



Vehicle Use Policy

Category: Administration and Governance
Responsible Office: Office of the Controller
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Date Established:
Date Last Updated: 5/14/2026

Policy Summary

The University at Buffalo operates vehicles – owned, leased, and rented – to support official university business. This policy outlines requirements for the use of university vehicles, as well as the use of personal vehicles for university business. It supports compliance with federal regulations, New York State law, State University of New York policy, and university safety standards.

Policy Statement

The University at Buffalo (UB, university) is committed to the safe, legal, effective, and efficient use of vehicles to support university business while minimizing loss, damage, and claims against the university.

Proper Use of UB Vehicles/Personal Vehicles While on University Business

Driver Requirements

Drivers must operate vehicles in a safe and responsible manner with respect for other drivers and awareness that they are acting as a representative of the university, exercise sound judgment, and comply with all vehicle and traffic laws. Drivers must:

- Be an employee (i.e., State, Research Foundation (RF), UB Foundation (UBF)), enrolled student, or volunteer
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have a valid driver license acceptable in New York State (NYS) for the type of vehicle to be operated
- Allow driver license information to be submitted for enrollment to the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles License Event Notification System (LENS)
 - Report any change in license status (e.g., suspensions, convictions, revocations) to their supervisor immediately

- Wear seatbelts and require passengers to do the same
- Observe all speed limits and parking regulations
- Operate the vehicle at a prudent speed considering weather and road conditions and in full compliance with all laws applicable to the state in which they are operating the vehicle
- Use hand-held mobile communication devices with a hands-free adapter
- Remove the keys and lock all doors when the vehicle is left unattended
- Assume financial responsibility for all fines and traffic violations associated with use of a university vehicle
- Report any damage – aesthetic or operational – to their supervisor immediately

Driver Training, Certification, and Testing Requirements

- Drivers must successfully complete all required trainings and certifications before operating a university vehicle.
 - Departments and units may require additional or stricter training or certification appropriate for the type of vehicle being operated (e.g., gators, golf carts)
- Drivers who hold a Commercial Driver License (CDL):
 - Must possess the appropriate endorsements for the type of vehicle being operated
 - Complete drug and alcohol testing in accordance with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and State regulations

Prohibited Activities

- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes
- Carrying firearms, except for University Police
- Tampering with installed university equipment (e.g., EZ Pass transponder, GPS units, annual inspection sticker)
- Transporting passengers who are not on official university business (e.g., family members, friends, hitchhikers)
- Carrying more passengers than the vehicle is designed to carry
- Allowing unauthorized individuals to drive university vehicles
- Idling vehicles for more than five minutes
- Personalizing a university vehicle by:
 - Affixing stickers to the exterior and/or interior
 - Hanging objects from the rearview mirror
 - Placing decorative objects on the vehicle dashboard or within the vehicle

The university reserves the right to restrict employee access to any NYS-owned vehicles for any reason it determines to be in its best interest. Circumstances warranting restriction may include, but are not limited to, Vehicle and Traffic Law convictions, criminal convictions, license suspension or revocation, substance abuse concerns, accident history, and other relevant factors.

Employees Required to Drive

Employees required to operate a university vehicle as part of their employment will be enrolled in the appropriate reporting service depending on the class of license:

- NYS LENS for holders of a Class D driver license
- FMCSA Clearinghouse for holders of a CDL

Additional information is available at [Driver's License Verification](#).

New York State Non-Residents

Drivers who are not residents of NYS at the time of hire must obtain a NYS driver license within 30 days after becoming a resident. Students attending UB who are not NYS residents are exempt from this requirement.

Non-NYS resident drivers who cannot obtain a NYS license within 30 days after becoming a resident or who do not intend to become a NYS resident must complete the *Non-NYS Resident Driver Attestation* (attestation). The attestation confirms that the driver has not been convicted of driving violations within a specified time.

An individual may drive in NYS with a valid driver license from another state or country. If holding a driver license from another country, an International Driving Permit is not required, but is helpful, as it verifies in multiple languages that a valid driver license exists.

Personal Vehicle Use

Employees, students, and volunteers who drive their personal vehicle for university business or other university-related activities are responsible for their own safety as well as their passengers. The university bears no responsibility for the operating condition of personal vehicles and does not provide reimbursement for damage to personal vehicles or personal auto policy deductibles. Drivers must comply with all local, state, and federal laws.

Departments may authorize drivers to use a personal vehicle for official university business. Employees will be reimbursed in accordance with the [Travel Policy](#) and the requirements detailed in [Traveling for Business](#).

Fleet Vehicle Use

Units/departments that maintain or control university vehicles must:

- Establish a system to authorize, track, monitor, and review vehicle use
- Schedule regular maintenance and safety checks

Employees who operate university fleet vehicles must:

- Use fleet vehicles for university business only
- Inspect the vehicle at the beginning and end of their shift; report concerns to their supervisor immediately
- Maintain logbooks and other vehicle documentation in accordance with department and/or unit requirements
 - Store the vehicle inspection checklist (on a clipboard) and the usage log in the glove box; checklists and logs should be completed by the individual using the vehicle at point of use

Vehicle Insurance

All State-owned vehicles are insured under a State automobile insurance policy and/or NYS self-funded/retained insurance fund. Employees, students, and volunteers are insured to use State vehicles while acting in the course and scope of their employment or volunteer activities.

Drivers must be aware of personal liability associated with vehicular travel. Coverage for medical, vehicle damage, and personal injury liability may vary based on employment status or ownership of the vehicle used (e.g., State, personal, rental). When driving a personal or rental vehicle on university business, liability may extend to the driver's own insurance policy. The vehicle owner's personal insurance is primary for vehicle damage in the event of an accident; employee commuting is not covered under the State insurance policy.

Vehicle Rental

When traveling on university business, rental vehicles may be used when it is in the best interest of the university. Use of a rental vehicle is appropriate when it represents the most cost-effective option, when no other means of transportation are available, or when renting will prevent significant delays.

Additional information is available at:

- [Managing Procurement – Car Rental](#)
- [Travel Policy Charts – Transportation Expenses – Rental Vehicle](#)

Accident Reporting

In the event of an accident involving a university-owned, leased, rented, or personal vehicle while on university business:

- Stop, regardless of the level of damage; it is a traffic violation to leave the scene of an accident including a crash that involves property damage
- Seek emergency assistance immediately by calling 911 for any accident that results in personal injury
- Contact the police (e.g., local, county, State)
- If another vehicle is involved, obtain the following information:
 - Driver/owner name and address
 - Driver license number
 - Vehicle license number
 - Insurance company name and policy number
- Refer to the accident guidance stored in the vehicle glovebox for additional information
- Contact your department or unit vehicle fleet team for vehicle tow instructions, as needed

Drivers must report all accidents to their supervisor immediately, but no later than 24 hours after the event. Drivers must complete the [New York State Motor Vehicle Accident Report \(MV-104\)](#).

Compliance

The university reserves the right to deny, suspend, or revoke the driving privileges of any driver who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy.

Background

This policy supports compliance with federal and NYS traffic and motor vehicle laws and SUNY vehicle use policies while promoting the safe operation and responsible management of university vehicles and minimizing risk to drivers, passengers, and institutional resources.

Applicability

This policy applies to all State, RF, and UBF employees, students, and volunteers who use university owned, rented, leased, or personal vehicles for university business.

This policy does not apply to vehicles used as experimental instruments for conducting autonomous driving research.

Definitions

Employee

Individual currently employed by the University at Buffalo, Research Foundation, or UB Foundation.

License Event Notification Service (LENS)

NYS Department of Motor Vehicles automated system that verifies the validity of NYS driver licenses and reports events that post to a driver license record (e.g., license status changes, suspensions, expirations, reportable accidents, convictions). Access to information is strictly regulated by the federal [Driver's Privacy Protection Act](#) which regulates how information from Department of Motor Vehicles records is released and shared.

Volunteer

An individual who performs services under direct supervision, for and directly related to the business of the university, without the expectation of compensation.

Responsibility

University Human Resources

- Verify driver records prior to hire.

Driver (Employee, Student, Volunteer)

- Comply with all applicable local, state, and federal traffic regulations.
- Operate vehicles responsibly and represent the university in a professional manner.
- Report accidents, citations, or changes in license status immediately.

Departments, Units

- Ensure required training and certifications are successfully completed prior to vehicle operation.
- Maintain and review vehicle operation logs.

Contact Information

Contact An Expert		
Policy Contacts	Phone	Email
Human Resources	716-645-7777	ub-hr@buffalo.edu
Purchasing and Contract Services – Jordan Kayes	716-645-2595	jkayes@buffalo.edu
University Police	716-645-2227	ub-police@buffalo.edu
Accident Reporting Contacts		
Fleet Vehicle Accidents		
Travel/Rental Accidents – Meg Mitchell	716-645-4535	ubtravel@buffalo.edu

Related Information

University Links

[Hiring a Candidate - Driver's License Verification](#)

[Managing Procurement – Car Rental](#)

[Travel Policy](#)

[Travel Policy Charts](#)

[Traveling for Business](#)

[University Police – Driving and Vehicle Safety](#)

Forms

Non-New York State Resident Driver Attestation (to be developed)

Related Links

[Driver's Privacy Protection Act](#)

[Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration \(FMCSA\)](#)

[New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Driver's Manual](#)

[New York State Motor Vehicle Accident Report \(MV-104\)](#)

[State University of New York Passenger Vans Policy, Document 5601](#)

Presidential Approval

Satish K. Tripathi, President

Date

DRAFT