

Vehicle Safety Guidelines

As a University driver, you have a responsibility to your passengers, the university, and to the general public with whom you share the highway. The safety of our students, faculty, staff and the community is a central concern of Stetson University. The following guidelines governing the use of University owned, leased, rented, or other work related vehicles are designed to support safe and prudent use of vehicles.

Please read the following information carefully. As an approved driver, you have a responsibility to review and adhere to the following guidelines.

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

Driver Adjustments:

- **Always wear seatbelts! – (Passengers Too)**
- 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, locate important features & controls such as: lights, windshield wipers, air-conditioning & emergency signal controls are located.
- Secure any loose or miscellaneous items in the front driver area (ie. purses, cd's, etc.)
- Pre-program radio stations or have front passenger control radio/cd's/tapes.

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.
- Seatbelts reduce risk of death in rollover accidents by 75%!
- Failure to wear your seatbelt will 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
- Drivers shall be alcohol and drug free. This includes prescription and non-prescription drugs that may impair a driver's judgment or driving ability.
- Concentrate on driving at all times and maintain a safe speed- Consider weather & road conditions
- Avoid distractions such as eating, excessive radio volume, cell phones, searching/reaching for items, etc. **Never Text or Email while driving!**
- 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 & motorcycles
- Always allow a safe following distance – Consider weather & road conditions- Never Tailgate

Check Blind Spots frequently

- Especially when changing lanes & backing
- 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 & avoid backing into traffic.
- As an added caution- use your emergency flashers while backing up & turn down radio

Before backing up, make sure all is clear behind you – Do not rely solely on mirrors.

When in doubt – check it out: (G.O.A.L. – Get Out And Look!)

- Back up slowly

Turning and Changing Lanes:

- Use turn signals well in advance
- Always watch for pedestrians, small vehicles, & motorcycles in intersections when turning
- **When changing lanes- double check blindspots**
- 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 while fatigued (Change drivers or stop to rest every 2-3 hours)
- Driving during extreme windy, rainy or hazardous weather conditions
- Following too closely (at *least* a 4 second following distance- note road conditions)
- Sudden stops or panic stops – (look ahead & signal early - slow down gradually)

Avoid Rear-End Collisions – Look Ahead, Avoid Sudden Stops, and Never Tailgate

Reduce distractions:

- When possible, have a passenger assist with navigation and cell phone calls.
- **Texting and Emailing should never be performed while driving!**
- Avoid eating, excessive radio volume, or searching/reaching for items within car
- As added precaution, pull over to a safe place when needing to do the above activities

Rental Vehicles:

Make sure to note on the Rental Car Agreement “Stetson University” along with your name as the driver. Always keep your copy of the Rental Agreement as it may be needed later in event of an incident/damages.

Drivers should thoroughly inspect rental vehicles for damages prior to leaving the rental facility and obtain copies of rental paperwork that reflects any existing damages. Once the driver leaves the rental facility, any damages found upon return that were not previously noted are the responsibility of the renting party and corresponding university department. This would include damages up to the existing policy deductible (currently \$500) Departments utilizing rental vehicles should consider this exposure when planning travel budgets, or plan on extra expense of obtaining the rental company’s vehicle Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), which provides payment for damages to rental vehicles.

Vehicle Damages/Reporting Accidents:

If any damages occur to a Stetson rental, leased or owned vehicle, the department utilizing the vehicle shall be responsible for the cost of damages up to the \$500 auto deductible.

Drivers should report all business related auto accidents to their supervisor and to Risk Management: (386-822-7701) or riskmanagement@stetson.edu within 24 hours, or immediately if injuries result.

If involved in an auto accident:

- Notify the proper authorities immediately and obtain a copy of the police report, or obtain information from the Officer needed to obtain the report.
- Whether or not an officer is in attendance, always exchange pertinent information with the “Other Driver” for insurance filing. (Insurance Company Info, Name, phone, address, year/make/model of other vehicle, if any passenger or witness, etc)
- Note: Date & Location of Accident, Name of Law Enforcement Agency (DPD, State Trooper, County Sheriff, etc) and any Damages.

Complete the [University Vehicle Accident Report](#) as soon as possible.

Please Keep The Above Information For Your Reference

VEHICLE SAFETY GUIDELINES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have thoroughly read and acknowledge the preceding information regarding vehicle safety guidelines, and understand the hazards, safety precautions & guidelines specified and agree to abide by them. I also understand that failure to adhere to the vehicle safety guidelines could be detrimental to my safety, the safety of others, and could impact my driving duties and/or result in corrective action.

Date: _____

Signature of Driver

Print Name

Department

Supervisor Signature

Print Name

(Please forward copy of this signature page to Risk Management – Unit 8420)