

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

SECTION: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

SUBJECT: VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The information and instructions included in this policy will enable operators of University vehicles to avoid situations that may compromise their safety or the safety of those in the vicinity of the vehicle, and avoid damaging the vehicle or other property. This policy applies to all vehicles owned, leased, or operated on University premises by University employees, volunteers, contractors, vendors, or agents.

II. DEFINITIONS

Licensed Vehicle: A University vehicle that is used primarily on public roadways, and is registered with the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Utility Vehicle: A University vehicle regardless of size or energy source, which is non-licensed, including golf carts, Club Cars, Cushman's, and Gators.

III. PROCEDURES

All Vehicles

A. Department Responsibilities

- i. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations regardless of whether vehicles are operated on sidewalks or roadways.
- ii. Vehicles must have proper University signage and numbering assigned by Facilities Management.
- iii. Vehicles shall be operated in a manner that does not interfere with normal pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow on roadways, sidewalks, and ramps.
- iv. University employees should not operate a vehicle managed by other departments unless approval has been granted by the supervisor of the department/unit to which the vehicle is assigned.

B. Authorized Vehicle Operators

- i. University employee (faculty, staff, or employed student) or students with expressed permission from university administrator
- ii. Possess a valid driver's license.
- iii. Approved Motor Vehicle Record on file with Risk Management (See University of Houston MAPP 06.05.03 – Motor Vehicle Record Evaluations)
- iv. Adhere to the State of Texas motor vehicle laws.

C. Operator Responsibilities

- i. Must be knowledgeable regarding the requirements and guidelines set by this policy.
- ii. Responsible for the security of the vehicle for the period that the vehicle is assigned to them.
- iii. Immediately notify their supervisor if and when their driver's license is suspended or revoked and discontinue operating a vehicle for university business at that time.
- iv. Provide timely notification of safety and maintenance concerns to the University Facilities Management Department.

Licensed Vehicles

D. Daily Inspection

- i. Inspections of licensed vehicles should be done at least once per day at the beginning of the operator's shift.
 - (1) Are tires inflated to the proper pressure?
 - (2) Are there any loose parts?
 - (3) Are all the fluids maintained at the proper levels?
 - (4) Is there any evidence of fluid leaks?
 - (5) Is the vehicle steering loose?
 - (6) Is the audible reverse alarm operational, if equipped?
 - (7) Are the brakes functioning properly?
 - (8) Are the side and rear view mirrors in good condition, e.g., not cracked, fogged, loose, or dirty?
 - (9) Are seat belts accessible for use and in good condition?
 - (10) Are all signals fully functional?
 - (11) Are all the original equipment safety features maintained in good working order as recommended by the manufacturer's service schedule?
 - (12) Are there any other visibly defective items noted?

E. General Operation Guidelines

- i. Seat belts must be used when provided.
- ii. Materials and equipment shall be loaded so they will not cause a hazard by shifting or falling off.
- iii. Loads that extend more than three feet from the rear of the vehicle must be flagged with a brightly colored material, usually red or orange.
- iv. Hazardous Conditions
 - (1) Operators must account for conditions that may require driving at slower speeds:
 - a. Slippery sidewalks, roadways, or other surfaces due to rain, ice, sand, or oil.
 - b. Heavy pedestrian traffic or pedestrians using cell phones or headphones.
 - c. Reduced visibility due to weather conditions.
 - d. When approaching intersections or blind spots.
- v. Intersections and Crosswalks
 - (1) Operators must come to a complete stop before crossing a roadway or proceeding through intersecting sidewalks or other areas that have blind spots.
 - (2) Operators must stop utility vehicles at all blind intersections and sound horn before proceeding.
 - (3) Operators may cross roadways only at pedestrian crosswalks by slowly driving

alongside the pedestrian crosswalk (do not drive within the marked pedestrian crosswalk).

(4) Operators must obey all traffic signals. Operators must look in all directions prior to entering the intersections and crossing.

- vi. Pedestrians (including those who employ wheelchairs or any type of mobility assistance)
 - (1) Vehicles shall be operated with the utmost courtesy, care, and consideration for the safety and convenience of pedestrians.
 - (2) Pedestrians shall be afforded the right-of-way at all times.

Utility Vehicles

F. Daily Inspection

- i. Inspections of utility vehicles should be done at least once per day at the beginning of the operator's shift.
 - (1) Are tires inflated to the proper pressure?
 - (2) Are operational flashing beacon lights on top of the utility vehicle operational?
 - (3) Are there any loose parts?
 - (4) Is the audible reverse alarm operational, if equipped?
 - (5) Are the side and rear view mirrors in good condition, e.g., not cracked, fogged, loose, or dirty?
 - (6) Are seat belts accessible for use and in good condition?
 - (7) Are all signals fully functional?
 - (8) Are there any other visibly defective items noted?

G. General Operation Guidelines

- i. Seat belts must be used when provided.
- ii. No utility vehicle shall be operated between dusk and dawn without properly working headlights and taillights.
- iii. All utility vehicles must be equipped with a functional horn.
- iv. Utility vehicles shall not be modified in any manner that affects the recommended mode of operation, speed, or safety of the vehicle.
- v. Operators of utility vehicles which are not equipped with turn indicators shall use appropriate hand signals.
- vi. Cargo
 - (1) Utility vehicles equipped with a cargo bed or ladder rack shall not be overloaded. Overloading decreases maneuverability and safe operation.
 - (2) Materials and equipment shall be loaded so they will not cause a hazard by shifting or falling off.
 - (3) Top heavy equipment is especially dangerous and should be secured near the center of the cart to avoid tipping. Be extremely careful during turning maneuvers.
 - (4) Loads must not extend more than one foot from either the side or the front of a utility vehicle.
 - (5) Loads that extend more than three feet from the rear of the cart must be flagged with a brightly colored material, usually red or orange.
- vii. Hazardous Conditions
 - (1) Operators must account for conditions that may require driving at slower speeds:

- a. Slippery sidewalks, roadways, or other surfaces due to rain, ice, sand, or oil.
 - b. Heavy pedestrian traffic or pedestrians using cell phones or headphones.
 - c. Reduced visibility due to weather conditions.
 - d. When approaching intersections or blind spots.
- viii. Intersections and Crosswalks
- (1) Operators must come to a complete stop before crossing a roadway or proceeding through intersecting sidewalks or other areas that have blind spots.
 - (2) Operators must stop utility vehicles at all blind intersections and sound horn before proceeding.
 - (3) Operators may cross roadways only at pedestrian crosswalks by slowly driving alongside the pedestrian crosswalk (do not drive within the marked pedestrian crosswalk).
 - (4) Operators must obey all traffic signals. Operators must look in all directions prior to entering the intersections and crossing.
- ix. Pedestrians (including those who employ wheelchairs or any type of mobility assistance)
- (1) Utility vehicles shall be operated with the utmost courtesy, care, and consideration for the safety and convenience of pedestrians.
 - (2) Pedestrians shall be afforded the right-of-way at all times.
 - (3) Operators must account for the fact that a pedestrian may be physically impaired and unable to hear or see the utility vehicle, or unable to move quickly.
 - (4) Operators must reduce speeds in heavy pedestrian traffic or stop until the traffic has lessened.
 - (5) Operators must never attempt to get pedestrians out of their way by intimidating them to step off the sidewalk or use of the vehicle horn.
 - (6) Whenever an operator feels he/she cannot predict the actions of a pedestrian or other vehicle operator, he/she must come to a complete stop before proceeding.
- x. Parking
- (1) Utility vehicles shall not be parked within 25 feet of the entrance or exit of any building.
 - (2) Utility vehicles shall not be parked in a way that blocks stairs, sidewalks, fire hydrants, fire lanes, or handicap ramps.
 - (3) Utility vehicles shall not be parked in any manner likely to obstruct or interfere with the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
 - (4) Utility vehicles shall not be driven or parked in the breezeway of any building.
 - (5) Utility vehicles shall not be parked or driven in covered entrances of buildings.
 - (6) Utility vehicles shall not be driven in buildings

IV. REFERENCES

Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP) Number 03.01.04 Fleet Management Plan

University of Houston SAM Number 03.E.06 Business Use of Vehicles