

## Transportation

**DRIVER TRAINING** begins when a driver has been selected. The primary focus of the training should be on three areas:

**1. Vehicle operation.** Those who drive the church vehicle should receive an orientation on

- a. How to operate all controls (ignition, lights, etc.).
- b. How to interpret all dashboard instrumentation
- c. How to adjust mirrors
- d. How to back up safely
- e. How to make a right turn if driving a bus
- f. How to fill the vehicle with gas
- g. How to open the hood and trunk
- h. How to check engine fluid levels
- i. How to change a fuse
- j. How to change a flat tire
- k. How to lock and unlock the vehicle
- l. Any other routine maintenance issues

***An operational manual should be kept in the vehicle.***

**2. Policies and procedures.**

Individuals should receive a complete review of all driving policies and procedures before they begin to drive. They should be in writing. The policies should clarify who can drive and under what conditions. Attention should be given to the use of alcohol and drugs, including prescription drugs and over the counter drugs. No driver should be impaired in any way, including using medication that could make the driver sleepy. Procedures should clarify how to drive, including the use of driving checklists, and how to respond to a variety of specific situations including bad weather, an accident, an emergency, a mechanical problem or flat tire, getting lost, or running out of gas.

**3. Occupant safety.**

**Seat belts** should include both lap belt and a shoulder strap. The lap belt should be worn low across the hips and not across the abdomen. The shoulder strap should cross the collar bone and go over the breastbone. There should be no excess slack in the seat belt.

There should be as little slack as possible in the belt. Children should not wear a shoulder strap behind their back or sit on the edge of the seat.

**Air bags** are important and have been proven to save lives, however, it is important for children age 12 and under always to ride, properly restrained, in the back seat. Under no circumstances should an infant ever be placed in the front seat in a rear facing safety seat. Occasions arise when a child under 12 must sit in the front seat. In those situations, secure the child in an age appropriate restraint based on their size and weight.

Adults need to take care when riding in vehicles equipped with air bags. The front seats should be moved back as far as practical to reduce the impact of the air bag if it should deploy. This is particularly important for smaller adults. Serious injuries can occur if an adult is within 2-3 inches of a deploying air bag. If a vehicle has a tilt steering wheel, it is best to tilt it down so it will deploy toward the chest and not toward the head.

Finally, if a church sells any vehicles that have had air bags turned off, it is imperative that the buyer knows that information. It should be provided on the bill of sale.

**Transporting infants and toddlers** must consider what is safe.

- a. Proper use of child safety seats requires the safety seat to be anchored in three locations, two lower anchors and one upper anchor. The new standard requires that 100 percent of all cars and light trucks manufactured after 9/1/2000 have upper anchor tether installed. The final phase-in for the lower anchor tethers occurs two years later. All safety seats manufactured after 9/1/99 must comply with the new standard for the upper tether attachment. Full compliance for all three anchors must occur by 9/1/2002.
- b. Once the child outgrows the safety seat, the child should use a booster seat. Booster seats should be used when the child is about 40 lbs. And should continue to be used until the seat/lap belt fits properly, generally when the child is between 60-80 lbs. Children should never wear a shoulder belt behind their back or under their arms.
- c. Seating arrangements should always have infants in the back seat in a rear-facing restraint. The safety seat should be positioned so the infant reclines at a 45 degree angle to keep the baby's head from dropping forward. Children should not ride in the front seat until they are age 13.

**Temperature and safety.** Church vehicles that are used to transport children should be equipped with air conditioning. The National Health and Safety Standards for child care programs indicate that vehicles should be air conditioned when the outside temperature exceeds 75 degrees F. They should be heated when the outside temperature falls below 50 degrees F.

**Selecting Routes.** Selecting a safe route is fundamental to transportation safety. All routes should be planned in advance.

Stop the vehicle and park it off the road in a safe location until control is maintained. Don't argue, threaten unless you plan to follow through, or discipline the whole group – focus on the ringleader. Never ask a child to get off the bus except at his/her appropriate stop. Follow church policy on preparing a discipline report and maintain records of each incident.

Use the following checklists with your drivers:

Safety should be a higher priority than time. In selecting a route, attention should be given to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> road conditions                        | <input type="checkbox"/> weather conditions                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> traffic congestion                     | <input type="checkbox"/> pedestrians                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> one-way streets                        | <input type="checkbox"/> traffic patterns                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hills and curves                       | <input type="checkbox"/> parking area                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sunlight                               | <input type="checkbox"/> loading and unloading area        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> high crash locations                   | <input type="checkbox"/> fueling                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> road construction and detours          | <input type="checkbox"/> rest stop                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> railroad crossings                     | <input type="checkbox"/> food stops                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wildlife                               | <input type="checkbox"/> low clearances                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trees and shrubs that block visibility | <input type="checkbox"/> weight limits                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> help if a break down occurs tolls |

**Managing children** should follow three basic rules:

1. stay seated while the vehicle is moving;
2. face forward and keep arms and head inside the vehicle;
3. talk in a quiet voice so the driver is not distracted.

## Church Vehicle Driver's Safety Checklist

Driver's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Number of Passengers: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Mileage Start: Mileage End: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Prior to starting the trip**

- Walk around the vehicle and inspect its overall condition.
- Check condition of tires and if they are properly inflated.
- Look under the vehicle for fluid leaks.
- Look behind the vehicle for any obstructions.
- Look under the hood for loose wires or hoses.
- Check levels of washer fluid, oil, transmission and power steering fluid
- Start the vehicle. Have someone stand outside and test the lights, directional lights and brake lights.
- Look for broken lights.
- Test the brakes and the parking brakes.
- Test the horn, wipers, fans and defroster.
- Make sure you have unobstructed views of all windows and mirrors.
- Test emergency door, buzzer and lights.
- Check that all seats have seat belts that are in good condition.
- Do not exceed maximum passenger limit for the vehicle.
- Vehicle should be maintained regularly and a maintenance schedule should be recorded. Any problems discovered should be recorded and submitted to the church office.

### **Driving tips**

- Require all passengers to remain seated at all times
- Monitor all gauges regularly and listen for noises.
- Be aware of changing driving conditions.
- If on a longer trip, make regular rest stops. Have two qualified drivers.
- Travel with a cellular phone and a list of emergency phone numbers
- Obey posted speed limits & use defensive driving skills.

### **In case of an accident**

- Remain calm
- Assess condition of passengers.
- Keep all injured persons comfortable, but do not move them.
- Administer first aid only if you have had proper training.
- Call for an ambulance, the police or fire department.
- Write down names and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
- Cooperate with police and fire department investigators.

### **Notify the insurance company**

- Notify family**, especially if transporting children.

**Emergency telephone numbers (in addition to 911)**

Your church: \_\_\_\_\_

Your camp: \_\_\_\_\_

Your pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contacts\*:

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State police or highway patrol: \_\_\_\_\_

State weather and/or highway information:

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\*note: Emergency contacts should be listed for every passenger, especially children.

*(Some information in this section was quoted from Risk Management Handbook for Churches and Schools by Dr. James Cobble and from Risk Management Booklets and Forms by Church Mutual Insurance Company.)*