

Texas A&M University-Texarkana

Guidelines for Student Travel

Guidelines Statement

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clarification of and supplement guidance to the Texas A&M University System Policy *13.04 Student Travel* and the Texas A&M University-Texarkana University Rule *13.04.99.H1 Student Travel*, both related to student travel. Student travel, for the purpose of these guidelines, is defined as student travel that exceeds 25 miles from campus for an activity that is organized, sponsored, and/or funded by the university or by an organization properly registered at the university.

I. Responsibilities:

- A. The DIRECTOR of the university department sponsoring the student travel is responsible for appointing a TRAVEL COORDINATOR and one or more approved DRIVERS for each student trip.
- B. The TRAVEL COORDINATOR must be a university employee and may serve as an approved DRIVER for the same trip. The TRAVEL COORDINATOR shall assume the following responsibilities:
 - 1. Completing and submitting the university approved *Student Travel Notification* form (*Attachment A*) to the department DIRECTOR a minimum of two weeks prior to travel commencement;
 - 2. Arranging logistics for the trip;
 - 3. Ensuring that pre-travel conditions designated in the A&M System policy *13.04 Student Travel*, the A&M-Texarkana *UR 13.04.99.H1 Student Travel*, and these student travel guidelines are followed prior to commencement of travel;
 - 4. Ensuring that the *Student Travel Release of Liability and Medical Information* form (*Attachment B*) is completed for each student traveler and on file in the department office prior to the commencement of travel;
 - 5. Ensuring that each vehicle transporting students is equipped with:
 - 5.1 a copy of the *Texas A&M University-Texarkana Student Travel Guidelines*
 - 5.2 a cell phone that includes the cell telephone number of the A&M-Texarkana chief of police
 - 5.3 a flashlight and approved fire extinguisher
 - 5.4 a copy of the completed *Student Travel Release of Liability and Medical Information* form for student passengers
 - 5.5 car registration and insurance information (for university owned vehicles)
- C. University employees and students may be approved as DRIVERS. However, students may not be approved as DRIVERS of university owned or leased vehicles. In the case of emergency circumstances that render an approved DRIVER unable to drive while on university sanctioned student travel, this requirement may be waived by the TRAVEL COORDINATOR or the A&M-Texarkana CHIEF OF POLICE. For trips exceeding 500 miles

one way, a minimum of two approved DRIVERS is required for each vehicle. When multiple DRIVERS of a vehicle are appointed, one shall be named as LEAD DRIVER.

1. Employees who are approved as DRIVERS must meet the following requirements:
 - 1.1 be 21 years of age;
 - 1.2 possess a valid Texas driver's license; (Any change in an approved driver's license endorsements or restrictions that are not reflected on the hard copy must be reported to the TRAVEL COORDINATOR during the approval process or prior to commencement of travel, as applicable.)
 - 1.3 provide proof of personal automobile insurance coverage required by the State of Texas; and
 - 1.4 pass a driver's history check conducted by the A&M-Texarkana chief of police.
 2. Student DRIVERS who transport other students must meet the requirements outlined in 1.1-1.4 above and show proof of current automobile registration and safety inspection prior to commencement of travel.
- D. As representatives of A&M-Texarkana, all STUDENTS are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner during university-sponsored trips. Any report of student code of conduct violations will be subject to applicable disciplinary actions.

II. Approved Modes of Transportation

University-sponsored student travel may be conducted via personal, contracted, and/or commercial modes of travel:

- A. Approved modes of personal transportation include:
 1. University owned vehicles
 2. University leased vehicles
 3. Personally owned vehicles
 - 3.1 Use of personally owned vehicles is discouraged and must be approved in advance of the trip. Students need to sign and submit an *Authorization to Travel in a Personal Vehicle form (Attachment C)* two weeks prior to departure for approval. Personal vehicles should only be considered when necessary to fulfill the mission of the trip.
 - 3.2 DRIVERS and passengers of all personally owned vehicles must sign and submit to the TRAVEL COORDINATOR prior to the commencement of travel a *Release of Liability form (see Attachment B)* releasing A&M-Texarkana of all liability associated with students traveling in personally owned vehicles to university sponsored events.
- B. STUDENTS traveling by contacted transportation must comply with all conditions set forth in the contract between the university and the carrier.
- C. STUDENTS traveling by commercial transportation must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

III. Waiver and Release Forms

STUDENTS who participate in university sponsored travel must complete the *Student Travel Release of Liability and Medical Information form (Attachment B)* verifying that they understand

and accept the risks involved in participating in the travel activity and assume responsibility for their behavior. The form requires the signature of the parent or guardian of a student under the age of eighteen (18). Originals of completed forms shall be retained in the office of the department sponsoring the travel for a minimum of two years after completion of the travel activity.

IV. Safety Procedures

A. All DRIVERS shall abide by the following safety procedures:

1. Avoid the use of cell phones while operating a moving vehicle;
2. Allow only approved DRIVERS to drive the vehicle except under emergency situations; (See Section A.)
3. Obey all local, state, and federal traffic laws. (DRIVERS are responsible for any and all traffic or parking tickets.)
4. Remain free from the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
5. Avoid possession or transport of alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms, or weapons within the vehicle;
6. Require that seat belts be worn by all passengers at all times while the vehicle is in motion, thereby limiting the number of passengers to the number of seat belts;
7. Avoid distracting or aggressive behavior (e.g., racing, horseplay);
8. Avoid driving when conditions are hazardous (e.g., fog, heavy rain, snow, ice, etc);
9. Plan routes in advance. Stop every 2-2 ½ hours for a driver's rest break. Avoid driving between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.;
10. Alternate drivers no less frequently than every 500 miles;
11. Avoid taking medication prior to driving, especially if the label warns against operating a vehicle while taking medication; and
12. Require a passenger or a second DRIVER to ride in the front passenger seat and remain awake at all times.

B. Emergency Procedures

A. If the vehicle is involved in an accident, the LEAD DRIVER is responsible for following designated emergency procedures:

1. Stop immediately and notify the local police or call 911.
2. Notify the A&M-Texarkana University Police Department at 903-334-6611 or the A&M-Texarkana CHIEF OF POLICE at 903-278-3709 at the earliest possible time.
3. Complete a police report (necessary for insurance purposes).
4. Obtain the names and addresses of all witnesses.
5. Do not make any statement regarding who is at fault, nor should you make any offers to pay damages. Fault or legal liability will be determined by the appropriate authorities.
6. If a leased vehicle is involved in an accident, contact the rental company immediately.

B. If someone is injured in the accident:

1. Call 911 immediately and obtain medical attention.
 2. Consult an injured passenger's medical release form (page 2 of the *Student Travel Release of Liability and Medical Information* form (*Attachment B*) for any special needs.
- C. If a vehicle breakdown occurs, call the DPS Non-Emergency Roadside Assistance at 800-525-5555 (also *DPS on many wireless phones).

V. Additional Student Travel Guidelines

Departments, units, and/or student organizations may request that additional student travel standards or guidelines be enforced to address the unique requirements associated with a particular type of organized student travel. All additional travel guidelines must be submitted in writing by the DIRECTOR of the department or DEAN of the academic college sponsoring the student travel to the PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS for approval at least four weeks prior to commencement of travel.

VI. Waivers to Student Travel Guidelines

Any waivers to the A&M-Texarkana Student Travel Guidelines must be approved by the DIVISION VICE PRESIDENT or UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT.