

## Appendix G Vehicle Safety

The following sections provide vehicle safety guidelines and procedures. This section covers the following topics:

- **General Vehicle Safety**
- **Defensive Driving**
- **Backing Large Vehicles**
- **Accidents**
- **Mobile Phones and Radios**
- **Railroad Crossings**
- **Passengers**

### General Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death and crippling injury in the United States. Traffic safety laws are important components of vehicle safety, but the most important aspect of vehicle safety is the driver.

**Important (Driver's License Requirement):** All UT employees who operate a motor vehicle for university business (whether a university, rental vehicle, or personal vehicle) must possess a valid state of Tennessee driver's license for their vehicle's class.

### To ensure driving safely, follow these driving practices:

- Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals.
- Respond to dangerous driving conditions, as appropriate.
- Maintain a safe distance between your car and any car in front of you. Allow at least one car length for each 10 MPH (e.g., three car lengths if you are driving 30 MPH).
- Keep your eyes moving to avoid fatigue, especially if you plan on driving for a long period.
- Always use your turn signal to indicate your intended action.
- Leave yourself an "out" by either driving in the lane with a shoulder, driving in the middle lane of a multi-lane road or following other vehicles at a safe distance.

### Defensive Driving

The principles of defensive driving include the following:

- **Knowledge:** Know your vehicle and know the law.
- **Control:** Always maintain control of your vehicle. To improve your control, perform routine vehicle maintenance and respond to road conditions, as appropriate.
- **Attitude:** Be willing to obey all laws and be willing to yield to all other vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Reaction:** Respond to driving conditions appropriately. Do not impede your reaction time by driving when tired or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- **Observation:** Be aware of potential accidents and take preventive measures. Always try to anticipate the actions of other drivers.

- **Common Sense:** Do not risk your safety to save time. Avoid "Road Rage" - Do not respond to rude or obnoxious drivers.

### Backing Large Vehicles

Backing a large vehicle can be very difficult. Try to avoid backing whenever possible. If you must back a vehicle, follow these guidelines:

- Before you enter the vehicle, inspect the area you want to back into.
- If possible, have someone outside help guide your vehicle into position.
- If your vehicle does not automatically sound a warning horn or beeper when in reverse, sound the horn once before moving backwards.
- Back slowly and check your mirrors often.

### Accidents

If you are ever involved in a vehicle accident, follow these guidelines:

- Check for injuries. If anyone is injured, immediately call EMS (911).
- Call the police and obtain an accident report from the police department for each and every accident involving a vehicle on official university business.
- If there are no injuries, you are blocking traffic, and your car can be driven, move the car to a safe location nearby. (If the accident occurs on a freeway lane, ramp, shoulder, median, or busy metropolitan street, you must move your car if it is safe and possible to do so.)
- If you cannot move your car, try to give warning to oncoming traffic to prevent other accidents by raising your hood, turning on your hazard lights, or lighting flares.
- Exchange the following information with other drivers involved in the accident:
  - Name, address, and phone number
  - Vehicle identification number, license number, and description
  - Insurance information
  - Driver's license number

### Mobile Phones and Radios

Whether hand-held or "hands-free," mobile phones and CB radios are not to be used, and should be switched off if possible, when driving on the open roads. They can be used freely when the vehicle is parked.

This guideline applies when university vehicles are driven off UT property, rental vehicles are used on UT business, or personal vehicles are driven for UT business.

### Railroad Crossings

Compared with other types of collisions, train/motor vehicle crashes are 11 times more likely to result in a fatal injury. On the average, there are more train-car fatalities each year than airplane crashes. Unfortunately, driver error is the principal cause of most RR crossing accidents. Many drivers ignore the familiar tracks they cross each day, and some drivers disregard train warning signals and gates.

All public highway-rail crossings are marked with one or more of the following warning devices:

- **Advance Warning Signs:** Advance warning signs indicate that a railroad crossing is ahead. These signs are positioned to allow enough room to stop before the train tracks.



- **Pavement Markings:** Pavement markings may be painted on the pavement in front of a crossing. Always stay behind the stop line when waiting for a passing train.
- **Crossbuck Signs:** Railroad crossbuck signs are found at most public crossings. Treat these signs as a yield sign. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck will indicate the number of tracks at the crossing.
- **Flashing Lights and Gates:** Flashing lights are commonly used with crossbucks and gates. Stop when the lights begin to flash and the gate starts to lower across your lane. Do not attempt to go around the gates. Do not attempt to cross the tracks until the gate is raised and the lights stop flashing.



**Important: Stopping Requirements:** You must stop at least 15 feet from a train track when: (1) warning lights flash; (2) a crossing gate or flag-person signals an approaching train; (3) a train is within 1500 feet of the crossing; or (4) an approaching train is plainly visible and in hazardous proximity.

Follow these guidelines when you encounter a railroad crossing:

- Always expect a train.
- When approaching a crossing, **Look, Listen, and Live.**
- Be sure all tracks are clear before you proceed. Remember, due to their large size, it is easy to misjudge the speed and distance of an oncoming train. If you have any doubts, stop and wait for the train to pass.
- Watch for vehicles, such as school buses, that must stop before train tracks.
- Never race a train to a crossing.
- Always stop for flashing lights, bells, and gates. Never drive around a gate. (State law also requires pedestrians to stop when a railroad crossing gate is down.)
- Do not allow yourself to be boxed in on a track with cars in front and behind you.
- Never stop on train tracks. If your car stalls on train tracks, call 911 immediately. If a train approaches, abandon the car and run away from the tracks.
- When driving at night, look low to the ground for moving trains. (one third of all train-car collisions occur at night when cars run into moving trains.)
- Watch out for a second oncoming train after the first train has passed.

## Passengers

Only UT employees or persons on official business for the University of Tennessee are allowed to be transported by UT vehicles. The University of Tennessee cannot and will not accept the liability for any other persons in UT vehicles

## Boating

When boats are used, the PI in charge must be familiar with relevant state and federal boating laws. Personnel in charge of boats are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate licenses and any appropriate boat registrations are obtained.

Boats should be well-maintained and equipped with adequate spare parts and tools, according to the area worked and the length of the trip. Care must be taken when loading boats. The maximum capacity that the boat can carry must be displayed on the boat and must not be exceeded. Boats must contain adequate safety devices such as distress flares, personal flotation devices, etc.

Only licensed and appropriately trained personnel should be in charge of boats. Boats must be driven with caution and attention to prevailing conditions. Only those personnel necessary and trained for the fieldwork may be carried in boats. No one may go out boating alone.

Before setting out on boating trips, check prevailing and predicted weather conditions. Boat trips should not be undertaken in poor weather (e.g. high winds, rough seas) or when poor weather is predicted over the period of the planned trip. Even when good weather is predicted, changing weather should be anticipated in planning the trip.

Prior to setting out, check the vessel for safety equipment, personal flotation devices, fully charged battery, fuel, spare plugs, cotter pins, anchor and small bucket for bailing.

