

Use of Vehicles for University Business

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Why do we need a Vehicle Use Policy?

Having a policy that spells out who is authorized to drive and that establishes driver standards is best practices. For several years our insurers, legal counsel, and outside risk consultants have all recommended we put a policy in place. Implementation of a vehicle use policy puts us in line with our peer institutions. Finally, historical loss data indicates that loss prevention efforts in this area need to be addressed now.

Why now? Is this a way to cut cost or cull employees?

The policy has been in development for about 2 years and involved input from a cross-section of the Purdue system. It was a time consuming process to benchmark with peers, develop a workable policy for Purdue, and go through the various review processes. The timing of implementation has no correlation to the current budget situation, and it is not the University's intent to use the policy as a means to eliminate staff. The intent of the policy is to promote vehicle safety and reduce the number and severity of auto accidents.

Have there been incidents that created a need for the policy?

During the policy development phase there were some catastrophic claims that reinforced the need for the policy.

What is the benefit to Purdue?

The benefit for Purdue is that we will now have a policy that proactively manages the use of our vehicles, establishes minimum qualifications for our drivers, and decreases the number and severity of auto accidents.

How does this policy compare to the point system used by Indiana or other states?

There is no correlation. The state point systems address general driving privileges within that state. The University's system reflects our tolerance for and ability to absorb vehicle risk exposures.

There is concern that the policy language is stricter than Indiana state law. How can this be justified?

For example: Indiana State law allows, in certain circumstances, individuals with substance abuse driving violations to continue to have an active drivers license, provided they pay the appropriate fine, document attendance in a court ordered rehabilitation program, and surpass the suspension period. Yet most employers would not accept the risk of allowing such an individual to drive their institutional vehicles without confirming a clean record for at least 3 years post incident. This

is a matter of prudent underwriting, loss prevention, and risk control. We simply cannot afford this kind of reputational risk and liability exposure in today's business environment.

Does this policy apply to all Purdue campuses, statewide technology sites and Purdue Extension sites?

Yes.

Are the rules the same for on-campus and off-campus driving?

Yes, the policy applies to use of vehicles regardless of where they are being used.

What entity/entities will be responsible for insuring the enforcement of the Vehicle Use Policy?

Risk Management will oversee the policy and work collaboratively with HR and departments.

What defines the difference between operating a vehicle on University business and operating a vehicle while traveling on University business?

Any activity engaged in on behalf of the University is considered University Business and is subject to the policy if a vehicle is being used. University travel is a subset of that which requires official written approval.

What if I take my own vehicle at lunchtime to go out and make a purchase for my department?

Operating your personal vehicle for an errand like this would make you an occasional driver, so you would not be subject to an MVR check, however, you are still expected to be in compliance with the policy. If you are not a qualified driver, and you choose to operate anyway, then the University may not indemnify you in the event of an accident.

Does the policy apply to visiting scholars and visiting faculty/researchers who are in the payroll system for tracking purposes but are in non-pay positions?

These individuals will fall under the "volunteer" criteria in the policy. See the definition of Volunteer in the policy.

How are emeritus faculty/staff members classified?

These individuals will fall under the "volunteer" criteria in the policy. See the definition of Volunteer in the policy.

Are motorcycles allowed to be used for University business?

Yes, motorcycles, scooters, mopeds, and other similar Vehicles are an approved form of transportation for use on University business or for any other University purpose.

Does the policy apply to me when I travel under Blanket Travel since I do not sign a Travel Form 17?

Yes, the policy still applies to you. The policy requires anyone who operates a vehicle on University business to be in compliance. It is not contingent upon you signing a statement certifying that you are in compliance. Departments are encouraged to remind staff covered by Blanket Travel of their responsibility to be in compliance with the Use of Vehicles for University Business policy. This can be done as part of an annual reminder regarding Blanket Travel.

Driver Qualification Questions

How do I know if I can drive on University Business?

Most drivers will need to self-assess to make sure they meet the minimum driver qualifications.

What are the minimum driver qualifications?

Minimum Driver Qualifications are as follows:

- 1. Possess a valid US or Canadian driver's license with a classification appropriate to the type of Vehicle being driven, or a valid license from another country where a Vehicle is being operated.*
- 2. Be at least 18 years of age and have one year of licensed driving experience prior to driving on University Business. Requests for exceptions to these requirements must be submitted to Risk Management in advance for review on a case-by-case basis.*
- 3. Have an "acceptable" driving record, as defined by Risk Management. (http://www.purdue.edu/risk_mgmt/pdf/MVR_Grading_Grid.pdf). Individuals who are unsure of their driving record may secure a copy of their MVR from their auto insurance provider or through the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles.*

Why not run MVRs on everyone who operates a vehicle instead of making me self-assess?

There is a cost associated with running MVR's, and the cost to run on everyone who uses a vehicle on University business would be prohibitive. By only running MVR's on routine drivers and requiring others to self-assess, we are being good stewards of University resources.

What if I lie on my self-assessment, how would you know if I was conditional or unacceptable?

If you are involved in an accident we will run your MVR to verify that you fall in the "acceptable" category.

What happens if you find out that I lied?

According to the policy, drivers who fail to adhere to its requirements will no longer be authorized to operate a vehicle on University business, will jeopardize their indemnification from the University and incur personal liability. Disciplinary action is possible as well.

How can I as a supervisor know that my employee or student driver actually has at least 1 year of licensed driving experience?

The policy is written to clearly make the individual driver responsible for their own actions in complying with the policy. Those drivers that self-assess will be responsible for compliance. For those drivers that an MVR is required, Risk Management will be able to confirm whether they meet this requirement.

Does an "unacceptable" or "conditional" status affect the ability to keep certain jobs? Who determines this and how will this be handled?

Drivers who fall in the "conditional" category may continue to operate a vehicle on University business with approval from Risk Management. "Conditional" drivers may be required to complete remedial driver training that will be assigned to them by Risk Management.

Drivers who fall in the "unacceptable" category will lose their privilege to operate a vehicle on University business until such time as their record becomes "acceptable". Human Resources will work with departments with "unacceptable" drivers to see if alternate solutions can be found. If there are no alternative solutions available, termination of employment may be necessary.

If an employee should engage in an activity that causes them to be classified in the "Unacceptable" category and driving is a requirement of their position, what steps will be taken?

Presumably the same steps that would be taken if the employee lost their ability to drive legally and could not fulfill their job requirements. From time to time we deal with these situations currently. HR would need to be consulted. The employee perhaps could be reassigned to non-driving duties or they may have to be let go. Keep in mind the negligence associated with Purdue keeping an unacceptable driver behind the wheel can far exceed the cost of termination and new hire training.

In my department, the majority of positions require a valid driver's license, so reassigning staff into other positions would not be a viable course of action. How can this be resolved?

Employees will need to be responsible for maintaining an acceptable driving record. This is no different than requiring employees to maintain certain skills or job competencies to assure continued employability.

If I fall in the “conditional” category, can I still use my personal vehicle for University business?

The policy requires “conditional” drivers to communicate their status to their supervisor and Risk Management. Conditional drivers may continue to operate a vehicle on University Business with the approval of Risk Management. Approval may be contingent upon the completion of driver training.

If I fall in the “unacceptable” category, can I still use my personal vehicle for University business?

No, the policy requires that drivers be in compliance regardless of the vehicle being driven. You should report your unacceptable record to your supervisor and should not operate any vehicle on University business. Individuals in this category will not be indemnified by the University in the event of an accident.

I am a staff member and need to travel on official University Business, but my driving record falls in the unacceptable category. Can I still drive my personal vehicle to the airport or drive a rental vehicle at my destination?

No, the policy prohibits individuals with unacceptable driving records from operating any vehicle on University Business or for any other University purpose. You should notify your Department Head/Supervisor concerning your driving record, who should then contact Risk Management to discuss alternative courses of action.

Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Questions

How do I know if I am subject to an MVR check?

The following individuals must have an MVR check:

- Employees that routinely operate a University Vehicle five (5) or more times per week.*
- Employees whose job description requires the possession of a valid driver’s license.*
- Student/Volunteer drivers who will operate a University Vehicle.*
- Student/Volunteer drivers operating a Personal Vehicle on University Business or for any other University purpose and specific written approval is required for such use.*

Do I have to consent to having a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check run on them?

Yes. An authorization form is required. Once authorization is received, it does not expire.

What happens if I refuse to give Purdue authorization to run my MVR?

A driver who refuses to give authorization for an MVR will no longer be authorized to operate a vehicle on University Business.

Does the MVR review go back a certain number of years?

MVR's typically show violations for the past 10 years, however, Purdue will only consider violations occurring within the past 3 years when determining driver eligibility.

How long will it take to have an MVR check run?

Results of MVR reviews will typically be communicated within 5 business days.

How long is my MVR good for?

MVR's are typically good for one year. If you are unsure of when your MVR will expire, Risk Management maintains an approved driver database on its departmental website. The database includes the expiration date of each driver's MVR.

Will my department or student organization be charged for the cost of MVR checks?

The cost of MVR checks for employees and graduate students will be covered by Risk Management. The cost of MVR checks for undergraduate students or volunteers will be recharged to the requesting department or student organization.

Are MVR costs allowable on Sponsored Program accounts?

Yes. Costs should be allocated on the basis of the total trip.

Will it be expected that MVR reviews be conducted prior to an offer of employment?

No. For those positions that are subject to an MVR check, an offer of employment could be made subject to the individual having an "Acceptable" MVR check.

Would the MVR have to be completed before an employee is allowed to begin work?

Yes.

Training Questions

How long does it take to complete the passenger van training program?

Completion of the passenger van training program takes about 20-30 minutes.

How will any assigned driver training be handled?

Risk Management has partnered with Alert Driving to help manage our vehicle use policy. Training will be provided on-line through Alert Driving. Drivers assigned training will be assigned a log-on and password for the Alert Driving website and will complete the training on-line. If a driver does not have access to a computer at their job location, they should work with their supervisor to find an accessible computer.

If an employee is required to participate in training due to “conditional” status, will they do so in paid status?

Yes. Training will be web-based and accessible by the employee on-line. Most modules take less than 30 minutes to complete.

The policy states that employees who fail to successfully complete assigned training will lose authorization to operate a vehicle for University business. Should it be stated that employees for whom driving is a job requirement may be dismissed if required training is not successfully completed?

Risk Management can only revoke driving privileges. If the loss of driving privileges results in an employee’s job being in jeopardy, then that becomes an HR issue that Risk Management, the employing department, and HR will work together on.

Who will assume the cost of training modules?

The cost of training will be covered by Risk Management and is built into our current auto insurance recharge rates.

Student/Volunteer Driver Questions

Why are graduate students considered the same as undergraduate students?

Most students (graduate and undergraduate) fall within the 16-25 age group that statistics show are higher risk drivers. Use of vehicles by students should be subject to more scrutiny than use by staff.

Can graduate students operate vehicles in foreign countries if they are there conducting research or engaging in other official Purdue business?

Generally, students are not allowed to operate vehicles in countries other than the United States and Canada. There is an exception in the policy for graduate students travelling on official university business to a foreign country. See section 1.3d in the policy.

Are student employees considered students or employees?

For purposes of this policy, Student Employees (undergraduate or graduate) are considered Students.

Why are the requirements stricter for student and volunteer van drivers?

These requirements were carefully selected after much deliberation, research with our peer institutions, and in consideration of best practices in the industry.

Can students operate carts?

Yes. Please refer to the cart guidelines for further details.