

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

**SECTION: Fiscal Affairs**

**NUMBER: 03.E.08**

**AREA: Physical Property**

**SUBJECT: Student Travel**

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1. PURPOSE

This document outlines the policy to minimize risks of liability connected with travel by students of component universities within the UH System. This policy applies to travel in excess of 25 miles that is undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled in a component university that is organized and sponsored by the component university and that is either

- (1) Travel funded by the institution and using vehicles owned or leased by the institution or
- (2) Travel required by a student organization registered at the institution.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 2.1. Organized student travel may require use of various modes of transportation. Each form of transportation requires students to follow common and mode-specific safety precautions. In addition to applicable international, federal and/or state laws and using sound judgment when traveling, students must follow the safety provisions applicable to the specific mode of travel involved and travel conditions.
- 2.2. When using vehicles owned or leased by any of the universities or their employees for student travel, such travel must be in compliance with [SAM 01.C.13](#). [SAM 01.C.13](#) articulates the System policy for the use of vehicles owned, leased or rented by component universities by establishing standards for granting driving privileges, insurance coverage, and reporting requirements when there are accidents and/or losses.
- 2.3. The universities require updated Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) evaluation on anyone authorized to operate a vehicle owned or leased by a component university. MVR evaluations shall be requested for employees and students who operate a vehicle owned or leased by the universities. Each department head will notify the component Risk Management Department when MVR evaluations should be obtained for new drivers. MVRs can be obtained by the universities or may be requested from the System Risk Management Department, using the request form available on the System Risk Management Web site (<http://www.uh.edu/af/riskmanagement/>). The MVR evaluation lasts for one year after the university Risk Management area approves it, and must be renewed

annually. No employee, potential employee, student, or volunteer is allowed to operate a university owned or leased vehicle until the authorization has been approved.

- 2.4. Departments, units and student organizations sponsoring organized travel outside the United States are responsible for assuring compliance with the provisions of any universities policy regarding group travel outside the United States.
- 2.5. Universities must make this policy available to the public by publishing it in the institution's catalog. Universities should consider making available to the public all related policies concerning student travel and should consider other methods of providing public access, such as making student travel-related policies available on web sites.

### 3. DOCUMENTATION

Universities should establish a system of record keeping for student travel in excess of 25 miles to universities sponsored and organized events where the student travel is organized, arranged, or coordinated by a universities' department, employee or registered student organization sponsor. For such trips, student travelers should complete an official universities waiver and release form, verifying that they understand and accept the risks involved in participating in the travel activity and assume responsibility for their behavior. Records should include the identity of travelers, dates of travel, mode of travel, destination, purpose of trip and completed waivers.

### 4. COMMERCIAL TRAVEL

Students traveling by commercial transportation, whether domestic or international, must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

### 5. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES BY EMPLOYEES

- 5.1. System employees occasionally use personal vehicles while transporting students to or from events organized and sponsored by universities. Because personal automobile insurance will be looked to first in the event of an accident, all persons who use their vehicles while conducting university business should be made aware of the possibility of personal liability related to such use.
- 5.2. System employees may be reimbursed for mileage at the official state rate when a personal vehicle is used for universities business whether local or outside the universities' area in accordance with [SAM 01.C.13](#).
- 5.3. No individual shall be required to use his or her vehicle for transporting students to events organized and sponsored by universities.

6. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES BY STUDENTS

Students driving privately-owned vehicles for organized student travel (as defined in the Purpose) within the U. S. must have a valid Texas or other state driver license and possess personal automobile insurance coverage as mandated by the state of Texas, and their vehicles must have a current state inspection and registration. Students driving privately-owned vehicles for organized student travel taking place outside the U.S. must have all appropriate licenses, certificates and insurance as required by the country in which travel occurs.

7. HIGH PROFILE VEHICLES

- A. High profile vehicles are vehicles with a high center of gravity, including pick-up trucks, vans and sport utility vehicles. They are a particular safety concern because they are more susceptible to rollover accidents than most vehicles.
- B. All drivers of high profile vehicles must successfully complete the safety course for vehicles available at the universities' safety's web site before driving a high profile vehicle that will transport students. The safety course for high profile vehicles is required for both student and employee drivers of high profile vehicles and whether they are driving a university-owned, leased, or rented vehicle or a personal vehicle that will transport students for any university-related trip or university-sponsored activity. Thereafter, the vehicle safety course must be completed annually by drivers of high profile vehicles who will continue to transport students.
- C. 15-passenger vans are of particular concern as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has been publishing advisories regarding these vans. There have also been a number of multiple fatality accidents attributed to the use of these vans. Therefore, the purchase or use of 15-passenger vans for universities' business is prohibited.

8. SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR DRIVERS AND OCCUPANTS

- 8.1. Drivers and occupants engaged in student travel must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling.

Drivers must:

- Have a valid driver license;
- Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits;
- Not drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or transport or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons; and

- Ensure that the vehicle in which the group or individual is traveling has appropriate insurance as mandated by the state of Texas, as well as a current state inspection and registration.

Drivers and occupants must:

- Wear seat belts at all times; the number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts;
- Ensure the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity is not exceeded; and
- Avoid horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.

8.2. Drivers engaged in student travel are encouraged to follow safe driving and traveling practices, including the following:

- Begin the trip well rested;
- Notify a designated contact person upon departure and arrival;
- Avoid driving when conditions are hazardous (this includes but is not limited to fog, heavy rain, snow or ice conditions). Be prepared to stop the trip and check into a motel when fatigue or travel conditions warrant;
- Plan routes in advance, and carpool and caravan when possible;
- Divide the trip into segments, stopping for rest as necessary;
- Carry at least one cellular telephone or other two-way communication device in each vehicle for emergency purposes;
- Establish a reasonable departure and arrival time to and from the activity or event;
- Avoid driving between midnight and six a.m.;
- Have at least one other approved universities' driver in the vehicle. It is recommended that drivers rotate every two hours. A passenger or second driver should ride in the front passenger seat and remain awake at all times to help the driver maintain alertness;
- Carry a flashlight and approved fire extinguisher; and
- Avoid taking medication prior to driving that may impede the ability to operate a motor vehicle. Drivers must consult with their physicians concerning the administration of medication and related restrictions.

9. TRAINING

Universities are encouraged to make available driver safety training for staff and other individuals who act as drivers for student travelers.

10. REIMBURSEMENT OF STUDENT TRAVEL EXPENSES

Each universities is responsible for developing policies and procedures for addressing the reimbursement of student travel expenses.

11. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance  
 Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Review: Every two years on or before March 1

12. APPROVAL

Approved: Richard Walker  
 Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

Jim McShan  
 Interim Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator  
 Chancellor

Date: April 8, 2016

**REVISION LOG**

Revision Number	Approval Date	Description of Changes
Interim	01/08/2002	Initial edition written to comply with Senate Bill 263, which requires that the governing board institute policy regarding the safety issues of student travel by 01/01/2002

Revision Number	Approval Date	Description of Changes
1	01/14/2003	Applied revised SAM template to meet current documentation standards. SAM 03.E.08 replaces the Interim document of the same name and has been revised to address the safety provisions required by Senate Bill 263
2	09/29/2011	Applied revised SAM template and added new Revision Log. SAM 03.E.08 was submitted for its scheduled review by the Risk Management Department and the Dean of Students' Office. Changed reference from SAM 03.E.06 to SAM 01.C.13 throughout text. Removed reference to MAPP 04.02.04 in Section 2.3. Changed responsible party from AVC for Plant Operations to AVC for Finance; included AVC for Student Development. Changed review period from every two years on or before August 1 <sup>st</sup> to every two years on or before March 1 <sup>st</sup> . Added VC for Student Affairs to approval cycle. Removed Section 12, Index terms
3	04/08/2016	Changed title of SAM to "Student Travel." Revised Section I to define component university student travel criteria, and use "Universities" in place of "component university." Added Section 2.3 on motor vehicle record evaluations required for anyone authorized to operate a vehicle owned or leased by a component university, and indicated that the MVR evaluation lasts for one year after the university Risk Management department approves it. Added Section 7.0 on High Profile Vehicles. Updated the title of AVP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students