Headlights (High & Low Beam) _________________________________________
[ ] Brake Lights _________________________________________
[ ] Hazard Lights _________________________________________
[ ] Seat Belts (Front & Back) _________________________________________
[ ] Tires _________________________________________
[ ] Tread
[ ] Inflation
[ ] Spare
[ ] Fluid Levels
[ ] Gasoline [ ] Power Brakes [ ] Windshield Washer
[ ] Oil [ ] Coolant
[ ] Power Steering [ ] Transmission
Driver’s Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

The following checklist is designed for drivers with little mechanical knowledge or background. Elements included enhance safety and prevent breakdown. This inspection should only take a few minutes for a typical automobile. Completion will increase the likelihood of a successful trip. Unsatisfactory elements should be corrected prior to operation of vehicle.

Vehicle Make & Model ______________________ Date ___________________

ELEMENT (☐) SATISFACTORY (☐) UNSATISFACTORY (☐ OR COMMENT)

1. Brakes – do service brakes and parking brake operate?
2. Lights – check headlights, high beams, blinkers, tail lights, brake lights, back-up light, parking lights and side markers. Are all working?
3. Tires – check pressure against p.s.i. noted on tire. Check treads depth (at least 1/8 inch). Check for defects such as unusual wear pattern, bubbles or deformed sidewalls.
4. Belts – are they quiet with engine running?
5. Glass – no broken windows, no cracks that interfere with driver’s vision. Clean.
6. Mirrors – are side and rearview mirrors intact?
7. Windshield wipers – do they operate and remove washer fluid when tested?
8. Windshield washer – is reservoir full, does it pump when operated?
9. Engine oil – check dipstick. Any leaks?
10. Coolant – is fluid to mark on reservoir?
11. Transmission – check dipstick. Any problems shifting?
12. Steering – does steering react when steering wheel is turned? Any noise?
13. Occupant restraints – are all seatbelts and airbags present? Do seatbelts operate properly?
14. State inspection sticker – is a current inspection sticker in lower driver’s side corner of windshield?
15. License Plate – is a license plate mounted and easily seen?
16. Emergency equipment – is there a jack, lug wrench, flashlight, etc.?
17. Keys – do keys operate ignition and all locks? Are a spare set of keys available?
18. 

Note: Consider a similar checklist for use when returning a vehicle after a trip to report needed repairs.
Trip Request

Department: ____________________________________________________________

Driver’s Name(s):________________________________________________________

Driver’s License No: ____________________________ Issuing State: ______________

Start Date: ___________________________ Return Date: _______________________

Total Trip Miles: _____________________

From: ______________________________ To: _______________________________

Reason for Trip: _________________________________________________________

Vehicle No: _________ Vehicle Tag No: ______________________________________

By signing this report, I acknowledge that I have:
1. A valid Driver’s License
2. Not had my driver’s license suspended or revoked within the past three years
3. Passed the Safe Driving Course on (Date) ______________ for 15-passenger vans
I also give my permission to the University Police Department to do a background check and give the results to my department chair/head.

Print Name: ____________________________________________________________

Sign Name: ____________________________________________________________
Vehicle Use Agreement

Operating a university vehicle is a privilege. All drivers will be responsible and accountable to:

• Possess a valid motor vehicle driver’s license. This license must have the appropriate classification and any required endorsements needed for operating the vehicle(s) assigned to the operator.
• Be subject to a driver’s motor vehicle record check, and if such records show a suspension or revocation of driving privileges, the driver will not be authorized to operate a motor vehicle for the University.
• Operate university vehicles for official university business only.
• Operate motor vehicles in a safe manner at all times.
• Comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.
• Maintain vehicle in a safe operating condition.
• Maintain vehicle in accordance with the maintenance schedule.
• Report moving violations to their Supervisor.
• Report changes in their driver’s licensing to Human Resources or the Office of Procurement Services.
• Accurately complete a condition survey when turning in a university-owned vehicle.
• Accurately record and report vehicle mileage in accordance with university procedures.
• Participate in required driver safety education and training programs.
• Require all occupants to use seat belts, child safety seats, booster seats, or other restraint devices at all times.
• Pay all moving/parking violation fines and fees.
• Keep automobile ID cards in the vehicle glove box at all times, including proof of liability coverage.
• Refrain from towing any personal equipment (boats, campers, etc.) with a university-owned vehicle.
• Not alter vehicles leased, owned, or rented by the University in any way.
• Never deactivate air bags on any vehicles leased/owned by the University, rented vehicles or personal vehicles used for university business.
• Never operate a computer while the vehicle is moving.
• Pull off the road to a safe location prior to making or receiving phone calls.
• Comply with university policy on transport of passengers.

Operating privileges shall be revoked if:
• Driver does not adhere to responsibilities listed above.
• The driver’s license is revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or denied.
• Driver refuses to undergo drug or alcohol testing in accordance with university policies or as required by applicable state or jurisdiction laws.
• Operating outside the limitations of a restricted license.
In case of vehicle damage:

- Report any vehicle damage to the University by the end of the day in which the incident occurred.
- Police reports, witness statements or other pertinent documents should be obtained and forwarded to the University.
- The driver shall cooperate with representatives of the University, including insurance company personnel, and obtain written repair estimates from reputable shops or authorized dealerships as instructed. If it becomes necessary to rent another vehicle during repairs, the driver will be instructed as to provisions for a rental vehicle.
- Drivers should not make verbal or written statements concerning an incident during its immediate aftermath except to law enforcement officials or representatives of the University or its agents.

I, ______________________________, have read and understand The University of Mississippi’s Motor Vehicle Policy and Fleet Management Guide. I agree to abide by the provisions of this policy. I understand that violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Driver’s Signature ........................................... Supervisor’s Signature ......................................

Driver’s License Number (required) ..........................................................

__________________________            __________________________
Date                                                         Date
Motor Vehicle Incident Reporting Instructions for Drivers

General Information: The following information should be kept in all vehicles used for university business:

- Phone number(s) to which incidents are to be reported.
- Insurance carrier information that can be provided to other involved parties. Current proof of coverage from the liability insurance carrier should always be kept in vehicle.
- Instructions for notifying the university’s insurance carrier (see insurance card)
- Instructions for contacting law enforcement and emergency personnel; and instructions for contacting roadside assistance services, if available.
- Instructions for leaving the incident scene intact, securing the scene against further collisions or injuries until emergency personnel arrive, and meeting regulatory requirements (if any) for blood alcohol testing.
- A reminder to the driver that he or she should not admit fault for the incident.

Materials to consider placing in vehicle may also include a disposable camera for documenting the scene, a witness card for recording initial comments and contact data from potential witnesses, and a pen or pencil.

Incident Information: Recommended information to be collected in the event of a motor vehicle incident are as follows:

- Name of other driver(s)
- Address of other driver(s)
- Phone number(s) of other driver(s)
- Driver’s license number(s) of other driver(s)
- License plate number(s)
- Vehicle make and model
- Name of insurance carrier
- Insurance policy number
- Name, address, and phone number(s) of all parties involved in the incident, including passengers in each vehicle
- Name, address, and phone number(s) of all witnesses
- Date and time of the incident
- Location of the incident (intersection or milepost)
- The party to whom the driver’s vehicle was registered (e.g., the University, the driver, another individual, or a rental agency)
- Name and phone number(s) of the investigating law enforcement officer on the scene, if any
- Any other entities responding at the scene (e.g., fire department, ambulance, hazardous materials unit)
- Citations issued
- A detailed narrative of the incident
- Space to allow the driver to make a sketch or diagram of the incident scene
Factors to Consider during an Incident Review

During a review of a motor vehicle incident, possible contributing factors may be considered using the following framework:

**Driver:**
- Driver’s work schedule for at least the week preceding the incident
- Length of time on duty since the previous break prior to the incident
- Fatigue
- Scheduling demands on driver
- Motor vehicle record history
- Physical condition of the driver at the time of the incident
- Physical limitations of the driver at the time of the incident
- Training history
- Driver’s emotional state

**Vehicle:**
- Maintenance and inspection records
- Vehicle condition
- Damage to the vehicle from the incident
- Suitability and safety of the vehicle for the work task
- Vehicle control layout
- Modifications to the vehicle that may have contributed to the incident

**Operating Environment:**
- Weather
- Road conditions
- Traffic conditions
- Route planning
- Delivery or service schedules

The following reference sources provide further information on factors that may be considered in determining causation:


Mississippi Department of Public Safety
Driver Records Request

DRIVER’S NAME: _______________________________________
DL NO: ____________________ DOB: ____________________

I HEREBY REQUEST THE FOLLOWING RECORDS RELATING TO THE
ABOVE-NAMED PERSON:
Record Requested: ______ MVR Summary ______ Other Record (must be
specified)

CHECK THE FOLLOWING APPLICABLE STATEMENT:
___ I am the person named in the record sought.
Type ID Shown ____________________ Authorized Agent

___ I am requesting the information on behalf of the current owner (written authorization
from record owner required).

___ The information is to be used by a legitimate business or its agents, employees, or
contractors for use in the normal course of business only:
a. To verify the accuracy of personal information submitted by the individual to the
business or its agents, employees.
b. If such information as submitted is not correct, or no longer correct, to obtain the
correct information for the sole purpose of preventing fraud by pursuing legal remedies
against, or recovering on a debt or security interest against the individual.

___ The information is to be used in conjunction with a civil, criminal, administrative, or
arbitral proceeding in a federal, state or local court or agency or before any self-
regulatory body, including service of process, investigation in anticipation of litigation and
the execution or enforcement of a judgment or order, or pursuant to an order of any
court.

___ The information is to be used by an insurer or insurance support organization, or by
a self-insured entity, or its agents, employees or contractors in connection with the
claims investigation activities, anti-fraud activities, rating or underwriting.

___ I represent a license private investigative agency or licensed security service and
the information will be utilized for one of the above listed permitted purposes.

___ For use by an employer or its agency or insurer to obtain or verify information
relating to a holder of a commercial driver’s license that is required under the
___ For use in connection with the operation of private toll transportation facilities.

___ For use by a government agency, court or law enforcement agency in carrying out
its functions.
___ For use in connection with matters of motor vehicle or driver safety and theft, motor vehicle omissions, recalls, performance monitoring and the like.

___ For use in the normal course of business by a legitimate business to verify accuracy of personal information submitted by the individual to the business and if the information is incorrect, to obtain the correct information, but only for fraud prevention or recovering debts from the individual.
Motor Vehicle and Fleet Management Best Practice Guidelines 21

___ For use in connection with any civil, criminal or administrative proceeding in any federal, state or local court or agency for service of process or enforcement of judgments.

___ For use in research activities as long as the personal information is not published, redisclosed or used to contact the individual.

___ For use by an insurance company for claims investigation, rating or underwriting.

___ For use in notifying owners of towed or impounded vehicles

___ For use by any licensed private investigator for any purpose permitted under the DPPA.

___ For use by an employer to obtain or verify information relating to the holder of a commercial driver license.

___ For use in connection with the operation of private toll transportation facilities.

___ For any other use authorized by state law, if the use relates to motor vehicle operation or public safety.

I understand the personal information furnished is confidential under Federal and State law and is being released to me only for the reason I have indicated above and that it is unlawful for me to furnish the information to an unauthorized person or entity.

Printed Name of Individual: _______________________________________
Signature: _______________________________ Date: ____________

Representing
Printed Name of Company: _______________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________
City: ________________________ State: ____________ Zip: _____________

You may mail the form with an $11.00 money order per request to:
Department of Public Safety
Attn: MVR
1900 E. Woodrow Wilson
DPPA-3 Jackson, MS 39216
The question is often asked, “Why are we so concerned about 15-passenger vans?” Two reasons are paramount, among others: first is the documented fact that these vehicles have demonstrated a propensity to be involved in roll-over crashes, with a 70% fatality rate. The second reason is the rather precious cargo (human lives) that is typically on board, and the amount of this cargo. When something goes wrong, it can go wrong in a big way.

“Where do we get our information?” is usually the second question. The standard bearer in this issue is the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which was created in Highway Safety Act of 1970. The NHTSA is responsible for reducing deaths, injuries, and economic losses due to traffic crashes. This is accomplished through research into traffic conditions, driver behavior, and vehicle design and then promoting ideas and strategies to improve overall safety on American roads.

A 2004 NHTSA study (and 49-page report) explored the relationship between vehicle occupancy and several other variables in the NHTSA Fatality Analysis and Reporting System (FARS) database and a 15-passenger van's risk of rollover. The study examines statistics on fatal crashes involving 15-passenger vans from 1990 to 2002. The study also constructs a logistic regression model to model the effects of various factors, most importantly occupancy level, on the risk of rollover. The model is constructed using data from 1994 to 2001 on police-reported motor vehicle crashes in five states that are part of NHTSA's State Data System (SDS).

The data show that between 1990 and 2002, there were 1,576 15-passenger vans involved in fatal crashes that resulted in 1,111 fatalities to occupants of such vans. Of these, 657 vans were in fatal, single vehicle crashes, of which 349 rolled over. In 450 of these vans, there was at least one fatality, totaling up to 684 occupant fatalities in single-vehicle crashes. The majority of fatally injured van occupants were not wearing seat belts. Only 14 percent of the fatally injured were restrained. Analysis of data from NHTSA's SDS reveals that the rate of rollover observed for 15-passenger vans that are loaded above half their designed seating capacity is 2.2 times the rate observed for vans loaded to or below half their capacity. The odds of a rollover for a 15-passenger van at its designated seating capacity is more than five times the odds of a rollover when the driver is the only occupant in the van.

The agency also performed computer modeling to assess the handling of these vehicles. The modeling predicted under-steer for 15-passenger vans when lightly loaded, similar to minivan behavior. However, when heavily loaded, it predicted understeer at low lateral acceleration, but over-steer at higher lateral accelerations. This transition to over-steer may pose safety problems for drivers.
who are unfamiliar with this characteristic. Loading 15-passenger vans to gross vehicle weight (GVW) also moved center of gravity rearward, increasing vertical load on rear tires.

What makes 15-passenger vans so dangerous? Begin answering this by recognizing that these vans were originally designed to haul cargo - not people. Therefore, many of the safety features associated with typical passenger vehicles (like mini-vans, or busses) was omitted. In fact, 15-passenger vans are more like trucks, while mini-vans are more like cars. They have truck chassis, truck suspensions, truck tires, and truck engines. Mini-vans are built on car chassis, with car suspensions and tires and engines.

The 15-passenger vans are higher off the ground, longer, taller, and heavier, have less visibility, and are more powerful than typical passenger vehicles. Add the weight of 15 people and some gear and you’ve got quite a truck-driving job ahead of you. Whoever is driving needs to be skilled, trained, and experienced.

Why can’t we load them to maximum capacity? The center of gravity of an empty van is already higher than most passenger vehicles. The risk of having a roll-over crash is about the same as for a pick-up truck, while the van is empty. As you add passengers, you add weight above the axles. If you pack the rear of the van first, you add weight behind the rear axle, shifting the center of gravity not only upward, but to the rear. This results in less ground pressure at the front, where you count on the front tires to steer with. The NHTSA report cited earlier stated that by the time you have ten people on board, you’ve tripled the risk of rollover that you had with only a driver on board. Fill all fifteen seats and the risk is now five times greater. Add in the difficulty in steering because your front wheels are barely touching the ground (and may even be coming off the ground if driving over bumps), and the risk is unacceptable.

Why all the focus on tires? Tire failure has been cited in many of the fatal crashes associated with these vans. With a vehicle weighing over 9,000 pounds, tires need to be above average. Manufacturers specify that light-truck (LT) tires are to be used for these vehicles rather than passenger (P) tires. The LT tires have many different qualities but the ability to take the weight and turn corners with it are two important ones. Ken Testorff, in a report he wrote for the U.S. Navy states that “a random check of government-owned and leased 15-passenger vans in mid-2001 revealed some had improper replacement tires installed. When tires don’t meet the manufacturer’s minimum standards for size, pressure, and load, you’re asking for problems. Heat rapidly builds up in such cases, creating the potential for tire failure, which can cause a driver to lose control and wreck.”

Tire pressure, even with the proper tires, must be checked with a gauge and adjusted to the tire and vehicle specifications. If you have the correct tires, this should be the same for both. Begin by checking the federal certification sticker.
usually found on the driver’s door pillar. This lists the vehicle’s gross weight load limits (per axle), required tire type and size, and cold inflation pressure for front and rear tires. Compare this to the tires that are actually on the van. If sub-standard tires are present, they should be replaced prior to further use. Note that the pressures usually differ from front to rear. The front tires are usually about 50 psi while the rear tires are usually about 80 psi. Only a good tire pressure gauge will tell you if you need more air.

Why are 15-passenger van wrecks so often fatal? Eighty (80) percent of those who died in 15-passenger van crashes were not wearing their seat-belts. Even people who normally wear seat-belts don’t feel the need, or don’t remember to wear them when Motor Vehicle and Fleet Management Best Practice Guidelines they get inside a van. The driver is the one person who usually remembers to fasten his or her seatbelt, and is the one person who can remind others to do so - or the van doesn’t leave the parking lot!

Lastly, what are your recommendations? The following were arrived at after studying numerous university, military, and other government agency procedures, NHTSA statistics and reports, and advice from the National Safety Council’s Defensive Driving Course. They are written from the standpoint of preventing loss of life while still being able to accomplish objectives. Input has come from several universities within the IHL system. Universities can create their own procedures based on these recommendations. While stricter standards may be chosen, these recommendations should be considered minimum allowable considerations. Recommendations may be changed or added in the future as additional information is obtained.

Summary of Recommendations IHL Safety and Loss Control

1. Drivers should be experienced. How this is measured can vary:
   a. Having held a driver’s license for at least five years
   b. Being of a certain age (25 is common) assuming they have been driving since the earliest allowable age (15 in MS)
   c. Having driven a truck or other large vehicle could be part of experience (10 years driving a motorcycle may not help much when driving a 9,000 + lb. van with 15 lives on board)

2. Drivers should be skilled. Do they have a good driving record, and does it include vans or similar vehicles?

3. Drivers should be trained. A driver training course should include a minimum of 4 hours in the classroom and should require demonstrated successful performance behind the wheel on a closed course. Content should include reference to actual university-owned vans, characteristics, manufacture’s specifications, maintenance, accident statistics, risks, load placement,
capacity, operation, defensive driving strategies, university policies, route/trip planning, emergency procedures, and other topics as identified.

4. Driving time should be limited. Fatigue is a common factor in crash statistics. Universities should adopt a policy to prevent driver fatigue while safely accomplishing the mission of the group traveling. Consider driving time as related to wakeful time within a 24 hour period. A standard work day being eight hours, this might be a good limit for the average driver. The Department of Transportation allows more hours behind the wheel for commercial truck drivers, but requires the next eight hours to be “off duty”. Taking a ten-minute break every 100 miles or two hours is also a recommendation of the National Safety Council.

5. Time of day should be limited. National Safety Council discourages driving between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. due to the condition of other drivers and the likelihood of fatigue and/or meeting other drivers who are intoxicated.

6. Drivers should be held responsible for the safe and lawful operation of the vehicle they are driving. Auto insurance and the MS Tort Claims Act will apply to liabilities while operating in the course and scope of one’s duties. Deviations from duty and violations of state or federal law should be understood. For these reasons and others, allowing non-employees to drive university-owned vehicles is discouraged. Authorization for non-employees to drive university-owned/rented/leased vans should be documented.

7. Vans should carry no more than 10 people. This includes the driver and up to nine passengers. This recommendation is based on NHTSA recommendations. With just ten passengers, the van will still be operating at triple the risk of roll-over than if the van were empty. With eight people, the risk is 2.2X. Limiting the total number to eight is also a common practice. Removal of one or more rear seats will help facilitate this practice.

8. Vans should be loaded from front to rear. Fill front seats first to avoid understeerage problems. All things being equal, place heaviest part of load (passengers or equipment) toward the front.

9. Roof racks or other “car-top carriers” should be prohibited. The risk of roll-over is magnified with the height of cargo.

10. Cargo should be low and secure. Keeping the center of gravity low will help reduce the risk of roll-over. Tiedown straps, cargo cages, or other restraints should be used to prevent cargo from shifting during transit or from causing additional injury in the event of a collision.
11. All occupants must wear safety-belts (lap and shoulder). Driver should make sure everyone is properly secured prior to operation of vehicle. The number of properly working seat-belts should determine the maximum number of passengers.

12. Towing (if allowed) should not be done with passengers. If it is absolutely necessary to tow a trailer with such a van, no more than one passenger (to assist driver) should be onboard the van. Other cargo within vehicle specifications can be allowed. Owner’s manual should be Motor Vehicle and Fleet Management Best Practice Guidelines consulted for safe towing procedures and safe limits. Trailers must meet requirements as established in Title 63 of MS Code. Only drivers with experience towing trailers should be allowed to operate vans with trailers attached. Avoiding the use of trailers is strongly suggested.

13. Backing should be performed with extra caution. If a passenger is present, he or she should exit the van and stand near the rear of the van to give guidance to the driver as it is backed. Drivers should walk around the rear of the van prior to backing alone to ensure an otherwise unseen object or person is not in harm’s way.

14. Emergency equipment should include proof of insurance, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, highway warning triangles, and tire pressure gauge. Larger items should be fastened securely to vehicle to prevent injury during a crash, protect equipment, and provide a reliable location when needed.

15. Drivers should conduct a pre-trip inspection prior to each trip. A checklist should be used to document inspection and note any needed repairs. Standard items should include: actual tire pressure (requires tire pressure gauge), tread wear, all lights and signals, reflectors, windshield wipers, windshield washer, mirrors, brakes, fluid levels, belts, hoses, horn, emergency equipment, cargo security, and others as identified.

16. Monthly inspections should be performed by a qualified mechanic. This is a more detailed inspection that is also documented, with repairs being made as needed. Reference should be made to any driver inspections made since previous monthly inspection.

17. Provisions for repair of safety-related items during travel should be identified. Drivers will need authority and procedure for replacement of tires that are about to fail, or headlights or wiper blades that don’t work, for example.

18. All recommendations apply to rental/lease vans as if they were university-owned. The university will be expected to cover liabilities and ensure the safety of passengers regardless or ownership. If vehicles cannot meet
standards established for university-owned vans, another source should be sought.

Rental companies may have additional rules/procedures that should be followed, such as minimum age requirements for drivers. None of these recommendations is intended to exempt any rule or procedure from renting and leasing authorities.
Guide to Hiring Bus Companies

Using a list of pre-qualified bus companies for transporting people to and from activities is the simplest way to ensure continuity and safety when outside vendors must be used.

A. For criteria in establishing such a list, request the bus company's USDOT number, and log on to http://www.safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/ for information, including:
   • the bus company's current USDOT safety rating, if issued, and the date of the company's last compliance review (on-site inspection by motor carrier safety authorities)
   • whether the company is authorized to transport passengers for hire
   • whether the company has current insurance in force
   • the company's record of regulatory violations and roadside out-of-service violations, with a comparison to national averages
   • the company's highway crash history

B. Whether or not you are working from a list of pre-qualified bus companies, ask the following questions and include similar language in contracts:
   • Does the driver have a current commercial driver's license (CDL) with a passenger endorsement?
   • Does the driver possess a valid medical certificate?
   • Does the company have a driver drug and alcohol testing program that complies with USDOT regulations?
   • Will your trip be completed within the legal limit of 10 driving hours? If not, will there be a second driver or overnight rest stop scheduled to legally complete the trip?
   • Does the company have its buses inspected annually? By whom?
   • Does the company have the required $5 million of public liability insurance?
   • Can the University be named as an additional insured and certificate holder?
   • Does the company subcontract with others for equipment and/or drivers? If so, what is the name of the second bus company and its USDOT number?
   • Does the company have notification procedures for roadside emergencies and breakdowns? Is the driver equipped with a wireless communications device?
