

## West Texas A&M University Procedure

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

*Effective January 1, 2002*

*Revised December 7, 2010*

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

#### 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 state-owned vehicle.

Travel	Requirements/Forms		
	Travel Manifest	Individual Release	Parental Release
If travel is...			
Less than 25 miles from campus	Optional	Optional	***
To and from Palo Duro Canyon	Yes	Yes	***
More than 25 miles from campus	Yes	Yes	***
<b>AND the travel is...</b>			
WTAMU funded	Yes	Yes	***
In a state-owned 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.	Yes	Yes	***
***Participant is under 18 years of age			Yes

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 Traveling to and from university organized or sponsored events and activities may require the use of various modes of transportation 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, students should use sound judgment and follow the procedures set forth in this document when traveling.
- 1.3 University employees who authorize students to drive state-owned vehicles for university-related business and activity are responsible for ensuring that the student has a valid driver's license and is approved to drive university vehicles as determined by the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance. To be covered on the Texas A&M University System self-insured auto plan, drivers must be employed by WTAMU when driving a state-owned vehicle.
- 1.4 Students traveling in university vehicles, to university organized or sponsored events and activities, must return in university vehicles, 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 are responsible for verifying that students are aware of the procedures outlined in this document.
- 2.2 Students who fail to comply with the rule and the procedures herein are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. Student organizations that violate the rule and the procedures herein also are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. University departments who fail to comply with the 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 rule.

- 3.1 **Required Documentation.** All required documentation must be submitted to the Director of Student Activities. The following documents should be completed 2 weeks prior to travel.
  - (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 will be routed via the Office of Student Activities to:

- (a) University Police Department – all group travel
- (b) Department head – travel that involves field trips, organized teams or performing groups, i.e. athletic teams, university band, dance groups, vocal ensembles, etc.
- (c) 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.

- (2) **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.
- (3) **Authorization for Student Travel in Personal Vehicles Form.** Students driving personal vehicles must have department head approval.

### 3.2 Modes of Travel.

- (1) **Vehicles owned by the University.** All employees and students must be approved by the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance (VPBF) to operate state-owned vehicles. The criteria are available in the VPBF Office. Departments, who request a driver to operate university vehicles regardless of the distance traveled, are responsible for coordinating with the VPBF Office 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 VPBF Office immediately. Failure to do so will result in immediate and permanent removal from the University's approved driver 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 Vice President for Business and Finance.

(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 the procedures 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.** While traveling to and from university sponsored or organized activities and events, students using privately-owned vehicles, or any vehicle other than those owned by the university, are expected to follow the safety guidelines outlined in this procedure. Student drivers must have a valid driver's license, current motor vehicle insurance, and current state vehicle inspection. 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 (**i.e. Authorization Form for Student Travel in Personal Vehicles**).

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

- (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 the use of personal electronic devices (cell-phones, texting, mp3, ear-phones, etc.) while driving.
- (4) 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.
- (5) Not consume, transport, or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, firearms or weapons.
- (6) Avoid horseplay, racing, or other distracting or aggressive behavior.
- (7) 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.

