

## Vehicles and Road Safety

Policy Number: 17.02

Effective Date: May 20, 2012

Revision Approval Date: Jun. 28, 2015

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**1. Title:** Vehicle Operation and Road Safety

**2. Purpose:**

The intent is to identify and adopt policies which will maximize the safety of the passengers in vehicles being operated for church events. Much knowledge has been learned by the transportation industry and through government-sponsored studies about vehicle operational safety. The knowledge learned has resulted in many “best practices”. This OPS identifies and adopts these “best practices” as policies for the operation of the church’s owned vehicles and for any leased/rented vehicles used to transport passengers. Regardless of the diligent effort to identify and adopt prudent policies and procedures there remains the element of risk when transporting passengers especially in a 15 passenger van. Parts of this OPS shall apply should the church rent a fifteen passenger van.

**3. Policy:**

### VEHICLE SAFETY

3.1 Anyone who drives a vehicle owned or leased by FPCC shall abide by the following safety rules.

3.1.1 For trips greater than a fifty-mile radius, the Driver of the vehicle is required to inspect the vehicle (before taking it on the road) to ensure that it is in safe working condition. This includes properly working brakes, horns **and checking tire pressure with a gauge**. The *Vehicle Inspection Report* form F-170102 shall be used for all trips taking passengers greater than a fifty-mile radius. For local trips, trips less than a fifty-mile radius, only an “eyeball” inspection is required (17.01-3.15).

3.1.2 Any defects in the vehicle should be reported promptly to the Church Transportation Manager (CTM). The CTM shall decide if the vehicle is unsafe for use and making repairs. See OPS 17.04, 3.6.

3.1.3 **All** Drivers shall obey and abide by all federal, state, local traffic regulations and FPCC OPS’s policies.

3.1.4 Engines are to be stopped and ignition keys removed when parking, refueling, or leaving the FPCC owned/leased vehicles.

3.1.5 Employees, volunteers, and FPCC members are not permitted to use personal cars or motorcycles for FPCC **youth or children transportation**, or for business, unless specifically authorized by the Chairman, Discipleship Committee. If personal vehicles are driven for other FPCC business, proof of

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personal auto coverage (i.e. copy of personal auto Declarations Page or copy of the Insurance Card from the vehicle) shall be filed in the Church Office.

3.1.6 No individual less than eighteen (18) years of age or not yet graduated from high school shall be transported in an FPCC owned or rented vehicle unless he/she has prior permission/approval (OPS 17.01, 3.11 and 3.12).

3.1.7 All drivers of FPCC owned, FPCC leased, employee/member, or volunteer owned vehicles should be driven in a safe manner and all drivers of such vehicles should practice defensive driving techniques at all times.

3.1.8 Seat belts and shoulder harnesses are to be worn at all times.

3.1.9 Vehicles must be locked when unattended to avoid criminal misconduct.

3.1.10 Vehicles must be parked in legal spaces and must not obstruct traffic.

3.1.11 Employees, volunteers, and members should park their vehicles in well-lighted areas at or near entrances to avoid criminal misconduct.

3.1.12 Articles, tools, equipment, etc. placed in cars, vans or Bus are to be placed and secured in such a manner as not to impair vision or in any way interfere with proper operation of the vehicle.

3.1.13 When a driver cannot see behind her/his vehicle (van), the driver should walk behind the van prior to backing. This is not required for vehicles equipped with a backup camera.

3.1.14 Speed shall not exceed ten (10) mph when operating vehicles within the FPCC parking lot or at an off-premise-function parking lot.

3.1.15 Drivers should not, at any time, operate a FPCC owned, leased, or privately owned vehicle (transporting FPCC members, volunteers, or visitors) if fatigued, if alcohol has been consumed, or if illegal substances have been consumed, or **if in possession of an illegal substance**. This also applies to legal substances that may cause drowsiness or other impairment. These conditions can dramatically affect the driver's reaction time in the event of an emergency or impair the driver's judgment and thus increase the probability of a motor vehicle accident.

### WHEN OPERATING RENTED VANS

3.2 Anyone who drives a van (rented or leased) by FPCC shall abide by the following safety rules.

3.2.1 All passengers and cargo transported in vans should be placed, if at all possible, **IN FRONT OF THE REAR AXLE OF THE VAN. This practice will help to decrease the probability of van rollover.** Passengers shall be loaded from the front of the vehicle to the back. This provides a “cushion space” in the rear of the van in the event of the vehicle being struck from the rear. Luggage and cargo should NOT be present behind the rear axle of the van, unless all seats in front of the rear axle are filled.

3.2.2 As a guideline, passengers should fill each row of seats beginning in the front of the vehicle prior to sitting in the rows towards the middle or rear of the vehicle. **This should help decrease the probability of van rollover accidents.**

3.2.3 All passenger van drivers shall require, without exception that each passenger within the van appropriately wear the seat and shoulder belt supplied with the vehicle prior to trip departure. Failure to **appropriately** wear the seat/shoulder belts shall be grounds for removing the passenger from the vehicle. **The Driver shall be familiar with the Vehicle’s Owner’s Manual and particularly its section on how to use the vehicles seat belts.**

3.2.4 Within passenger vans, when possible place passengers 12 years of age or younger in rear seats (after the front seats are filled by adults or older children). This is extremely important if the vehicle is equipped with front or side air bags.

3.2.5 Passenger vans should not be used at any time to tow trailers or other vehicles.

3.2.6 Passenger vans should not be used at any time to transport cargo on the roof of the vehicle. This practice will increase the probability of the vehicle, with an already high center of gravity, being involved in a rollover accident.

3.2.7 On long trips, a minimum of two experienced drivers of passenger vans should travel in each vehicle. This will allow for changing of drivers prior to one becoming fatigued and operating a motor vehicle in an unsafe condition.

3.2.8 Only persons who have been trained by the Church Transportation Manager as an *Approved Driver* shall operate any vehicle transporting passengers for a FPCC event/function.

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3.2.9 All drivers of vans with 10 or more passengers shall be informed of the potential for vehicle rollover and preventive measures to avoid vehicle rollovers.

3.2.10 Vehicles shall not be provided to other organizations or individuals for non-FPCC functions.

3.2.11 Van drivers shall have a cell phone and a list of emergency numbers (vehicle notebook has these). The cell phone should be used for emergencies only, and is to be used only when the vehicle is safely parked.

3.2.12 All van passengers who are twelve or older and under the age of **18** years **or not yet graduated from high school** shall be requested to sign a *Van Passenger Agreement* before being allowed to ride in the van on long trips (OPS.17.01; 3.19). This is Form 170102.

3.2.13 Two of the findings in the referenced end note are the following:

“Although 15-passenger vans are involved in a proportionate number of accidents compared to their percentage in the fleet, they are involved in a higher rate of single vehicle accidents involving a rollover than are other passenger vehicles. Statistical analyses have shown that increased occupancy level and vehicle speed (measured by either travel speed or posted speed limit) consistently predict the increased likelihood of 15-passenger van rollover”.<sup>i</sup> In consideration of this finding, Drivers of any church’s rental vans shall prudently stay within and below the posted speed limit. A California study’s best practice recommends a 55 mile per hour speed limit for 15 passenger vans on an open highway.

3.2.18 Drivers shall be prudent about driving in bad weather. Strong wind is a serious hazard for vans due to their large surface area. Drivers shall be familiar with the Owner’s Manual section regarding van operations in inclement weather and should not hesitate in finding a safe place to pull off the highway and park the vehicle if the weather is judged to be dangerous for the van’s operation.

### VEHICLE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR LONG TRIPS

3.3 Vehicles shall have onboard during a trip having a radius greater than fifty miles the various items listed below.

3.3.1 Vehicles shall have onboard the manufacturer’s provided Owner’s Manual (if available for rented vehicles).

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3.3.2 Vehicles shall have onboard the appropriate tire changing equipment and spare tire.

3.3.3 The Bus shall have a Vehicle Notebook as described in OPS 17.04.

3.3.4 Each vehicle shall have onboard its *Log Book*.

3.3.5 Each vehicle shall have onboard a tire pressure gauge.

3.3.6 All vehicles shall have onboard either appropriate maps for the trip being taken or a GPS device.

3.3.7 Each vehicle shall have on board a second set of vehicle keys if the vehicle is being used for a greater than fifty-mile radius trip. These keys should be in the possession of an adult other than the primary Driver.

3.3.8 Each vehicle shall have onboard a Safety Kit having flash lights, warning signs, etc.

3.3.9 Each Vehicle shall have onboard a First Aid kit.

### **RULES OF THE ROAD**

3.4 **All passengers shall follow the “rules of the road”**. They are the following:

3.4.1 Seat belts must be worn at ALL times.

3.4.2 No hazardous, disruptive activity or noise will be permitted while the vehicle is moving. All passengers must follow the driver’s requests.

3.4.3 Passengers shall keep all objects inside the vehicle.

3.4.4 All windows must be kept clear of objects that may disrupt the driver’s view.

3.4.5 In cases of a crash or emergency, stop and do not exit the vehicle unless instructed by the driver or a designee. Use caution and whenever possible, exit on the sidewalk or shoulder side of the vehicle, never on the traffic side.

3.4.6 Equipment and luggage should be properly secured at all times.

3.4.7 Violation of these rules may result in the termination of the trip for the entire group or the removal of a participant from the trip.

3.4.8 The safety of all passengers is every passenger’s responsibility and a priority on every trip.

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3.4.9 The driver shall remind the passengers of these “rules of the road” before departing on a trip.

**4. Definitions:** None

**5. References:**

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

**Insurance Institute of Highway Safety**

[www.hwysafety.org](http://www.hwysafety.org)

**National Transportation Safety Board**

[www.nts.gov](http://www.nts.gov)

**United Educators**

[www.ue.com](http://www.ue.com)

**National Safety Council**

[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

**6. Applicability:**

This policy applies to the operation of any and all church-owned vehicles and any church rented/leased vehicles.

**7. Procedures:** None

**8. Review Schedule:**

The Discipleship Committee Chairperson is responsible for reviewing this OPS on the triennium of the effective date and making any needed revisions for the Session’s approval.

**9. Approval:**

The Session approved the revision this OPS on the above Revision Approval Date.

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<sup>i</sup> National Transportation Safety Board. 2002. *Evaluation of the Rollover Propensity of 15-passenger Vans*. Safety Report NTSB/SR-02/03. Safety Study NTSB/SR-02/03. Washington, DC.