

# **STUDENT TRAVEL POLICY FOR REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS OR UNIVERSITY ORGANIZED SPONSORED EVENTS**

## **I. Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Missouri Western State University to promote safe travel by students to and from events and activities covered by this policy. This is in accordance to MWSU Travel Policy

## **II. Scope**

This policy applies to the travel of enrolled undergraduate or graduate students to attend activities or events that are organized and/or sponsored by registered student organization, department or college, or faculty and staff at Missouri Western State University

The types of activities and events covered by this policy, but not limited to, include course related field trips, recreational sports club trips, the activities of sponsored student organizations, and meetings of academic organizations where a student is officially representing the University. Students, participating in such activity, are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code since they're representing the University.

The policy does not apply to travel undertaken by students to engage in student-teaching.

With regards to the travel, in accordance with our policy, the students own insurance policy serves as a "primary" policy for third party liability and physical damage to their vehicle.

## **III. Definitions**

- An **organized event** is one that is initiated, planned and arranged by a member of the University's faculty or staff, or by the members of a sponsored (registered) student organization, and is approved by an appropriate administrator.
- A **sponsored event** or activity is one that the University endorses by supporting it financially, or by sending students to participate in it as official representatives of the University.
- An **enrolled student** is one who has been admitted to and is attending classes at the University.
- An **appropriate administrator** is a Dean, Department Chair, or Director of an administrative unit, or their delegate.

## **IV. Travel Authorization**

In order to assure that the events or activities that involve student travel are within the course and scope of the University's mission, and that student safety issues have been addressed, travel undertaken pursuant to this policy must be authorized in advance by an appropriate administrator. In the event the travel is in question, paper work has not been completed, or the institution is closed due to inclement weather or travel advisory posted by the MoDOT or National Weather Service, the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee reserves the right to cancel the trip.

- A. To request authorization, members of the faculty, staff or sponsored student organizations who organize activities covered by this policy must submit a completed Student/Organization Travel

Authorization form, along with the required documents and information, to the appropriate administrator for approval. The request must be submitted at least fifteen (15) working days in advance of travel to the activity or event. Request made less than fifteen (15) working days must state the reason for such late request.

- B. The following information/documents must be submitted:
1. A list of participants including their names, local addresses and phone numbers, and the names and phone numbers of persons to contact in case of an emergency.
  2. The name and phone number for the responsible University employee(s) who will be available to the students at all time during the travel and activity. In case of emergency, the main contact for the University is the MWSU Police Department.
  3. Copy of valid operators' licenses for any students who will operate vehicles. The operator(s) must be free of six or more traffic violation points under state law; any chargeable accidents within the past 24 months; any convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs or other major violations, such as reckless driving, hit and run, driving with a suspended license, or fleeing from a police officer.
  4. In the event the travel requires vehicle carrying 16 or more passengers or weigh more than 26,000 pounds, the operator, by federal regulations, is required to hold a commercial license.
  5. Completed and signed Release and Indemnification Agreements for each participant.
- C. When leading group trips, faculty/staff advisor should carry emergency contact.
- D. Faculty who teach courses that involve frequent field trips can collect the following information from students at the beginning of each semester and keep it on file with the appropriate administrator for use throughout a semester (This also applies to students and registered student organizations who frequently travel. The information collected will be destroyed at the end of each academic year):
- completed and signed medical authorization forms;
  - completed and signed release and indemnification agreements (a single release and indemnification agreement may be used if a single description fits all the proposed trips); **and**
  - Proof of a valid vehicle operator's license for students who will operate vehicles.
- E. When an RSO is traveling to a conference/competition an advisor is required unless it is a direct affiliation to the RSO (*Example: Alpha Kappa Psi Regional or National Convention*).

## V. Travel by Motor Vehicle

- A. Compliance with Laws and Policies
1. Motor vehicles used for travel covered by this policy shall have a current proof of liability insurance card.
- B. Vehicle Operator Requirements
1. All students who will operate vehicles while engaged in travel covered by this policy must have a valid operator's license.
  2. Operators of motor vehicles shall comply with all laws, regulations and posted signs or directions regarding speed and traffic control. Student is responsible for any legal issues arise from failure to observe regulations.
  3. Operators shall drive no more than four (4) hours without a minimum rest stop of fifteen (15) minutes;
  4. Operators shall drive no more than ten (10) hours in any 24 hour period;
  5. A navigator shall be assigned for all trips that are scheduled to take more than six (6) hours; and the navigator shall remain awake while on duty.
  6. Trips requiring more than ten (10) hours of driving time shall include overnight lodging.
  7. Driving between 11 PM and 6 AM is prohibited, without prior approval of the appropriate administrative official.

C. Safety Requirements for Both Operators and Passengers

1. **Fatigue.** In the event that the operator is experiencing sign of fatigues, such as forgetfulness, impaired decision making and communication, slower reaction times, staring ahead instead of scanning surrounding conditions, drooping eyelids, close calls, such as drifting into another lane or not maintaining a safe following distance, the operator must be replaced.
2. **Seat Belts.** Occupants of motor vehicles shall use seat belts or other approved safety restraint devices required by law or regulation at all times when the vehicle is in operation. Missouri Western State University recognizes that seat belts are effective in preventing injuries, and fatalities. Our students, faculty, and staff are important to us, and want to reduce the risk that, in the event of an accident, a passenger is injured or killed. Therefore, all students, faculty, and staff of Missouri Western State University must wear seat belts when operating a school-owned vehicle rented by, leased by, chartered by, in the custody of, or any vehicle while on school business. All occupants also are to wear seat belts or, where appropriate, child restraints when riding in a school-owned vehicle or in a personal vehicle being used for school business.
3. **Alcohol and Illegal Substances.** Occupants of motor vehicles shall not possess, consume, or transport any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances. Alcohol beverages are not allowed on any vehicle owned by, rented by, leased by, chartered by, in the custody of, or under the control of Missouri Western State University at any time. Vehicle operators and passengers are responsible for ensuring that no alcohol is carried onto any vehicle under their control. This includes, but is not limited to, kegs, cases, cans, bottles, coolers, etc. Operators are not to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. (Refer to Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Policy)
4. **Passenger Capacity.** The total number of passengers in any vehicle at any time it is in operation shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity, or the number specified by University policy, or federal or state law or regulations, whichever is lowest.
5. **Distractions.** In order to reduce accidents, operators are not permitted to use cell phones, headphones, grooming, and reading. When using cell phones or eating, operators should pull over.
6. **Trailers.** While there may be times when towing trailers may be necessary, operators must adhere to state law requirements and be informed of the trailer safety, not limited, to matching towing vehicle and trailer; hitching, braking, and wiring; and tire safety. (See Towing a Trailer: Being Equipped for Safety)
7. **Key Removal.** Operators are to remove keys and lock the vehicle when it is left unattended.
8. **Inclement Weather.** Operators are to check the forecast prior to departing on trip. When there is travel advisory issued by Weather Services, the trip is to be postponed until the travel advisory is lifted. In the event that weather problems develop a trip, appropriate accommodations should be considered.
9. **Emergency.** In the event that an accident or collision does occur, each operator is required to take along an emergency kit and accident report.

D. Travel by Rental Vehicle

Rentals of vehicles to use for travel to activities or events covered by this policy are governed by the following guidelines.

1. Payment of Costs for Rental Vehicles
  - a. Vehicle rental charges can be a) billed centrally to University Accounts Receivable; or b) billed directly to individuals renting the vehicle with submission for reimbursement. If the rental costs are to be centrally billed, it will be necessary for the driver to obtain a Purchase Order from the University's Purchasing Department *prior* to picking up the rental vehicle.
  - b. If necessary, personal credit cards may be used to rent vehicles for travel covered by this policy, and cardholders will be reimbursed for appropriate and approved costs.

2. Insurance Coverage
  - a. Western will NOT reimburse for supplemental liability protection insurance or any collision and loss damage waivers.
- E. Travel by Means of a Vehicle Owned or Leased Long-Term by the University

In addition to complying with the general rules set out above, travel by means of a vehicle that is owned or leased long-term (for a period of more than one year) by the University must comply with the following requirements:

  1. Employee Operators
    - a. All operators of vehicles described in this section shall be on the payroll of the University. All operators must have a valid license for the operation of a particular vehicle.
    - b. Employee who travels with students or sponsored student organizations must adhere to the Western Travel Policy
- F. Travel by Privately Owned Vehicles “Non-owned autos”
  1. When requesting authorization for travel that involves the use of personally owned vehicles, the requestor, in addition to submitting the information described in Part IV, B, shall also submit a copy of a current liability insurance certificate for any vehicle to be used for the proposed travel.
  2. In the event that vehicle is not owned by the operator(s), a written confirmation of the vehicle owner’s permission to use it for the university activities.
  3. The persons responsible for the proposed activity and travel shall inform students who will drive their privately owned vehicles that they should have personal liability insurance policy will cover any liability that may result from the use of the vehicle for the proposed travel. This means that if a claim arising out of an accident exceeds your policy limits, the University is not held liable for the excess costs.
- G. Volunteer Drivers and Passengers

Non-student/non-employee drivers and passengers who accompany students on travel covered by this policy must sign the Release and Indemnification form prior to the trip.

**For Assistance**

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Director of Student Life