

MOTOR VEHICLE USE & SAFETY

(Reviewed 9/16/2008)

A. Authorization To Drive

1. Employees who operate a motor vehicle in the performance of duty must:
 - a. Be at least 18 years of age.
 - b. Possess a valid state drivers license, or an international driver's license, for the class of vehicle being driven.
 - c. Receive defensive driving training every 3 years.
 - d. Sign an Annual Motor vehicle Operator's Certification form.
 - e. Possess a U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's identification Card (OF 346) before operating vehicles that require specialized skills or knowledge [e.g.: forklifts, all-terrain vehicles (ATV's), snowmobiles, vehicles with greater than 1-ton capacity, or vehicles towing trailers]. Authorization to operate each class of specialty must be authorized by the supervisor on the OF 346.
2. Additionally, drivers of motor vehicles having a GVW rating of more than 26,000 pounds, towing a trailer having a GVW rating of more than 10,000 pounds, hauling hazardous material requiring the vehicle to be placarded, or operating a vehicle designed to transport 15 or more persons (including the driver) must:
 - a. Possess a commercial driver's license (CDL).
 - b. Possess a valid medical examiner's certificate if required by the state of domicile or operation.
 - c. Be at least 21 years old.

B. Training

1. Defensive Driving - All new employees will complete an approved Defensive Driving course prior to receiving authorization to operate a government-owned vehicle. And at 3- year intervals thereafter
2. Supervisors will ensure that employees receive training as required to drive heavy trucks, 4X4 vehicles, trailers, and specialty vehicles such as ATVs or snowmobiles, or to operate vehicles in special operations such as nest dragging. In lieu of training, supervisors may authorize operation of specialized vehicles if

the employee has demonstrated proficiency in operating the vehicle through job or personal experience.

C. Accident Reporting and Investigation

1. A driver involved in a motor vehicle accident resulting in injury or property damage will report the accident to their immediate supervisor within one working day. If the supervisor cannot be reached, the driver will notify the Safety Officer of the accident.
2. Vehicular accidents require the completion of a number of forms in addition to form DI-134. A packet of accident reporting forms is kept in the glove compartment of each GSA and Interior vehicle. Several of these forms are designed to be completed at the accident site, if the driver is medically capable of doing so. **At a minimum, the driver should attempt to secure the names, addresses, license numbers, and phone numbers of other drivers involved and any witnesses to the accident.**
3. The supervisor will investigate the accident and ensure that all required reporting forms are completely and accurately filled out and delivered to the Safety Officer in timely fashion.
4. A "**Serious Accident**" i.e., a fatal accident or an accident resulting in the hospitalization of three or more persons or \$100,000 or more in property damage **must immediately be reported through the Safety Officer to the BRD Office of Safety and Health.** A specially trained investigator or a Board of Inquiry following procedures outlined in the USGS Safety Handbook will investigate serious accidents.

D. Safe Operation

1. Seat belts will be worn by drivers and all passengers at all times. This includes personally-owned vehicles (POV) used on official business. Shoulder restraints must be worn if the vehicle is so equipped. The number of occupants in a vehicle will not exceed the number of seatbelts available.
2. Adequate seating arrangements will be present for all passengers. They will not be permitted to ride standing up, seated on cargo or loads, or on outside portions of the vehicle, or with portions of the body outside the vehicle.
3. Drivers are prohibited from picking up hitchhikers or carrying any unauthorized persons in the vehicle.
4. Any driver feeling drowsy or noting fatigue will stop until adequately rested.
~~Medication to combat drowsiness or fatigue is prohibited.~~

5. Drivers will not operate vehicles under the influence of alcoholic beverages, legal over the counter drugs, or illegal drugs. Drivers should use caution if taking medications that may cause drowsiness or increase reaction time.
6. Drivers will adhere to posted speed limits and other traffic laws. Although speed limits have been relaxed in many states, it is Center policy that no driver shall exceed the posted speed limit at any time, and that drivers shall not exceed prudent limits of current conditions. In addition, drivers of 4x4 vehicles, because of severe wear on drive trains and tires, shall not exceed 55 mph in 4-wheel drive, vehicles pulling trailers shall not exceed 55 mph, and vehicles pulling other vehicles shall not exceed 55 mph. Vehicles are to be driven with common sense and safety of self, others, and equipment the foremost considerations determining speeds appropriate for completing assigned tasks.
7. When weather conditions warrant the use of windshield wipers, vehicle headlights shall also be turned on.
8. All large and heavy items shall be secured in the vehicle.
9. Drivers are responsible for reporting any malfunction or defect in vehicles to their supervisor or to the Facilities Manager.
10. Drivers are prohibited from talking on cellular phones while operating a vehicle. If needing to talk on a cellular phone, pull to the side of the road and make or receive your call.
11. If vehicles are to be used by interns or volunteers during off-hours, see Vehicle Use Policy Supplement for restrictions.

E. Protective Equipment

1. Seat belt installation and use is mandatory by drivers and all passengers in all on-road vehicles.
2. Cargo barriers will be provided for station wagons, SUVs and vans when loose materials, gear and equipment being transported are likely to be a hazard.
3. First aid kits are required to be in vehicles used for field research. They should be checked regularly and perishables replaced.
4. Roll bars will be installed on trucks and other equipment as necessary.
5. All vehicles will contain a packet of accident report forms, and drivers will be instructed on the use of the forms.

6. An appropriate fire extinguisher shall be mounted and easily accessible from inside the vehicle in all vehicles

USE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - SOP

As per DOI Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, the use of government vehicles is guided by the following:

REGULATORY GUIDANCE: 41 CFR 101-38.301

1. Government vehicles may only be used for official purposes. Employees who use a government vehicle for other than official purposes or who authorize a government vehicle for such use are subject to suspension of a least one month or, up to and including, removal from their position.
2. Use of government vehicles is restricted to government employees or authorized volunteers and interns, when on duty and acting in an official capacity.
3. Government vehicles may not be used for transportation between domicile and place of employment unless authorized under the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1344, or other applicable law. Justification for this is strictly limited to those instances where protection of life and property is essential and 24-hour use of a vehicle is integral to the mission.
4. Standard Operating Procedures for use of PIERC vehicles will be established, with periodic monitoring provided by the Administrative Officer.
5. Employees using government vehicles are responsible for their proper care, operation, maintenance and protection; including checking safety and operating conditions prior to each use.

MISCELLANEOUS

- (a) When in route from point A to point B while on official business, employees may stop to eat and use restrooms when this does not cause the employee to deviate from a prudent route of travel.
- (b) Use of government vehicle between home and work is prohibited unless specific written authorization from the head of the agency is on file. Where written authorization has been given, route of travel is limited to straight line between home and work.
- (c) With the exception of the above section, titled “Official Travel Status,” use of a government vehicle for personal errands of any kind is prohibited. This means that employees may not use a government vehicle to pick up or transport personal mail,

Health And Safety Manual – Motor Vehicle Use & Safety

U.S. Geological Survey, Kilauea Field Station

purchase food and supplies, stop at the bank, transport friends, relatives or off-duty co-workers (except when they are in an official capacity), etc.

- (d) Use of a government vehicle to transport alcohol or any form of contraband is prohibited at all time except when in the line of official duty.
- (e) Picking up hitchhikers and/or giving rides to strangers are prohibited when operating a Government motor vehicle, a leased vehicle or a privately owned vehicle on official business.
- (f) Government employees and other authorized operators (such as a volunteer or intern) must have a valid state driver's license or an international driver's license.
- (g) Discretion must be exercised by those who use Government vehicles to preclude creating **ANY** public misconception. Government vehicles are easily identifiable and subject to close public scrutiny. Though the use may be authorized and valid, employees are to take every effort to avoid a perception that the use is not official.