

# West Texas A&M University Procedure

## 13.04.99.W1.01/SS Student Travel Procedures

*Effective January 1, 2002*

*Revised July 30, 2002*

*Supplements System Policy 13.04 and WTAMU Rule 13.04.99.W1/SS*

### 1. GENERAL

The purpose of these procedures is to protect the health and welfare of the West Texas A&M University community by regulating travel that is undertaken by one or more students presently enrolled at the university under certain conditions.

1.1 It is the intent of West Texas A&M University to promote safety and to encourage safe conduct when traveling to and from university activities or events. Accordingly, in addition to encouraging the use of good judgment, the university has adopted the Student Travel Rule and set out safety procedures designed to encourage safe behavior. These procedures herein apply to all who travel to an activity or event that is organized and sponsored by the university:

- (1) When the travel will be (a) more than 25 miles from the University or (b) to and from Palo Duro Canyon; and
- (2) When (a) attendance at the activity or event is required by a student organization properly registered at the university; or (b) the activity or event is funded by the university [including Campus Organizations/Forums Committee (COFC) funds]; or (c) travel is in a vehicle owned or leased by the university.

Travel	Requirements/Forms		
If travel is...	Travel Manifest	Individual Release	Parental Release
Less than 25 miles from campus	No	No	
To and from Palo Duro Canyon	Yes	Yes	***
More than 25 miles from campus	Yes	Yes	***
<b><u>AND the travel is...</u></b>			
WTAMU funded	Yes	Yes	***
In a WTAMU owned/leased vehicle	Yes	Yes	***
Required by a registered student organization	Yes	Yes	***
The responsibility of students to (1) an off-campus site where a class is meeting; (2) internship, field study, clinical or student teaching sites; or (3) service-learning activities.	No	No	

*** Participant is under 18 years of age			Yes
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These procedures do not apply when students are responsible for their own transportation to (1) an off-campus site where a class is meeting; (2) internship, field study, clinical or student teaching sites; or (3) service-learning activities.

- 1.2 Travel to and from university organized and sponsored activities or events may be required to use various modes of travel and travel under different conditions. Each form of travel requires the student to follow common and mode-specific safety precautions. In addition to following federal and state laws that encourage safe travel and using sound judgment when traveling, students must follow the procedures set out in this rule for the specific mode of travel involved and travel conditions.
- 1.3 University employees who authorize students to drive vehicles leased for university-related business and activity are responsible for ensuring that the student has a valid Texas driver's license and are approved to drive University vehicles as determined by the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance.
- 1.4 Students who travel to university organized and sponsored events and activities in university vehicles must return in vehicles provided by the university unless authorized in writing to do otherwise. Only the vice president or department head responsible for organizing the travel may authorize travel in a vehicle other than that provided by the university

## 2. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

- 2.1 Departments that encourage or require one or more students to travel to university organized and sponsored events and activities subject to these procedures as outlined in section 1.1 are responsible for verifying that students are aware of this rule and for ensuring compliance with the procedures. Departments that use any university owned or leased vehicle are responsible for ensuring that the driver attends all driver training required by the university and has been approved to drive university owned or leased vehicles. Departments must report all violations of this rule to the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance.
- 2.2 Students who fail to comply with this rule and the procedures herein are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. Student organizations that violate this policy and the procedures herein also are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. University departments who fail to comply with this rule and the procedures herein are subject to losing the use of University vehicles.

## 3. PROCEDURES

The following procedures are established to implement the student travel rules.

### 3.1 Required Documentation

- (1) **Travel Manifest.** All trips, including field trips, need to have a travel manifest (itinerary and participants) completed if the travel will be subject to these

procedures as outlined in section 1.1. The completed travel manifest needs to be routed as follows:

- (a) University Police Department - all group travel
- (b) Director of JBK - travel that involves only student organizations and clubs
- (c) Department head - travel that involves field trips, organized teams or performing groups, i.e., athletic teams, university band, dance groups, vocal ensembles, etc.
- (d) Business Office - travel that involves absence from work by the faculty/staff sponsor and/or university funds for payment of the travel. The manifest should be submitted with the Notification of Absence.

For those organizations or classes in which travel is a regular practice during the semester, a blanket **Travel Manifest** and **Individual Release Forms** may be submitted for the entire semester. Travel organizers may attach a list of persons participating in the travel to the **Travel Manifest** form.

- (3) **Individual Release Forms.** Students must be warned of any dangers inherent in an activity and sign a document (*TAMUS Student Activity Release Form*) stating that they understand these dangers and will assume the responsibility for themselves. Students under the age of eighteen (18) must have a release form signed by their parents or legal guardian.
- (4) **Authorization for Student Travel in Personal Vehicles Form.** Students driving personal vehicles must have department head approval. The completed form needs to be given to the department head.

### 3.2 Modes of Travel.

- (1) **Vehicles Owned or Leased by the University.** All employees and students must be approved by the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance (VPBF) to operate university-owned or leased vehicles. The criteria is available in the Office of the VPBF. Departments who request a driver to operate university vehicles, regardless of the distance traveled, are responsible for coordinating with the Office of the VPBF to obtain the driver's motor vehicle record from the Department of Public Safety.
  - (a) If an individual who has been approved to drive the University's vehicles receives a ticket or has restrictions or endorsements added or removed from his/her driver's license, that individual must report this change to the Office of the VPBF immediately. Failure to do so will result in immediate and permanent removal from the University's approved driver's list. In addition, anyone having knowledge of an approved driver receiving a ticket or other status change must report it to the Office of the VPBF.
  - (b) Travel in vans with a capacity to hold 15 passengers must be approved by the vice president or director responsible for organizing the travel. Passenger capacity in 15-passenger vans involving travel subject to these procedures as outlined in section 1.1 is strictly restricted to no more than ten (10) individuals, including the driver. The weight of passengers and

their gear should be distributed evenly throughout the van. The vice president or department responsible for organizing the travel may authorize a higher capacity for local, same-day travel.

- (2) **Privately Owned Vehicles.** Students who use a privately owned vehicle or any vehicle other than those owned or leased by the university for travel to and from activities and events organized and sponsored by the university are expected to follow the safety guidelines set out in these procedures. Student drivers must have a valid state driver's license and adequate motor vehicle insurance and their vehicles must have a current state inspection when using a privately owned vehicle. If students use their own vehicles, and/or transport other students as passengers, they should be informed, in advance, that their personal insurance will be primarily responsible for any liability that may arise from such use. Departments or advisors that authorize students to travel in privately owned vehicles are responsible for ensuring compliance with these requirements (*Authorization for Student Travel in Personal Vehicles Form*).

Departments or advisors are not responsible for verifying the legitimacy of the documents the student(s) provide. The student's signature of the authorization form attests that the information is current and correct. The department or advisor needs only to collect documents, ensure they have been filled out completely, and then submit the documents to the appropriate offices.

- (3) **Commercial Travel.** Students traveling by commercial transportation must comply with all federal laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier. This includes laws and rules regarding carry-on baggage and baggage weight restrictions.
- (4) **Rodeo Team Travel.** Each member of the WTAMU Rodeo Team will complete a TAMUS Student Activity Release Form, with participant information, at the beginning of each semester. The Rodeo Team coach will complete a Travel Manifest prior to each out-of-town rodeo and supply a list of participants for the given rodeo as outlined in 3.1(1) above. The coach will provide each student participant with information concerning (1) emergency notifications in case any travel-related emergency results in serious injury to the student or to the student's livestock; (2) driving directions and suggestions specific to rodeo travel; and (3) NIRA travel insurance options.

3.3 **Safety Requirements.** Drivers and passengers must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling. The procedures set out below do not replace individual judgment in regard to individual safety. Drivers and passengers traveling to and from an activity or event that is subject to these procedures as outlined in section 1.1 must:

- (1) When driving, obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits and reduce driving speeds as dictated by adverse road or weather conditions.
- (2) Wear seat belts at all times. The number of occupants in the vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts and the load shall not exceed the vehicle

manufacturer's recommended load capacity (see owner operating manual for specific instructions).

- (3) Avoid driving when conditions are hazardous (this includes but is not limited to fog, heavy rain, snow or ice conditions). It may be necessary to stop the trip and check into a motel.
- (4) Not consume, transport, or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, firearms or weapons.
- (5) Avoid horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.
- (6) Bring a copy of the participant list, emergency contacts and Travel Manifest on the trip.

3.4 **Safety Recommendations.** Drivers and passengers are encouraged to follow the safe driving practices as follows:

- (1) Begin the trip well rested.
- (2) Plan routes in advance, and carpool and caravan where possible.
- (3) Divide the trip into segments, stopping for rest as necessary.
- (4) Immediately contact the organization advisor or designated contact person upon departure and arrival if the advisor is not present on the trip.
- (5) Whenever possible, carry at least one cellular telephone or other two-way communication device in each vehicle for emergency purposes. The driver should only use any communication device when the vehicle is not in motion.
- (6) Establish a reasonable departure and arrival time to and from the activity or event.
- (7) Limit driving time to between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. unless otherwise approved by the organization advisor or department head.
- (8) Whenever possible on extended trips, have at least one other approved University driver in the vehicle. It is recommended that drivers rotate every two hours. A passenger or second driver should ride in the front passenger seat and remain awake at all times to help the driver maintain alertness.
- (9) Follow proper procedures for emergencies and when experiencing mechanical problems as outlined in the Student Organization Handbook.
- (10) Read and become familiar with suggestions on "Staying Alert and Fit to Drive" found in the Texas Department of Public Safety's Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook (also outlined in the Student Organization Handbook).

### 3.5 Driver Qualifications and Training

- (1) Driver Qualifications. All students who operate a vehicle owned or leased by the university or who use a privately or commercially owned vehicle when traveling to or from activities and events organized and sponsored by the university must possess a valid state driver's license and maintain motor vehicle insurance as required by state law. Students may only use privately or commercially owned vehicles with a current vehicle inspection.
- (2) Driver Training. Effective January 1, 2002, all employees and students who operate vehicles owned or leased by the university must successfully complete mandatory van operator training provided by the Environmental Safety Office. Departments that authorize students to operate vans are responsible for ensuring compliance with this requirement.

CONTACT FOR INTERPRETATION: Vice President for Student Services