

Virginia Commonwealth University Vehicle Accident Prevention and Safety Program

1. Introduction

The Virginia Commonwealth University Vehicle Accident Prevention and Safety Program is established to emphasize the importance of safe driving, to encourage a sense of responsibility among all employees in the operation of state-owned vehicles and to create an awareness of the need to **drive defensively at all times**.

The safety of VCU students, faculty, staff and the public being of central concern to the University, the policies and requirements outlined in the University's Vehicle Accident Prevention and Safety Program are intended to support and promote the safe, prudent operation of motor vehicles.

2. Department Heads and Deans are responsible for:

- A. Keeping the vehicles assigned to or owned by their departments in safe operating condition at all times.
- B. Scheduling the necessary maintenance in accordance with [VCU Physical Plant Shop](#) rules and/or motor vehicle laws of Virginia.
- C. Maintaining a department record of miles driven and maintenance for each vehicle and **reporting annual mileage to the VCU Office of Risk Management by no later than August 1 of each year**. This information is necessary for a required annual report to the Department of State Police (See Section 8).
- D. Ensuring auto accident information packets are kept in each vehicle. (These packets are available from the VCU Office of Risk Management, 700 W. Grace Street, Suite 3200, phone 828-7531 or fax 828-8510.)
- E. Ensuring that their drivers meet the criteria for operating a University vehicle.
- F. Ensuring that their drivers know and understand the requirements and responsibilities contained in this manual.
- G. Reviewing DMV records annually to insure compliance with paragraph 3C below.
- H. Ensuring that all persons who operate a University vehicle meet the following qualifications:
 1. The driver must be 18 years of age (19 if a student) and have a driver's license recognized as valid by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The driver's license must be of the proper class for the type of vehicle being driven.
 2. The driver must not have any medical condition that precludes the safe operation of a motor vehicle.
 3. The driver shall not have had two or more moving violations in the past twelve months, any suspension of driver's license in the past three years, or any conviction for driving under the influence in the past five years.

4. Before being allowed to drive, students must be 19 years of age and present a valid driver's license (see paragraph 1 above) to an appropriate supervising employee of the University. A copy of the student driver's license must be kept on file by the department operating the vehicle.
- I. Establishing procedures to insure all accidents involving University vehicles are promptly reported to VCU Office of Risk Management.

3. University Drivers are responsible for:

- A. Remaining familiar with the proper care and operation of the vehicle they are driving.
- B. Obeying all traffic laws.
- C. Complying with the rules set forth in this document. Failure to do so may result in suspension of the privilege to drive a University vehicle and/or other disciplinary action.

4. Safe Driving Regulations

A. Use of University Owned and Leased Vehicles

1. University vehicles will be used only for matters relating to University business and University sponsored events.
2. No person, other than VCU employees and students, will be transported in a University vehicle unless the person is being transported in connection with University business, law enforcement matters, for medical purposes, or as authorized by a Department Head or Dean.
3. When equipment, supplies, etc., are being transported, the driver will assure all items are properly secured to prevent shifting or falling from the vehicle.
4. To the extent possible, only employees of VCU should drive University vehicles. In certain situations approved by Department Heads or Deans, such as athletic team travel, students may be allowed to drive.
5. No person will be allowed to ride on or in any vehicle non-passenger compartment including running boards, fenders, hoods, tailgates, or in the open beds of trucks.
6. All occupants of University owned vehicles are required to wear seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion. (This does not apply to vehicles not required by state law, such as Head Start's school buses, to be equipped with seatbelts.)
7. Wireless or cellular telephones should not be used while the vehicle is in motion.
8. No person will operate or allow to be operated any University vehicle by a person who is under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, narcotic drug, hallucinogen, or any substance that may impair the ability of the driver to safely operate the vehicle.
9. A driver whose vehicle is towing a trailer, dolly or other equipment will assure that the trailer hitch is securely latched and that safety chains and other safety equipment are properly attached and operable.

10. Any vehicle having a load which extends beyond the rear bumper of the vehicle will have the end of the load marked with a red flag or other warning in accordance with state motor vehicle laws.
11. No driver will operate a vehicle when it is so loaded that the driver's view is obstructed or the load interferes with the driver's control of the vehicle.
12. Before a driver leaves a vehicle unattended, the driver must shut off the engine, remove the keys, set the emergency brake, and lock the vehicle.
13. Drivers of emergency vehicles may exercise those privileges granted to them under University Policies and Procedures and by the laws of Virginia. This provision does not relieve the driver of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.
14. Whenever work requirements make it necessary for a University vehicle to block or obstruct traffic, the driver will place warning signs and/or traffic cones to warn motorists of the obstruction.
15. All drivers of University vehicles will, at all times, obey local and State traffic laws.
16. When possible, drivers will position their vehicles so as to avoid the necessity of backing up. When backing up is necessary, the driver will check the rear clearance of the vehicle from other vehicles or objects before moving.
17. Any defects or damage noted by the driver that would affect the safe operation of the vehicle will be reported to the driver's supervisor. It is the supervisor's responsibility to arrange for such defects or damage to be corrected.

5. Drivers of VCU vehicles involved in accidents must:

- A. Render all possible aid to anyone injured and send for an ambulance, if needed.
- B. While the vehicle is at the accident scene, notify the Virginia State Police (911) or, if the accident occurs on campus, the VCU Police (804-828-1234). Also notify your supervisor.
- C. Obtain the following information:
 1. The names, addresses, phone numbers, vehicle license numbers and insurance information of all persons and vehicles involved, including this information from any witnesses.
 2. The names, phone numbers and addresses of anyone injured or claiming to be injured.
 3. Notify our insurance claims adjusters by calling their 24-hour toll free number 1-866-219-6120 or fax 1-804-673-9425.
 4. **Do not comment on fault or make any statement to anyone except a VCU employee, a representative of the State Division of Risk Management, a law enforcement officer or a representative of VCU's claims adjusters (Crawford and Company).**
 5. Each University vehicle should carry an insurance information packet in the vehicle. The packet will contain a "statement of accident" form that the driver must complete and forward to

VCU Risk Management at P.O. Box 843040, 700 W. Grace St., Suite 3200, or Fax to 804-828-8510 within 24 hours.

- D. If an accident involving a State vehicle occurs outside the Commonwealth of Virginia:
1. The driver must report the accident to the State Police, Highway Patrol, or local police department having jurisdiction.
 2. The driver of the State vehicle must obtain information from the investigating officer about how to obtain a copy of the police accident report and the names, addresses, phone numbers and insurance information of the other drivers/vehicles involved.
 3. This information is to be provided to the driver's supervisor immediately upon return.
 4. The driver is responsible for obtaining copies of the police accident report and forwarding the report to the Virginia Department of State Police. Also send a copy to the VCU Office of Risk Management, PO Box 843040, 700 W. Grace St., Suite 3200, Richmond, VA. 23284 or Fax to 804-828-8510.
- E. The failure to make a report of a vehicle accident as required by the VCU Accident Prevention and Safety Program and the laws of the Commonwealth will be handled in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia Standards of Conduct and Performance.

6. VCU Accident Review Committee

- A. The VCU Accident Review Committee shall be comprised of at least five VCU employees and shall meet quarterly in order to review each accident involving a University owned vehicle. The Review Committee will consider all relevant information including information provided by the claim adjusting organization, the VCU driver, others involved in the accident, witnesses to the accident, and information contained in any police reports in determining its decision. After reviewing all of the material, the Review Committee will evaluate the accident as Preventable, Not Preventable, or Incident based on the following criteria established by Section 52-4 of the Code of Virginia and Department of State Police Memo – 2000 – No. 6:
1. The accident will be considered a Preventable accident when the driver of the University owned vehicle is found to have been guilty of contributory negligence.
 2. The accident shall be considered Not Preventable when it has been determined that the driver of the University owned vehicle did not contribute to the accident.
 3. Those cases resulting from natural forces, from acts by other than human, from a deliberate act, from a non-perceivable object, or while the vehicle is properly parked, shall be classified as an Incident and not considered as accidents in the safety program.
- B. After an accident is evaluated and classified by the Review Committee, it will be reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Business Services and Treasurer and then forwarded with any possible disciplinary action recommendation to the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration. The SVPFA will review and if he agrees with the recommendation, will forward the report to the appropriate Department Head or Dean. The Department Head or Dean will then advise the employee of the findings and of any other action that might be taken against the employee.

C. Possible Disciplinary Actions:

1. Any appropriate action under the Commonwealth of Virginia Standards of Conduct and Performance.
2. Attendance of a remedial driver/accident prevention training class.
3. Suspension of privilege to operate a State-owned vehicle based upon conditions reported by the State Police or other police department, the VCU Police, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the State Uniform Accident Prevention Review Committee (in the case of pool vehicles), or the University Accident Review Committee.

If a question as to the classification of an accident is in dispute between the driver and the University, the matter may be referred to the Department of State Police. The State Police will review the facts of the case and will provide a report of its findings and recommendations to the University. Appropriate action to comply with the recommendations of the State Police will be taken by the University.

7. Reporting Requirements to the Department of State Police

- A. At the end of each fiscal year, the VCU Office of Risk Management will forward a report on the operation of University owned vehicles to the Department of State Police. This report must be received by State Police prior to September 1 of each year. The report will reflect the following information:
 1. Number of miles agency-owned vehicles traveled during the fiscal year.
 2. Total number of accidents involving agency-owned vehicles.
 3. A breakdown of the accidents into the three classifications:
 - (a) Preventable
 - (b) Not Preventable
 - (c) Incident
- B. From this report, the University's accident frequency will be calculated based upon the number of preventable accidents per 100,000 miles driven.