

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

SECTION: Fiscal Affairs

NUMBER: 03.E.08

AREA: Physical Property

SUBJECT: Travel by Students to Component University Funded Activity

1. PURPOSE

This document outlines the policy to minimize risks of liability connected with travel by students of component universities. 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 travel funded by the institution and using vehicles owned or leased by the institution or 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 the component university or their employees for student travel, such travel must be in compliance with SAM 03.E.06. This SAM 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. Departments, units and student organizations sponsoring organized travel outside the United States are responsible for assuring compliance with the provisions of any component university policy regarding group travel outside the United States (See e.g., UH MAPP 04.02.04).
- 2.4. Component universities must make this policy available to the public by publishing it in the institution's catalogue. Component universities should consider making available to the public related policies concerning student travel and should consider other methods of providing public access, such as making student travel related policies available on websites.

3. DOCUMENTATION

3.1. Component universities should establish a system of record keeping for student travel in excess of 25 miles to component university sponsored and organized events where the student travel is organized, arranged, or coordinated by a component university department, employee or registered student organization sponsor. For such trips, student travelers should complete an official component university 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 a component university. 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 component university business whether local or outside the component university area in accordance with SAM 03.E.06.

5.3. No individual shall be required to use his or her vehicle for transporting students to events organized and sponsored by a component university.

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. SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR DRIVERS AND OCCUPANTS

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

Drivers must:

- a. Have a valid driver license;
- b. Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits;
- c. 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
- d. 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:

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

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

- a. Begin the trip well rested;
- b. Notify a designated contact person upon departure and arrival;
- c. 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;
- d. Plan routes in advance, and carpool and caravan when possible;
- e. Divide the trip into segments, stopping for rest as necessary;

- f. Carry at least one cellular telephone or other two-way communication device in each vehicle for emergency purposes;
- g. Establish a reasonable departure and arrival time to and from the activity or event;
- h. Avoid driving between midnight and six a.m.;
- i. Have at least one other approved component university 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;
- j. Carry a flashlight and approved fire extinguisher; and
- k. Avoid taking medication prior to driving that may impede your ability to operate a motor vehicle. Consult with your physician concerning the administration of medication and related restrictions.

8. TRAINING

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

9. REIMBURSEMENT OF STUDENT TRAVEL EXPENSES

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

10. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Review: Every two years on or before August 1

11. APPROVAL

Approved: John M. Rudley
Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Arthur K. Smith
Chancellor

Date: January 14, 2003

12. INDEXING TERMS

Accident Reporting
Motor Vehicle Records
Student Travel
University owned Vehicle
Vehicle Insurance Coverage