

## **VEHICLES –UNIVERSITY OR RENTED**

**Summary/Purpose:** Defines policy for drivers, use, requirements, and rental of vehicles to conduct University business. Section I defines the policy for vehicles owned by the University to conduct official business. Section II further defines added policy requirements for 15 passenger vans and the rental of vehicles to conduct University business.

### **SECTION I**

#### **Accidents**

Immediately report an accident involving a University owned or rented vehicle to law enforcement, the department head, human resources, and the director of procurement. Post accident drug testing is required by the university's drug and alcohol testing policy. Get 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.**

#### **Cargo**

Cargo must be secured to prevent items from moving about in the vehicle or being thrown out onto the roadway.

#### **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.

#### **Drivers**

Employees (part time or full time) must be 18 years old to operate vehicles owned or rented by the University, except 15 passenger vans (addressed in Part II), off campus. Only drivers with a valid driver's license from Mississippi or one of its contiguous states are authorized to drive University vehicles under Mississippi law.

Students employed by the University can operate vehicles on campus provided they are 18 years old and have a valid driver's license. They are required to pass the safe driving course. Where applicable, Sections I and II will apply to students.

If a University employee or student's license is suspended or revoked, they are not permitted to drive a vehicle, personal or otherwise, while conducting University business. The employee or student must notify their immediate supervisor, who notifies their direct report or department head, who notifies Procurement. (in writing) that his/her license has been suspended or revoked. Failure to provide this notification may result in immediate disciplinary action on the driver and

any University personnel having knowledge of the suspension or revocation. Personal vehicles are included, because employees are covered under workers compensation and tort liability while acting in an official capacity. If an unauthorized person elects to drive anyway, reimbursement for the rental car, gasoline or mileage will not be reimbursed by the Travel Office. If traveling in a personal vehicle, 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 immediately reported to Procurement Services.

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 is not permitted in University vehicles.

Because of the pedestrian traffic and vehicle congestion on campus eating or drinking while driving on campus is prohibited.

Making or receiving cell telephone calls while driving is strongly discouraged.

### **Driver Training**

The Physical Plant Department offers driver safety training to all University departments. Department heads have the option to require drivers of University or rental vehicles to attend and pass the safe driver course regardless of type of vehicle driven.

### **Fuel**

The University operates a Service Station for servicing UM vehicles and purchasing gasoline. All departments should use the Service Station for small repairs, oil changes, oil filter changes, and so on. Purchases of gasoline from the University Service Station for UM vehicles is mandatory unless otherwise exempted by the proper administrative head of the unit. Purchasing gasoline for a personal vehicle at the UM service station is strictly prohibited.

### **Marking of Vehicles**

All state vehicles owned or leased by an agency of the State will have a permanent decal or paint 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 and half (1½) inches in height, stating the name of the university. The vehicle is to be properly marked before being put into service. The marking must be in a color, which is in contrast with the color of the vehicle. Section 25-1-87, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, allows a few exemptions of marking for law enforcement vehicles.

### **Passengers**

Only University employees, students, and approved guests can ride in a University owned or rented vehicle.

Riding in the back of trucks is strongly discouraged unless absolutely necessary while performing University work related activities. Anyone riding in the back of a pickup or truck must be seated in the bed of vehicle at all times, no exceptions. Do not stand up, sit on the side or hang your feet off the tailgate. The tailgate must be in the “up” position when the vehicle is moving.

### **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.

### **Seat Belts**

State law requires the driver and passengers wear seat belts while a vehicle is moving.

### **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 acceptable condition to drive. See page 7 of this document for an example

Inspect vehicles monthly for service that should be performed to keep the exterior appearance 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 approves the condition of a vehicle. University vehicles must have an annual safety inspection and inspection stickers are available at the University Service Station.

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.

## **SECTION II**

In addition to following Section I, drivers are to follow requirements in this section for 15 passenger vans and rental of vehicles.

#### Rental of Vehicles

Drivers must meet and follow the sections of Part I applicable to using and operating a rented vehicle.

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.

Departments needing to rent a vehicle to travel for University business should do so with the University approved rental car agency. The department is responsible for submitting documentation to Procurement Services for payment of the invoice or reimbursement.

- Employees are prohibited from misrepresenting a rental arrangement with the State/University authorized rental car agency (i.e. Enterprise) for personal travel. The rented vehicle must be for official University business to request the State/University rate.
- Employees are prohibited from renting a vehicle and later filing a travel voucher that shows using a personal vehicle to get a higher reimbursement rate.

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. A list of approved vendors will be on the travel office web site at <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/procurement/travel1.html>. Please contact the Travel Office by phone at 7448 or e-mail at [travel@olemiss.edu](mailto:travel@olemiss.edu) if you have questions.

- Use of vendors, except those listed on the web site, is discouraged. Vendors must meet guidelines as defined by the University. If you want to use a bus service that is not on the approved list, please contact Procurement Services.

#### **Vans (Fifteen Passenger)**

The University will no longer purchase fifteen (15) passenger vans because of safety concerns for drivers and passengers.

Rental of 15 passenger vans will be prohibited.

Fifteen passenger/cargo vans in operation will continue to be used until such time the vehicle is sold or salvaged. During this transition period, mandatory requirements must be followed. Those requirements are as follow:

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- Drivers must be 21 years old and have a valid driver's license. A copy of the license must be on file with Procurement Services.
- Drivers must pass a national safety council driver training course specifically for 15 passenger vans provided by the Physical Plant. A person failing the course will not be permitted to drive the van. A refresher course must be attended every three years.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- In the event someone suspects a driver is on drugs or has consumed alcohol, the person should be reported to the next level supervisor. The supervisor or department head should contact Human Resources for instructions about the incident. In no case should an individual about whom there is reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use be allowed to drive until the issue has been fully resolved in the individual's favor.
- Any individual who wishes to drive a 15-passenger van owned by or rented to the University shall fill out a Trip Request (see page 8) with the department. On the Trip Request, the individual must state his name, department, date of completion of the 15-passenger van driving course, driver's license number, and any convictions for moving violations received in the last three years. Based on any information disclosed on the Trip Request or during the background investigation, it is within the discretion of applicant's department head to refuse to allow the applicant to drive a 15-passenger van or any other University vehicle. Because of the increased risk associated with these vans, an individual may be precluded from driving a van for the University but may be permitted to drive other University owned or rented vehicles on a case by case basis.

- Besides the monthly maintenance check, perform a Vehicle Inspection Checklist (see page 7) before leaving on a trip.

**University employees and student drivers are warned that failure to follow this policy (Sections I and II) will be addressed immediately and will subject the person violating this policy to disciplinary action, including possible immediate dismissal from their job.**

**VEHICLE INSPECTION CHECKLIST**  
**(MONTHLY AND BEFORE A TRIP)**

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers Name: (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's/inspected by \_\_\_\_\_

**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

Oil

Power Steering

Power Brakes

Coolant

Transmission

Windshield Washer

TRIP REQUEST

The University of Mississippi

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver Name(s) : \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers 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 Drivers License
2. No moving traffic violations in 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_