



Checklist

Safety in Student and Employee Transportation

Vehicle accidents often lead to expensive claims against colleges and universities. Many of these claims involved institution-owned vehicles driven by students or employees. To best manage the safety and liability risks surrounding college-owned vehicles, institutions should develop a vehicle use policy addressing procedures for driver authorization, vehicle use and maintenance, emergency response, and the use of charter or rental vehicles.

By centralizing this policy, institutions can better impose similar safety standards for vehicle use across campus departments. Often Risk Management, Transportation Services, Campus Safety, or a combination of these departments manages the institution's vehicle use policy and forms. Ideally, the institution's policy should state which employee or department is charged with oversight of its transportation policy and related procedures and forms, such as accident reports, waivers, and vehicle request forms.

This checklist is designed to help risk managers or employees charged with fleet management at higher education institutions use best practices in student and employee transportation safety. Administrators may also find this checklist helpful when creating vehicle use policies. The recommendations in Part 1 (Driver Authorization), Part 2 (Vehicle Use & Safety), and Part 3 (Emergency Response Plan) apply to the use of both institution-owned and privately owned vehicles for institution business, except where otherwise specified.

For each question, check the appropriate “Yes” or “No” box. Review any box checked “No” to determine whether the suggested practice is possible. Use the “Actions Needed” box to identify any follow-up actions your school may wish to take.

Driver Authorization

Does your institution’s vehicle use policy:

- Restrict who can drive institution-owned vehicles to:
 - Employees on institution business? Yes
 No

 - Students on institution business? Yes
 No

 - Address when employees and/or students drive privately owned vehicles for institution business? Yes
 No

 - State that all traffic and parking tickets are the responsibility of the driver? Yes
 No

 - Impose the following driver qualifications:
 - Minimum driver age, such as 18, 21, or 25? (Younger drivers represent a higher proportion of fatal highway crashes, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.) Yes
 No

 - Possession of a driver’s license? (Keep a photocopy; require drivers to advise if suspended or revoked.) Yes
 No

 - Check of state motor vehicle records (MVRs) by:
 - Annually pulling MVRs for all drivers or a random sample of drivers who frequently drive for institution business? Yes
 No

 - Denying or revoking authorization for the following driving infractions:
 - Driving under the influence? Yes
 No

 - Committing a felony with a vehicle? Yes
 No

 - Leaving the scene of an accident? Yes
 No

 - Multiple speeding violations? Yes
 No

 - At-fault crashes? Yes
 No

- Successful completion of a driver training course that addresses the following topics:
 - Fatigue and drive time limits? Yes
 No

 - Use of seat belts? Yes
 No

 - Distractions such as phones and passengers? Yes
 No

 - Prohibition of ingesting or possessing alcohol or nonprescription drugs? (Prescription drugs that have been prescribed for the driver are allowed if they are nondrowsy and do not contain a warning not to operate vehicles.) Yes
 No

 - Disqualification of drivers with past alcohol or drug infractions on the MVR check? Yes
 No

 - Forbidding passengers to ride in cargo areas? (Examples include the back of a pickup truck or the cargo area of a multipassenger van.) Yes
 No

Vehicle Use & Safety

Distracted driving resulted in nearly 1 million crashes and over 3,000 deaths in 2019 alone, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Providing comprehensive training and vehicle safeguards can help limit distracted driving.

Use

Does your vehicle use policy:

- Prohibit transporting people not involved in the institution's business? Yes
 No

- State whether the driver-owner's insurance will be required to provide first coverage if a privately owned vehicle crashes while conducting institution business? Yes
 No

- Prohibit purchasing or using 15 passenger vans? Yes
 No

Safety features

Do fleet vehicles have safety features such as:

- “How’s My Driving” decals with a vehicle number and hotline? Yes
 No

- Video recording? Yes
 No

- On-board crash event recorders (similar to an airplane’s black box)? Yes
 No

Maintenance of Institution-Owned Vehicles

Does your institution’s policy:

- List state inspection requirements? (For example, some states require an annual safety inspection.) Yes
 No

- State whether vehicle maintenance will be conducted through one campus department or whether each department will be responsible for conducting its own fleet maintenance? Yes
 No

- State who is responsible for keeping maintenance and repair records? Yes
 No

- List which individuals or vendors may conduct scheduled maintenance on the vehicles, noting that emergency maintenance will not be restricted to this list? Yes
 No

- State that in most circumstances, drivers may not conduct their own maintenance or repairs on institution-owned vehicles? Yes
 No

Emergency Response Plan

If students or employees driving a vehicle on institution business are involved in an accident, will they know what to do? Establish an easy-to-follow protocol for accident response, both for the driver and for the institution personnel who receive the report. By creating and publicizing a detailed emergency response plan, the institution can limit hasty, adrenaline-fueled decisions at the accident scene. Test the plan frequently, and update any elements that do not function as planned.

Does your institution place an accident reporting kit in its fleet vehicles? Yes
 No

Does your institution provide drivers using privately owned vehicles for institution business with an accident reporting kit? Yes
 No

Does your institution's accident reporting kit include:

- Accident reporting guidelines, such as:
 - Take steps to prevent another accident at the scene? Yes
 No

- Dial 911 to call police/ambulance and other emergency vehicles? Yes
 No

- Do not move injured parties? Yes
 No

- Encourage all parties to seek medical attention? Yes
 No

- Instructions for notifying the campus reporting entity (such as a hotline or campus police phone number)? Yes
 No

- Do not make statements to anyone except police, appropriate institution personnel, and the driver's personal insurance company? Yes
 No

- Do not sign any papers concerning responsibility? Yes
 No

- Obtain contact and insurance information from the driver of any other vehicle involved in the accident? Yes
 No

- Give the other party the driver's contact information and the insurance information contained in the vehicle? Yes
 No

- Record as much information that is available including name, license number, plate number, make, model, and year of the car, how the accident happened, and information about any witnesses? Yes
 No

- A list of the emergency equipment and documentation provided in institution-owned vehicles? Yes
 No

- An accident report that includes:
 - Instructions to complete only once the emergency situation has passed? Yes
 No

- The appropriate institution contact to receive this report? Yes
 No

- The time period for submitting the report after the accident (generally 24 hours)? Yes
 No

- Instructions for creating an accident diagram? Yes
 No

Actions Needed

- A request for information about the:
 - Institutional driver, such as name, age, license number, and phone number? Yes
 No

 - Investigating officer, such as name, badge number, and department? Yes
 No

 - Witnesses, such as name, address, and phone number? Yes
 No

 - Other drivers and their contact information? Yes
 No

 - Vehicles involved, such as license plate number, make, and model? Yes
 No

 - Actions of each involved vehicle before and during the accident? Yes
 No

 - Injuries received by any party to the accident? Yes
 No

 - Roadway where the accident occurred? Yes
 No

 - Any vehicular damage? Yes
 No

- Does your institution train those charged with receiving accident reports to handle reports, including those submitted via phone?** Yes
 No

- Does your institution have procedures for handling accident notification calls received outside of business hours?** Yes
 No

Charter and Rental Vehicles

Actions Needed

Many institutions charter vehicles for student trips. Vehicles chartered by colleges have been involved in high profile accidents resulting in deaths and serious injuries.¹ In some cases, the charter company's lax business practices contributed directly to the accident. Thoroughly vet the companies from which your institution charters or rents vehicles to ensure their quality.

If transportation services are donated, do they go through the same qualification process as those that are purchased? Yes No

When selecting a charter company, does your institution or its student organizations review the following:

Driver Qualification and Training

- Monitor the vetting and training of charter drivers. For example, does the charter company:
 - Require possession of a current driver's license appropriate for the vehicle being driven? Yes No
 - Perform annual MVR checks and disqualify drivers for major or multiple offenses? Yes No
 - Conduct driver safety and training programs? Yes No

Safety and Certification

- Whether the company's drivers comply with federal and state requirements for certification, insurance, and safety? See the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMSCA) website for federal passenger carrier regulations. Most states' requirements can be found through an online search of "Your State passenger carrier company." Yes No
- The company's policies for:
 - Vehicle age and type? Yes No
 - Vehicle maintenance and documentation, including preventive maintenance and pre- and post-trip inspections? Yes No
 - Emergencies and accidents? Yes No

¹ March 2, 2007 — A charter bus carrying members of the Bluffton University baseball team crashed killing five; March 16, 2013 — A charter bus carrying members of the Seton Hill University women's lacrosse team crashed killing two; Sept. 26, 2014 — A charter bus carrying members of the North Central Texas College softball team crashed killing four; March 12, 2015 — A charter bus carrying members of the Indiana Institute of Technology bowling team crashed, injuring 21.

- Whether the company has obtained operating authority from FMSCA to provide interstate transportation? Yes No

- Whether the company has a satisfactory rating on the U.S. Department of Transportation’s SAFER database? Those with a rating lower than satisfactory — the highest rating — *should not be considered*. Yes No

Insurance

- The charter company’s insurance policies to ensure that the lines of coverage include, at a minimum:
 - Worker’s compensation and employer’s liability policies with limits of at least:
 - Your state’s minimum coverage requirement for worker’s compensation? Yes No

 - \$1 million aggregate for employer’s liability insurance? Yes No
 - General liability policy with limits of at least:
 - \$1 million per occurrence? Yes No

 - \$5 million aggregate? Yes No

 - Automobile liability policy with a minimum limit of:
 - \$5 million per occurrence, as required by the Federal Motor Carrier Act? Yes No
- The financial strength rating of its insurance carriers, such as an AM Best rating of A- or better? Yes No

Contracts & Risk Allocation Practices

Before signature or acceptance, are contracts for charter services reviewed for:

- A clearly written indemnity clause (also known as a risk allocation or hold harmless clause) addressing how the college and the charter company will share in any claims or losses arising out of the vehicle rental? (Ideally, the clause is not one-sided making the college responsible for losses it did not cause or cannot control.) Yes No

- A requirement that the charter company name the institution as an additional insured on its insurance policy and provide a certificate of insurance noting the applicable lines of insurance? Yes No

Actions Needed

- Minimum coverage limits for each insurance line? Yes No
- Language establishing the charter company's insurance as primary and noncontributory? Yes No
- Clearly defined performance expectations? Yes No
- Financial penalties for negative performance, such as not getting the passengers to the specified location within the defined time period? Yes No
- Provisions to prohibit subcontracting, or to control and transfer the risks? Yes No

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