

Vehicle Use Policy & Procedures

Revised 9/30/08

I. General

The following Vehicle Use Policy & Procedures provide directives regulating the use of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (hereafter University or New Mexico Tech) vehicles, as may be required to meet University needs and requirements, and all applicable laws. University vehicles are defined as any vehicle owned by New Mexico Tech which is used to transport people and/or cargo. University vehicles can include, but are not limited to, passenger vehicles, vans, trucks, semi-trucks, heavy equipment and golf carts used for University business.

Personal use of University vehicles is prohibited. Transportation between the University and the employee's residence is normally prohibited, even if the employee is required to return to the campus to perform his or her job outside of regular business hours. If an employee needs a vehicle to attend an out-of-town meeting, the employee can take the vehicle home to facilitate an early departure; however, again, personal use is prohibited.

II. Authorized Drivers and Passengers

Vehicles are provided for University business, and are to be driven **only** by University employees, students or agents of the University in the performance of their duties. All drivers must have the appropriate, current class license to operate a motor vehicle. They also must show proof of having successfully completed a National Safety Council Certified Defensive Driving Course prior to operating any state vehicle or privately owned vehicle used for official state business.

- **Training.** New Mexico Tech offers the National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course (DDC) which is updated and approved by New Mexico Risk Management. New Mexico Tech maintains a fleet of multi-passenger vans which require drivers to receive training on safety and restrictions for the use when transporting passengers and equipment. Multi-passenger vehicles with over 15 passengers require that drivers possess a Commercial Drivers License with special endorsement. DDC training will be made available for drivers at ISD, Multi-passenger vehicle training or equivalent will be available at NMT, and Commercial Drivers License will be obtained thru the State Motor Vehicle Department.

Passengers are limited to University employees, students participating in authorized trips, and invited guests engaged in University-related activities. Providing transportation to hitchhikers is prohibited. Passengers are also strictly prohibited from riding in the back of a truck.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the use or occupancy of a University vehicle when rendering emergency aid or assistance to any person, or the use or occupancy by private sector mechanics or repair personnel in the course of performing required maintenance or repairs.

III. Vehicle Use

University vehicles are to be used exclusively for official University business. Vehicles cannot be used for personal use, i.e., running personal errands, dropping off or picking up children from school, or visiting commercial establishments (such as banks, restaurants, grocery stores) while not on official University business. Personal use of University vehicles is strictly prohibited.

Exceptions are those vehicles issued to personnel who are on emergency call on a 24-hour/7-day a week basis. These vehicles may be utilized for *de minimus* use; i.e., incidental stops of a personal nature when

traveling to and from work. In addition, long-term field research or out-of-town business might require authorized personnel to purchase supplies and/or fuel, or engage in other *de minimus* use, while traveling in a University vehicle.

Field research is often conducted in rural areas with limited commercial resources. It is not uncommon for the only dining establishment within miles to also serve alcoholic beverages. Drivers are urged to use common sense when parking a University vehicle near an establishment that might be misconstrued by the public as a violation of this policy.

Some vehicles are issued to individuals as a condition of their employment with the University. Users must be aware that any applicable IRS guidelines apply, and that a semi-annual report (at FYE 6/30/xx and CYE 12/31/xx) is to be submitted to the University Business Office and Payroll Department with appropriate documentation providing a breakdown denoting business and personal mileage.

- A. Identification.** New Mexico state regulations require that all state vehicles be marked with certain identifying information on the front doors of all vehicles. The NMT Property Office is responsible for applying the standard NMT decal, or logo, to all University vehicles. All University vehicles must bear the standard logo. Any other proposed decal must be approved by the Property Office and the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Anyone, regardless of job title or position, who removes a decal from a University vehicle can be subject to an official reprimand and other disciplinary action as deemed necessary.
- B. License plate.** All University vehicles will have the proper Government plates issued to government agencies, as required by law.
- C. Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Travel in University Vehicles.** The department/division director must approve in advance all out of state and out of country travel in University vehicles. The authorized driver must ensure that the vehicle contains proper insurance and registration documents for out of country travel. Personnel intending to take a vehicle out of the country must contact and inform the Property Office, which will provide the authorized driver with the proper documentation (copies of the vehicle registration and certificate of insurance).
- D. Vehicle rental.** Vehicles are reserved from the Facilities Management department on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations should be made two to three weeks in advance by notifying the Facilities Management Front Desk staff at 505-835-5533. In addition, the University maintains a small fleet of 11-passenger vans which requires drivers to receive specialized training. The course is offered weekly through the University's Information Services Department, or ISD (505-835-5700).

IV. Responsibility and Maintenance

Departments/divisions may purchase vehicles with funds from contracts, grants, etc., subject to State, University and contract/grant restrictions. The department by which a vehicle is used is responsible for the maintenance and safe operation of the vehicle. An authorized driver must immediately take steps to report any mechanical or operating problem that occurs while a University vehicle is in operation. An authorized driver must not continue to operate a University vehicle if such operation could endanger any person or property, nor should anyone be ordered to operate an unsafe vehicle.

Each department/division shall ensure that current copies of the following documents are kept in the glove compartment of all University vehicles in its custody:

- A. Fuel Credit Cards.** Detailed instructions and procedures for use of the fuel credit card, a list of authorized purchases, and a current list of statewide-authorized vendors. (Please see Business Office policies for fuel card policy and procedures.)
- B. Vehicle Maintenance.** Manufacturer's specifications or other authorized specifications.
- C. Emergency repairs.** Instructions and procedures for emergency repairs of mechanical breakdowns during and after normal business hours.
- D. Lube & Oil Shop.** The Lube & Oil Shop Mechanic maintains a single-employee operation under the oversight of the Facilities Management Associate Director of Engineering. The Mechanic provides the Associate Director with reports based on mirrored files that reflect the service history of every tax-supported vehicle on the New Mexico Tech campus.

The Mechanic notifies the respective department/divisions of fleet vehicles scheduled for regular lube maintenance: Every three months or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first.

The Mechanic maintains a supply of oil filters for the variety of vehicles serviced by the shop, and schedules service activities based on the vehicle's maintenance record and frequency of use.

The Mechanic conducts vehicular safety inspections to ensure vehicle is "sound" for regular use; if not, vehicle is referred to the Garage.

V. Traffic Laws and Operator Conduct

- A.** Authorized drivers shall obey all applicable traffic laws while operating a University vehicle.
- B.** Authorized drivers must exercise appropriate caution and prudence while operating a University vehicle.
- C.** Authorized drivers shall not engage in discourteous behavior or inappropriate conduct while operating a University vehicle.
- D.** Authorized drivers shall not use University vehicles for inappropriate or illegal activities.
- E.** Cellular phone use is strongly discouraged while driving a University vehicle. Drivers should pull off the road and park before making or answering a call.
- F.** Authorized drivers shall operate University vehicles at, or below, posted speed limits.
- G.** An authorized driver who receives a traffic citation or parking ticket while using a University vehicle shall be personally responsible for the citation or ticket.
- H.** All drivers and passengers in University vehicles must wear a seat belt.

VI. Insurance and Accident Reporting

All University vehicles are state-owned and as such are insured for liability, comprehensive and collision, under the State Risk Management Pool. All comprehensive and collision coverage is subject to a \$1000 deductible. Payment of the deductible is the responsibility of the department assigned the vehicle or to the appropriate service center in the event the vehicle's operating costs are normally charged thru this recovery mechanism.

In the event of an accident, Campus Police shall be notified immediately (505-835-5435). The responding officer(s) then can contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to coordinate emergency services, if necessary. Any accident report needs to be completed on-site and turned in to Campus Police within 48 hours. The completed accident reports then shall be forwarded to the NMT Department of Human Resources at 505-835-5206 to file the proper documents for insurance.

Loss of personal property is not covered by Risk Management and is the personal responsibility of the individual, who should have his or her own insurance.

VII. Prohibitions

- A. No person shall operate a University vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating alcohol, controlled substances, or illegal drugs.
- B. No person shall transport intoxicating alcohol of any type, whether in open or unopened containers, while operating or occupying a University vehicle.
- C. No person shall operate a University vehicle when he or she is so impaired by a legal drug that he or she is rendered incapable of operating a motor vehicle in a safe and responsible manner.
- D. No person shall smoke or use smokeless tobacco products of any type in any University vehicle.
- E. No person shall possess a firearm while operating a motor vehicle unless he or she is a certified law enforcement officer on duty, or has been authorized by the appropriate Cabinet official.
- F. No pets allowed at any time in University vehicles. Department/division directors may authorize canine patrols or transportation of other animals upon written request.
- G. The use of radar detectors in state vehicles is prohibited.

VIII. Violations and Penalties

- A. An employee or student who receives a traffic citation for driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs is subject to the revocation or suspension of his or her University driving privileges.
- B. Failure to obey any applicable traffic laws while driving or occupying a University vehicle may result in suspension or revocation of their University driving privileges.
- C. A University employee or student may be assessed for the loss or damage of a University vehicle if the loss or damage was caused while driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or reckless driving.
- D. Any employee or student violating the regulations contained in this policy may be subject to an official reprimand and other disciplinary action as deemed necessary and appropriate by the jurisdictional department/division of the University based on University personnel policies. Said employee or student will be given an opportunity to explain his or her actions and any extenuating circumstances prior to the administration of disciplinary action.

IX. Administration of Procedures

The procedures contained in this policy will be administered by a council comprised of the President, the New Mexico Tech Vice Presidents, and the Division directors. Additional Departmental procedures may be applicable. The President shall have the right to waive any of the policies or procedures contained in this document.