

Questions & Answers about our vehicle safety program

Q: What are the components of our vehicle safety program?

A: Modified 15 passenger van program:

1. Good driver requirement – drivers license record review
2. Classroom instruction
3. Hands-on instruction for new & in-experienced drivers
4. Limit to 11 passengers
5. Driver responsibilities – (all passengers wear seat belts, no cell phone or eating while driving, etc)
6. Routine vehicle maintenance

Vehicle program:

1. Good driver requirement – drivers license record review
2. Routine vehicle maintenance
All drivers (staff, faculty, students, visitors, guests) must be approved to use a fleet vehicle, rent a vehicle, or use their personal vehicle (reimbursed) for University business. This consists of a driver's license record check.

Q: How do I get approved?

A: Request a drivers license form from SU Police: (x1657), just sign the form and return it to SU Police via campus mail. That's all. Drivers who have violations exceeding the good driver guidelines will not be approved. You will only hear from SU Police if there is a problem with your driving record to ensure confidentiality.

Q: Isn't this an invasion of my right to privacy?

A: We understand some individuals are concerned about this issue. We are taking specific steps to ensure your confidentiality. Your drivers license record is a public record and we are taking reasonable steps to help prevent an accident, reduce our risk of liability and personal injury to staff, faculty and students. SU does have a legal right to review and approve all of our drivers. We are taking a proactive approach in an effort to restrict at-risk drivers from injuring our students/staff. When we weigh the value / benefit of providing for the safety of the campus community vs. a small percentage of employee's who feel their right to privacy is being infringed upon, we really must choose to do the right thing and protect our community from an at-risk driver.

In addition, most rental car agencies now perform a driver's license record check when you rent a vehicle. They have a similar good driver point system and deny at-risk drivers! Most people are not even aware that their license record was checked (it takes 20 seconds on-line while you're in-line and is public information).

Q: If I only travel (drive a vehicle for University business) to a foreign country do I still need to be approved ?

A: Yes, the same requirements apply. In addition, according to our risk management group, it is strongly recommended that you purchase the additional rental vehicle insurance for liability and collision if you are in a foreign country!

Q: Can my spouse drive a University vehicle or rental vehicle on University business?

A: Yes, however, they must also get approved by our driver's license record review just like an employee. On long trips you can then share the driving, reduce driver fatigue and improve safety.

Q: Why did Southwestern University implement a drivers license review process? Doesn't the State of Texas handle this and remove unsafe drivers from the road?

A: The State of Texas doesn't necessarily remove unsafe or at-risk drivers from the road. Insurance companies (underwriters) commonly practice risk reduction by dropping coverage or increasing premiums on "at-risk drivers". Our employees are acting as agents for Southwestern University when traveling on business. If an accident occurred, Southwestern University (not the State of Texas) could incur significant liability as well as being responsible for the claims. We are implementing a "best practice" program to improve safety and reduce our liability.

Q: Are other Universities and organizations implementing similar fleet safety programs?

A: Yes. Many universities have developed and implemented comprehensive fleet safety programs. As of 2002, more than 70% of our EIIA colleges/universities have implemented a similar program. Both our risk management group and insurance provider have strongly encouraged member institutions to implement an effective and comprehensive fleet safety program. Many states have adopted a "should have known" standard regarding drivers previous violations and at-risk driving behaviors. We want to do something to prevent accidents from ever occurring by being proactive, not looking back after it's too late and being reactive.

Our fleet safety program shows that Southwestern University is taking reasonable and proactive steps to help prevent accidents, protect the safety of students, staff and faculty.

Please drive safely and responsibly. You can make a difference.