

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

VEHICLE AND DRIVER SAFETY PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all staff and others with responsibilities related to the use of university-owned or operated vehicles are familiar with La Trobe University's safety requirements.

Particular aims are to ensure that:

- University vehicle purchasing policy and procedures place a high priority on safety.
- Vehicles belonging to the University are equipped and maintained to ensure a high level of safety, and that vehicles are adequate for their required purposes.
- Drivers of University vehicles are adequately experienced and equipped, are aware of University guidelines and procedures related to road safety, and drive only when in a fit condition to do so.

This document forms part of the University Occupational Health and Safety Program and reflects the University's commitment to the health and safety of employees.

2. DEFINITIONS

University Vehicle

A vehicle owned or operated by La Trobe University and which is designed to be used primarily as a means of transport on a public road. A 'vehicle' is one designed to carry a driver and no more than 11 passengers. A vehicle designed to carry 12 or more passengers in addition to the driver is defined as a bus; policies and procedures related to university-owned buses are specified in the reference section. Vehicles leased by the University under the University Novated lease plan considered private for the purpose of these procedures.

Responsible Driver

The driver with primary responsibility for the vehicle during the period of its use for a particular purpose, as specified on the Driving Trip Authorisation and Booking Form.

Vehicle Manager

A staff member who has primary responsibility for the maintenance of one or more university-owned vehicles. The Manager of an allocated vehicle is the person to whom the vehicle is allocated as part of their salary package, whereas the Manager of one or more pool vehicles performs the specified duties as part of his/her job requirements.

Bendigo Vehicles Office

At Bendigo Campus the Vehicles Office administers all vehicles on Campus and performs the functions as specified in these procedures.

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1 **Deans, Heads Of Academic And Administrative Departments, Colleges** are responsible for ensuring that:

- Vehicle purchase specifications include detailed descriptions of the vehicle and associated equipment requirements for the vehicle use (e.g. off-road, in snow, etc). Note: normal sedans and station wagons are not suitable for long trips on unmade or rough roads.
- Reference to relevant legislation is made pre purchase.
- Vehicle maintenance is maintained
- Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in these procedures.
- Financial support is available for staff or other authorised drivers requiring 'special purpose' driver training (e.g. related to driving 4WD vehicles, or on low-friction surfaces such as ice/snow).

3.2 **Procurements And Contracts Branch** are responsible for ensuring that:

- Ensure that all purchases of vehicles and accessories comply with University purchasing procedures.
- Ensure that vehicles and accessories purchased for primary use on university business meet current 'best practice' safety standards, as specified below under 'Guidelines for Vehicle Purchase'.
- Ensuring that vehicles purchased for primary use on university business should meet current 'best practice' safety standards, in terms of the Vehicle Safety Features listed below, provided that these features are available at reasonable cost in vehicles of the required type; for example, it is recognised that some features might not be available at reasonable cost for 4WD or some other 'special purpose' vehicles.

3.3 **Vehicle Managers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that vehicles are equipped and maintained in accordance with these procedures
- Authorising the use of vehicles under their control
- Advising staff (and other intending drivers) within their School, Department or College on issues related to renting vehicles, and administer related procedures as determined by the School or Unit. [Note that insurance purchased from rental companies frequently excludes damage to the vehicle roof and to its underbody, and that insurance cover may not apply when using 4WD vehicles in off-road conditions.]
- At the request of people who wish to use their own vehicles on university business, grant permission provided that it is in accord with LTU Business Procedures Manual section 8.2.1, page 17, and that the vehicle seems to be adequate for the intended purpose.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Vehicle Safety Features

The following vehicle safety features and recommended characteristics include:

- a kerb mass between 1300 kg and 1700 kg (passenger cars & derivatives only)
 - day time running lights or automatic head lamp off device
 - clear glazed windows (no added window tinting)
 - at least a 3-star rating in the Australian New Car Assessment Program for that model or, where not available, the previous model
 - a statement from the manufacturer that the vehicle meets the frontal, offset and side impact requirements of ADR 72 and 73
 - anti-locking braking system (ABS)
 - automatic transmission
 - cruise control and over-speed warning
 - driver, front passenger and side air bags (passenger cars only)
 - air conditioning
 - for station wagons, hatch backs, light goods vehicles: a cargo barrier complying with AS4034 (1998)
 - any vehicle modifications must be consistent with the manufacturer's recommendations.
 - generally white or a light colour, except when driving on snow trips.
 - 'intelligent' seat belt reminder system
- Mandatory features specific to 4WD vehicles. Rollover tow balls (enabling a trailer to roll over independently of the towing vehicle).
 - Trailers must comply with the requirements of VicRoads.
 - Preferred features specific to light commercial vehicles:
 - front passenger's air bag
 - reversing aid
 - a statement from the manufacturer that the vehicle meets the technical requirements of ADR 73
 - Offset Frontal Impact Occupant Protection.

4.2 Vehicle Manager Procedures

4.2.1 Vehicles and Equipment

- Ensure that vehicles are equipped with the following items:
 - Vehicle Owner's Manual
 - LTU 'Motor Vehicle Pocket Guide'
 - Pool Vehicle Log Book or Sheets
 - RACV membership card (if applicable)
 - fuel card (*Bundoora*: from Procurement & Contracts Branch; *Bendigo*: from Vehicles Office)
 - jack and wheel brace

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- roadworthy spare tyre
 - tow bars and couplings relevant to towing requirements.
- Ensure that vehicles, trailers and couplings where applicable are inspected and maintained by qualified personnel in accord with individual vehicle requirements as specified in their respective manuals, and withdrawn from use if found to be non roadworthy
 - Maintain a schedule of key maintenance tasks in a form accessible by vehicle users, signing and dating each task to certify its completion.
 - When a driver returns a car, check that the driver has recorded required information in the Log Sheet and arrange for any necessary maintenance prior to signing the vehicle out to another driver.
 - Ensure that essential ‘consumables’ such as oil, radiator coolant, windscreen washer water and tyre pressures are maintained at adequate levels, between normal servicing.
 - Ensure that non-standard vehicle-related equipment required for a particular purpose is made available to the responsible driver. Depending on the nature of the intended trip, such equipment might include:
 - a first aid kit
 - a mobile phone
 - a dry chemical fire extinguisher.
 - When a trailer is to be towed, ensure that the towing vehicle is appropriate for that purpose.
 - Equipment specific to 4WD vehicles:

4WD vehicles are often driven on University business in areas where it is advisable to carry an extensive range of equipment. Information about such equipment, and related issues, may be obtained from the ‘Desert Access’ website (see references).

4.2.2 Driving trip authorisation

- For each person intending to drive a University-owned vehicle, check the type and current validity of the driver’s licence.
- A Trip Authorisation and Booking Form must be completed for all trips exceeding 150 km.
- If the intended trip will be longer than 8 hours (driving plus non-driving time), *or* if it will entail driving at night, check that the proposed trip schedule is consistent with these procedures covering trip planning and fatigue management.
- If the intended trip is likely to demand skills or capacities different from those normally required (e.g. driving in low-friction conditions; towing a trailer), ensure that the driver(s) are aware of all relevant issues and that they feel adequately competent.

Particular vehicles and/or conditions:

4WD drive vehicles: check that the driver has completed a 4WD training course or can show extensive experience in driving 4WD vehicles.

Driving in low-friction conditions (e.g. off-road, in snow, on icy roads): drivers inexperienced in the particular conditions may feel the need for training related to these conditions, prior to undertaking a trip where such conditions might reasonably be expected.

Towing a trailer: check that the driver feels adequately experienced and does not require assistance to develop greater towing skills.

- Organise and arrange payment for specialist driver training, as appropriate.

4.2.3 Use of a private vehicle

Employees or other eligible people wishing to use their own vehicles on University business must:

- Have a vehicle that is adequate for the intended purpose. (This requirement is intended to protect the safety of all people travelling in the vehicle on University business, and to minimise problems associated with the use of unreliable vehicles on long trips.)
- Be granted permission in accord with LTU Business Procedures Manual, section 8.2.1, p.17.
- Follow all applicable guidelines concerning pre-trip preparation and on-road procedures, in accord with section 4.2.4. of these Procedures, and with information in the LTU 'Motor Vehicle Pocket Guide'.
- Ensure that the vehicle is serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.

4.2.4 Trip planning and fatigue management

- For trips exceeding 150 km, the driver must complete a Driving Trip Authorisation form and submit it to the Vehicle Manager (or the Bendigo Vehicle Office), together with supporting information.
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle, or in unfamiliar conditions, may require an initial period of familiarisation. Depending on the vehicle type and expected driving conditions, specific training might be needed. Where there is any doubt, these issues should be discussed with the Vehicle Use Supervisor, who will help to arrange any agreed driver training.
- Give particular consideration to the amount and type of driving expected of drivers aged less than 25 years, or with less than 5 years driving experience. Because such drivers tend, on average, to be at higher risk than older, more experienced drivers, plan the trip to minimise their driving, particularly under relatively high risk conditions (e.g. on rural highways and at night).
- Plan a work schedule that:
 - allows drivers to be well rested before departure, and avoids the need to drive with a significant sleep deficit (e.g. someone may have worked for most of the night when their sleep patterns were not adapted to 'night shift'; they should not then be expected to drive)
 - avoids driving at times when the driver would normally be asleep

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- avoids driving when it is more than 16 hours since the driver awoke from the previous night's sleep, regardless of time spent driving, or working on other tasks (e.g. it may be unwise to drive home from the airport after a long day away)
 - takes account of likely weather, road and traffic conditions and other factors likely to influence travel time
 - includes 10-15 minute rest breaks at approximately 2-hour intervals
 - does not entail more than a total of 10 hours 'on the road' in any 24 hour period
 - does not require more than 12 hours in any 24 hour period for any combination of: driving, other work duties and rest breaks
 - does not entail driving for most of the working day on more than three consecutive days; every fourth day should be a non-driving day.

4.3 Transporting Dangerous Goods, Hazardous and Radioactive Substances

- Comply with all relevant regulations in the Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail, 9.3 Safe Stowage and the Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Substances 1982.

4.4 Drivers – On-Road Requirements And Guidelines

4.4.1 Medications and drugs

- Avoid or at least minimise the consumption of alcohol or other drugs prior to driving (Blood Alcohol Concentration levels lower than the legal limit increase sleepiness, particularly in combination with fatigue and some medications).
- Minimise consumption of medications that may cause drowsiness.

4.4.2 Initial vehicle checks and adjustments; loading equipment

- Notify the Vehicle Use Supervisor / Vehicle Manager if available vehicles and/or related equipment are inappropriate or inadequate for particular duties.
- Check with the Vehicle Manager that all required maintenance tasks have been completed
- Place equipment in the boot or behind the cargo barrier of a station wagon, to prevent injury in the event of it becoming airborne during sudden change of speed or direction
- Check that the vehicle's information folder is in the vehicle and that it contains a full set of information
- Ensure that essential 'consumables' such as oil, radiator coolant, windscreen washer water and tyre pressures are maintained at adequate levels.

- If unfamiliar with the vehicle, check the functioning of controls for horn, turn indicators, windscreen (wipers and washers), lights (parking, low and high beam), front and rear demisters, and the location of opening levers for the bonnet, boot and petrol cap.
- Adjust the seating position as necessary to suit individual requirements.

4.4.3 Log sheet information

The Log Sheet must be completed for each trip undertaken in the University vehicle.

4.4.4 Comply with road laws and safety guidelines

- Obey all road traffic laws and drive in accord with particular road and traffic conditions; drivers are personally responsible for the payment of any traffic fines
- Use of a *hands-free* mobile phone while driving is strongly discouraged. It is recommended that drivers pull over to the side of the road to receive or make calls. Use of other mobile phones is illegal.
- Smoking is not permitted in university vehicles at any time.

4.4.5 Manage fatigue

- Maintain a schedule of driving and rest breaks in accord with the guidelines in 4.2.4.
- If feeling sleepy while driving, stop and take an adequate rest break even if it is less than 2 hours since commencement of driving. This might mean 20 minutes away from the vehicle or a night's sleep, depending on time of day and time since waking.

4.4.6 When refuelling

- Ensure that windscreens are cleaned and tyre pressure, oil and windscreen washer reservoir levels checked and replenished if necessary (refer to the Information Folder for details of appropriate tyre pressures and oil type).
- Only appropriate fuel is to be used in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.

4.4.7 Returning the vehicle

- Ensure that the fuel tank is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full
- Complete log book/sheet details:
 - any suspected or observed mechanical defect (including unusual sounds)
 - speedo reading and time at return
 - Name and signature of driver.

- Remove all rubbish and equipment other than that listed above; sweep clean the boot or tray if necessary

4.4.8 Drivers – Accident Procedures and Reporting

In the event of an accident, follow the procedure detailed in the vehicle's Information folder. Both major and minor crashes involving university vehicles are to be reported using the University Incident Report process.

Where the damage is greater than the insurance policy excess, if the vehicle is driveable then obtain two written quotations for repairs and send them to the University Insurance Office, Bundoora, with a claim form completed by the driver (available on www.latrobe.edu.au/www/insurance/uio4.htm). If the vehicle is not driveable, have it towed to the repairer of your choice or nearest point of safety – only one written quotation is required in these circumstances, together with a claim form. The Insurance Office will arrange for the vehicle to be assessed. Unless extenuating circumstances apply, insurers will not assess vehicles until a claim form and written quotations have been lodged.

5. REFERENCES

- VicRoads vehicle standards information⁹, registration requirements for light trailers manufactured before July 1991
- Review Of Best Practice Road Safety Initiatives In The Corporate And/Or Business Environment. Monash University Accident Research Centre, March 2000, Report No 166
- VicRoads vehicle standards, Information 24, Tow bars and couplings (for light trailers)2000
- Bendigo bus procedure
- Code of Practice for Safe Transport of Radiation Substances 1990

Websites with information about driving off-road and in remote areas:

http://www.desertaccess.com.au/to_take_list.htm

This site has an excellent equipment checklist, plus good 'survival guide' material of potential use to researchers/campers. It also has many useful links.

<http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

This Parks Victoria site gives current information on accessibility for all parks, including track closures, snow reports, etc, as well as links to National Parks.

<http://www.motorcare.com.au/beacon.htm>

This site includes information about how communication beacons function, plus other links.

6. CROSS LINKS

University Field work guidelines

Insurance www.latrobe.edu.au/www/insurance/adobe/h.pdf

Section 8.2.2 of the LTU Business Procedures Manual (for information on the categories of staff and other people who are entitled to drive University vehicles)

7. DOCUMENTATION

Vehicle Log Sheets

LTU 'Motor Vehicle Pocket Guide'

Vehicle Booking & Authorisation Form

The Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee approved this procedure at its meeting on 4 March 2002.