

13.04.99.K1 Student Travel



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Rule Statement

This rule is designed to promote the health and welfare of Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) students by regulating travel that is undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled at the university to reach an event organized or sponsored by the university and that is located more than 25 miles from the university.

Reason for Rule

This rule is required by System Policy *13.04, Student Travel*.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

- 1.1 All international/study abroad related travel must be coordinated and approved through the International Studies and Programs Office located in Cousins Hall. All international student travel paperwork must be submitted to that office according to their published deadlines. International Studies and Programs will assist departments, programs and organizations in complying with all travel guidelines and/or international travel warnings from the State Department during the planning process to ensure all safety and additional travel approval steps are met. Information related to international travel is located at this link: <http://www.tamuk.edu/intpro/travelguide/index/html>

2. DOMESTIC TRAVEL

- 2.1 In compliance with state law and System Policy *13.04, Student Travel*, the following provisions apply to any student who travels more than 25 miles from campus to an activity or event that is organized or sponsored by the university (including, but not limited to, travel under the scope and/or direction of a college, department, class, office, learning community, study abroad program, registered organization, or their representatives) which meets at least one of the following criteria:

- (a) The travel is organized through or funded by the university; or

(b) The travel will use a vehicle owned or leased by the university; or

(c) The travel is organized and/or funded by a student organization registered at the university.

2.2 These provisions apply to faculty, staff and students who engage in transporting students off campus on any university business or related travel activities. It is the responsibility of the entity (e.g., university department, recognized student organization, academic program, etc.) that sponsors the organized student travel to assure compliance with these procedures. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the suspension of student travel for the department, program or organization responsible for arranging the trip.

2.3 This rule is applicable to students who are responsible for their own transportation to an off campus site (e.g., internships, practicum experiences, clinical and/or student teaching sites).

2.4 These regulations are considered to be a minimum standard; departments may mandate additional procedures to address the unique requirements associated with a particular type of organized student travel. Departments or units should submit proposals for additional standards through the chain of command to the appropriate vice president.

3. MODES OF TRAVEL

Organized student travel may require various modes of transportation. Each form of transportation requires students to follow common safety and mode-specific safety precautions.

3.1 **Vehicles Owned or Leased (including rental) by the university:** Only university employees (including student employees) may be authorized to drive university owned vehicles. Rental car companies may have minimum age requirements for drivers. Students driving rental vehicles must include the optional insurance coverage from the rental company when leasing a vehicle, except when a student employee is renting the vehicle as a function of their employment. Drivers must possess a valid driver's license appropriate for the types of vehicle they are operating.

3.2 **Privately Owned Vehicles:** Students and/or staff who use a privately owned vehicle or any vehicle other than those owned and/or leased by the university for travel to and from activities and events organized and/or sponsored by the university that are covered by this student travel rule are expected to follow the safety requirements related to student travel set out in this policy. Drivers on student travel trips in privately owned vehicles must have a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the classification of the vehicle being driven, motor vehicle insurance and a current state registration.

3.3 **Commercial Carrier Travel (air travel, charter travel, boat, ferry and/or rail travel):** Students and/or staff traveling by commercial carrier transportation must comply with all international, federal, state and/or local laws regulating the specific mode of travel and the rules of the specific carrier. This includes laws and rules regarding carry-on baggage and baggage weight restrictions. When arranging commercial travel, every effort should be made to use an official state travel card for the purposes of the additional insurance coverage provided by the travel card. Refer to documentation regarding the travel card for details regarding the coverage, or contact the Travel Office.

4. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Efforts should be made, in advance, to identify and minimize risks associated with the student travel trip, including, but not limited to, safety with the modes of travel, events during travel, etc. It is strongly recommended that all departments, programs and/or organizations conducting student travel covered under this rule purchase the additional “special risk accident insurance” available through the Office of Enterprise Risk Management. The application can be located on the TAMUK website at:

http://www.tamuk.edu/finance/risk/camps/camps/_files/word/System%20Special%20Event-Application.doc

4.1 General Driving Safety Recommendations

- (a) Plan routes in advance, and carpool and caravan when possible.
- (b) The length of the trip should be considered when selecting the number of drivers needed. See 4.3 (Minimizing Driver Fatigue) below for more details.
- (c) Notify a designated contact person upon departure and arrival.
- (d) Drivers must have valid drivers’ licenses for the types of vehicles they are operating. Individuals not familiar with driving large capacity vehicles are encouraged to participate in training related to 12 to 15 passenger van operations.
- (e) For individuals with Texas driver’s licenses, a verified good driver record check will be conducted (verification will be based upon a Motor Vehicle Records check by the University Police Department). Driver checks are valid for one calendar year after the date of verification. Any cost associated with a Texas driving record check is covered by the university. Drivers with out of state licenses must request and/or submit a copy of their driving record from the licensing state for review by the University Police Department. Out of state driving record check costs are covered by the licensed driver whose record is being checked.

4.2 Vehicle Operation Safety:

- (a) All occupants must use seat belts and remain seated when the vehicle is in motion. The number of occupants in a vehicle shall not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle.
- (b) Loading of the vehicle should be done in accordance with vehicle manufacturers’ recommendations. Drivers, occupants and luggage shall not exceed the vehicle manufacturer’s recommended capacity.
- (c) Occupants and driver of the vehicle must comply with all the university travel guidelines.
- (d) Drivers will comply with all applicable traffic laws, posted speed limits and regulations at all times, avoid horseplay, racing and/or other aggressive behavior.

- (e) The driver shall confront rowdy or disorderly behavior by the passengers that may cause driver distractions.
- (f) Smoking or driving while under the influence of impairing drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
- (g) Use of radar/laser detection devices is prohibited in the vehicle.
- (h) Use of headphones or earphones by the driver is prohibited.
- (i) Use of a cellular/mobile phone must be limited by the driver, and must comply with all applicable local laws/ordinances.
- (j) No alcohol, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons are to be in the vehicle at any time.
- (k) Driver must be 18 years of age or older (or meet the rental company's age requirement).
- (l) Any rental/leased vehicle must carry the optional insurance at the time of rental. Refer to 3.1 for more details.

4.3 Minimizing Driver Fatigue

Drivers should recognize that driving a vehicle for long hours is challenging; and therefore, should practice certain safety precautions to stay alert and safe. To help reduce fatigue drivers should:

- (a) Begin the trip well-rested.
- (b) If there are two or more drivers per vehicle, drivers should rotate every two hours, and divide the trip into segments to allow stops for rest. If a driver is traveling alone or is a sole driver, the driver should consider limiting the distance traveled to 400 miles and/or 8 hours per day.
- (c) Schedule trips during normal waking hours. Establish a reasonable arrival time to the activity or event.
- (d) Avoid driving when weather conditions are hazardous (including, but not limited to, fog, heavy rain, snow or ice conditions), and be prepared to pause the trip or check into a motel should fatigue and travel conditions warrant.
- (e) Avoid medication before driving, especially if the label warns against operating vehicles while taking the medication.
- (f) Avoid taking any type of drug to stay awake.
- (g) If traveling with others, it is recommended that a passenger ride in the front seat and remain awake at all times.

- (h) It is recommended that drivers of all vehicles, including privately owned vehicles used on official business, travel with an Emergency Road Kit (first aid kit, flashlight, fire extinguisher, and traffic control devices such as roadside reflectors and flares). It is further recommended that groups traveling have someone who is certified in CPR/First Aid, have emergency supplies of food and water, have access to maps for the area in which they are traveling, and have a cellular phone.

5. TRAVEL PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 It is recommended that a designated advisor, staff member(s) and/or faculty accompany each student travel group. In the event that an advisor, staff member(s) and/or faculty cannot attend the function with the student group, the group should become familiar with expectations for behavior and all procedures pertaining to student travel. The group should plan its itinerary in a manner that divides up the trip into reasonable segments, avoids driver fatigue, and incorporates the necessary safety precautions.
- 5.2 All travel paperwork must be turned in to the Dean of Student Office no less than five business days before the trip is to begin. All paperwork will be reviewed for compliance with the travel rules. Departments, programs and/or organizations will be notified of any areas of non-compliance with the paperwork. All areas of non-compliance must be rectified prior to the travel departure. Repeated non-compliance with complete travel paperwork, guidelines and/or deadlines may result in the suspension of student travel for the department, program and/or organization until re-training on proper procedures occurs. Travel paperwork must be completed on each person attending the trip, and driver record checks must be conducted, in advance, on all individuals who may be operating a vehicle during the trip.
- 5.3 The Dean of Students Office will share completed trip paperwork with the University Police Department.
- 5.4 The University Police Department will maintain a list of qualified drivers. As travel is being organized and planned, trip organizers are encouraged to verify with the University Police Department that the faculty, staff or students who serve as drivers are on the authorized driving list.
- 5.5 Groups traveling must submit the following paperwork as a complete packet:
 - (1) Trip Itinerary (one for entire group) (Form 1)
 - (2) Travel Passenger List (one for entire group) (Form 2)
 - (3) Emergency Notification Form (one for each traveler) (Form 3)
 - (4) Assumption of Risk Indemnification Agreement (one for each traveler) (Form 4)
 - (5) A copy of the Incident/Accident Report should be taken with the group. (Form 5)
 - (6) Application for Copy of Driver Record (one for each driver) (Form 6)
 - (7) Special Event Insurance Application (optional, but strongly recommended).

The sponsoring department and/or organization should keep a copy of the Emergency Notification & the Assumption of Risk Indemnification Agreement forms for each member of the group while traveling. The information will be needed in the case of an accident or other incident.

5.6 Access to Student Travel Forms

- (a) Student travel forms are provided online and can be accessed at this link: <http://www.tamuk.edu/studentorganizations/forms.html>
- (b) Faculty and/or staff accompanying students as a part of their university duties must complete and submit a travel request in Concur.
- (c) Student travel forms are retained by the Dean of Students Office according to the state record retention schedule.

6. IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

The following procedures should be used whenever members of a university group are involved in an accident, regardless of the extent of the injury and/or damage:

- (a) Stop immediately; do not leave the scene; take necessary steps to prevent another accident; and notify the proper law enforcement agency and/or emergency medical services (9-1-1) so that an official report of the accident is made.
- (b) Render aid to the injured until help arrives.
- (c) Call the University Police Department at 361-593-2611. Do not call the family members of the injured university students and/or employees. The University Police Department will do this in accordance with university policies.
- (d) Record the names, addresses and phone numbers of all witnesses.
- (e) Provide all required information to the law enforcement officer.
- (f) When returning to campus, the driver must immediately contact the University Police Department and Dean of Students Office to follow up on the completion of the accident report forms.
- (g) In the event of an automobile accident, gather the following information on any vehicles involved in the accident:
 - Year of vehicle
 - Make and model of vehicle
 - Color of vehicle
 - License plate number
 - Driver's license number of the other driver
 - Insurance information of the other driver
- (h) If a university vehicle is involved in an accident and it is inoperable, the driver should contact the University Police Department at 361-593-2611 for instructions.
- (i) If a rental vehicle is in an accident, contact the rental agency for instructions.

- (j) If a vehicle in an accident must be towed, remove any keys, fuel/credit cards and all personal property, which might be lost or stolen.
 - (k) DO NOT make any statements, oral or written, as to who was at fault. Any admission of fault may impair the insurer's ability to defend a case of questionable legal liability. Appropriate legal authority will decide fault or liability.
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Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[Tex. Educ. Code § 51.950](#)

[System Policy 13.04, Student Travel](#)

Contact Office

Dean of Students Office
(361) 593-3606