



Policy #FA020: Vehicle Use

Recommended for Approval by: Teresa Smith Digitally signed by Teresa Smith
Date: 2025.09.25 11:34:40 -04'00'
Teresa E. Smith, Ph.D.
Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration

Approved by: 
Jon Anderson, Ph.D.
President

Effective Date: 09/23/2025

A. Intent

The intent of this policy is to establish the requirements for the authorized use of Pennsylvania Western University (PennWest) provided (owned, leased, and rented) vehicles. This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff who travel on university business or operate university-provided vehicles. This policy is superseded by any applicable local, state or federal regulation where the regulation is more stringent than this policy.

B. Definition(s)

- **Distracted Driving** – Anything that inhibits a driver from paying full attention to the task of driving or inhibits them from being fully engaged to adequately respond to changes in the driving environment. These distractions may be visual (eyes off the road), manual (hands off the wheel), or cognitive (mind off the driving task).
- **University Business** – Any activity engaged in on behalf of the University for the performance of, or necessary to, or during, the duties of employment.
- **University-Provided Vehicle** – Any vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the University.
- **Utility Vehicle** – A non-licensed vehicle powered by electric or an internal combustion motor, including, but not limited to, golf carts, UTV, tractors, and mowers. These do not include wheelchairs or other electronic personal assistance mobility devices.
- **Vehicle** – A motorized form of transportation that is licensed for use on public roadways.

C. Policy Statement

- **Authorized Drivers**

All drivers of university-provided vehicles must meet the requirements listed below.

- Individual must be a PennWest employee.
 - Student employees at PennWest who receive salary remuneration (with taxes withheld) while in pursuit of university business and that are covered for worker's compensation liability in the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program can operate University vehicles under the Automobile Liability Self-Insurance Program. This means the student employee must be "on the clock" receiving remuneration for the time he or she is behind the wheel of the vehicle.
 - Undergraduate students and graduate assistants on fee remission only, are not University employees and are not authorized to drive university vehicles. Likewise, interns and volunteers that do not receive remuneration from the University for their services are not authorized to drive University vehicles.
 - Volunteers that are required to drive university-provided vehicles must be hired temporarily and must be "on the clock" receiving remuneration for the time he or she is behind the wheel of the vehicle. Please contact Human Resources to facilitate.
- Must be at least 18 years old. Note: To operate a university-provided passenger van (12 passengers or more) you must be at least 25 years old, unless further restricted by a vehicle rental agreement. The at least 25 years old restriction does not apply to university vans that are only operated on university property (i.e., Facilities or IT vans).
- Possess a valid driver's license with applicable endorsements, where required.
 - All drivers are subject to periodic driver's license verification checks by the university. The driver's license verification checks will be used to confirm that they possess a current and valid driver's license, with applicable endorsements.
 - Operators of departmental vehicles shall have their driver's license verified by their supervisor prior to initial operation and annually. The driver's license verification is used to confirm that the employee possesses a current valid driver's license, with applicable endorsements.
 - Student employee drivers shall have their driver history checked prior to initial operation and annually. Student employees will not be permitted to operate a university-provided vehicle if their driver's history indicates any at fault incidents or driving violations within the past 36 months.
- Complete the University's Driver Safety Training.
- **University Provided Vehicles (Owned, Leased, or Rented)**
 - The use of a university-provided vehicle must be for the purpose of conducting legitimate business of PennWest.
 - The operation of any University provided vehicle shall be in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, rental agreements, and all policies. Any fines, including towing and/or impound fees, resulting from violations are the responsibility of the driver and not the University. Fines and penalties are not a reimbursable expense.
 - Non-University employees may accompany a PennWest employee in university-provided vehicles only when they have a legitimate business interest in the purpose of the trip and their presence is actively related to the direct conduct of university business. PennWest students may be passengers in university-provided

vehicles to attend official University sanctioned activities to conduct the business of the University. When a hotel is authorized for travel and it requires valet parking, the hotel's valet may drive the University-provided vehicle to park it in the hotel's required parking facility.

- Student organizations requiring vehicles for travel that is not directly related to university business should contact their respective Student Association (i.e. organization meetings, dinners/parties, fundraisers, etc.).
- Seat belts are required to be worn at all times by all individuals occupying the vehicle. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers are properly secure before the vehicle is put into motion. Passengers utilizing wheelchairs shall have their wheelchair properly secured before the vehicle is put in motion.
- The use of hand-held mobile electronic devices, while operating a vehicle, is prohibited. The use of hands-free technology is permitted. All employees are discouraged from engaging in distracted driving and are encouraged to pull over at a safe location to complete the task safely. The use of handheld cellular phones or mobile electronic devices is permitted if the employee is reporting an emergency or hazardous road condition, or the employee is a university first responder (i.e. University Police, Safety & Risk Management) and is using the phone or device as part of an essential service of their official duties.
- No animals, except service animals, are permitted in university-provided vehicles at any time, except when transportation is necessary in the conduct of official University business.
- Drivers shall not be under the influence of medications, alcohol, drugs, or other substances that cause drowsiness or other physical or mental impairment at the time of operation. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in university-provided vehicles, except when transportation is necessary in the conduct of official University business.
- Smoking, vaping, or similar activities are not permitted in university-provided vehicles.
- Transporting of hazardous materials in university-provided vehicles shall only occur in compliance with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Materials of Trade Exceptions (49 CFR 173.6).
- All University-owned vehicles shall be equipped with a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Self Insurance Financial Responsibility Identification Card.
- All University-owned vehicles, including DGS vehicles, are restricted to traveling within a 350-mile radius from their campus of origination. If travel is to occur beyond 350 miles (one-way), then a university-provided rental vehicle shall be utilized.
- Insurance
 - University-owned vehicles have liability coverage under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program, which is limited to \$250,000 per person and \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
 - University-provided leased vehicles (non-DGS vehicles) ARE NOT covered under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program because the Commonwealth is not authorized to extend its self-insurance vehicle liability coverage to non-Commonwealth vehicles. Insurance coverage will need to be provided by the leasing agency or by a third party through the Bureau of Finance and Risk Management (FARM).
 - University-provided rental vehicles ARE NOT covered under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program because the Commonwealth is not

authorized to extend its self-insurance vehicle liability coverage to non-Commonwealth vehicles. The University has an agreement with Enterprise Rent-A-Car to provide insurance coverage for rental vehicles as part of their contract. If a department wishes to rent from another rental company, they MUST purchase additional coverage for collision and liability at the highest level available. That department will be responsible for absorbing the increased cost.

- **Utility Vehicles**

- Utility vehicles must be operated by a university employee that is at least 18 years old.
- Utility vehicles must be for the purpose of conducting legitimate University business and the operation shall be in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and all policies. Any fines resulting from violations, including towing and/or impound fees, are the responsibility of the driver and not the University. Fines and penalties are not a reimbursable expense.
- Utility vehicles may only be operated to transport people, equipment or supplies.
- Utility vehicles may be operated on walkways or sidewalks, when authorized, in such a manner that they do not impede or interfere with normal pedestrian traffic, and with the utmost courtesy, care and consideration for the safety of pedestrians who will be always given the right of way.
- Utility vehicles shall be equipped with a slow-moving vehicle emblem, when traveling on a public roadway at speeds less than 25 MPH, in accordance with the Commonwealth Vehicle Code.
- Passengers must be seated in seats designed for such use and utilize seat belts, if utility vehicle is equipped. Non-University employees may accompany a university employee only when they have a legitimate business interest in the purpose of the trip and their presence is actively related to the direct conduct of university business.

- **Personally Owned Vehicles (POVs)**

- Use of a personally owned vehicle for conducting legitimate University business requires approval of the department head or his/her designee, in accordance with the University's established travel management process.
- Mileage reimbursement shall be compensated in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. This reimbursement is intended to cover the costs of operating an employee's vehicle, including insurance costs.
- Insurance
 - Personal vehicles also ARE NOT covered under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program. The employee's personal automotive liability insurance will be responsible for providing primary coverage. Commonwealth provides excess liability insurance coverage for employees who use their personal vehicles for travel in the conduct of official University business. The Commonwealth's excess liability insurance only provides coverage after the coverage provided by any other applicable and collectible insurance (including the employee's personal automotive liability insurance, a family member's personal automobile insurance policy that names the driver as an additional insured, homeowner's insurance, healthcare insurance, worker's compensation insurance and any other) are exhausted.
 - If a university employee's personally owned vehicle is damaged due to the employee's negligence, the employee's personal automobile insurance physical damage coverage is the only available remedy to pay for all damages to, or

replacement of, the employee's vehicle. The Commonwealth does not provide physical damage coverage insurance for an employee's vehicle or personal property. Coverage for these items may be provided by the employee's personal insurance.

- Employees using or anticipating the use of their personal automobiles on university business are advised and strongly encouraged to notify their insurance carrier of such use or anticipated use.
- **Student Association Vehicles**
 - Student Associations may own, lease, and/or insure their own vehicles for use by student organizations. The use of those vehicles requires their official approval from the appropriate campus Student Association. University employees, upon approval from the respective Student Association, are authorized to function as a driver or passenger of their vehicle if they are conducting business on behalf of the Student Association.
 - Insurance
 - Student Association vehicles ARE NOT covered under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program. Students and/or employees who operate vehicles that are owned by the Student Government Associations, are not covered for automobile liability under the Commonwealth's Self-Insurance Program.

D. Related Policies

[Travel \(FA031\)](#)

[Safety and Risk Management \(FA052\)](#)

E. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of Finance and Administration or the Office of Safety & Risk Management.

F. Policy Review Schedule

Each policy shall be reviewed by the corresponding Vice President on a regular basis as appropriate.

Procedure #FA020: Vehicle Use

Corresponding Policy:	Vehicle Use (FA020)
Responsible Office:	Office of Finance and Administration and Safety & Risk Management
Effective Date:	09/23/2025
Last Reviewed/Updated Date:	Not Applicable

A. Intent

The purpose of the Vehicle Use Procedure is to ensure the safe, efficient, and responsible use of vehicles by establishing clear rules, responsibilities, and guidelines for operators.

B. Definition(s)

- **Distracted Driving** – Anything that inhibits a driver from paying full attention to the task of driving or inhibits them from being fully engaged to adequately respond to changes in the driving environment. These distractions may be visual (eyes off the road), manual (hands off the wheel), or cognitive (mind off the driving task).
- **University Business** – Any activity engaged in on behalf of the University for the performance of, or necessary to, or during, the duties of employment.
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- **Vehicle** – A motorized form of transportation that is licensed for use on public roadways.

C. Procedure

- **Driver Approval Procedure**
 - Operators of departmental vehicles shall submit the Driver Approval Form and a copy of their driver's license to their supervisor for review and initial approval. This review and approval shall occur before the initial operation and annually in July of each year thereafter. The completed documents shall be submitted to Safety & Risk Management to verify that the employee has completed the required driver safety training and retain the driver's approval records.
 - Student employees shall submit the completed Driver Approval Form and a copy of their driver's license to their supervisor for review and initial approval. This review and approval shall occur before the initial operation and annually after July of each year thereafter. The completed documents shall be submitted to Safety & Risk Management to verify that the student employee has completed the required driver safety training. Safety & Risk Management will work with the University Police to perform the driver history check. Safety & Risk Management will notify

the supervisor of approval and will retain the driver's approval records.

- **Motor Vehicle Collision Procedure**

In the event you are involved in a motor vehicle collision involving a university-provided (owned, leased, or rented) vehicle or your personal vehicle (on university business), regardless of severity:

- Stop immediately. Take necessary steps to prevent another incident.
- If the incident occurs on university property, immediately notify the University Police.
- If the incident occurs off-campus, call 911 if the incident results in:
 - Injury or death to any person; or
 - Damage to any vehicle involved to the extent that it cannot be driven under its own power in its customary manner without further damage or hazard to the vehicle, other traffic elements, or the roadway, and therefore requires towing.
- If it does not result in any of the above:
 - Take pictures to document the incident.
 - Exchange insurance information
 - University/Commonwealth-Owned Vehicles – Present the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Self Insurance Financial Responsibility Identification Card
 - University-Provided Rental Vehicles – Present the Rental Agreement
 - Provide Safety & Risk Management's contact information

Safety & Risk Management
(814) 732-2709
safety@pennwest.edu

- DO NOT make any statement, oral or written, as to WHO was at fault. The appropriate authority will decide fault or liability.
- Obtain the following information:
 - License plate numbers of all vehicles involved.
 - Names, phone numbers, addresses of all people involved.
 - Names, phone numbers, and addresses of all witnesses, if possible.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Complete the University's Incident Report. Submit the completed Incident Report and corresponding documentation to safety@pennwest.edu. All forms are to be submitted to Safety & Risk Management within 24 hours of the time of the incident.

- **Disabled Vehicle Procedure**

In the event your university vehicle becomes disabled:

- Do not slam on your brakes.
- Move the vehicle off the road to a safe location, if possible.
- Activate your hazard lights.
- Contact your supervisor.
- University-Provided Rental Vehicle – Notify your rental company for assistance. Additional information can be found on your rental agreement.
- If vehicle can be driven safely, continue to a service garage or return to campus.
- If a vehicle cannot be driven safely, contact a towing service to transport the vehicle to a service garage for repairs.
- Arrange for alternative transportation.

- Keep all receipts for expenses incurred.

For questions regarding Motor Vehicle Collision Procedures and Disabled Vehicle Procedures, please contact Safety & Risk Management at safety@pennwest.edu or 814-732-2709.

D. Related Policies or Procedures

Vehicle Use Policy (FA020)

E. Forms/Resources

[PennWest Driver Approval Form](#)

F. Contact Information

For more information, please contact the Office of Finance and Administration or the Office of Safety & Risk Management.

G. Procedure Review Schedule

Each procedure shall be reviewed by the corresponding Vice President on a regular basis as appropriate.