



*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of* **VERMONT**

Policy V. 4.1.17.1

Responsible Official: Vice President for  
Finance and Administration

Effective Date: April 16, 2003

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## **Driver Safety and Motor Vehicle Use**

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### **Policy Statement**

Authorization to Drive a University Vehicle : Only authorized drivers affiliated with the University of Vermont in the capacity of student, staff or faculty shall be permitted to drive a University vehicle. Use of a University vehicle is restricted to authorized University related activities. Any liability arising out of the personal use of a UVM owned or rented vehicle is the sole responsibility of the driver. UVM will expect the driver's personal auto insurance to respond in the event of an accident, arising out of personal use.

All drivers of UVM owned, leased, or rented vehicles must be 18 years old and hold a valid U.S. or Canadian license. All drivers for whom driving is an essential function of their job and all drivers of passenger vans must attend UVM Risk Management's Driver Training and have their motor vehicle record checked BEFORE being authorized to drive. (This can take up to ten working days.) Call X63242 to schedule.

### **Reason for the Policy**

To establish policy, procedure and safety guidelines for UVM faculty, staff and student use of University owned, leased and rented vehicles.

### **Strategic Direction**

This policy supports the following goal in the University's Strategic Plan:  
[http://www.uvm.edu/president/?Page=strategic\\_planning/strategicplan.html](http://www.uvm.edu/president/?Page=strategic_planning/strategicplan.html)

- Focus the human, fiscal, environmental, technological and physical resources of the University on institutional values and priorities

# Applicability of the Policy

This policy applies to all University of Vermont faculty, staff and students.

## Policy Elaboration

### UVM Driver and Passenger Safety Guidelines

1. Driver must be at least 18 years old and in possession of a valid United States or Canadian driver's license at all times when operating a vehicle as a UVM employee, student, or volunteer.
2. Driver shall observe all rules and regulations for safe driving as defined by the State of Vermont Motor Vehicle Department, or by the Department in whose state the vehicle is operated.
3. Safety belts shall be used by all occupants traveling either in a vehicle owned, leased, or rented by UVM or in private vehicles while on University business. Seats should be occupied from front to back.
4. Drinking, possession of intoxicating liquor, illegal drugs in vehicles or driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.
5. For long distance trips, if there is more than one qualified driver, such drivers should consider rotating every two hours. No driver should drive more than 10 hours during a 24 hour period. If there are not enough drivers to rotate, an overnight stay should be planned. Avoid driving past midnight
6. Front passenger should remain awake to help keep the driver alert.
7. Avoid conditions that lead to loss of control - driving while sleepy or inattentive, or driving too fast for road conditions.
8. If the weather is inclement, stop and stay overnight in a safe place. The additional lodging cost is worth avoiding the risk.
9. Do not use a telephone while driving. Stop the vehicle in a safe area to use a cell phone or have a passenger operate it.
10. All off-campus accidents should be reported immediately to the local police department. If an accident occurs on campus, UVM Police Services should be notified. All accidents should also be reported to UVM's Department of Risk Management (x63242).
11. Drivers who anticipate towing a trailer are required to attend the Trailer Towing Operations course offered by Risk Management.
12. Maintain vehicles and their tires. Worn or underinflated tires can increase the risk of rollover.

### 15-Passenger Van Safety Guidelines (in addition to the guidelines above):

In April 2001 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a cautionary warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions.

When carrying fewer than five passengers, 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk similar to light trucks and smaller vans. However, the risk rises dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five occupants to more than ten occupants. In fact, 15-passenger vans with ten or more occupants had a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.

The increased loading of these vans causes the center of gravity to shift higher and toward the rear, thereby increasing the likelihood of rollover. The center of gravity shift also results in less driver control of the vehicle in panic situations.

Because of the risks associated with 15-passenger vans, effective June 2003 UVM departments should begin to phase out the use of these vehicles with a goal of removing them completely from the University fleet as they depreciate or as existing leases expire. This includes short term rentals as well. In the interim, UVM departments and offices that own, lease or rent 15-passenger vans should heed the following guidelines to reduce the risk of rollover:

1. All passenger vans, whether UVM owned, leased or rented, should always be operated by drivers who have attended UVM Risk Management's driver training class and have had a motor vehicle record check done within the last three years. Drivers need to understand the handling characteristics of vans, especially when fully loaded.
2. Vehicle operators should assure that all their passengers are wearing their seat belts. (The NHTSA indicates that you can reduce your chance of being killed in a rollover by about 75% just by wearing a seat belt.)
3. Evenly load the vehicles and load front first (i.e. empty or remove the back seat). Limit occupant numbers to 10 or less.
4. Luggage should be placed in the rear behind the back seat. Roof loads raise the center of gravity, and hence, the risk of rollover. Roof racks should be removed.
5. Use charter buses or other contracted transport or mini-vans for long trips. Use 15-passenger vans only for shorter trips - 200 miles or less one way.
6. Drivers transporting 16 or more persons must have a commercial drivers license (CDL).
7. Avoid extreme panic-like over-steering.
8. Reduce the number of 15-passenger vans in the University fleet - e.g. replace old vans with mini-vans or 12-passenger vans, or order through a 15-passenger school bus manufacturer. (School buses are manufactured to different specific safety requirements, which are more stringent.)

#### Motor Vehicle Records Check Criteria:

Anyone with the following violations within the last three years may not drive a University vehicle:

- DWI
- Driving under the influence
- Negligent homicide
- Operating with a suspended license
- Using a motor vehicle for commission of a felony
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle

- Operating a motor vehicle without the owner's consent
- Permitting an unlicensed driver to drive
- Reckless driving
- Hit and Run

Supervisors should regularly do a visual check of employees' driver licenses to assure they possess a valid driver's license. A motor vehicle record check is recommended every three years, or when violations are suspected. (This can be done through Risk Management – x63242.)

## Definitions

*Insurance/Indemnification:* The University of Vermont, as per the terms of its Officers and Employee Indemnification Policy, will provide its officers and employees a legal defense and pay judgments or settlement expenses incurred in connection with civil claims brought against such persons, provided that the individual was acting within the scope of University employment and in good faith.

University insurance or self-insurance shall be used to finance such protection. Any student with claims or actions brought against him/her and resulting from the authorized use of a UVM owned or leased vehicle will be indemnified only to the extent that insurance coverage applies, and only as long as the student follows the driver safety guidelines noted above. UVM reserves its right to subrogate its interest against any personal auto insurance a student may have that would respond to such claims.

All physical damage claims are subject to a \$1,000 deductible to be borne by the department or unit.

Any employees who are furnished with a UVM vehicle for their regular use are required to carry "extended non-owned automobile insurance" as an endorsement to their personal auto policy or proof of a "named non-owner policy" if the driver does not already have a personal automobile insurance policy. The purpose of this coverage shall be to protect UVM for claims arising out of the employee's personal use of a UVM vehicle. These coverages are considered primary over any liability insurance UVM may carry.

*Traffic Violations* are not considered reimbursable costs under UVM's Travel Policy. All violations, including parking tickets and speeding tickets, will be the responsibility of drivers, not UVM.

*Trailer Towing:* Towing a trailer adds a significant risk to automobile operations. Certain activities require transporting bulky or oversize equipment. Unfamiliarity with a large van plus the increased demands of pulling a trailer necessitates that drivers complete the Trailer Towing Operations safety course offered by Risk Management. (Call x6-3242 to schedule.) All vehicles towing a trailer are restricted to 55 mph.

*Use of Personal Vehicles:* Mileage Reimbursement for use of an employee's personal vehicle to conduct University business is outlined in the University's Travel policy at <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/travel/travel.pdf>

This reimbursement is intended to cover the costs to operate an employee's vehicle, including

insurance costs. UVM's insurance is always excess over any personal automobile insurance carried by the employee, who uses his/her personal auto on UVM business. UVM recommends that employees who regularly use their vehicles on University business maintain auto liability insurance with limits of at least \$100,000 for bodily injury.

## Procedures

If an Accident Occurs:

1. If there are injuries, always call 911.
2. Notify local police. If on campus, notify UVM Police Services at 656-3473. Risk Management must have a UVM or local police report verifying that an accident occurred.
3. Call the Risk Management Department within THREE days at 656-3242.
4. Notify your supervisor.

To file a Claim:

1. The driver of the UVM vehicle should submit a written statement to Risk Management detailing the accident, parties involved, and estimates of cost to repair the UVM vehicle
2. Damage to UVM-owned and long-term lease vehicles are subject to a \$1,000 deductible per occurrence. (Department to whom vehicle is assigned is responsible for deductible.)
3. If short-term rental vehicle, and Department did not buy collision damage waiver from the rental company, the \$1,000 deductible applies. Otherwise, submit bill to rental company.
4. If vehicle is a leased or rented vehicle, notify the rental company immediately. Failure to do so will void the terms of your rental contract, including any insurance coverage provided under the contract. This may in turn jeopardize UVM's insurance coverage, making the Department responsible for the entire loss.
5. In all claims situations, do not admit fault or liability. Do not sign a statement admitting responsibility for damages or injury. Obtain the facts of the situation and submit them in writing to the Risk Management Department.

## Forms

Automobile Accident Claims Reporting Procedure

[http://www.uvm.edu/%7Eriskmgmt/?Page=insurance/autopropertyaccidentreport.html&SM=insurance/insuranceclaims\\_submenu.html](http://www.uvm.edu/%7Eriskmgmt/?Page=insurance/autopropertyaccidentreport.html&SM=insurance/insuranceclaims_submenu.html)

Incident Reporting Form:

[http://www.uvm.edu/~riskmgmt/?Page=emergencies/accidentreport.html&SM=emergencies/emergencies\\_submenu.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~riskmgmt/?Page=emergencies/accidentreport.html&SM=emergencies/emergencies_submenu.html)

## Contacts

Questions related to the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to:

Administrative Asst. to the Director of Risk Management (for training registration)  
(802)-656-3242

Asst. Director Insurance/Claims Management (for reporting accidents)  
(802)-656-0307

Safety Specialist (accident prevention advise)  
(802)-656-3242

The Vice President for Finance and Administration is the official responsible for the interpretation and administration of this policy.

## Related Documents/Policies

UVM Indemnification Policy: [http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general\\_html/indem.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/general_html/indem.pdf)

Automobile Rental Policy: <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/procure/autorent.pdf>

Travel Policy & Procedures: <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/travel/travel.pdf>

General University Insurance Protection:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/riskmgm/genins.pdf>

## Effective Date

Approved by the President April 16, 2003

Revised July 28, 2004