



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

## Operating Policy and Procedure

**HSCEP OP:** 77.08, **Student Travel Policy**

**AUTHORITY:** This policy is required by Section 51.949 of the Texas Education Code.

**PURPOSE:** This policy regulates any travel undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled at TTUHSC El Paso to an activity or event that is located more than 25 miles from the campus of TTUHSC El Paso or traveling abroad. This operating policy applies to any event or activity which is organized, sponsored and/or funded by TTUHSC El Paso, is undertaken using a vehicle owned or leased by the university or is a required event or activity by a student organization registered at TTUHSC El Paso.

Modes of travel by students to events or activities as defined above include:

1. personally-owned vehicles;
2. commercial vehicles, including but not limited to rental cars, vans, chartered buses;
3. commercial airlines; and,
4. use of TTUHSC El Paso-owned vehicle.

The purpose of this policy is to help minimize the risks of liability connected with motor vehicle travel by University faculty, staff and students. The policy applies to the use of motor vehicles in any activities directly related to the academic, research, and/or administrative responsibility of the department involved. This policy also applies to travel undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled at the University to reach a University-related activity located more than 25 miles from the University. It applies to travel required by a registered student organization.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed on July 1 of each even-numbered year (ENY) by the Asst. Vice President of Student Services, Directors of Payment Services and General Services, and the Senior Associate General Counsel or their designees, with recommendations for revision forwarded to the vice president for academic affairs and the chief financial officer or their designees by August 1.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

**1. Generally Applicable Definitions.**

- a. **Student.**  
A Student is anyone eligible to hold a current student identification card.
- b. **Sponsor.**  
The sponsor of a student activity is selected by the organization from faculty or full-time staff members who have been employed by the University for at least one year.
- c. **Authorized Passenger.**  
Any employee, sponsor, student, or prospective student being recruited to participate in specific university program or activity. In all such cases, reasonable efforts shall be made by the responsible department to ensure that each participant executes a release and hold harmless agreement.

- d. **University-Related Activities.**  
University-related activities are those activities that are consistent with the University's mission and that are approved by the appropriate administrative unit. This includes activities organized or sponsored by the University, funded by the University, or using vehicles owned or leased by the University.

## 2. **Travel Using University-Owned Vehicles.**

- a. **Appropriate Use.**  
Only persons who are acting within the course and scope of University-related activities may use university vehicles.
- b. **Drivers.**  
Because of the risks of personal injury, it is required that only those persons whose names appear on the approved driver's list be considered or allowed to use University-owned motor vehicles. To be considered for approval, drivers must complete the Driver Approval Request form (Attachment C) and send to the TTUS Office of Risk Management or designee, TTU M/S 2003. This completed form must be RECEIVED by the Office of Risk Management or designee 12-14 working days prior to when a vehicle is to be driven. If students will be using state-owned or rental vehicles, the following is required:
  - (1) The requesting department or unit must submit a completed Texas Tech University System Driver Approval Request form (Attachment C) for each driver seeking approved status to the TTUS Office of Risk Management.
  - (2) Qualifications for drivers of all University or rental vehicles are as follows:
    - (a) Must have a valid (Texas or other U.S. state or District of Columbia) driver's license, be at least 18 years of age and have a valid license for at least two years. Foreign students with no driving experience in the U.S. will not qualify, and an alternate driver will be required;
    - (b) Must sign an Indemnification Agreement (Attachment A);
    - (c) Must not have more than two moving violations within the last 18 months;
    - (d) Are required to report any driving violations to their immediate supervisor within five days. This includes violations that occur while driving a vehicle not owned by the University;
    - (e) Must not have had any violations for drunk driving, driving under the influence of drugs or reckless driving.
    - (f) Must not have had a reinstated license in effect for less than one year after a revocation;
    - (g) Must not have a suspended license; and
    - (h) Must be able to provide documentation of current personal automobile liability insurance.
  - (3) Additional qualifications for drivers of vans equipped for 15 passengers:
    - (a) Must be at least 21 years of age and held a valid license, as defined in (2)(a) for at least two years;
    - (b) Foreign students with no driving experience in the U.S. will not qualify, and an alternate driver will be required;
    - (c) Must comply with Motor Vehicle check on an annual basis;
    - (d) Must successfully complete a 15-Passenger Van driver training course;
    - (e) Must complete 15-Passenger Van retraining annually;
    - (f) Must not have more than one moving violation in the last 18 months; and

- (g) Must successfully pass a drug test.

### 3. **Operator Conduct.**

Any operator of a University vehicle must take a 15-minute break every 3 hours and **may drive no more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period**. When the vehicle driven is a van with passengers, **a second person must remain awake at all times and must ride in the front passenger seat**.

- a. Those that operate a University vehicle represent the University to the general public. The image conveyed does affect the University; therefore, an operator:
  - (1) MUST NOT use University vehicles for personal transportation or business;
  - (2) MUST NOT allow alcoholic beverages or narcotics to be transported or consumed in any University vehicle;
  - (3) MUST NOT pick up hitchhikers or transport family members;
  - (4) MUST NOT allow the vehicle to become unnecessarily dirty and present an unfavorable image to the general public;
  - (5) MUST observe all traffic rules and regulations;
  - (6) MUST drive carefully, safely, and courteously;
  - (7) MUST require driver and all passengers to use seat belts and other appropriate occupant restraints at all times the vehicle is being operated;
  - (8) MUST NOT operate the vehicle unless all occupants are wearing the appropriate restraints; and
  - (9) MUST NOT allow the number of passengers to exceed the authorized capacity of the vehicle.
  - (10) The driver MUST NOT use a cell phone, other type of communication device, or other electronic equipment when the vehicle is moving. The driver is only permitted to use these types of items when the vehicle is stopped and pulled off to the side of the road and parked. Care should be exercised when using GPS or any instrumentation that distracts the driver.
- b. When a vehicle is damaged through operator misuse or operated by a person under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, the department head is responsible for obtaining a complete statement of the circumstances and a copy of the police report for the appropriate administrative action. Citations for all parking and traffic violations will be the personal responsibility of the operator.
- c. Operators shall use common sense when driving. For road trips of 100 miles or more, driving should be shared, if possible, and frequent breaks should be taken.

### 4. **Accidents.**

The following procedures should be followed whenever a University vehicle is involved in an accident, regardless of the extent of damage:

- a. Stop immediately and notify local police so that an official report can document the accident;
- b. Take necessary steps to prevent another accident;
- c. Contact a doctor, ambulance, or emergency medical team, if necessary. Render aid to the injured until help arrives;
- d. Obtain names and addresses of all witnesses;
- e. Provide all required information to the law enforcement officer;
- f. Notify the department head or supervisor. If the operator is unable to contact or reach the department head or supervisor, the operator shall contact the Texas Tech Police Department; and

- g. Refer to TTUHSC El Paso OP 76.34 for the completion of required vehicle accident documentation, summarized in the Vehicle Fleet Management Handbook, Section 1, M.

An operator may be asked to submit to a “for cause” screen in compliance with TTUHSC El Paso OP 70.39, Drug-Free Workplace Policy, when there is any accident causing injury to anyone, damage to property of TTUHSC El Paso or others, or when the operator received a traffic citation as a result of an on-the-job motor vehicle accident. If the operator refuses the screen, the individual will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**5. Travel by Commercial or Charter Aircraft.**

All students traveling on official university business or activities will use only those aircraft and aircraft operators that meet the requirements set forth below. The travel regulations contained in the Texas Appropriations Act and other applicable laws will be followed by the university.

TTUHSC El Paso will only use aircraft and aircraft operators that are flight worthy and are certified and operate under Subchapters F & G, Parts 91, 119, 121, 125 or 135 as applicable in Chapter 1, Federal Aviation Regulations, 14 Code of Federal Regulations (the “C.F.R.”). In addition all aircraft used pursuant to this provision must be piloted, at a minimum, by pilots that are fully qualified and insured in the aircraft being flown, possessing a commercial pilot certificate with instrument rating.

**6. Travel Using Personal Vehicles.**

The University recognizes that individuals occasionally use personal vehicles while engaged in University-related activities on campus and in the local area. Because personal automobile insurance will be looked to first in the event of an accident, all persons who use their personal vehicles while conducting University business should be made aware of the possibility of personal liability related to such use. No University coverage for personal injuries is available to students if they drive their personal vehicles on university-related activities as defined hereinabove.

**7. Reimbursement for Costs of Personal Vehicles.**

Mileage costs related to any significant use of personal vehicles to conduct University-related business may be reimbursed to students upon approval of Department heads. The travel office should be contacted for additional information.

**8. Use of Personal Vehicles Not Required.**

No individual shall be required to use a personal vehicle to perform University-related activities, with the exception of travel to and from clinical affiliation sites.

**9. Policy Concerning Use of Personal Vehicles by Students.**

- a. Use of personal vehicles by students to drive to University-related activities is discouraged.
- b. If students use their personal vehicles, and/or transport other students as passengers, they need to be informed in advance that their personal insurance will be primarily responsible for any liability that may arise from such use.
- c. No University coverage for personal injuries is available to students if they drive their personal vehicles on University-related activities as defined hereinabove.

**10. Policy Concerning Student Releases and Medical Authorization.**

Each student who travels by any form of transportation to participate in a University-related activity, including but not limited to an academically-related field trip, course, competition, contest, or non-academic activity, must, prior to such activity, execute a copy of the Travel Release and Indemnification Agreement (Attachment A) and the Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment (Attachment B) which are attached to this policy.

**11. International Travel by Students.**

Students traveling abroad for any TTUHSC El Paso related reason (e.g., conferences, research, competition, community service, mission work, etc.) in any status (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate, graduate, supported by scholarships, assistantships, institutional, etc.) must abide and **complete the required forms through the Office of International Affairs, TTUHSC El Paso OP 10.29 regarding procedures for Pre-Departure 4.(a), 1; 2 (a-e) and Exit Counseling 5 (1) a-c.**

Students are not permitted to travel to a nation that is subject to a Travel Warning issued by the United States Department of State. To determine if a country is the subject of such a travel advisory, contact the Office of International Affairs (OIA) or the U.S. Department of State Office in Washington, DC at 202-647-4000 or through the web at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html). In the event the Department of State issues a travel advisory to which a student will be traveling, OIA will contact the student immediately. If the country has been placed on the Travel Warning list, the student must cancel the trip.

**When an emergency occurs, procedures for Response to Emergencies Abroad will be followed (HSC OP 10.29, Attachment B).**

**12. Guidelines Concerning Safe Travel Practices.**

- a. Each administrative unit approving University-related travel, especially travel that involves students, is encouraged to promulgate guidelines that encourage safe driving and minimize risks of injury during that travel.
- b. Registered student organizations are free to make such off-campus trips as are deemed worthwhile by the membership and sponsors of the organization. Participation in such off-campus trips and activities is at the students' own risk. If personal injury or accident should occur to students or other persons during such activities, TTUHSC El Paso will assume no responsibility, financial or otherwise.
- c. Faculty and staff sponsors and organization officers are urged to take all possible precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of all persons participating in off-campus activities.
- d. There is no official registration procedure for official off-campus trips, and there are no official excused class absences for students who participate in off-campus trips sponsored by student organizations. Students will be responsible for making their own individual arrangements in advance with instructors for class work missed while participating in an off-campus trip. Instructors may set their own requirements for class work missed under such circumstances; they must grant students an opportunity to make up all course work missed while participating in an official off-campus trip.