

Motor Vehicle Transportation and Operation Policy

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SECTION I. PURPOSE

This policy establishes standards and processes for becoming a University-certified driver and provides expectations and information about the use of motor vehicles in connection with University Activities.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all University-owned, leased or rented motor vehicles, and to the use of personal motor vehicles for University Activities. It applies to all St. Thomas employees (faculty, staff and student workers), students, students clubs and organizations, and volunteers.

In addition to this policy, individuals must comply with any additional or more stringent motor vehicle transportation requirements put in place by their respective St. Thomas program or department.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

- a. **“Covered Persons”** means the individuals to whom this policy applies, as stated in Section II.
- b. **“Motor Vehicle”** or “vehicle” means a ground-based motorized vehicle, including cars, vans, and utility vehicles. It does not include e-bikes or e-scooters.
- c. **“University Activities”** means events, activities, or programs hosted, authorized, or sponsored by the University that Covered Persons attend as representatives of St. Thomas or as part of an organized course, event, club, or program. Examples include but are not limited to University-sponsored trips (including class field trips), St. Thomas sporting events, and conferences St. Thomas employees attend as part of their job duties. It shall not be interpreted to apply to Covered Persons who attend a University Activity merely as a spectator and not as part of an organized University course, event, club or program.
- d. **“University-owned vehicle”** means motor vehicles owned or leased on a long-term basis by the University.
- e. **“University-rented vehicle”** means motor vehicles Covered Persons rent on a short-term basis for driving to or from University Activities, the cost of which is reimbursable under the University’s Purchasing and Payables policy.

SECTION IV. WHEN DRIVER CERTIFICATION IS REQUIRED

Covered Persons are required to be certified to drive by St. Thomas when:

- Driving a University-owned vehicle;
- Towing a University-owned or leased trailer with a motor vehicle, regardless of whether the towing vehicle is a personal vehicle or University-owned or rented;
- Driving St. Thomas students to or from University Activities, regardless of whether the vehicle is a personal vehicle or University-owned or rented. This includes situations where St. Thomas students are driving other students to or from University Activities (e.g., students carpooling to participate in a University Activity); or
- Operating a motor vehicle is part of a St. Thomas employee's job description, regardless of whether the vehicle is a personal vehicle or University-owned or rented.

The University reserves the right to require certification on a case-by-case basis in unique situations not specified above and will inform relevant persons as necessary.

SECTION V. REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS FOR OBTAINING DRIVER CERTIFICATION

Covered Persons who need to be certified are responsible for obtaining and keeping an up-to-date certification on file with the University's Transportation and Parking Services department ("Transportation and Parking Services").

A. Prerequisites to Certification

A Covered Person applying for certification must:

- Be a University employee, student, or volunteer;
- Be at least 18 years old (exceptions may be made for 17-year-old student workers whose job description requires operating a motor vehicle); and
- Possess a valid United States or Canada driver's license.

B. Certification Procedure

Human Resources will perform the initial certification for persons whose job description includes operating a motor vehicle. In all other cases, persons who need to be certified (or re-certified) must complete the [driver certification form](#) and submit it to Transportation and Parking Services for evaluation.

C. Evaluation of Driving Record and Accident History for Certification

Certification will generally involve review of a person's driving record and accident history and will be based on criteria adopted by the University. The criteria, which may change from time to time in St. Thomas's discretion, will be available upon request to persons seeking certification and may be included in the driver certification form.

D. Obligation to Renew Certification

Certification is valid for 24 months. Certified drivers are responsible for tracking the timing of their certification and timely renewing their certification consistent with this policy. Certification may be renewed by submitting a completed [driver certification form](#) to Transportation and Parking Services.

E. Re-Checks

Transportation and Parking Services may re-evaluate a driver's certification as part of a randomly performed audit or based on newly discovered information giving it a reasonable basis to conclude a Covered Person's driving record no longer meets criteria for certification. After a re-check, Transportation and Parking Services may revoke certification based on criteria then in effect.

F. University Retains Discretion

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Policy, the University reserves the right to deny or revoke certification for any non-discriminatory reason.

SECTION VI. DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY AND SAFETY

Covered Persons driving University-owned or rented vehicles, or driving personal vehicles for University Activities, must:

- Comply with all traffic and safety laws and regulations, the safety guidelines attached to this policy, and any guidelines reviewed as part of the certification process;
- Be covered by an automobile insurance policy in the coverage amounts required by state law; and
- Pay or dispute any parking or traffic fines as permitted by law. St. Thomas is not responsible for such fines.

SECTION VII. REPORTING ACCIDENTS

All motor vehicle accidents involving the transport of students to or from University Activities, or that involve a University-owned or rented vehicle, must be reported to Public Safety. Accidents involving injury or major damage must be reported immediately; all others should be reported as soon as possible. Law enforcement should also be contacted when University-owned or rented vehicles are involved in accidents on public roads.

SECTION VIII. DRIVING PERSONAL VEHICLES

A. Liability, Insurance, and Expenses

The University generally will not be responsible for personal or property damage arising from a Covered Person's use of a personal vehicle to participate in University Activities. St. Thomas does not provide insurance coverage for personal vehicle use, even if the use is University-related. Individuals who use a personal vehicle for University Activities must maintain, at their own expense, personal automobile insurance in the coverage amounts required by state law.

B. Reimbursement

The [Purchasing and Payables Policy](#) governs how and when Covered Persons are reimbursed when driving personal vehicles for University Activities. Each department is responsible for the costs of such reimbursements.

C. Driving Students

Whenever possible, St. Thomas employees should avoid transporting students in their personal vehicles.

SECTION IX. REQUESTING AND USING UNIVERSITY-OWNED OR RENTED VEHICLES

Covered Persons should be good stewards when driving University-owned or rented vehicles and only use such vehicles for legitimate, University-authorized activities.

A. University-owned Vehicles

1. Requesting Use

University-owned vehicles are assigned by the department or program that primarily uses them. The appropriate department or program must be contacted when use is requested. In addition, Transportation and Parking Services manages a small number of vehicles for use by the St. Thomas community. These vehicles can be requested using the “Request for Services” app under the “Public Safety & Parking Services” category.

2. Maintenance and Repairs

The department with primary use of a University-owned vehicle is responsible for notifying the Grounds Department about any vehicle maintenance or repair needs. The Grounds Department will then arrange for necessary maintenance or repair and charge back to the relevant department.

B. University-rented Vehicles

1. Requesting Use

Covered Persons interested in renting a vehicle for University Activities should consult the [Purchasing and Payables policy](#) and use a preferred University vendor. Only persons 21 or older can drive University-rented vehicles.

2. Prohibited Rentals

Covered Persons are not permitted to rent 15-passenger size vans for University Activities. The maximum size vehicle rental is a 12-passenger size van. For clarity, this means 15-passenger size vans that have had seats removed to accommodate only 12 passengers are prohibited. The number of passengers permitted in any vehicle may not exceed the number of seat belts.

3. Insurance

For domestic rentals, Covered Persons **should not** accept additional insurance offered by the rental company. For international rentals, Covered Persons **must** accept the additional insurance offered by the rental company.

Appendix A to Motor Vehicle Transportation and Operation Policy

Safety Guidelines

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All persons driving University-owned or rented vehicles, or driving personal vehicles for University Activities:

MUST

- Comply with all traffic and safety laws and regulations.
- Comply with the University's Motor Vehicle Transportation and Operation policy.
- Drive safely and free from distraction.
- Not unlawfully use or view a cellphone (or other mobile device) while driving.
- Wear a seatbelt and ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.
- Be covered by an automobile insurance policy in coverage amounts required by state law.
- Not operate a vehicle while drowsy or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medicines that impair their ability to drive.

In addition, drivers are encouraged to follow the below guidelines:

- Employees are strongly encouraged not to drive students in their personal vehicles.
- Drive defensively, anticipating what other drivers might do.
- Before operation, visually inspect the vehicle to ensure it's free from obvious defects, like flat tires.
- Take a break from driving when tired. During long trips, take breaks every four hours. Never drive more than 10 hours during a 24-hour period.
- Whenever possible, avoid towing trailers and other items, using roof top carriers, and driving after midnight or in hazardous conditions.