Introduction

This Guideline primarily addresses the work-related road travel conducted in cars, but is also relevant to drivers of other vehicles. It was developed by the University Health and Safety Policy Committee and is part of a range of driving risk reduction measures the University has developed and implemented. Whilst it does not have the status of a policy, all staff are strongly encouraged to comply with all its recommendations.

Road crashes represent one of the leading causes of traumatic injury and death in daily life and at work. Yet, maybe as an illustration of the adage “familiarity breeds contempt”, research shows that many of us severely underestimate the risks and fail to adopt an appropriate driving behaviour.

Driving performed in the context of work creates responsibilities and liabilities for the employer and the employees. The behaviour of employees in work-related driving is not just a personal matter.

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Warning – Uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is kept on the University website.
1 Safe Driving

Recognising and controlling the hazards associated with driving is an essential part of the University's OHS program. Hazards may be created by human factors, by adverse conditions in the driving environment, or by vehicle defects.

VicRoads research has found that human factors are involved in 90% of all traffic crashes, whereas vehicle failures are implicated in only around 5% of accidents. Whilst the drivers of University vehicles have the main responsibility for the safe operation of the vehicle, supervisors and managers have an important role in driving safety.

Safe Driving Behaviours

Ensure you hold the correct Licence and Certificate

Before you book a University vehicle, ensure you hold the correct licence for it. Comply with all conditions and restrictions on your licence. You may be required to show it before taking possession of the vehicle. Carry the licence with you when driving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle description</th>
<th>Licence type required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to and including 4.5 tonnes GVM + seating 12 (including the driver) or less</td>
<td>Car licence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4.5 and up to 8 tonnes GVM and/or seating more than 12*</td>
<td>LR (Light Rigid) licence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 8 tonnes GVM with 2 axles</td>
<td>MR (Medium Rigid) licence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 8 tonnes GVM with 3 or more axles</td>
<td>HR (Heavy Rigid) licence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: a Driver's Certificate from the Department of Infrastructure (Victorian Taxi Directorate) must also be held for buses seating more than 12 people.

Perform Pre-Operation Checks

When setting off for long drives, inspect the vehicle's tyres, and conduct other pre-operation checks, as specified in the Owner's Manual.

Before driving off, switch off any mobile phone you are carrying, and adjust the seat and rear vision mirrors (internal and external) to suit you. After parking the vehicle, ensure that the handbrake is engaged and the gearbox is in "Park" (automatic vehicles).

Obey all Road Rules

Drivers of University vehicles must obey all applicable road rules (eg compulsory wearing of seat belts).

Travel at Moderate Speed

Speed kills. Drivers of University vehicles must observe speed limits at all times. It should be remembered that speed limits represent the maximum speed for ideal conditions. It is recommended that you keep to a maximum speed of 5 km/h less than the speed limit, even in ideal conditions, and further reduce that speed when encountering adverse conditions.

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Overtaking slower vehicles is inherently hazardous. Wherever possible, keep your overtaking manoeuvres to stretches of road where an overtaking lane is provided and where visibility is unimpeded.

**Adopt a Low-Risk Driving Style**

Apply the principles of low-risk driving, such as:

- anticipating potential risks and make realistic risk assessments;
- maintaining a 5-second clear view ahead of you (this may mean slowing down around blind corners or other blind spots); and
- maintaining an appropriate crash avoidance space ahead of your vehicle at all times.

### Minimum Crash Avoidance Space (CAS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed (km/h)</th>
<th>Favourable driving conditions</th>
<th>Adverse driving conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAS (distance)</td>
<td>CAS (time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>17 m</td>
<td>1.5 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>33 m</td>
<td>2.0 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>55 m</td>
<td>2.5 s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>83 m</td>
<td>3.0 s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that all drivers make occasional mistakes. Drivers of University vehicles should cultivate an "on-road courtesy" that defuses potentially hazardous situations.

Aggressive driving - such as tailgating, fast cornering, sudden lane changes, hard accelerations, and late braking - drastically increases the risks of accident. Never engage in aggressive driving whilst in a University vehicle. Keep at a safe distance from other road users, especially those who drive aggressively. Never leave your car to confront an aggressive driver.

Visibility - maximize your visibility by driving with low-beam headlights on at all times. Most University fleet vehicles are fitted with a device causing the headlights to be operating on low beam whenever the ignition is switched on. (The operation of the high beam is unchanged.)

Be aware that the most common type of reported serious casualty crash in Victoria involves right-turning vehicles being hit by oncoming vehicles. Only proceed across oncoming traffic when you are certain that the road is clear well ahead.

**Prevent, Recognise and Control Fatigue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDED Maximum Driving Hours*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum continuous driving time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum total drive-and-work time during a 24-hour period (when less than 2 hours of driving are conducted at night time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum total drive-and-work time during a 24-hour period (when 2 hours or more of driving are conducted at night time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: these recommendations apply to car drivers. They do not replace the regulatory requirements applicable to bus and truck drivers.
Fatigue is a factor in around 50% of crashes. Prevent the onset of fatigue by:

- limiting your driving time (refer to Recommended Maximum Driving Hours above);
- ensuring that you have had sufficient sleep before driving University vehicles;
- avoiding driving during your normal sleep times; and
- avoiding driving University vehicles more than 16 hours after your last sleep period.

Drivers of trucks and buses must strictly comply with the specific legal requirements applicable to maximum driving hours, rest breaks, etc.

Sharing the drive with another person is an effective way of reducing risks as long as:

- they have read and understood this Guideline;
- they have the competencies, skills, experience and qualifications required for the type of driving involved; and
- their names appear on the Vehicle Booking Requisition, if applicable.

The onset of fatigue when driving is an especially insidious hazard. It requires prompt and decisive action precisely at a time when judgement and decision-making are impaired. It takes a fraction of a second for a vehicle to career off course at highway speeds.

Make a commitment before starting a long trip to stopping the vehicle and resting if fatigue develops.

Take note of any of the obvious early signs of fatigue (frequent yawning, blinking or difficulty in keeping eyes open, tendency to stare, etc). If fatigue develops, stop and rest. Your safety, that of your passengers and of other road users is at stake.

Do Not Drink and Drive

Around a quarter of drivers killed in Victoria are above the legal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limit of .05g/100mL. Moreover, 15 000 drivers lose their licence every year in Victoria for exceeding the limit.

Drivers of University vehicles must have a BAC below the legal limit. Probationary drivers and drivers of University buses must have a BAC of .00g/100mL.

Drivers should remember that even at .05, their risk of crashing is twice greater than normal. A BAC below legal limits still reduces vigilance and increases response times. Decision-making and risk perceptions are also impaired. The University encourages drivers of University vehicles to abstain from any alcohol consumption before and during road travel. Never consume alcohol in a University vehicle.

Be Careful of Medication

Prescription and/or illicit drugs are found in about a third of those drivers killed in accidents who were judged to have engaged in culpable driving.

Never drive a University vehicle under the influence of illicit drugs.

Some medicines cause drowsiness or increase response times to unsafe levels. If you are on medication when planning to drive a University vehicle, ensure that you discuss the issue with your treating doctor beforehand.
Restrict Use of Phones

Research indicates that phone conversations whilst driving noticeably increase the risk of accident. Never use hand-held phones whilst driving. It is illegal. Remember also that using a hands-free phone may not be much safer than using a hand-held one.

Even if your car is fitted with a hands-free phone kit, avoid making phone calls whilst driving, especially in heavy traffic or in other demanding conditions. For incoming calls, either switch off phones or ask callers to wait whilst you park your vehicle in a safe location.

Driving Conditions

Adapt your Driving to the Weather Conditions

In rain or storms, visibility is impaired, and roads become slippery. Slow down. Increase the distance between your vehicle and traffic in front of you (refer to crash avoidance space guidelines above). Consider whether to switch on the parking lights or low beams. Take turns carefully and smoothly.

Flooded roads or creek crossings are unsafe. Consider turning back and seeking alternatives routes or overnight accommodation to wait out the flood.

In snow, use snow chains as required. In all slippery conditions, maintain wheel traction by:

- driving slowly and accelerating smoothly;
- braking gently and making use of engine braking;
- avoiding sudden changes of direction; and
- keeping your distance from traffic in front of you.

University bus drivers must hold a Hazardous Area Authority if driving in declared areas during the applicable months.

Hot weather can present special hazards. The risk of breakdown can increase due to the reduced cooling capacity of the radiator and the extra engine heat load created by air-conditioning. Moreover, a breakdown in hot and remote parts of Australia presents real threats to the vehicle occupants. Prevent breakdowns by:

- checking the coolant level in the cooling system before setting off on a trip on a hot day (warning: do not take the cap off a hot radiator); and
- adopting a driving style that, for instance, avoids causing the engine to labour up hills in high gears.

Take sufficient drinking water for the trip, including a safety margin in case of mishap.

Refer to the paragraph on breakdowns for further advice.

Take Note of Road Conditions

Narrow one-lane country roads present an increased risk of frontal collision, roll-over, and windscreen damage. Slow down. Be careful of soft road edges and ruts in the road shoulder when passing oncoming vehicles. Slow down and keep left when approaching a crest in the road.

Slow down when stock is likely to be on the road.
Guideline
Driving

Regular travel on unsealed roads generally requires the use of a four-wheel drive vehicle.

Take Extra Care at Night

Become familiar with the operation of the car lights before nightfall.

Be especially mindful of wildlife at night and at dusk or dawn.

Beware of Heavy Traffic and Vehicles

Plan your trip to avoid as much as possible peak times for commuters or trucks. Heavy vehicles present hazards for other road users, which include:

- generating a large amount of spray in rainy conditions;
- requiring longer stopping, overtaking, turning and separation distances; and
- causing significant aerodynamic disturbances alongside and behind them at highway speeds.

When interacting with heavy vehicles on the road, be mindful that their physical and mechanical characteristics necessitate a different driving style. In particular, leave greater distances than usual between your vehicle and trucks. Note that truck drivers may try to gather momentum downhill for the next uphill run. Keep out of their way as much as possible.

Give long and heavy vehicles plenty of turning space.

Remember that truck and bus drivers generally do not have the unrestricted rear view that car drivers have. If you cannot see the driver's face in the side mirror of his truck, assume that he is unaware of your presence. Avoid locating your vehicle in a driver's blind spots (e.g. beside a truck underneath the line of sight of the side mirrors).

Remain aware of motorcyclists and the ability of motorbikes to accelerate and brake much more sharply than most other vehicles.

Gain Experience with Trailers

Drivers of University vehicles who need to tow a trailer require previous experience. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff have that experience before towing a trailer.

Group Transport

Refer to the licensing and BAC requirements for bus drivers outlined above.

Buses hired in the context of University activities should be fitted with seatbelts.

Transport of Materials and Equipment

Unrestrained items transported within the cabin of a vehicle can be extremely hazardous in case of a crash or roll-over. It is preferable to transport all items in the boot of sedans, the rear of station-wagons, or the tray of pick-up vans. This recommendation is especially important in relation to briefcases, laptop computers, and any other relatively heavy or bulky item. All station-wagons and vans should have a physical barrier between the cargo section and cabin of the vehicle.
Substances classified as “dangerous goods” must be transported outside the passenger cell of the vehicle. Acceptable options include the tray of a pick-up van and trailers. In many cases, strict legal requirements apply to the transport of dangerous goods by road. Contact the Workplace Support unit if you require further information.

Do not exceed the maximum load of the vehicle, as specified in the Owner’s manual.

Management and Supervision of Work-Related Driving

Both road rules and Occupational Health and Safety legislation apply to work-related driving. Managers and Supervisors of the University bear significant responsibility for the occupational health and safety aspects of the work-related driving performed by people under their supervision. This responsibility includes:

- eliminating unnecessary driving tasks, for instance through the use of tele-conferencing or video-conferencing facilities;
- minimising the amount of driving performed under adverse conditions, such as driving in the dark, in poor weather, when fatigued, etc.;
- identifying the types of driving required as part of every position they supervise and outlining them in the relevant Positions Descriptions (e.g.: “as part of the School excursions program, the appointee will be required to drive groups of students in a 12-seater mini-bus”);
- specifying the level of competency required for the driving tasks associated with relevant positions in the Selection Criteria (e.g. "applicants must hold a Light Rigid (LR) licence and must have demonstrated experience in off-road and trailer-towing situations");
- selecting drivers, whether in the context of employment or other, who meet the competency requirements of the relevant driving tasks;
- informing existing and new drivers of University vehicles of this Guideline;
- instructing and supervising them appropriately;
- ensuring staff attendance at relevant training; and
- taking appropriate disciplinary action for unsafe work-related driving behaviour.

Managers and Supervisors should put in place within their areas the work systems necessary for compliance with this Guideline. They should lead by example, and never allow double standards to develop. In particular, they should ensure that work and travel arrangements, timetables, work and meeting schedules, etc, allow compliance with road rules and the Guideline (e.g. re recommended maximum driving times, maximum speeds, etc.).

Grievances relating to work-related driving issues should be handled through the Staff Grievance Procedure or the OHS Employee Consultation Procedure.

Vehicle Hazards

Fleet vehicles are generally new and well maintained. It is therefore important to concentrate your road safety efforts on behavioural factors. However, the following recommendations apply to vehicle-related hazards:

- Conduct routine pre-operational checks, as detailed in the vehicle manual.
Pay attention to indications of impending critical mechanical failure. Stop as soon as it is safe to do so, and investigate whilst ensuring that you maintain your safety. Brake or steering failure, sudden tyre blowouts, engine seizures, etc. can cause a total loss of control. Refer to Chapter 5 “Vehicle Trouble” for further advice.

**Safety when Refuelling**

Refuelling a vehicle presents a number of hazards related to the vehicles, the presence of pedestrians, the substances used at petrol stations, etc. Examples of safe practices when refuelling at self-serve petrol stations include:

- if possible, choosing petrol stations on the left of the road to avoid having to cross the road;
- keeping children inside the vehicle during the full duration of the refuelling process;
- eliminating any potential source of ignition (no smoking, switching off the engine and any electrical appliance, including mobile phones, etc);
- not leaving the petrol pump unattended at any stage during refuelling; and
- locking your vehicle when leaving it unattended, including going to pay for fuel.
2 Healthy Driving

Reduce discomfort or back pain on longer drives with sensible precautions.

Driving Posture

A healthy and safe driving posture allows unrestricted access to the vehicle's controls and visual displays, whilst maintaining sufficient support for the body. It also allows for the safety devices of the vehicle (seat belt, air bag, etc) to offer maximum protection should a crash happen.

Adjust all controls as required before you set off. Refer to the vehicle’s Owner Manual for details.

Back Care

Adequate support for the lumbar region of the spine is essential for the care of your back. Some modern vehicles have adjustable lumbar supports built into the backrest of the seats. Refer to the Owner's Manual for further details.

Some drivers may find that an additional cushion is required for proper lumbar support.

Exercises

Take regular rest and exercise breaks during longer drives. (Refer to the Maximum Driving Hours above.) Go through gentle exercises to move your back. Simply walking is generally sufficient.

Protection against UV

The use of sunglasses with an appropriate UV protection factor is highly recommended in bright weather conditions.

Drinking Water

Carry water on drives longer than an hour or so. Drink regularly. It will have several beneficial effects on your health and safety, including forcing regular stops...

Prevention of Illnesses

Smoking is prohibited in all University vehicles.

The transport of chemicals, pharmaceutical products or other hazardous substances in University vehicles must be performed in strict compliance with regulatory requirements.

To prevent allergic reactions among users of University pool vehicles, avoid using car deodorisers and surface sprays. Pets and animals should not be transported in University vehicles.
3 Personal Security on the Road

Simple rules will ensure that your personal security is not compromised.

**Communication**

Advise work colleagues and/or relatives of the details of your trip.

Carry a list of important phone numbers, both work- and family-related. Take your licence, some cash and a mobile phone.

Staff who are planning work-related road travel in regions where digital network coverage is poor or non-existent are encouraged to conduct a Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control (HIRAC) review of the activity with their supervisor/manager to determine whether different means of communication are necessary and, if so, which ones.

**Assault Prevention**

Do not take hitchhikers or other unauthorised passengers on board. Conversely, if your vehicle breaks down, do not be tempted to hitch a ride if help can be organised in any other way.

Be wary of people motioning for you to stop whilst you are driving.

If talking to a stranger by the roadside, do so from within your car if possible. Do not open the window more than necessary, and be prepared to drive off.

Assaults and threats of violence must be treated as emergencies. Call 000 for emergency services attendance.

**Protection of Personal Belongings**

Do not leave valuable items exposed inside the car when it is unattended. Take them with you, lock them up in the boot, or keep them concealed.

Turn off the engine and lock up your vehicle whenever it is unattended, even for very short durations.
4 Accident and Emergency

At the Scene of a Road Accident

Stop vehicle in a safe location (safe for you, but also for other traffic). Turn ignition off. Switch hazard lights on.

Assess situation for hazards and take appropriate action to protect yourself and others.

Call 000 for emergency services attendance if necessary. Both ambulance and police attendance may be required if injuries warrant it. Assist any person in need.

If you were involved in the accident, provide your name and the address of the University to the driver of any other vehicle involved in the accident. Do not make any admission of fault to other parties. As far as possible, obtain the following details for any other vehicle involved in the accident:

• Name and address of the driver
• Name and address of the owner
• Description of vehicle
• Registration number of vehicle
• Name of company insuring the vehicle (if any)
• Description of the damage incurred by the vehicle
• Precise words of any admission of guilt by any other party

Remember that everyone’s interest will be best served if the parties are courteous and leave the entire handling of the claim to their insurance.

Report as soon as practicable any property damage resulting from the accident and any use of the first aid equipment to Stores Personnel (ext. 9543) for Mt Helen vehicles, Financial Operations (ext. 8097) for SMB, and Physical Resources (ext 2609) for the Western Campuses.

Report as soon as practicable any injury or ill health you have incurred as a result of the accident to the Risk, Health and Safety department (ext. 9370). Compensation provisions apply to most injuries resulting from work-related road travel, but proper reporting is essential.

Bushfire risk

Planning

Prior to your trip, check the Vic Emergency website at http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/ for any warnings. The phone number of the Victorian Bushfire information Line is 1800 240 667 (1800 122 969 for people who are deaf or communication impaired). Consider rescheduling or cancelling your travel if conditions are unsafe.

Check the vehicle you are using has a woollen blanket or other means to cover yourself and protect you from radiant heat if caught by fire. Tune in to a local radio station (refer Radio Resources below).
Safety in the car

If you are driving and see smoke ahead, make a U-turn to safety if you have the option. Note that a car will not offer safe protection from the radiant heat. However, if you are caught in a fire do not get out and run. Being in a car is still better than being in the open.

To increase your protection from radiant heat:

- Park behind a solid structure to block as much heat as you can. If this is not possible, pull over to the side of the road into a clear area, well away from debris that may ignite.
- Wind up your car windows, close the vents, put on your hazard lights and headlights, leave the engine running and air conditioning on recirculate.
- Get down as low as possible below window level and cover up with a woollen blanket until the fire front passes. If you have water, drink it.

Get out of the car once the fire has gone.

For all emergencies, call 000

Stay calm - Pull over to a safe area. An operator will answer you and ask if you need Police, Fire or Ambulance. Say the service that you require. Give the operator the details of where you are, including street number, name of road, street etc., nearest cross street, and locality.

In rural areas it is important to give the full address and distances from landmarks and roads. Be aware of where you are! When connected, stay on the line – do not hang up

112 can be dialled on any GSM digital mobile phone in areas where you are out of your service provider's coverage area but in another mobile carrier's coverage area (i.e. Telstra, Optus, Vodaphone).
In Case of Other Emergency

Vehicle Fire

If you notice a fire on board whilst driving, park by the side of the road, away from obvious fire risks (such as petrol stations). Turn off the ignition as soon as possible.

Get out of the vehicle and assist passengers out. The health and safety of people is your first priority. Call 000.

Combat the fire only if safe to do so. Remember the vehicle's fire extinguisher (if fitted). Otherwise, keep well clear of the burning vehicle and drifting smoke.

Report the fire to relevant University staff as described for accidents.
5 Vehicle Trouble

Report as soon as practicable any vehicle trouble. There is a SmartFleet Driver Information Kit in every pool vehicle which provides information about what to do in case of an accident or vehicle fault. As per the SmartFleet Kit advice, ring Smartfleet on 1300 555 665.

Flat Tyre

Park the vehicle in the emergency lane if available, or well clear of road traffic otherwise. Choose an area with a firm ground surface. Engage the handbrake. Turn the ignition off. Switch hazard lights on.

Decide whether to attempt to fit the spare wheel or call for roadside assistance.

If you choose to fit the spare wheel, refer to the vehicle's Owner's Manual for instructions on the use of the jack, access to the spare wheel, etc. Never place any part of your body under a vehicle that is hoisted on a jack.

If you choose to call for assistance, refer to the roadside assistance information provided in the vehicle’s glove-box (sedans and station-wagons) or attached to the ignition key. Please note that a few University vehicles that are primarily intended for on-campus use (e.g. trades vans, tractor) are not covered by any roadside assistance.

Vehicle Engine Fails to Start

Conduct the checks that you know you can conduct safely. For example, if the vehicle is fitted with automatic transmission, check that the gear lever is in "P". Check fuel level. Refer to the troubleshooting section of the owner’s manual.

If you cannot fix the problem, call for roadside assistance. Refer to the information provided in the vehicle’s glove-box (sedans and station-wagons) or attached to the ignition key.

Mechanical Failure Whilst Driving

Attempt to steer the vehicle toward the emergency lane or the left roadside. Be mindful of nearby vehicles.

Park vehicle in emergency lane, if available, or well clear of road traffic otherwise. Switch hazard lights on.

Conduct only those checks that you know you can conduct safely. Be especially mindful of hot components, mechanical hazards (e.g. fan blades and belts), electrical hazards and flammable fuels. Avoid standing in front of a vehicle fitted with an automatic gearbox when the engine is running.

Beware of nearby traffic. Never crawl under a vehicle that is raised on a jack.

If you cannot fix the problem, call the University's roadside assistance service provider. Refer to the information provided in the vehicle's glove-box (sedans and station-wagons) or attached to the ignition key.
5  Links

Motor vehicles policies, procedures and guidelines:

Travel policies, procedures and guidelines: