

Vehicle Safety Guidelines

While driving on Arkansas Tech University business, you have a responsibility to your passengers, the university, and to the general public with whom you share the road to operate the vehicle in a safe manner. The safety of our students, faculty, staff and the community is a central concern of Arkansas Tech University. The following guidelines governing the use of University owned, leased, reimbursed, rented, or other work related vehicles are designed to support safe and prudent use of vehicles.

Please read the following information carefully. You have a responsibility to review and adhere to the following guidelines.

Before leaving: Always inspect the vehicle to make sure all equipment is working properly. Vehicles not operating properly should not be utilized until proper maintenance is obtained.

Driver Responsibility:

- Driver must be at least 19 years old and must possess and maintain a valid driver's license and acceptable driving record whenever driving a University vehicle or when driving on behalf of the university.
- Drivers must report any change in status of their driving record immediately to their supervisor and to Human Resources.
- Drivers who utilize personal vehicles for university purposes, where mileage reimbursement or vehicle allowance is applied, must supply proof of current auto insurance coverage.
- Drivers must observe and obey all traffic regulations. Drivers are personally responsible for any traffic citations that may be issued as a result of improper vehicle operation.
- Drivers shall be alcohol and drug free. "Drug Free" includes prescription and non-prescription drugs that may impair a driver's judgment or driving ability.
- Radar detectors and hitchhikers are prohibited.
- Use of hand-held electronic devices to text, e-mail or access the internet is prohibited while driving. If cell phone use is necessary to make a telephone call, utilize the cell phone in "hands free" mode.
- Drivers should not drive more than 10 hours within a 24 hour period and should take regular breaks every 2 – 3 hours. If trip is longer than 10 hours, there should be an alternative driver, or overnight stay or flight travel should be considered as an alternative to driving. Vehicle travel between the hours of Midnight and 5 AM should be avoided. Front passenger should remain awake to help keep the driver alert on long distance trips.
- All violations, including parking tickets and speeding tickets, are the responsibility of the driver.

Procedures:

If an accident occurs:

- If there are injuries, always call 911.

- Notify local police. If on campus, notify ATU Department of Public Safety at (479) 968-0222.
- Driver should report the accident as soon as possible to their supervisor and to the Office of Procurement & Risk Management Services and/or Facilities Management Motor Pool Office
- After hours accidents should be reported to Bancorp South Insurance Services at 501-664-9252.

Driver Adjustments:

- Always adjust your seat and mirrors for optimal view of angles prior to leaving (taking note of blind spots at sides and rear of vehicle.)
- If unfamiliar with the vehicle, prior to driving, locate important features and controls such as: lights, windshield wipers, air-conditioning and emergency signal controls are located.
- Secure any loose or miscellaneous items in the front driver area (ie. bags, etc.).

Seatbelt Safety and Information:

- Only transport as many people as there are seatbelts.
- The driver and ALL passengers should be seated in recognized seats and must wear seat belts properly.
- Failure to wear your seatbelt may reduce your work comp benefits.
- The Driver should make sure all passengers have seatbelts on before leaving.

Safety Tips While Driving:

- **Drive defensively at all times - Be alert for unexpected actions, sudden stops and mistakes of others.**
- Observe and obey all traffic regulations, devices, road signs and warnings.
- Concentrate on driving at all times and maintain a safe speed- consider weather and road conditions.
- Avoid distractions while driving such as eating, excessive radio volume, cell phones, searching/reaching for items, etc.
- Slow down in busy areas such as city traffic, rush hour traffic, parking lots and residential areas.
- Always keep alert for pedestrians, children, and smaller vehicles such as bikes and motorcycles.
- Always allow a safe following distance, consider weather and road conditions and never tailgate. **Allow at least four seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you.**
- Avoid conditions that lead to loss of control – driving while sleepy or inattentive, or driving too fast for conditions.

Check Blind Spots frequently

- Especially when changing lanes and backing up.

- Change lanes slowly.
- Back up slowly.

Backing:

- The greatest blind spot is to the rear when backing up.
- Many accidents occur while backing out of parking areas.
- Your best defense is to back up only when necessary and avoid backing into traffic.
- Make sure all is clear behind you – do not rely solely on mirrors.

Turning and Changing Lanes:

- Use turn signals 150 feet in advance of lane change. Use turn signals well in advance of turns.
- Always watch for pedestrians, small vehicles, and motorcycles in intersections when turning.
- **When changing lanes- double check blind spots.**
- Take it slow when turning or changing lanes.

Intersection Safety:

- Scan ahead at least 1 block as you come upon intersections.
- Before entering the intersection, scan left-right-left before entering.
- Scan mirrors frequently.
- Check for pedestrians and bikers entering the intersection area.
- Do not assume anything....
 - The person with blinker on may not turn.
 - The pedestrian on corner may decide to run across intersection.
 - The light may not change when you expect it to.
 - The vehicle or bike in front of you may stop suddenly.
- Cover the brake with your foot as you enter into the intersection (this helps reaction time if need to stop suddenly).

Parking and Loading/Unloading:

- **Use extra caution and drive *slowly* whenever driving through a parking lot or other congested areas.**
- Watch carefully for pedestrians and other vehicles pulling in and backing out.
- If you are loading/unloading passengers or equipment, make sure you do so in the safest possible area.
- Avoid unloading passengers in areas where they would have to cross through traffic after exiting the vehicle.
- Always lock the vehicle when it is unattended.

AVOID driving practices that lead to loss of control – Such as:

- Sharp Turns – (Take corners and exit ramps slow and easy).

- Excessive Speed – (Note the speed limit and weather conditions).
- Abrupt Maneuvers (Change lanes slowly – do not jerk the wheel).
- Driving during extreme windy, rainy or hazardous weather conditions.
- Following too closely (allow at *least* a 4 second following distance- note road conditions).
- Sudden stops or panic stops – (look ahead and signal early - slow down gradually).

Reduce distractions:

- When possible, have a passenger assist with navigation and cell phone calls.
- Texting should never be performed while driving!
- Pull over to a safe place when it is necessary to use a cell phone.