



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI®

FLEET MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Procurement and Contract Services

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Section I: General Provisions

- A. **Statement of Purpose:** The purpose of this Fleet Manual is to provide information governing the administrative policies and procedures for the purchase, operation, maintenance, and disposal of university owned vehicles as mandated by the State of Mississippi, Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), and The University of Southern Mississippi (Southern Miss). This document exists to promote the safe, legal, and responsible use of vehicles owned or operated for the benefit of Southern Miss. The protection of life, property, and the good stewardship of public resources is at stake.
- B. **Application:** These policies and procedures apply to any and all vehicles owned by or used for the benefit of Southern Miss that are licensed for travel on public roads. This includes all such vehicles regardless of funding source or method of acquisition.
- C. **Enforcement/Consequences:** The President and all Vice Presidents have reviewed and endorsed the Fleet Management Policies and Procedures, including the Vehicle Use Agreement and Fuelman guidelines. The Vice Presidents will be responsible for enforcement of these policies and procedures and shall apply appropriate consequences for failure to comply. Such consequences could range from required training to reduced driving capabilities and may go as far as termination of employment. The degree of consequences shall be based upon the potential risk to life and property. Driving a university owned vehicle is a privilege, and the university reserves the right to deny or revoke the driving privileges of any driver in the event that driver does not meet the requirements outlined in this policy.

Section II: Management

- A. **Executive:** As mandated by IHL, no department shall purchase, rent, lease, or acquire any motor vehicle, regardless of the funds from which the motor vehicle is to be purchased, except under authority granted by the President. Authority shall only be granted to purchase, rent, lease, or acquire a motor vehicle which is the lowest cost vehicle to carry out its intended use. (This policy excludes the rental of vehicles from the state contract provider covered by the university's travel policies.)
- B. **Vice President:** Each Vice President will be responsible for allocating vehicle resources in the most cost effective and efficient manner. They could choose to create a department motor pool wherein vehicles will be checked out on an as needed basis or they may choose to assign specific vehicles to specific individuals or they may choose a combination of the two. The idea should be that the Vice President has the flexibility to assign the vehicles as they see fit while maximizing the use of the available resources.
- C. **Procurement and Contract Services:** Procurement and Contract Services will administer the university's Fuelman program, maintain a list of all vehicle administrators and provide training as necessary. Procurement and Contract Services will also maintain the Fleet Management Policies and Procedures Manual.



- D. Physical Plant: Physical Plant will be responsible for obtaining titles, tags, ensuring that all vehicles are marked appropriately and that all vehicles owned by Southern Miss are added to the university's fleet liability policy.
- E. Department: Individual university departments that have vehicles listed on their inventory are responsible for their assignment and use in compliance with all university policies and procedures. The department carries the fiscal responsibility for the proper maintenance and upkeep for any and all vehicles listed on their inventory. The department will also be responsible for assigning Vehicle Administrators.
1. For each vehicle owned by Southern Miss, a Vehicle Administrator shall be named. The name and contact information for this individual shall be on file at the department with a copy on file with Procurement and Contract Services. A department may have one Vehicle Administrator responsible for its entire fleet or they may choose to assign each vehicle a different Vehicle Administrator. The basis for this requirement is that unless someone is named as the responsible party, in most cases, nobody will be responsible. Procurement and Contract Services will provide training to Vehicle Administrators.
- F. Vehicle Administrator: Because the university does not operate a central motor pool, all daily vehicle operational functions are the responsibility of the department which operates a university owned vehicle. To accomplish this, each department must identify a specific employee, the Vehicle Administrator, who is responsible for the following functions:
1. Assures vehicle(s) receives appropriate service and in general, is maintained in a safe operating condition.
 2. Monitors assignments of vehicles, usage and in general assures compliance with this Fleet Manual.
 3. Maintains the department Authorized Driver List and ensures each driver has a current, signed Vehicle Use Agreement (Appendix A).
 4. Maintains records as outlined in this Fleet Manual.
 5. Ensures the appropriate appearance of the vehicle(s).

Section III: Acquiring University Owned Vehicles

- A. Decision Process: The purchase decision should be carefully considered. These guidelines are not intended to stop any department from purchasing a required vehicle but are intended to point out instances where the decision to purchase may not be the best use of the tax and tuition dollar. The following are general guidelines that should be considered:



1. In most instances, if an individual is traveling less than 15,000 miles per year (in a passenger type vehicle) it is possibly more economical for the department to have the employee drive his/her personal vehicle and have the department reimburse at the current mileage rate. Another option would be to develop a pool whereby low mileage users would have access to an appropriate vehicle.
 2. In many instances where transportation of dignitaries or other officials is required on a non-regular basis, it may be better to rent a full size vehicle or passenger van for those specific occurrences, rather than purchasing the vehicle and not fully utilizing its capabilities.
 3. A full size vehicle does not get great gas mileage and has a higher cost when compared to a mid size or intermediate size vehicle; therefore, full size vehicles would not be the appropriate vehicle to purchase if the intended use is to transport a driver only and occasionally three or fewer passengers to and from appointments, meetings, etc. Requests for full size vehicles must include detailed explanation of the need for the increased size (carrying capacity, towing responsibility, etc).
 4. Utility vehicles do not get good gas mileage and have much higher costs when compared to other passenger type vehicles, vans, and pickup trucks; therefore, there are very few situations where a utility vehicle would be the most appropriate vehicle. Transportation of passengers and equipment can normally be accomplished with a passenger van or sedan. Requests for utility vehicles must include a detailed explanation for the need of this type of vehicle.
 5. Large pickup trucks (3/4 ton and 1 ton) have much higher purchase and maintenance costs (fuel, etc.) and are not appropriate when a smaller vehicle will meet the needs of the department. Requests for larger trucks should include adequate explanation of the need for the increased size (carrying capacity, towing responsibility, etc).
- B. Purchasing Process: Vehicles may be purchased with departmental funds in accordance with university and state purchasing policies and procedures with the approval from the university's executive officer. Approved methods of acquisition include purchasing from the state contract vendors, interdepartmental or interagency transfer, state surplus property or purchase from an approved auction.
1. The department or budget unit shall develop a detailed description of the vehicle. Information on state contract vehicles is available on the Office of Purchasing and Travel website: https://www.dfa.ms.gov/competitive-contracts_DEF, click on Vehicles.
 2. A justification of vehicle need shall be developed. The justification must state whether the vehicle is an addition to the current number of vehicles on the departmental inventory or is intended as a replacement. If it is a replacement, the department shall include a description of the vehicle to be disposed of by the university.



3. The description and justification (in memo form – not a requisition) shall be submitted through the appropriate channels from the department or budget unit to the appropriate Vice President and on to the President for approval.
 4. The approved request should then be forwarded to Procurement and Contract Services, Bond Hall 214, Box 5003 with a requisition. It will be the department's responsibility to initiate the disposal process of the replaced vehicle, if appropriate.
 5. It should be noted that the state contract for vehicles usually takes effect in October of each year. While the contract states that it is for a 12 month period, in actuality the contract is only good for as long as the various manufacturers continue to produce the specific vehicles. Usually in February or March the manufacturers start to "cut off" production. This means that departments should make plans to order vehicles as soon after October 1 as possible. Any vehicle requested after the "cut off" date will need to go out for bids. This usually creates a delay as well as a higher price.
 6. Another note to consider is that the state contract is for vehicles that are ordered from the factory, it is not intended to be for vehicles that are currently on the dealer's lot. This means that from the date the purchase order is issued to the date of delivery is often 60, 90 or even 120 days. Again, this should indicate that departments should plan far in advance and order vehicles as soon as possible after the start of the new contract.
- C. Receipt of a Newly Acquired University Vehicle: Upon receipt of the newly acquired vehicle, the department should contact the Physical Plant and Property Accounting BEFORE department begins using the vehicle.
1. Physical Plant: Physical Plant is responsible for obtaining the title and license plate for the vehicle as well as ensuring it is marked appropriately and is added to the university's fleet liability insurance. Physical Plant will also provide and apply The University of Southern Mississippi decals to new vehicles for a nominal charge.
 - a. As set forth in Section 25-1-87, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, all state vehicles owned or leased by Southern Miss 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 and 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.
 2. Property Accounting: Regardless of the method of acquisition, each university owned vehicle must be assigned an asset number. Property Accounting should be notified when a vehicle is received and the asset number should be assigned before the department begins using the vehicle.
- D. Record Keeping Requirements: The department shall maintain proper documentation which provides the intended use of the vehicle and the basis for choosing the vehicle. Such documentation shall



show the department made diligent efforts to purchase, rent, lease or acquire a vehicle that is the lowest cost vehicle for its intended use. For each vehicle purchased, the department shall establish and maintain a file which shall include all pertinent information concerning the vehicle (purchase documentation, annual mileage records, maintenance documentation, disposal documentation, etc). Such documentation shall be updated as needed when the intended use of the vehicle or any other facts concerning the vehicle are changed. Departments shall maintain the following information on all university owned vehicles:

1. Asset number.
 2. Brand/Make/Model/Year.
 3. Tag receipt and bill of sale.
 4. Vehicle license plate number.
 5. Vehicle Administrator.
 6. Purpose for which vehicle is to be used.
 7. Location and assignment of vehicles.
 8. Identification of individual employee assigned vehicle and/or Authorized Driver List for department.
 9. Expense report and vehicle log: Vehicle use log should include names of driver, purpose of use, destination, beginning and ending mileage, dates and times of trip, and fuel purchased. This vehicle use log should be reconciled with the weekly Fuelman transaction reports. Mileage listed on vehicle use logs should be verified with vehicle's actual mileage and compared to estimated mileage to destination. Miles per gallon can be calculated based on vehicle logs and should be compared to the vehicle standard. (See Appendix B for sample form.)
 10. History of repairs and operating expenses.
 11. Cost per mile (fuel, maintenance).
- E. Insurance: The University of Southern Mississippi is self-insured and has coverage under the IHL Tort Claims Plan. This plan provides protection for tort claims against employees of the university subject to terms and limitations established by law.
1. All university owned vehicles should carry proof of insurance. Insurance cards are distributed by Physical Plant.



2. Southern Miss does not purchase physical damage auto coverage for our fleet of vehicles. Rather, in the unfortunate instance when one of our vehicles is damaged, we examine the magnitude of the loss and the ability (or lack thereof) of the department to cover their own loss. If the department cannot cover the loss, the Vice President covers it. If the Vice President cannot, the university finds the cash like any other unavoidable expense. The university is considered "self-insured". It has been determined that the cost of insuring the entire fleet would be much greater than the occasional expense associated with repairing our own vehicles.
3. Liability coverage is afforded under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act which is only applicable while the vehicle is used within the scope and course of one's duties for the university. Within Mississippi the limit is \$500,000 per occurrence. Out of state limits on damages will be subject to the law of the state in which the accident occurs.
4. Worker's Compensation will apply as the exclusive remedy to employees injured in a vehicle collision while engaging in the course and scope of one's duties for the university.
5. Everyone should be aware that "within the scope and course of one's duties for the university" is an extremely important phrase. If a Southern Miss employee went to a grocery store, day care, friend's house or other non-job related site, on their way to a job site, it would be considered "outside the scope and course of one's duties" and therefore, in addition to being a violation of Southern Miss policy and state law, the employee may have some personal liability. Employees are advised to consider talking to their personal insurance agent to include a "rider" that will provide additional coverage when driving a Southern Miss vehicle.
6. Additional insurance purchases must be approved by the Office of Risk Management at IHL. Departments must first complete the Request for Insurance Approval form (Appendix C). This form, and all relevant policy information, must be sent to Procurement and Contract Services, Bond Hall 214, Box 5003.
7. Frequently Asked Questions:
 - Q:** Our department's Southern Miss vehicle was involved in an accident with another Southern Miss vehicle. Will our automobile liability insurance cover the damage?
A: No. The two departments may work out an agreeable solution to pay for all repairs.
 - Q:** Our Southern Miss vehicle was damaged by falling tree limbs. Will the university's automobile insurance cover these damages?
A: No. This type of damage is not covered by liability insurance.
 - Q:** Will our automobile liability insurance cover Southern Miss vehicles traveling to Mexico for research purposes?
A: No. Our current coverage applies to the United States of America, Canada and Puerto Rico. Additional liability coverage must be purchased to insure a vehicle traveling outside these areas.



Section IV: Vehicle Use Policy

- A. General Policies and Guidelines: The following are general policies and guidelines that should govern the use of any university owned vehicle:
1. Southern Miss owned motor vehicles are authorized for use in the performance of all travel or tasks that are within the scope and course of the employee's duties and are necessary to accomplish official Southern Miss business, provided that the use is within the rated design capability of the vehicle. Official university business is defined as the performance of tasks in furtherance of the mission related services that the department responsible for the vehicle is charged with providing to its customers and the university community. Southern Miss owned vehicles shall be driven only by Southern Miss employees, students, and other authorized individuals, and used for official Southern Miss business only.
 2. Drivers of university owned vehicles are required to abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws, university policies and all procedures outlined in this Fleet Manual.
 - a. All traffic and parking laws are to be obeyed. Posted speed limits are not to be exceeded nor is the vehicle to be operated above safe driving speeds for road conditions.
 - b. Drivers will be expected to report and pay for any parking violations, moving violations, violations resulting in a threat to life, violations resulting in a collision, etc. University drivers receiving citations for any vehicle related violations are personally responsible for all fines and costs.
 3. All university owned or leased motor vehicles shall be equipped with the occupant restraint devices that were mandated by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards in effect at the time the particular vehicle was manufactured.
 - a. All occupant restraint devices installed in a university owned vehicle shall be maintained in proper working order. If the occupant restraint devices are not completely operational, the vehicle should not be used until proper repairs are made. The Vehicle Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the occupant restraint devices are in working order before each use of the vehicle.
 - b. The number of passengers in a vehicle shall not exceed the number of available seat belts.
 - c. Drivers operating university owned vehicles, and all passengers, are required to wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in motion. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure compliance with this rule while they are in charge of the vehicle.
 4. Only authorized passengers are permitted to accompany authorized employees in university owned vehicles. Non-state individuals such as volunteers, spouses, and children should not be passengers in a Southern Miss 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.

5. Approved motorcycle helmets must be worn by all motorcycle riders. Proper protective clothing should be worn if operating a motorcycle.
6. Drivers should attempt to minimize distractions that can interfere with the driver's ability and/or focus.
7. Cell phone use should be held to a minimum. Hands free equipment is recommended.
8. PDA/Laptop computer use is not allowed while operating a vehicle.
9. MP3 use should be held to a minimum.
10. Portable two-way radio use should be held to a minimum.
11. Eating/drinking should be held to a minimum.
12. Reading/writing is not allowed while operating a vehicle.
13. Tobacco use is prohibited in all Southern Miss owned vehicles.
14. Firearms are prohibited in university owned vehicles unless they are required for the performance of the official job duties necessitating the travel.
15. Animals are not allowed in university owned vehicles unless they are transported in the conduct of official university business or are required by a passenger's disability.
16. Cargo must be secured to prevent items from moving about in the vehicle or being thrown out onto the roadway.
17. Personal property in university owned vehicles is not insured for loss or damage by Southern Miss. 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 personal policy.
18. 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 can create negative public impressions and result in bodily injury, death or property damage. Failure to comply with the following may lead to a reduction or termination of driving privileges:



- a. Speeding, improper passing, failure to yield right-of-way, tailgating, other violations of law and improper conduct (such as improper gesturing, language and use of horn) are prohibited.
 - b. Drivers should always attempt to adjust to road and weather conditions and should always use vehicle's safety devices such as lights, wipers, turn signals, etc.
19. Drivers are prohibited from the operation of a motor vehicle while mentally or physically impaired.
- a. The use of illegal drugs is prohibited and the use of alcohol is prohibited during the period prior to or during the operation of a vehicle.
 - b. The use of prescription and non-prescription medicine should be monitored carefully to ensure that it does not impact the driver's abilities to safely operate the vehicle.
 - c. Medical conditions or illnesses, fatigue, and emotional state should be monitored carefully to ensure that they do not impact the driver's abilities to safely operate the vehicle.
20. Appropriate actions should be taken to prevent collisions from parking and backing operations. Drivers should consider the use of observers to guide the driver, parking so as to avoid the need to back into traffic, walking around vehicle prior to backing, observing other drivers in crowded parking lots.
21. Vehicles should be locked when not in use and out of sight of Southern Miss employees. Keys should never be left in the ignition when the driver is not present.
22. Commuting: Unless specifically authorized by the appropriate Vice President and/or President, drivers are not permitted to use university owned vehicles for commuting purposes. Commuting shall mean driving a university owned vehicle to and from an employee's work place and residence on a regular basis. Taking a vehicle home one evening to enable an early departure the next day is not considered commuting.
- a. Commuting is only authorized when it is the most cost-effective or practical alternative. Any decision to authorize the use of a Southern Miss vehicle for commuting purposes shall be based upon a determination that the university is the main beneficiary of the arrangement, such as in the case of an individual having a vehicle available for emergency response. Southern Miss vehicles may not be used in a commuting capacity solely by virtue of an employee's position. A commute vehicle cannot be part of a compensation or administrative package.
 - b. If it is determined that a vehicle is needed for commuting purposes, the department shall submit a letter to the Internal Auditor which clearly identifies the vehicle, the employee and the extenuating circumstances which necessitate the authorization for commuting. The letter shall be approved by the appropriate Vice President prior to submitting to the Internal



Auditor. It should be noted that the use of a Southern Miss vehicle for commuting purposes should be considered a taxable fringe benefit.

- B. Authorized Drivers: Only Southern Miss employees, students and other authorized individuals with a valid driver's license may drive a university owned vehicle.
1. All employees must be at least 18 years old and have a valid Mississippi driver's license or a valid driver's license from a contiguous state (MS Code § 25-9-153). Other authorized drivers must be at least 18 years old and have a valid driver's license issued in the state or country of residence. An International Driver's Permit from the country of residence must also be required of drivers possessing a valid license from another country. Likewise, university personnel traveling abroad should obtain an International Driver's Permit prior to travel.
 2. Drivers shall hold the proper license for driving the vehicle they have been assigned. All driver's licenses must be of the appropriate classification and have any required endorsements needed for operating the vehicle(s) assigned. Classifications and endorsements are listed below:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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 vehicles being towed is in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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:
 - i. Vehicles designed to transport sixteen (16) or more passengers, including the driver; and



- ii. Vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials which are required to be placarded under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, 49 USCS Appx., Section 1801 et seq.
- g. 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.

Commercial driver's licenses may be issued with the following endorsements and restrictions:

- i. "H" authorizes the driver to drive a vehicle transporting hazardous materials;
 - ii. "K" restricts the driver to vehicles not equipped with air brakes;
 - iii. "T" authorizes driving double and triple trailers;
 - iv. "P" authorizes driving vehicles carrying passengers;
 - v. "N" authorizes driving tank vehicles;
 - vi. "X" represents a combination of hazardous materials and tank vehicle endorsements;
 - vii. "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
 - viii. "I" restricts driving which requires a commercial license to intrastate driving only.
3. Drivers must be mentally and physically capable of the safe operation of the vehicle(s) assigned.
 4. All drivers will be required on an annual basis to sign a Vehicle Use Agreement. 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. The document will be kept in Procurement and Contract Services, but a copy should be kept in the employee file.
 5. 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. Any employee whose driver's license has been revoked or suspended shall not be allowed to operate any motor vehicle on Southern Miss business while such suspension or revocation is in effect, this includes personal vehicles.
 - a. If an employee uses a personal vehicle for university business while their driver's license is revoked or suspended, the employee assumes all risk associated with the use of the vehicle.



The university's insurance will not apply to an employee operating a vehicle without a valid driver's license.

6. Departments shall not allow employees to travel, as drivers of a vehicle, who are refused use of a university owned vehicle due to an unacceptable driving record. If travel, as drivers of a vehicle, is unavoidable, such drivers may use their personal vehicles and be reimbursed at the state approved mileage rate.
7. Operators of emergency vehicles such as patrol cars, ambulances, fire trucks, etc. shall only operate the vehicles after receiving proper training and shall hold the proper license for operation of the specific vehicle, if applicable.
8. Operators of special vehicles such as motorcycles, boom trucks, dump trucks, tow trucks, etc. shall hold the proper license for operation of the specific vehicle, if applicable.
9. All van drivers shall review the IHL Van Safety Recommendations (Appendix D) and shall comply with the requirements set forth. A copy of Appendix D, signed by the driver shall be included in the driver's file.
10. Documentation of driver qualifications and driving records should be maintained by the department for each driver. Drivers must therefore agree to abide by the university's policies and procedures and to provide the necessary information or consent to allow the gathering of necessary information. Authorized driver files should contain the following:
 - a. Authorized vehicle use agreement, signed by driver and supervisor. See Appendix A.
 - b. Copy of current driver's license.
 - c. Copies of driver medical exam results as required (CDL).
 - d. Copies of drug and alcohol test records as required (CDL).
 - e. Documentation of motor vehicle record (MVR) checks.
 - f. Training/testing records.
 - g. Documentation of any other form of periodic driver performance evaluation, public feedback, citations, or accident reports.
 - h. Any other information related to the driver's ability or inability to operate a motor vehicle as related to employment.



- C. Misuse of Southern Miss owned vehicles: University owned vehicles shall be driven only by Southern Miss employees, students and other authorized individuals and used for official university business only.
1. 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. Some examples of unauthorized use are but are not limited to:
 - a. Sightseeing or trips for pleasure unless the trip is part of the official agenda for a business conference.
 - b. Transporting family members, dependants or friends to school, daycare, medical appointments, social events or other personal activities.
 - c. Conducting other personal business outside the employee's scope of employment.
 2. Operators of university owned vehicles are charged with an ethical responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional and prudent business manner. This basically means that employees 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:
 - a. Parking any state owned vehicle at a compromising establishment.
 - b. Exceeding the posted speed limit.
 - c. Failure to take proper care of the vehicle (washing, vacuuming, routine maintenance).
 - d. Using the vehicle for personal use.
 - e. Tobacco use in university owned vehicles. The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all university owned vehicles.
 3. University owned vehicles are highly visible to the public and their use is scrutinized. Thus, poor driving manners and inappropriate use reflect on all Southern Miss employees. Operators should exercise 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. The department head shall report all such instances to the Internal Auditor. The following information should be provided.
 - a. name, address and telephone number of complainant, if known;
 - b. summary of complaint;



- c. name and address of driver.
- 4. The neglect or misuse of any university owned motor vehicle shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action as well as forfeiture of ability to operate a university owned vehicle.

Section V: Maintenance and Care of University Owned Vehicles

- A. Maintenance of Southern Miss property is a vital responsibility when considering the best use of the tax and tuition dollar. All departments are urged to establish a written procedure 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 Southern Miss owned vehicles must be documented and retained for the life of the vehicle. The maintenance and upkeep of fleet vehicles is the responsibility of the Vehicle Administrator to which the vehicle is assigned. Departments are encouraged to develop a specific vehicle maintenance procedure or schedule for each class of vehicles operated. The Vice President shall enforce the procedures and schedules to ensure routine service is completed as scheduled.
- B. Vehicle Warranty Tracking: The Vehicle Administrator shall track vehicle and parts warranties to achieve maximum savings on maintenance and repairs. A good warranty tracking system can prevent the university from paying for repairs or parts that are still covered under manufacturer warranties.
- C. Vehicle Checks: The Vehicle Administrator is responsible for ensuring periodic checks of the following to ensure safe operation of university owned vehicles.
 - 1. Engine fluid levels.
 - 2. Tire pressure and wear, to include the spare tire
 - 3. Seat belts
 - 4. Interior and exterior appearance
- D. Each department shall schedule and complete the annual state inspection at a state approved maintenance facility for each vehicle assigned to their department. Annual inspection stickers are available through the Physical Plant.
- E. Periodic safety inspections should also be completed on a regular basis as needed. Safety inspections should be completed not less than once every 3000 miles. See Inspection Checklist (Appendix E) for a guide on the areas to consider during the inspection.



- F. All departments should use Physical Plant for small repairs, oil changes, oil filter changes and routine services.
- G. Emergency Equipment: Vehicles should be equipped with appropriate emergency equipment for use in the event of mechanical failure, crash, or other circumstance that results in a disable vehicle. Items may include but are not limited to: warning triangles, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, water, blankets, and other equipment depending on vehicle type and use.
- H. Vehicle modifications such as radio equipment, towing equipment, security devices, navigational devices, etc. shall only be installed by a qualified individual. The items being added or modified should not detract from the performance or safety of the vehicle. The Vehicle Administrator shall ensure that a list of all such modifications, including the date work was completed and the cost of the modification, are included in the vehicle file.
- I. Vehicle Appearance: It is the department's responsibility to ensure the vehicle represents the University appropriately.
 - 1. Vehicles should be cleaned inside and out as appropriate for the intended use of the vehicle. Passenger vehicles that drive up and down the roads of the university, city and state, obviously would need to be kept cleaner than a truck that is used on a farm in the delta. Common sense should rule. If in doubt, clean it.
 - 2. It is the department's responsibility to ensure that scrapes, dents, and other visible damage is properly repaired. Vehicles should not appear to be in disrepair.
- J. Decals: No decals, bumper stickers, commercial advertising, or political stickers of any kind may be placed on any university owned vehicle without prior approval from the appropriate Vice President.
- K. Fuel: Fuel for university owned vehicles can be purchased in two different ways: (1) the Fuelman card and (2) on campus through the Physical Plant.

It is recommended that departments use the state contract for fuel access card services for the acquisition of fuel. The program offers reduced rates on fuel as well as management reports that provide information to assist the department in better managing its fleet resources. There are a number of Fuelman locations throughout the state.

- 1. Fuelman applications are located under Purchasing on the Procurement and Contract Services website at <https://www.usm.edu/procurement-contract-services/purchasing.php>. Completed applications should be sent via email to Procurement and Contract Services, procurement@usm.edu.
- 2. Each vehicle should have an individual, unique Fuelman card assigned to it. The use of "spare" cards is prohibited.



3. Fuelman cards should always be secured inside the assigned vehicle in a locked glove box or kept in a secure, locked location in the department office.
4. Authorized drivers will be assigned a unique PIN for use with the Fuelman card(s). Individual PINs should be kept private and separate from the Fuelman card(s) to prevent unauthorized use of the Fuelman card(s).

PINs are obtained by contacting Procurement and Contract Services, procurement@usm.edu. Please include employee name and identification number when requesting a PIN.

5. Each Fuelman card will be set with the default transaction limits listed below. Higher transaction limits will be considered on a case-by-case basis if need is determined based on intended use of the vehicle.

Vehicle Type	Fuel Type	Tank Limit	Daily Gallons	Weekly Gallons	Weekly Supplies	Weekly Misc
Sedan & Small Truck	Regular Only	25	50	125	\$50	\$0
Van & Truck	Regular Only	40	80	200	\$50	\$0
Bus	Regular Only	75	150	300	\$50	\$0

6. Weekly invoices should be sent to Accounts Payable along with the original register receipts.
 7. Weekly exception reports will be sent via e-mail to department Fleet Managers. An explanation of all Fuelman exceptions must be submitted to Procurement and Contract Services within one week of receipt of notice. Failure to comply may result in the cancellation of the Fuelman card.
 8. Only regular unleaded gasoline or diesel should be used. No higher-octane gas is to be purchased unless it is determined that these fuels are not appropriate for a specific vehicle. If any fuel other than regular unleaded or diesel is used there should be documentation from a reliable third party (vehicle manufacturer, independent testing laboratory, etc) indicating the requirement and this documentation should be placed in the vehicle file.
 9. Department fleet managers are required to notify when employee is terminated so their PIN number can be cancelled.
 10. When a vehicle is disposed of, the department fleet manager is responsible for returning the Fuelman card to Procurement and Contract Services, Bond Hall 214, Box 5003.
- L. Accidents: All drivers and Vehicle Administrators should be aware of the correct steps to follow and the proper forms to complete in the case of an accident or other reportable incident.



1. How to Deal with an Automobile Accident: All inventoried vehicles owned by The University of Southern Mississippi carry liability insurance coverage. If a Southern Miss vehicle causes injury or damage to a third party, this policy may pay for damages to the third party. The steps below must be followed when an accident occurs:
 - a. Call the police and obtain an accident report.
 - b. Write down the name, driver's license number, vehicle tag number and insurance carrier for all other parties involved in the accident. This information is necessary to complete insurance claim forms and is often marked out of the accident report copies from the police department.
 - c. Immediately notify the following university employees of the accident:
 - (1) The department head responsible for the vehicle
 - (2) Southern Miss Physical Plant, Transportation Services, 601.266.4465
 - (3) Physical Plant Accounting, 601.266.4425
 - d. Do not make statements except to answer questions asked by law enforcement officials.
 - e. Send copies of the accident report to Physical Plant Accounting, Box 5058.
2. How to Deal with an Accident NOT Involving an Automobile: The university also carries liability coverage through *American Federated General Agency (AMFED)* for damages caused by weed eaters, mowers, tractors and other non-automotive equipment. The steps below must be followed when an accident occurs involving this type of equipment:
 - a. Immediately notify Human Resources, 601.266.4050, of the accident.

Section VI: Vehicle Rentals

- A. Southern Miss uses the state contract vendor for renting vehicles. The state contract vendor information, rental rates and rental procedures are outlined on the Travel website at www.usm.edu/procurement/travelvehicles.html.

Section VII: Privately Owned Vehicles

- A. Authorization: University officers and employees may be authorized to travel on university business using their private automobile. If going out of state or attending a convention, the driver should receive written approval to use a privately owned vehicle prior to beginning the trip. The departments are responsible for periodic review of use of personal vehicles and ensuring that it provides the most efficient and economic choice when compared to the use of a university owned vehicle or a rental.



- B. Insurance: 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 § 46-11-1 et. al.
- C. Expense: University employees that are authorized to travel on official state business in their private automobile will be reimbursed at the same rate, based on mileage, as federal employees as determined by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration. All other operational and maintenance expenses are the responsibility of the owner.
- D. Safety: If authorized for official use, privately owned vehicles will be operated and maintained in accordance with the safety related policies and procedures established for university owned vehicles.

Section VIII: Replacement/Disposal of University Owned Vehicles

- A. The following guidelines provide minimum replacement suggestions for routine vehicle replacement. It is the department’s responsibility to ensure that the university maximizes the value of its available resources.
 - 1. Attainment of these goals should minimize fleet capital and operating costs. In general, most vehicles should be replaced when they reach 8 years (96 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). Agencies 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 department shall make a determination that the lifetime use and mileage of the vehicle has been maximized and it would not be feasible for another Southern Miss department to use this vehicle. The following table details the specific replacement goals for different types of vehicles:

Vehicle Type	Replacement Goals	
	Age	OR Mileage
Sedans and wagons	8 years	120,000 miles
Light trucks and Sport utility vehicles (SUVs) (8,600 GVWR or below)	10 years	150,000 miles
Passenger vans	8 years	120,000 miles
Cargo vans	10 years	150,000 miles

- B. Disposition of Vehicles
 - 1. Transfer to Surplus Property: Vehicles may be transferred to Surplus Property for removal from department inventory. Complete a transfer form with approval from department head. Contact Property Accounting for further instructions on removing vehicle from department premises.



2. **Sale by Sealed Bid:** Vehicles may be sold through sealed bid upon approval from department head. Contact Procurement and Contract Services, Bond Hall 214, Box 5003, or call them at 266-4131 for further instructions. University and other State of Mississippi employees are strictly prohibited from bidding on state-owned equipment (Section 25-4-103(3) (b), Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated).
3. **Sale by Auction:** Equipment auctions are periodically conducted by Receiving & Property Control. Vehicles may be added to the auctions upon approval from department head. Information is distributed to departments several weeks prior to auction date. Sale of vehicles is allowed at consignment auctions provided conditions are met to satisfy disposition requirements. Contact Procurement and Contract Services for further instructions. University and other State of Mississippi employees are strictly prohibited from bidding on state-owned equipment (Section 25-4-103(3) (b), Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated).
4. **Cannibalization of Vehicles:** Property should not be cannibalized unless it has no reasonable prospect for sale or use as serviceable property without major repair or alterations, but is has some value in excess of its scrap value. Cannibalized property must be deleted from the university's master listing when it loses its identity. If the remainder of the property has no recovery value, it may then be discarded. Property to be deleted must be cleared through the University Salvage Committee and the Property Manager before action will be taken to remove it from the master inventory file.
5. **Missing/Stolen:** The department is required to notify local law enforcement authorities immediately upon the discovery of vehicle theft. The department should also notify Property Accounting. Once a reasonable length of time has been allowed for the investigation, complete a Property Affidavit. In the event that the vehicle is found or recovered, Property Accounting should be notified immediately so that the vehicle can be added back to inventory.
6. **Transfer to State-Funded Agency/Local Government Entity:** Vehicles can be transferred to a state-funded agency or local government entity (public school, police department, fire department, etc.) at no cost or with a negotiated price agreement with the agency/entity. Prior approval from unit head and vice president is required. Departments wishing to transfer surplus equipment to a state-funded agency should contact Property Accounting. Transfer of equipment to another state-funded agency without prior approval is strictly prohibited.



Appendix A: Vehicle Use Agreement (contact Procurement and Contract Services for an original form)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
VEHICLE USE AGREEMENT

I (print name) _____ being age 18 or older, understand and agree that my use of any vehicle owned by The University of Southern Mississippi shall be exclusively for the fulfillment of The University of Southern Mississippi business that I have been engaged for. I understand and agree that I am not to use the vehicle for any other reason what so ever. I agree to operate this vehicle in a safe, prudent and lawful manner at all times. Seat belts shall be worn by all vehicle occupants when the vehicle is in motion. I will not permit any other person to operate the vehicle while it is in my control unless such use is made part of this agreement. I will not drive this vehicle out of the State of Mississippi without prior approval from the department head responsible for the vehicle. I do truthfully state that I have a valid, non-conditional driver license and that my privilege to drive is not currently under suspension. I grant permission to the university to verify my license information and motor vehicle driving record and willingly offer the following license information:

Date of Birth _____ License No. (If SSN list last 4 digits) _____ State _____

One of the following MUST be checked:

_____ I do truthfully state that in the past three years: my license has not been suspended, I have not been convicted of any alcohol related driving violations, nor have I been convicted of any unsafe motor vehicle operations.

_____ I do truthfully state that in the past three years I have been issued the following motor vehicle violations (please list):
Type of violation: _____ Date: _____
Type of violation: _____ Date: _____
Type of violation: _____ Date: _____

I HAVE BEEN PROVIDED A COPY OF THE UNIVERSITY FLEET MANUAL AND HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. (The fleet manual is available online at www.usm.edu/procurement.)

I UNDERSTAND THAT ANY MATERIAL, FALSE STATEMENT, OR USE OF THE VEHICLE NOT PERMITTED BY THIS AGREEMENT WILL REQUIRE ME TO ASSUME THE FULL LEGAL AND FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF MY ACTIONS.

I ALSO UNDERSTAND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ME USE OF UNIVERSITY OWNED VEHICLES BASED ON THE INFORMATION I HAVE PROVIDED WHEN IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF SAFETY WHILE USING A STATE OWNED VEHICLE.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO DRIVER: DO NOT SIGN BELOW UNLESS YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS DOCUMENT.

Driver Name (Please Print): _____ EmplID: _____

Driver Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

Department: _____

Department Head Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____



Appendix C: Request for Additional Insurance

REQUEST FOR INSURANCE APPROVAL

Insurance Policy Information

Please complete the information below and submit it to Procurement and Contract Services, Bond Hall 214, Box 5003 and it will then be submitted to IHL for approval.

1. Type of Coverage (i.e. property, liability, bond, crime, etc.)
2. Policy coverages, deductibles and amount of limits
3. Name and address of insurance company
4. Insurance company's complete "Best" rating
5. Policy premium
6. Policy coverage dates
7. A statement as to why there is a need or requirement to procure the coverage
8. Description of the university asset being covered by the policy
9. Name, email address, and telephone and fax numbers of person to contact if additional information is needed
10. A specimen policy is desired on all significant policies and may at any time be required before IHL can complete the review.
11. Written assurance that the insurance company shall provide a copy of the insurance policy when issued and a Certificate of Coverage mailed to the Office of Insurance & Risk Management, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Suite 816-818, Jackson, MS 39211. The Certificate of Coverage should, at a minimum, contain the effective and expiration dates of coverage, a description of the insurance company, and the name and mailing address of the insurance agent. All liability insurance policies (i.e. professional, medical malpractice, special events, automobile, aircraft, special equipment, buses, etc.) must name the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning as an additional insured and the Mississippi Tort Claims Board as a certificate holder.



Appendix D: IHL Van Safety Recommendations

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Safety and Loss Control Van Safety Recommendations

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, 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 is usually about 50 p.s.i. while the rear is usually about 80 p.s.i. 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 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 under-steerage 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 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 of 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.



Appendix E: Driver Inspection Checklist

Sample 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 tread 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?		

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