



Policy Directory

Responsible Division: Finance and Administrative Services
Responsible Office: Facilities Management
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Transportation Policy

Policy:

Members of the Alcorn State University community engage in many activities requiring transportation to other locations. To provide this transport, the University maintains a fleet of rental vehicles. These vehicles are available to University faculty, staff and official university organizations. The University is committed to protecting both the vehicle and especially the occupants. Because of the significant hazards such transportation activities represent, the following procedures have been instituted to prevent harm to both persons and property and to provide fair and safe usage of the fleet. These policies and procedures apply to any and all vehicles owned by or used for the benefit of Alcorn State University that are licensed for travel on public roads; this includes all vehicles regardless of funding source or method of acquisition.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The general management guidelines regarding the use of motor vehicles are as follows:

- **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.)
- **FM.** FM will be responsible for obtaining titles, tags as well as ensuring that all vehicles are marked appropriately and that those vehicles owned by Alcorn State University are added to the University's fleet liability policy.

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 to work in concert with FM personnel. The vehicle administrator's name and contact information must be on file at FM, with a copy on file with Purchasing/Procurement Services.

Vehicle Administrator. This administrator will be responsible for the following functions:

- Assures vehicle(s) receives appropriate service and is maintained in a safe operating condition.
- Monitors assignments of vehicles, usage of vehicles and assures compliance with the policies regarding the fleet.
- Maintains the department Authorized Driver List and ensures each driver has a current, signed Vehicle Use Agreement.
- Maintains records as outlined in the Fleet Manual.
- Ensures the appropriate appearance of the vehicle(s).

VEHICLE USE

University 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 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. University owned vehicles shall be driven only by lay employees, students, and other authorized individuals, and used for official university business only. The vehicles cannot be used for commuting to and from work.

LIABILITY

Losses occurring to a third party during an employee's use of a vehicle for approved university business are subject to the protections provided under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act (Miss. Code Ann., Sec. 11-46-1 et al).

The Mississippi Tort Claims Act provides liability protection to the Institutions of Higher Learning and is the exclusive remedy when using a vehicle within the scope and course of one's duties. The limit of liability within Mississippi is \$500,000 per occurrence. Other laws apply when outside the state of Mississippi.

INJURED EMPLOYEES

Injured employees are covered by worker's compensation coverage which is the exclusive remedy under law.

University vehicles do not carry physical damage insurance coverage. When a vehicle is damaged in an accident, any repairs to the University vehicle will be at the expense of the department unless the damage can be shown to be the fault of someone else.

TERMS OF USES

University-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 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. The University-owned vehicles shall be driven only by licensed employees, graduate students and other authorized individuals and used for official University business only.

TRAINING

All employees who are approved to drive University vehicles are encouraged to enroll in a defensive driving course. The instructor and the course must be certified by the National Safety Council. Each employee approved to drive should enroll in an approved defensive driving course every three years. The University maintains a list of certified instructors who can be contacted through FM.

LAWS

Drivers must obey all traffic rules and regulations in the state where they are traveling. Tickets for traffic violations (speeding, failure to yield and so on) must be paid by the driver and immediately reported to FM. No radar detectors are allowed to be used in University vehicles.

DRIVER BEHAVIOR

Operations and appearance of University-owned vehicles affect the University's image. The public expects safe and courteous drivers in the vehicles provided. Unsafe or aggressive driving, such as those acts listed below, can create negative public impressions and result in bodily injury, death, or property damage:

- Speeding
- Improper passing
- Failure to yield right-of-way
- Tailgating
- Failure to adjust to road or weather conditions
- Failure to use vehicle's safety devices such as lights, wipers, turn signals, etc.
- Improper gesturing, language or use of horn or lights
- Other violations of law or improper conduct

OPERATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Operators of emergency vehicles such as patrol cars, ambulances, fire trucks, etc. shall only operate the vehicles after receiving proper, certified training specific to the vehicle they operate and shall hold the proper license for operation of the specific vehicle as applicable.

OPERATION OF SPECIAL VEHICLES

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.

OPERATION OF VANS

All van drivers shall review the IHL Van Safety Recommendations and shall comply with the requirements set forth.

The 15-passenger/cargo vans in operation will continue to be used until such time the vehicle is sold or salvaged. The following requirements apply to 15-passenger/cargo vans:

- Drivers must be 21 years or older and have a valid driver's license. A copy of the license must be on file with FM.
- The driver should obey posted speed limits but not exceed 65 miles per hour regardless of posted speed limit.
- Having luggage racks or hauling items on top of the van is prohibited.
- The 15-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 driver must not operate a van continually for more than eight hours and must take a 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.

In the event someone suspects that a driver is on drugs or has consumed alcohol, the driver should be reported to the next-level supervisor. The supervisor or department head should contact the Office of Human Resources for instructions for handling 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.

Besides the monthly maintenance check, the driver should perform a safety check of the van before leaving on a trip. The safety check includes: tire pressure, lights (head and tail), brake lights, turn signals, brakes, wiper blades, water in radiator, window operations and functional seat belts for all passengers.

OPERATION OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

ASU has motor coaches, 18-wheelers and tractor trailers. Certain commercial vehicles require additional licenses beyond the Class R (regular license):

- **Class A License.** This license is required for any single vehicle with a gross weight rating greater than 26,000 pounds provided the gross weight rating of the vehicle or vehicles being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- **Class B License.** This license is required for any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 pounds and any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds.
- **Class C License.** This license is required for any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 26,000 pounds or any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight not in excess of 10,000 pounds used to transport 16 passengers or hazardous materials.
- **Class D License.** A Class D license is required for all other vehicles or combination of vehicles which are not included in Class A, Class B or Class C.

USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES FOR UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

University officers and employees may be authorized to travel on University business using their private automobile. In these cases, drivers are typically reimbursed on a per-mile basis.

- **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 use of personal vehicle provides the most efficient and economic choice when compared to the use of a University-owned vehicle or a rental.
- **Insurance.** Owners must 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.
- **Expenses.** University employees traveling 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.

VEHICLE REQUESTS

Guidelines to be used for vehicle requests:

- Vehicles are reserved by completing the online request form on the ASU website (www.alcorn.edu). Click on the quick links drop down and select Agile Fleet Management.
- All requests must include the name(s) of the driver(s) with emergency contact information and destination.

- Departments that need a rental vehicle will be responsible for the pick-up and return of the vehicle to the rental agency. Vehicle maintenance checks, seat belt rules and other safe driving and maintenance practices will be followed with rental vehicles as if they are part of the normal University fleet.

VEHICLE USAGE COSTS

Costs involved with vehicle usage:

- Vehicle rental rates are set annually and include minimum daily charges and mileage charges. A minimum daily charge will also be assessed for renting a bus if the bus is driven less than 80 miles. An additional charge will be assessed to include fuel use unless arrangements are made to return the vehicle with a full tank. All tolls, parking and other incidental charges are the responsibility of the renting department.
- All parking, moving violations or other traffic tickets and fines are the responsibility of the driver.
- List of the fines involved with vehicle use:
 - Failure to give 24-hour cancellation notice: \$50.00
 - Early pick up or late return: Minimum daily charge
 - Failure to report an accident: \$500
 - Failure to return the fuel tank full: \$ 50.00

VEHICLE PICK UP AND DROP OFF

Procedures for vehicle pick up and drop off:

The keys and mileage forms for a reserved vehicle may be picked up from the Facilities Management Office the day of the scheduled usage between 8 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and on Friday for weekend usage. The keys and forms must be picked up between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Failure to pick up the keys and forms during these times forfeits your usage of the vehicle until the next business day, at your expense.

Because vehicles are frequently used several times on a given day, the vehicles cannot be picked up before or returned later than the time specified above. Please respect the needs of other vehicle users from the University community by being punctual in the return.

DISQUALIFICATION OF DRIVERS

Driving privileges will not be granted to, or will be revoked from, individuals who:

- Have any of the following citations on their motor vehicle record: conviction for reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident, at fault in a fatal accident, felony committed involving a motor vehicle, conviction for alcohol and/or drug-related driving offense and/or refusal to submit to a blood alcohol test.

- Have been at fault in 2 or more accidents that have been recorded on their motor vehicle record in the past 3 years.
- Have a recorded instance of driving without insurance, driving on a suspended license or having failed to appear in court.
- Falsify information on their written University driving application.
- Failure to comply with any license restrictions (e.g., corrective lenses).

TRIP AND ROUTE SAFETY POLICY

GENERAL REGULATIONS

With regard to passenger capacity, no driver shall transport more passengers in a vehicle than the vehicle is designed to carry. All passengers must have a seat belt.

With regard to seatbelt usage, all occupants of University vehicles must use seatbelt restraints as they were designed to be used at all times when the vehicle is in operation. Drivers shall not begin operation of the vehicle until all passengers have complied with the seat belt rule. Passengers must not remove their seat belts during travel. If the driver becomes aware of passengers who refuse to use the provided restraints properly, the driver may refuse that person further passage unless such refusal would endanger their safety. Exceptions for physical or medical reasons can be granted but require a physician's statement.

FLEET GROUNDING

At all times FM retains the right to ground the entire fleet or such portions of it as are deemed necessary, including rentals, in cases of inclement weather or potential maintenance safety hazards. There will be no late cancellation fee if the vehicle used is canceled due to weather.

WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING TRIPS

Drivers and departmental sponsors of student trips are responsible for obtaining weather information before and during daily travel to determine if road and weather conditions present hazards along their planned travel route. If University vehicles are already on the road and weather conditions become hazardous, the sponsor must stop, delay or cancel travel planned for that day to ensure the safety of all passengers and drivers.

DRIVING TIME LIMITS

No trip segment shall exceed 12 hours. After 12 hours, the driver(s) must stop for a minimum 7-hour break.

INSPECTIONS/INVESTIGATIONS

The guidelines for inspections and investigations are as follows:

- **Pre-Trip Inspections.** Before renting the vehicle, FM personnel must walk around the vehicle to check for tire condition, fluid leaks, and body damage that could interfere with safe operations of the vehicle.
- **Post-Trip Inspections.** When exiting the vehicle at the end of a trip, the driver must report inspect the vehicle by checking for fluid leaks, tire condition and body damage. Unusual noises, awkward operation or other problems should be reported to FM as soon as possible.
- **Accidents and Reporting Policy.** Any event that results in damage to vehicles, damage to property or personal injury must be reported to Campus Police immediately.
- **Accident Investigations.** Campus Police will investigate all accidents. All accidents will be designated as either “preventable” or “non-preventable” by the actions of the vehicle driver.