Procedure Statement

Texas A&M University-Commerce is supportive of student activities both on and off campus but also recognizes that the safety of its students is of the utmost importance.

Reason for Procedure

This procedure applies to students who travel outside the city limits of Commerce, Texas, using a university owned or operated vehicle to an activity or event, which is organized, funded, and sponsored by A&M-Commerce. Students traveling on behalf of A&M-Commerce must obtain approval through the sponsoring department.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1 TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS AND PLANNING

Departments responsible for arranging the trip must take steps to assure all travel is in compliance with the student travel procedure. A travel itinerary and passenger list shall be filed with the University Police Department and the sponsoring department prior to the start of the trip. Large groups who wish to travel in the same vehicle may be required to obtain a commercial carrier. A carrier must be in compliance with Texas Department of Transportation rules and regulations.

2 SAFETY ISSUES RELATED TO STUDENT TRAVEL IN UNIVERSITY, PERSONAL OR RENTAL VEHICLES

Drivers must be recommended by the department head/director of the division/department that is arranging the trip and meet the following requirements:

2.1 Any student who may be required to drive a university vehicle, their own vehicle or a rental, shall have a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check and shall be assigned a driver rating. With an acceptable rating, an applicant’s name & driver’s license number shall be added to the approved driver’s list. The Fleet Management office obtains the MVR and maintains the list of approved drivers. Fleet Management personnel shall provide the
names of the approved drivers to the Motor Pool Coordinator. Persons who drive passenger vans must be 21 years of age, have attended a van safety orientation, and performed successfully on a test drive every three years. The test drive shall be with an orientation supervisor in a 15-passenger van. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to safely operate the van. The supervisor may reject the applicant if he/she cannot demonstrate safe operation of the vehicle. The applicant must acknowledge (with signature) that he/she was informed of the extreme differences in driving a 15-passenger van as compared to a four-passenger vehicle.

3 PROCEDURES FOR CAMPS

3.1 Transportation to and from camp is the responsibility of each individual camper, and personal vehicles are not covered by A&M-Commerce’s vehicle insurance.

3.2 Field trips related to the content of the camp reinforce the concepts taught during the camp, and during these field trips, campers are required to utilize the transportation provided by A&M-Commerce to and from any off-campus field trips. In the unlikely event of an emergency, the Camp Sponsor will contact the University Police Department and emergency services, if necessary. Any expenses incurred for medical transportation and/or treatment of the camper are the responsibility of each individual camper.

4 OPERATOR CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 All drivers will comply with all applicable traffic laws and regulations.

4.2 Before departure the driver must make certain the passengers are aware of the posted load limits, passenger seat belt requirements, and smoking restrictions.

4.3 The Trip Manifest and Itinerary will be delivered to the University Police Department immediately prior to the group’s departure and signed immediately upon the return to campus.

4.4 The driver shall confront rowdy or disorderly behavior by the passengers that may cause driver distractions.

4.5 Smoking or driving while under the influence of impairing drugs or alcohol is prohibited.

4.6 Use of radar/laser detection devices is prohibited.

4.7 Use of headphones, cell phones or earphones is prohibited when driving.

4.8 The number of occupants in a vehicle shall not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle or the posted Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). Travel bags and other storage items are not permitted on the tops of passenger vans.

4.9 The number of occupants in a 15-passenger van Shall Not Exceed 10 Occupants as recommended in the U.S. Department of Transportation Consumer Advisory (dated April 9, 2001).
4.10 The maximum number of consecutive hours that a driver may drive is four. The driver must stop the vehicle immediately if, at any time during the four-hour driving period, the driver becomes fatigued.

4.11 Travel outside the continental USA must conform to Section III-C of the Transportation Department Procedures Manual.

5 IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

5.1 Follow the procedures in the Transportation Department Procedures Manual (Section III-B) in the glove compartment of each vehicle.

5.2 For additional information, operators should refer to The Texas A&M University System General Use Guidelines pertaining to use of TAMUS vehicles.

6 Departments may have their own specific procedures for student travel in addition to the above requirements. These procedures should be easily accessible to all students and should be coordinated through the appropriate departments.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy 13.04 Student Travel

University Rule 13.04.99.R1 Student Travel Rule

University Rule 24.02.02.R1 Van Safety Rule

Contact Office

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