



# **Motor Vehicle Policy & Fleet Management Guide**

**Effective: July 1, 2022**

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**MISSISSIPPI DELTA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## Foreword

This guide contains the basic elements concerning the safe and legal use of vehicles operated by Mississippi Delta Community College, whether they are College-owned, rented, or privately owned. The following elements are reflective of various state and federal laws and regulations, insurance industry standards, and safety standards. The following practices are designed to apply to motor vehicles that are licensed to operate on public roadways and the drivers of such vehicles, in compliance with MDCC Policy 4.1 X.

## General

**Statement of Purpose:** These policies and/or procedures exist to promote the safe, legal, and responsible use of College vehicles owned or operated for the benefit of Mississippi Delta Community College. The protection of life, property, and the good stewardship of public resources is at stake.

**Application:** These practices apply to any and all vehicles used for the benefit of the College that are licensed for travel on public roads.

**Enforcement/Consequences:** College employees and student drivers are warned that failure to follow this policy will be addressed immediately and will subject the person violating this policy to disciplinary action, including possible immediate dismissal from the College.

## Management

**General:** The College administration has fully endorsed this overall vehicle operations and fleet management policy / program, recognizing that first and foremost is the safety of employees, students, and the public. The benefits of this vehicle policy include wise stewardship of public resources, a good public image, conservation of budget, and responsibility to citizens. With consideration given to how vehicles are allotted, assigned, or managed, all levels of the College administration (faculty and staff) should be familiar with this master policy and fleet management program and are to be held accountable for the program's development, management, and implementation.

All College vehicles belong to the College as a whole and are considered a single College fleet of vehicles. While most vehicles are managed as individual vehicles or as departmental vehicles, they are still part of the College's fleet and will be treated as such under this policy. Having a College vehicle to operate is a **privilege**, not a right.

**Safe and Courteous Operation:** College-owned vehicles affect MDCC's image and so does the operation of those vehicles. The public expects safe and courteous drivers in the vehicles provided. Unsafe or aggressive driving, such as those acts listed below, can create negative public impressions and result in bodily injury, death, or property damage:

1. Failure to adjust to road or weather conditions
2. Failure to use vehicle's safety devices such as lights, wipers, turn signals, etc.
3. Failure to yield right-of-way
4. Improper gesturing, language, or use of horn or lights
5. Improper passing
6. Speeding
7. Tailgating
8. Other violations of law or improper conduct

## **Risk Management**

**Liability Coverage:** Mississippi Delta Community College carries auto liability coverage only on all vehicles that are licensed for street and highway travel. Current Insurance Cards, as proof of insurance, must be placed and kept in every College vehicle.

The MS Tort Claims Act provides liability protection for the driver and the College, and is the exclusive remedy under the law while the automobile is being used within the scope and course of one's duties for the College. Within Mississippi, the limit is \$500,000 per occurrence. When out of state, other state laws apply. **There is NO liability protection coverage in force when a College vehicle is operated unlawfully or for other than official College business.**

**Accidents and Accident Reporting:** Immediately report an accident involving a College-owned or rented vehicle to law enforcement, the department lead, Human Resources, and the Director of Facilities Management. Copies of the reporting form will be sent to the College's insurance company, MDCC loss prevention office and to the College attorney's office. Post-accident drug testing is required by the College's [drug and alcohol testing policy](#). Always obtain the name, driver's license number, tag number, and insurance carrier from the other person involved in an accident. **Do not make statements except to answer questions asked by law enforcement officials.**

**Injured Employee:** For injuries sustained in a work related automobile accident, Workers' Compensation coverage will serve as the exclusive remedy to employees injured in a vehicle collision while engaged in the course and scope of one's duties for the College. Your supervisor will need to contact Human Resources immediately to report the injury and to initiate the claim process.

**Injured Passenger (non-employee):** Nonemployee(s), including students not serving in an employment capacity, injured in an accident while traveling in a College vehicle currently have \$1,000 of medical coverage per person with a \$25,000 annual aggregate. For this reason, non-employees should be discouraged from traveling in College vehicles.

Any and all injuries sustained from a MDCC vehicle accident shall be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor, the department lead, and to Human Resources.

## **Vehicle Use Policy**

**College-owned Vehicle Official Use Policy:** College-owned motor vehicles are authorized for use in the performance of all travel or tasks necessary to accomplish official College business that is within the rated design capability of the vehicle. Use is not authorized for unofficial travel or tasks, the transport of unauthorized persons or items, or the performance of tasks outside the rated capacity of the vehicle. College-owned vehicles should only be driven by approved, authorized drivers and only used for official College business. Some examples of **unauthorized use include but are not limited to:**

- (1) Conducting other personal business outside the employee's scope of employment. Only authorized passengers are permitted to accompany authorized drivers in College vehicles. Non-authorized individuals such as spouses and children should not be passengers in a College vehicle unless they are involved in the conduct of business, which is in the scope of employment of the authorized employee operating the College-owned vehicle.
- (2) Sightseeing or trips for pleasure unless the trip is part of the official agenda for a business conference.
- (3) Transporting family members, dependents, students or friends to school, daycare, medical appointments, social events or other personal activities.

**Operating a College-owned Vehicle:** College employees and other authorized individuals with a valid driver's license may drive a College-owned vehicle when used for official College business only. All College departments that operate College-owned vehicles are required to have all drivers read and sign the Vehicle Use Agreement (see pages 16-17 of this document). The agreement contains a provision signifying that the driver has been given a copy of the fleet policies and procedures and that he/she understands and agrees to them. The Vehicle Use Agreement also contains space for the driver's license number and it informs the driver of his/her obligation to reveal changes in the status of that license. Departments shall forward a signed copy of this form to the Office of Facilities Management. This agreement should be read and signed by each driver on a periodic basis after the initial signing.

College employees and approved individuals who have an acceptable driving record may operate a College-owned vehicle. All drivers who use College vehicles may have their driving records checked annually by the Campus Police. Whenever a driver of a College vehicle has his/her driver's license revoked, restricted, or suspended, the driver is required to immediately notify his/her supervisor. Failure to provide a timely notification may result in immediate disciplinary action to the driver and any College personnel having knowledge of the suspension or revocation. Disciplinary action may include the loss of driving privileges of a College vehicle, suspension from work, and possible termination.

**At no time can an employee operate a College-owned vehicle to conduct College business with a suspended license.**

Departments shall avoid allowing employees to travel on College business using a College-owned vehicle due to an unacceptable driving record. If travel is unavoidable, such drivers may use their personal vehicles and be reimbursed at the state-approved mileage reimbursement rate.

**Drivers:** Employees and authorized drivers, including students (part time or full time) must be at least 18 years old to operate vehicles owned or rented by Mississippi Delta Community College.

Personal vehicles are also included in this section when used in an official capacity because employees with a valid driver's license are covered under workers compensation and tort liability while on the job. If an unauthorized person (does not have a valid driver's license) elects to drive anyway, the Office of Business Services will not reimburse gasoline or mileage or for a rental vehicle. If traveling in a personal vehicle under these circumstances, the driver is assuming all risk associated with the trip.

The MDCC insurance policy requires drivers to have a valid driver's license to be covered by the policy. Drivers must obey all traffic rules and regulations in the state where they are traveling. Tickets for traffic violation (speeding, failure to yield, and so on) will be paid by the driver of the vehicle and should be immediately reported to Business Services. Such traffic fines are not reimbursable from College funds to the individual and are considered personal expenses.

It is illegal for a driver to operate a College-owned or rented vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Smoking and smokeless tobacco are not permitted in College vehicles.

Due to the pedestrian traffic and vehicle congestion on campus, eating or drinking while driving on campus is prohibited. Making or receiving cellular telephone calls along with sending or viewing text messages while driving is strictly prohibited regardless of where the vehicle is being operated.

**Misuse of College-owned Vehicles:** College-owned vehicles are highly visible to the public and their use is scrutinized. Poor driving manners and inappropriate use reflect on all College employees. Operators must exercise the highest degree of prudence and courtesy. If misuse has occurred, it is the responsibility of the employee to **immediately** bring the misuse issue to the attention of the department lead and or the Director of Facilities Management. The director shall investigate all alleged misuse complaints received.

**Donated Vehicles:** This policy applies to vehicles donated to College departments. The College will not accept donations of 15 passenger vans. Vehicles given to College departments must follow all policy requirements of a vehicle purchased with funds controlled by the College.

**Personal Use:** Using College-owned or rented vehicles to conduct personal business is strictly prohibited by Mississippi Code 25-1-79. Drivers are prohibited from taking a College vehicle to their residence unless previously approved by the College President. Only in extreme circumstances should this be approved because of the perception that a College vehicle is being misused for private purposes.

**Privately Owned Vehicles:** College officers and employees may be authorized to travel on

College business using their private automobile. In these cases, drivers are typically reimbursed on a per-mile basis.

Owners should have current proof of insurance in accordance with state law. Losses occurring to a third party while conducting official business with prior approval are subject to protections provided by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act. Having an approved travel authorization on file will confirm prior travel authorization for College business. College employees that are authorized to travel on official College business in their private automobile will be reimbursed at the same rate as federal employees, based on mileage determined by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration. All other operational and maintenance expenses are the responsibility of the owner.

**The College will not reimburse for gasoline used in a personal vehicle regardless of the circumstances. College credit cards cannot be used to pay for fuel in a private vehicle. Only actual mileage may be reimbursed.**

If authorized for official use, privately owned vehicles will be operated and maintained in accordance with the policies and procedures established for College-owned vehicles. For those drivers utilizing their personal vehicles on College business, the following requirements apply:

- Must have a valid driver's license and meet the same motor vehicle record (MVR) and accident criteria as drivers of College vehicles.
- Automobile liability coverage must be maintained by the driver as prescribed by state law. The College shall be provided with evidence of this insurance coverage, which clearly lists policy declarations and coverage limits, when requested.
- In case of an accident and subsequent claim, all losses and claims are subject to the protections and limitations provided by the Mississippi Tort Claims Act, 11-46-1 et. seq.
- The vehicle must be maintained at owner's expense, in accordance with state law.
- Drivers must comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.
- Motor vehicle records may be checked initially, and periodically thereafter. The driver's authorization to operate their personal vehicle for College business may be revoked by management if the motor vehicle record discloses any of the following:
  - The motor vehicle driver's license is revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or denied
  - Operating outside the limitations of a restricted license
  - Driver refuses to undergo drug or alcohol testing in accordance with College policies or as required by applicable state or jurisdiction laws
  - A conviction for driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
  - Regular occasional drivers (those being reimbursed more than six times per year for business use) may be required to attend driver safety training and meetings.
- The College reserves the right to withdraw this privilege at any time.

**Vans (15-Passenger):** The College discourages the purchase of 15-passenger vans because of safety concerns for drivers and passengers. Rental of 15-passenger vans will be prohibited unless special permission is granted by the Office of Business Services.

If a department desires to order a 15-passenger van, the Office of Business Services will need a statement from the department lead stating that he/she has read and will adopt the recommendations included in the **Mississippi Delta Community College Safety and Loss Control**

**Van Safety Recommendations** which is located at the end of this policy.

Fifteen-passenger vans are not to be used for trips more than 350 miles one way. A bus or several smaller vehicles should be used for trips greater than 350 miles. Some exceptions will be made for special circumstances. In 15-passenger vans manufactured before 2009, the back seat is to be removed. Luggage, boxes or equipment inside the van must not be stacked higher than the back of passenger seats.

The driver must not operate a van continually for more than eight (8) hours and must take a thirty (30) minute break every four hours. Trailers or other vehicles must not be towed with a van. In 15-passenger vans manufactured prior to 2009, a maximum of 10 passengers, including the driver, is permitted with the number decreasing by one for every 170 lbs. of cargo. The exception is for vans operated on campus where the maximum passengers can be 15 including the driver.

**Tobacco Use in College-owned Vehicles:** The use of tobacco products is prohibited in all College-owned vehicles.

**Animals:** Animals are not allowed in College vehicles unless they are transported in the conduct of College business or are required by a passenger's disability. The College shall be provided with evidence of the documented disability when requested.

**Non- Official Decals:** No decals, bumper stickers, commercial advertising, or political stickers of any kind may be placed on any College-owned vehicle. Only official marking as required by law may be placed on a College vehicle.

**Firearms:** Firearms are prohibited in College-owned vehicles unless they are required for the performance of the official job duties.

**Seat Belts:** Drivers operating College-owned vehicles are required by law to wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is being used for College business, in or out of the state. Front seat passengers also have this same requirement. College policy requires all passengers in a College vehicle to wear seatbelts at all times when the vehicle is being operated, especially on campus.

**Personal Property:** Personal property in College-owned vehicles is not insured for loss or damage by the State. Coverage for these items may be provided by the employee's personal insurance. Drivers are encouraged to discuss such issues with their own insurance representative and should consider the addition of a "rider" on their own policy.

**Vehicle Assignments:** College-owned vehicles may not be used in a commuting capacity solely by virtue of an employee's job title or position.

**Policy Violations:** College employees and student drivers are warned that failure to follow this policy will be addressed immediately and will subject the person violating this policy to disciplinary action, including possible immediate termination of employment.

**Commentary:** College-owned vehicle operators are charged with an ethical responsibility to conduct



themselves in a professional and prudent business manner. An employee should not engage in any activity that would violate the obligation of trust given with the privilege of operating a College-owned vehicle. Inappropriate activities or misuse include but are not limited to:

- Excessive speeding.
- Failure to take proper care of the vehicle (washing, vacuuming, routine maintenance, etc.).
- Parking any College-owned vehicle at a compromising establishment for non-business activities.
- Using the vehicle for personal use outside of the employee's scope of employment.

## **Rental of Vehicles**

The College will allow use of rental cars when there is a demonstrated cost saving over other modes of transportation and use of the rental car is not strictly for the traveler's convenience. If an employee uses a rental car instead of a private vehicle for travel to their destination, state guidelines require documentation of the total rental expense compared to the total mileage expense for using a private vehicle. Reimbursement of the lesser expense shall be claimed on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher. Please remember that an intermediate size vehicle is normally the largest rental that will be reimbursed. Naturally, there will be occasions for which a larger vehicle is required. A waiver request form should be submitted for approval to the Office of Business Services prior to making any reservations.

Employees are prohibited from misrepresenting a rental arrangement with a state authorized rental car agency (i.e., Enterprise) for personal travel. The rented vehicle must be for official College business to request the state rate. Employees are prohibited from renting a vehicle and later filing a travel voucher that shows using a personal vehicle in order to receive a higher reimbursement rate.

Vehicles may be rented for College business in certain circumstances, such as:

- Out of town travel
- Replacement vehicle for one that is being repaired
- Special events
- Transportation of guests
- Unexpected shortage of transportation resources

While operating a rental vehicle on College business, all requirements of the vehicle safety program applies. This includes the following:

- Drivers must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Must have a valid driver's license, and meet the same motor vehicle record (MVR) and accident criteria as all other drivers of College vehicles.
- Only authorized drivers may operate the vehicle.

**Vehicle Rental Insurance:** Current state contract rental agreements for both in-state and out-of-state rentals include free Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) insurance. CDW/LDW covers damage to the rental car, and MDCC's existing auto insurance covers third party damage/injuries at the fault of the college-authorized driver. The option to purchase insurance should always be declined when a vehicle is rented utilizing the state contract. Employees

will not be reimbursed for insurance purchases when a vehicle is rented utilizing the state contract. College employees must always be covered by insurance either provided by the contract or by purchase, should the employee utilize a vendor that is not on state contract. However, without proper justification, the employee may not be reimbursed for vehicle rentals if the vendor is not on state contract.

**Rental of Buses:** The College has discontinued operating a bus service. Departments must make arrangements for renting a bus or buses and submit all needed paperwork to procurement for payment.

## **Vehicle Records**

**Vehicle Tags:** College vehicles will receive a “no charge” permanent state-issued tag that will remain with the vehicle throughout its useful life as a College vehicle. Procurement Services will order the tag and will affix it to the vehicle after verification that the vehicle is of the correct color and is properly marked with the required identification stickers / markings.

**Marking of College-owned Vehicles:** All vehicles, owned or leased by Mississippi Delta Community College, shall have a permanent decal or be painted on both sides of the vehicle in letters at least three (3) inches in height and on the rear in letters not less than one-half (1 ½) inches in height, stating the name of the institution. Decals must be 12 inches wide and must be securely attached to both sides of the vehicle. The marking must be in a color which is in contrast with the color of the vehicle. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to vehicles exempted as set forth in Section 25-1-87 of the MS Code.

**Vehicle Colors:** The standard color of College vehicles is Oxford White. New vehicles ordered from state contract through Business Services should conform to this paint color whenever possible.

## **Maintenance**

**Maintenance and Care of Vehicles:** Maintenance of College property is a vital responsibility when considering the best use of tax dollars. The Transportation Department shall establish a written policy which shall describe the planned maintenance program for its fleet. This policy shall include mechanisms to assure proper, timely preventive maintenance (oil changes, lubrication, etc.) as well as mechanisms to track costs to allow management to make proper decisions concerning the continued operation of the vehicle. At a minimum, the manufacturer’s recommended maintenance schedule should follow for each vehicle.

All maintenance and repairs performed on College-owned vehicles must be documented and retained for the life of the vehicle. All maintenance and repair information and costs should be entered into the **Monthly Vehicle Summary Report**. The maintenance and upkeep of fleet vehicles is the responsibility of the department head and department to which the vehicle is assigned. The department head shall enforce the policies and schedules to ensure routine service is completed as scheduled.

**Vehicle Appearance and Operation:** The Department of Facilities Management has the authority to park (impound) a College vehicle with mechanical problems if operating the vehicle could result in a hazard to other vehicles or pedestrians. The vehicle will remain impounded until such deficiencies are corrected. Each department should develop a checklist to be updated monthly to make sure the vehicle is in an acceptable condition to drive. An example of a checklist is included in this policy. Vehicles should be inspected monthly to ensure that the exterior appearance is kept at the highest standard. This is in reference to dents, paint damage, a vehicle in need of washing, and so on.

College vehicles should be road worthy, carry proof of insurance and emergency phone numbers. The College's fleet mechanic must approve the condition of a vehicle.

**Monthly Vehicle Checks:** The Department of Facilities Management is responsible for monthly checks of the following:

- Air filter
- Automatic transmission fluid level
- Battery
- Belts/hoses
- Brakes
- Coolant
- Engine oil
- Inspection sticker
- Lights
- Seat belts
- Steering
- Tires
- Transmission
- Windshield wipers/fluid

The department head or other supervisor should monitor and sign off on this process.

**Routine Washing:** It is the department's responsibility to ensure fleet vehicles represent Mississippi Delta Community College appropriately. Vehicles should be cleaned inside and out as appropriate for the intended use of the vehicle. Passenger vehicles that are not used off road would need to be kept cleaner than a truck that is used off road on a daily basis. Common sense should rule. If in doubt, clean it. It is recommended that all passenger vehicles be cleaned inside and out at least once monthly.

**Annual Safety Inspection:** The Department of Facilities Management shall schedule an annual inspection for each fleet vehicle.

**Fuel Purchases:** All local gasoline purchases shall be obtained through the Fuelman Service. Each vehicle shall be issued a unique fuel access card for that specific vehicle. Employees that are assigned vehicles shall be issued a personal identification number that is to be kept separate from the fuel key in the vehicle. When using this key, always enter in the **correct employee identification number and correct mileage**. If a fuel access key is stolen or lost, notify the Department of

Facilities Management immediately. A replacement key will be issued if needed.

**Under no circumstances, can a College department use a College-authorized fuel card (Fuelman) or fuel access key to place fuel into a personal vehicle. There are no exceptions. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination.**

## **Classes of License and Endorsements**

1. **Class R** – Regular License. No person shall drive or operate a motor vehicle other than a motorcycle upon the highways of the State of Mississippi without first securing an operator's license to drive on the highways of the state. A motorcycle endorsement may be issued to any person who holds a valid Mississippi driver's license and meets the other requirements for such endorsement contained in this chapter. A restricted motorcycle operator's license may be issued to any applicant who fulfills all the requirements necessary to obtain a Mississippi operator's license that may be applicable to the operation of a motorcycle. Such license shall entitle the holder thereof to operate a motorcycle, and no other motor vehicle, upon the highways of this state.
2. **Class A.** Any combination of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or more, provided the gross vehicle weight rating of the vehicle or vehicle being towed is in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds.
3. **Class B.** Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or more, and any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds;
4. **Class C.** Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of less than twenty-six thousand one (26,001) pounds or any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating not in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds comprising:
  - a. Vehicles designed to transport sixteen (16) or more passengers, including the driver; and
  - b. Vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials which are required to be placarded under the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act.
5. **Class D.** All other vehicles or combination of vehicles which are not included in Class A, Class B, or Class C and for which a commercial license is required to be issued as provided by Section 63-1-43, Mississippi Code of 1972.
6. Commercial driver's licenses may be issued with the following endorsements and restrictions:
  - a. "H" authorizes the driver to drive a vehicle transporting hazardous materials;
  - b. "K" restricts the driver to vehicles not equipped with air brakes;
  - c. "T" authorizes driving double and triple trailers;
  - d. "P" authorizes driving vehicles carrying passengers;

- e. "N" authorizes driving tank vehicles;
- f. "X" represents a combination of hazardous materials and tank vehicle endorsements;
- g. "S" restricts the driver to school buses being operated for the purpose of transporting pupils to and from school or to school related functions and/or to all other vehicles not requiring a commercial driver's license; and
- h. "I" restricts driving which requires a commercial license to intrastate driving only to disposal.

## Monthly Vehicle Inspection Checklist

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Inspected by (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

List Problems:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Brakes (Pedal Pressure)         |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Both Tail Lights                |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Windshield Wipers               |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Windshield Defroster            |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Horn                            |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Mirrors (Adjust before driving) |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Turn Signals                    |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Backup Lights                   |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Headlights (High & Low Beam)    |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Brake Lights                    |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Lights                   |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Seat Belts (Front & Back)       |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Tires                           |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Tread                           |
- ☐ Inflation   ☐ Spare   ☐ Fluid Levels   ☐ Gasoline   ☐ Power Brakes   ☐ Windshield Washer   ☐ Oil  
☐ Coolant   ☐ Power Steering   ☐ Transmission

## Driver's Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

The following checklist is designed for drivers with little mechanical knowledge or background. Elements included enhance safety and prevent breakdown. This inspection should only take a few minutes for a typical automobile. Completion will increase the likelihood of a successful trip. Unsatisfactory elements should be corrected prior to operation of vehicle.

Vehicle Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### ELEMENT: ( ) SATISFACTORY ( ) UNSATISFACTORY (OR COMMENT)

1. Brakes – do service brakes and parking brake operate? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Lights – check headlights, high beams, blinkers, tail lights, brake lights, back-up light, parking lights and side markers. Are all working? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Tires – check pressure against p.s.i. noted on tire. Check treads depth (at least 1/8 inch). Check for defects such as unusual wear pattern, bubbles or deformed sidewalls. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Belts – are they quiet with engine running? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Glass – no broken windows, no cracks that interfere with driver's vision. Clean. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Mirrors – are side and rearview mirrors intact? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Windshield wipers – do they operate and remove washer fluid when tested? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Windshield washer – is reservoir full, does it pump when operated? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Engine oil – check dipstick. Any leaks? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Coolant – is fluid to mark on reservoir? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Transmission – check dipstick. Any problems shifting? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Steering – does steering react when steering wheel is turned? Any noise? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Occupant restraints – are all seatbelts and airbags present? Do seatbelts operate properly? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. License Plate – is a license plate mounted and easily seen? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Emergency equipment – is there a jack, lug wrench, flashlight, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Keys – do keys operate ignition and all locks? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note any irregularities when returning a vehicle after a trip to report needed repairs.*

## Trip Request

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License No: \_\_\_\_\_ Issuing State: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Trip Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle No: \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Tag No: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this report, I acknowledge that I have:

1. A valid Driver's License
2. Not had my driver's license suspended or revoked within the past three years
3. Passed the Safe Driving Course on (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ for 15-passenger vans I also give my permission to the College Police Department to conduct a background check and give the results to my department chair/head.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Vehicle Use Agreement**

Operating a College vehicle is a privilege. All drivers will be responsible and accountable to:

- Possess a valid motor vehicle driver's license. This license must have the appropriate classification and any required endorsements needed for operating the vehicle(s) assigned to the operator.
- Be subject to a driver's motor vehicle record check, and if such records show a suspension or revocation of driving privileges, the driver will not be authorized to operate a motor vehicle for MDCC.
- Operate College vehicles for official College business only.
- Operate motor vehicles in a safe manner at all times.
- Comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.
- Maintain vehicle in a safe operating condition.
- Maintain vehicle in accordance with the maintenance schedule.
- Report moving violations to their Supervisor.
- Report changes in their driver's licensing to Human Resources or Facilities Management.
- Accurately complete a condition survey when turning in a College-owned vehicle.
- Accurately record and report vehicle mileage in accordance with College procedures.
- Participate in required driver safety education and training programs.
- Require all occupants to use seat belts, child safety seats, booster seats, or other restraint devices at all times.
- Pay all moving/parking violation fines and fees.
- Keep automobile ID cards in the vehicle glove box at all times, including proof of liability coverage.
- Refrain from towing any personal equipment (boats, campers, etc.) with a College-owned vehicle.
- Not alter vehicles leased, owned, or rented by the College in any way.
- Never deactivate air bags on any vehicles leased/owned by MDCC, rented vehicles or personal vehicles used for College business.
- Never operate a computer while the vehicle is moving.
- Pull off the road to a safe location prior to making or receiving phone calls.
- Comply with College policy on transport of passengers.

Operating privileges shall be revoked if:

- Driver does not adhere to responsibilities listed above.
- The driver's license is revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or denied.
- Driver refuses to undergo drug or alcohol testing in accordance with College policies or as required by applicable state or jurisdiction laws.
- The Driver at any time leaves the state of Mississippi without a Board approved Out of State travel voucher
- Operating outside the limitations of a restricted license.

In case of vehicle damage:

- Report any vehicle damage to the College by the end of the day in which the incident occurred.
- Police reports, witness statements or other pertinent documents should be obtained and forwarded to the Director of Facilities Management at MDCC.
- The driver shall cooperate with representatives of MDCC, including insurance company personnel, and obtain written repair estimates from reputable shops or authorized dealerships as instructed. If it becomes necessary to rent another vehicle during repairs, the driver will be instructed as to provisions for a rental vehicle.
- Drivers should not make verbal or written statements concerning an incident during its immediate aftermath except to law enforcement officials or representatives of the College or its agents.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand *Mississippi Delta Community College's Motor Vehicle Policy and Fleet Management Guide*. I agree to abide by the provisions of this policy. I understand that violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Driver's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Driver's License Number (*Required*)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Immediate Supervisor/Director/Dean Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Division's Vice President Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name**

## Motor Vehicle Incident Reporting Instructions for Drivers

**General Information:** The following information should be kept in all vehicles used for College business:

- Phone number(s) to which incidents are to be reported.
- Insurance carrier information that can be provided to other involved parties. Current proof of coverage from the liability insurance carrier should always be kept in vehicle.
- Instructions for notifying the college's insurance carrier (see insurance card)
- Instructions for contacting law enforcement and emergency personnel; and instructions for contacting roadside assistance services, if available.
- Instructions for leaving the incident scene intact, securing the scene against further collisions or injuries until emergency personnel arrive, and meeting regulatory requirements (if any) for blood alcohol testing.

A reminder to the driver that he/she should not admit fault for the incident. Materials to consider placing in vehicle may also include a disposable camera for documenting the scene, a witness card for recording initial comments and contact data from potential witnesses, and a pen or pencil.

**Incident Information:** Recommended information to be collected in the event of a motor vehicle incident are as follows:

- Name of other driver(s)
- Address of other driver(s)
- Phone number(s) of other driver(s)
- Driver's license number(s) of other driver(s)
- License plate number(s)
- Vehicle make and model
- Name of insurance carrier
- Insurance policy number
- Name, address, and phone number(s) of all parties involved in the incident, including passengers in each vehicle
- Name, address, and phone number(s) of all witnesses
- Date and time of the incident
- Location of the incident (intersection or milepost)
- The party to whom the driver's vehicle was registered (e.g., MDCC, the driver, another individual, or a rental agency)
- Name and phone number(s) of the investigating law enforcement officer on the scene, if any
- Any other entities responding at the scene (e.g., fire department, ambulance, hazardous materials unit)
- Citations issued
- A detailed narrative of the incident
- Space to allow the driver to make a sketch or diagram of the incident scene

## **Factors to Consider during an Incident Review**

During a review of a motor vehicle incident, possible contributing factors may be considered using the following framework:

### **Driver:**

- Driver's work schedule for at least the week preceding the incident
- Length of time on duty since the previous break prior to the incident
- Fatigue
- Scheduling demands on driver
- Motor vehicle record history
- Physical condition of the driver at the time of the incident
- Physical limitations of the driver at the time of the incident
- Training history
- Driver's emotional state

### **Vehicle:**

- Maintenance and inspection records
- Vehicle condition
- Damage to the vehicle from the incident
- Suitability and safety of the vehicle for the work task
- Vehicle control layout
- Modifications to the vehicle that may have contributed to the incident

### **Operating Environment:**

- Weather
- Road conditions
- Traffic conditions
- Route planning
- Delivery or service schedules

## **Mississippi Delta Community College Van Safety Recommendations**

The question is often asked, "Why are we so concerned about 15-passenger vans?" Two reasons are paramount, among others: first is the documented fact that these vehicles have demonstrated a propensity to be involved in roll-over crashes, with a 70% fatality rate. The second reason is the rather precious cargo (human lives) that is typically on board, and the amount of this cargo. When something goes wrong, it can go wrong in a big way.

"Where do we get our information?" is usually the second question. The standard bearer in this issue is the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which was created in Highway Safety Act of 1970. The NHTSA is responsible for reducing deaths, injuries, and economic losses due to traffic crashes. This is accomplished through research into traffic conditions, driver behavior, and vehicle design and then promoting ideas and strategies to improve overall safety on American roads.

A 2004 NHTSA study (and 49-page report) explored the relationship between vehicle occupancy and several other variables in the NHTSA Fatality Analysis and Reporting System (FARS) database and a 15-passenger van's risk of rollover. The study examines statistics on fatal crashes involving 15-passenger vans from 1990 to 2002. The study also constructs a logistic regression model to model the effects of various factors, most importantly occupancy level, on the risk of rollover. The model is constructed using data from 1994 to 2001 on police-reported motor vehicle crashes in five states that are part of NHTSA's State Data System (SDS).

The data show that between 1990 and 2002, there were 1,576 15-passenger vans involved in fatal crashes that resulted in 1,111 fatalities to occupants of such vans. Of these, 657 vans were in fatal, single vehicle crashes, of which 349 rolled over. In 450 of these vans, there was at least one fatality, totaling up to 684 occupant fatalities in single-vehicle crashes. The majority of fatally injured van occupants were not wearing seat belts. Only 14 percent of the fatally injured were restrained. Analysis of data from NHTSA's SDS reveals that the rate of rollover observed for 15-passenger vans that are loaded above half their designed seating capacity is 2.2 times the rate observed for vans loaded to or below half their capacity. The odds of a rollover for a 15-passenger van at its designated seating capacity is more than five times the odds of a rollover when the driver is the only occupant in the van.

The agency also performed computer modeling to assess the handling of these vehicles. The modeling predicted under-steer for 15-passenger vans when lightly loaded, similar to minivan behavior. However, when heavily loaded, it predicted understeer at low lateral acceleration, but over-steer at higher lateral accelerations. This transition to over-steer may pose safety problems for drivers who are unfamiliar with this characteristic. Loading 15-passenger vans to gross vehicle weight (GVW) also moved center of gravity rearward, increasing vertical load on rear tires. What makes 15-passenger vans so dangerous? Begin answering this by recognizing that these vans were originally designed to haul cargo -not people. Therefore, many of the safety features associated with typical passenger vehicles (like mini-vans, or busses) was omitted. In fact, 15-passenger vans are more like trucks, while mini-vans are more like cars. They have truck chassis, truck suspensions, truck tires, and truck engines. Mini-vans are built on car chassis, with car suspensions and tires and engines.

The 15-passenger vans are higher off the ground, longer, taller, and heavier, have less visibility, and are more powerful than typical passenger vehicles. Add the weight of 15 people and some gear and you've got quite a truck-driving job ahead of you. Whoever is driving needs to be skilled, trained, and experienced.

Why can't we load them to maximum capacity? The center of gravity of an empty van is already higher than most passenger vehicles. The risk of having a roll-over crash is about the same as for a pick-up truck, while the van is empty. As you add passengers, you add weight above the axles. If you pack the rear of the van first, you add weight behind the rear axle, shifting the center of gravity not only upward, but to the rear. This results in less ground pressure at the front, where you count on the front tires to steer with. The NHTSA report cited earlier stated that by the time you have ten people on board, you've tripled the risk of rollover that you had with only a driver on board. Fill all fifteen seats and the risk is now five times greater. Add in the difficulty in steering because your front wheels are barely touching the ground (and may even be coming off the ground if driving over bumps), and the risk is unacceptable.

Why all the focus on tires? Tire failure has been cited in many of the fatal crashes associated with these vans. With a vehicle weighing over 9,000 pounds, tires need to be above average. Manufacturers specify that light-truck (LT) tires are to be used for these vehicles rather than passenger (P) tires. The LT tires have many different qualities but the ability to take the weight and turn corners with it are two important ones. Ken Testorff, in a report he wrote for the U.S. Navy states that "a random check of government-owned and leased 15passenger vans in mid-2001 revealed some had improper replacement tires installed. When tires don't meet the manufacturer's minimum standards for size, pressure, and load, you're asking for problems. Heat rapidly builds up in such cases, creating the potential for tire failure, which can cause a driver to lose control and wreck."

Tire pressure, even with the proper tires, must be checked with a gauge and adjusted to the tire and vehicle specifications. If you have the correct tires, this should be the same for both. Begin by checking the federal certification sticker usually found on the driver's door pillar. This lists the vehicle's gross weight load limits (per axle), required tire type and size, and cold inflation pressure for front and rear tires. Compare this to the tires that are actually on the van. If substandard tires are present, they should be replaced prior to further use. Note that the pressures usually differ from front to rear. The front tires are usually about 50 psi while the rear tires are usually about 80 psi. Only a good tire pressure gauge will tell you if you need more air. Why are 15-passenger van wrecks so often fatal? Eighty (80) percent of those who died in 15-passenger van crashes were not wearing their seat-belts. Even people who normally wear seat-belts don't feel the need, or don't remember to wear them when Motor Vehicle and Fleet Management Best Practice Guidelines 24 they get inside a van. The driver is the one person who usually remembers to fasten his or her seatbelt, and is the one person who can remind others to do so or the van doesn't leave the parking lot!

Lastly, what are your recommendations? The following were arrived at after studying numerous university, military, and other government agency procedures, NHTSA statistics and reports, and advice from the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course. They are written from the standpoint of preventing loss of life while still being able to accomplish objectives. Input has come

from several universities within the IHL system. Universities can create their own procedures based on these recommendations. While stricter standards may be chosen, these recommendations should be considered minimum allowable considerations. Recommendations may be changed or added in the future as additional information is obtained.

#### Summary of Recommendations MDCC Safety and Loss Control

- a. Drivers should be experienced. How this is measured can vary:
  - i. Having held a driver's license for at least five years
  - ii. Being of a certain age (25 is common) assuming they have been driving since the earliest allowable age (15 in MS)
  - iii. Having driven a truck or other large vehicle could be part of experience (10 years driving a motorcycle may not help much when driving a 9,000 + lb. van with 15 lives on board)
- b. Drivers should be skilled. Do they have a *good* driving record, and does it include vans or similar vehicles?
- c. Drivers should be trained. A driver training course should include a minimum of 4 hours in the classroom and should require demonstrated successful performance behind the wheel on a closed course. Content should include reference to actual College-owned vans, characteristics, manufacture's specifications, maintenance, accident statistics, risks, load placement, capacity, operation, defensive driving strategies, College policies, route/trip planning, emergency procedures, and other topics as identified.
- d. Driving time should be limited. Fatigue is a common factor in crash statistics. Universities should adopt a policy to prevent driver fatigue while safely accomplishing the mission of the group traveling. Consider driving time as related to wakeful time within a 24 hour period. A standard work day being eight hours, this might be a good limit for the average driver. The Department of Transportation allows more hours behind the wheel for commercial truck drivers, but requires the next eight hours to be "off duty". Taking a ten-minute break every 100 miles or two hours is also a recommendation of the National Safety Council.
- e. Time of day should be limited. National Safety Council discourages driving between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. due to the condition of other drivers and the likelihood of fatigue and/or meeting other drivers who are intoxicated.
- f. Drivers should be held responsible for the safe and lawful operation of the vehicle they are driving. Auto insurance and the MS Tort Claims Act will apply to liabilities while operating in the course and scope of one's duties. Deviations from duty and violations of state or federal law should be understood. For these reasons and others, allowing non-employees to drive College-owned vehicles is discouraged. Authorization for non-employees to drive college-owned/rented/leased vans should be documented.
- g. Vans should carry no more than 10 people. This includes the driver and up to nine passengers. This recommendation is based on NHTSA recommendations. With just

ten passengers, the van will still be operating at triple the risk of roll-over than if the van were empty. With eight people, the risk is 2.2X. Limiting the total number to eight is also a common practice. Removal of one or more rear seats will help facilitate this practice.

- h. Vans should be loaded from front to rear. Fill front seats first to avoid under-steerage problems. All things being equal, place heaviest part of load (passengers or equipment) toward the front.
- i. Roof racks or other “car-top carriers” should be prohibited. The risk of rollover is magnified with the height of cargo.
- j. Cargo should be low and secure. Keeping the center of gravity low will help reduce the risk of roll-over. Tie-down straps, cargo cages, or other restraints should be used to prevent cargo from shifting during transit or from causing additional injury in the event of a collision.
- k. All occupants must wear safety-belts (lap and shoulder). Driver should make sure everyone is properly secured prior to operation of vehicle. The number of properly working seat-belts should determine the maximum number of passengers.
- l. Towing (if allowed) should not be done with passengers. If it is absolutely necessary to tow a trailer with such a van, no more than one passenger (to assist driver) should be onboard the van. Other cargo within vehicle specifications can be allowed. Owner’s manual should be Motor Vehicle and Fleet Management Best Practice Guidelines 26 consulted for safe towing procedures and safe limits. Trailers must meet requirements as established in Title 63 of MS Code. Only drivers with experience towing trailers should be allowed to operate vans with trailers attached. Avoiding the use of trailers is strongly suggested.
- m. Backing should be performed with extra caution. If a passenger is present, he or she should exit the van and stand near the rear of the van to give guidance to the driver as it is backed. Drivers should walk around the rear of the van prior to backing alone to ensure an otherwise unseen object or person is not in harm’s way.
- n. Emergency equipment should include proof of insurance, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, highway warning triangles, and tire pressure gauge. Larger items should be fastened securely to vehicle to prevent injury during a crash, protect equipment, and provide a reliable location when needed.
- o. Drivers should conduct a pre-trip inspection prior to each trip. A checklist should be used to document inspection and note any needed repairs. Standard items should include: actual tire pressure (requires tire pressure gauge), tread wear, all lights and signals, reflectors, windshield wipers, windshield washer, mirrors, brakes, fluid levels, belts, hoses, horn, emergency equipment, cargo security, and others as identified.



- p. Monthly inspections should be performed by a qualified mechanic. This is a more detailed inspection that is also documented, with repairs being made as needed. Reference should be made to any driver inspections made since previous monthly inspection.
- q. Provisions for repair of safety-related items during travel should be identified. Drivers will need authority and procedure for replacement of tires that are about to fail, or headlights or wiper blades that don't work, for example.
- r. All recommendations apply to rental/lease vans as if they were college-owned. The College will be expected to cover liabilities and ensure the safety of passengers regardless of ownership. If vehicles cannot meet standards established for College-owned vans, another source should be sought. Rental companies may have additional rules/procedures that should be followed, such as minimum age requirements for drivers. None of these recommendations is intended to exempt any rule or procedure from renting and leasing authorities.