

**Westwood Baptist Church
Policies & Operations Manual
For Use of Church Vehicles**

**Produced by the
Transportation Committee**

July 26, 2013

The purpose of this manual is to provide clear guidance and direction for all members of Westwood Baptist Church in the usage of vehicles for Christian ministry. It will be the responsibility of the Transportation Committee to see that the policies provided in this document are maintained and revised as needed.

General Guidelines

A. Drivers

1. Drivers for all church vehicles will be considered for certification by the Transportation Committee (TC) under the following conditions:
 - a. The driver must be at least 25 years of age. As recommended by the church's insurance company, Brotherhood Mutual, any driver 70 years of age or older is required to have an annual physical in order to drive the vehicle.
 - b. The driver must have and maintain a good driving record. All rules of the road, especially speed limits, will be strictly observed including no moving violations within the previous 3 years. Upon a second legal citation, the driver will lose driving privileges for the church vehicle. We will examine each driver's record annually. The Transportation Committee will determine any actions needed upon review if any violations are found.
 - c. Each driver must review all policies and procedures as designated by the Transportation Committee.
 - d. Must have or obtain a North Carolina Commercial Drivers License to operate a vehicle that holds more than 15 passengers.
2. A list of approved drivers will be kept in the church office with the Church Secretary and furnished to the church's insurance company. Only persons on this list will be permitted to drive any church vehicle.

B. Reservations and Scheduling of Vehicles

Reservations and schedules for the vehicles will be handled through the church office by the Church Secretary and the Associate Pastor. Reservations will be made on a "first come, first serve" basis. Reservations must be recorded on the church calendar as we would any part of the church facility. There is particular information required in order to reserve the vehicle. This information is:

1. Destination, dates, and times of departure and return.
2. The name of the group and group leader.
3. The name(s) of the driver(s). The group leader is responsible for securing the driver(s).
4. A two-week notice is required when scheduling the vehicle for use. If a scheduling conflict should arise, they are to be resolved by the leaders of the groups involved and the Associate Pastor.

5. A mileage fee of sixty cents (.60) per mile per group will be charged for all trips. Fees should be announced in advance to the group, collected from the group by the group leader, and submitted to the church office within the next business day after the trip. Church credit cards will be used for all gas purchases and other vehicle expenses.

C. General Use of the Vehicle

1. The law now requires all passengers under the age of 18 to wear a seatbelt. The group leader is responsible for making sure every person age 18 and under is seat belted.
2. Trips of more than 300 miles (one-way) require a second driver.
3. There will be no alcoholic beverages or tobacco use in the vehicles.
4. The group leader and/or designees will see that all personal belongings and trash are removed after the trip, and that the vehicle is cleaned per the "Vehicle Cleaning Policy."

D. Miscellaneous

1. Citations for traffic violations are the driver's responsibility.
2. The Church Secretary will notify those responsible for vehicle maintenance when a trip of more than 150 miles is planned.
3. The use of vehicles is restricted to Westwood groups.

Normal Operation

A. Pre-Trip Preparation and Inspection

1. The driver will be responsible for arranging through the church office to obtain keys and a church credit card and return them to the church office immediately after the trip during normal office hours.
2. Before starting the engine, the following items will be checked:
 - a. Engine oil level
 - b. Engine coolant level
 - c. Power steering fluid level
 - d. Tire pressure
 - e. Once engine is started, check all signals and running lights operation.
 - f. If needed, clean frost, dew, etc. from windshield, windows, and mirrors.

A tire gauge is stored on the vehicle. The correct cold tire pressure is located on each tire. Always check the tire pressure before each day of driving. Walk around the vehicle at fuel stops and look for any slack tires. If you have doubts, check the pressure of the tire.

3. The pre-trip inspection checklist will be posted in the vehicle in the logbook.

B. Driving

1. Fasten your seatbelt.
2. Adjust rear and side view mirrors for best vision.

3. Be sure that all passengers are seated and belted.
4. Remember that you must allow extra room for turns and stops. These vehicles are not a car.
5. Have passengers assist in looking when backing if needed. There may be a need to have someone on the ground directly behind the vehicle to assist with backing the vehicle.
6. When loading or unloading passengers, turn on emergency flashers, and check mirrors carefully before moving the vehicle.
7. Obey all regulatory and warning signs.
8. Keep a proper lookout and pay attention to your driving. Do not let passengers distract you by engaging you in extended conversation.
9. In wet weather, slow down and allow for extra distance when stopping. Test the brakes by applying them ahead of the stopping point.
10. In hilly or mountainous terrain, downshift **before** descending a hill. It is dangerous and illegal to descend a hill in neutral. **Do not** ride the brakes continuously going downhill; this can quickly reduce the brakes' stopping ability, as well as warp the brake rotors.
11. Give the vehicle a walk around inspection at all fuel and rest stops. Observe all gauges frequently during driving to detect any problems with the engine temperature, oil, or electrical systems. **Remember do not remove the radiator cap on a hot engine.**
12. Stop the vehicle for about 15 minutes at least once for every three hours of operation. You and your passengers need the rest and diversion.
13. Maximum allowable driving time is 8 hours per driver in any 24-hour period. Please do not exceed this limit. Inattention caused by fatigue is a major cause of vehicle accidents.
14. If you are going to be more than 30 minutes late in arriving at your destination or your returning home, please notify the church office or the Associate Pastor and inform them of a best estimate of the group's arrival time.
15. If a traveler's advisory or warning has been issued concerning storms, snowy, or icy conditions, a trip should not be made until the advisory or warning has been lifted. This also includes **return** trips. If necessary, terminate or postpone the trip until weather conditions improve.

C. Post Trip

1. The driver should refuel the vehicle upon your return to the church.
2. Set the parking brake.
3. The group leader and/or designees must clean the vehicle in accordance with the "Vehicle Cleaning Policy."
4. The driver should record all information in the Trip and Mileage log.
5. Record on the log and report any problems with the vehicle to church office, or the Associate Pastor.
6. Lock the vehicle and return the keys to the church office.

7. The group leader should turn in mileage fees along with Trip and Mileage log the next business day during regular office hours.

Church Vehicle Use Policy

The purpose of a church vehicle is to provide transportation for church sanctioned or sponsored activities of the various groups and ministries of Westwood Baptist Church. Such activities are designed to promote spiritual growth and Christian fellowship. To this end, the Transportation Committee has adopted the following policy on use of church vehicles.

1. Church vehicles will be available for group activities sanctioned or sponsored by Westwood Baptist Church.
2. Expenses for rental transportation will be borne by the group when the group's size is greater than can be accommodated by the church vehicle.
3. Westwood vehicles are not to be loaned to other churches except on an emergency basis. In the event a group from another church is stranded, a Transportation Committee member will secure an approved driver to assist that church group. The other church will bare all expenses.
4. If a group has more luggage than can be accommodated by the capacity of the vehicle, any costs for rented luggage carriers or trailers are the responsibility of the group.

Church Vehicle Cleaning Policy

1. The vehicle's interior must be cleaned on the date of the vehicle's return. The group leader and/or designees are responsible for removing all personal items and trash from the interior of the vehicle. Plastic bags will be stored in the vehicle.
2. The group leader or a designated person should coordinate the cleaning process. Sweep or vacuum the vehicle as needed. **Brooms and a vacuum cleaner will be available in room 205** to the group upon their return to the church. Please make sure the windows of the bus are cleaned if necessary.
3. The exterior of the vehicle must be cleaned if it has become extremely dirty or muddy during the trip.
4. Failure to clean the interior immediately revokes the driver's and the group's privileges to use the vehicle until one of the following occurs:
 - a. The vehicle is cleaned inside and out including windows, or
 - b. A \$50 cleaning fee will be assessed and paid to the Bus Maintenance budgeted line item.
5. Please be considerate of the next group to use the vehicle by seeing that it is left, as you would like to find it. If you find the vehicle in a mess, please notify the church office and/or the Associate Pastor.

Emergency Procedures

It is difficult to adopt a policy concerning emergency procedures that will apply in all circumstances. However, the ingredients that will best serve in all cases are training, planning, and common sense. We recognize that it could be one thing to set policy as a committee, and quite another thing to follow the policy under trying and possibly dangerous circumstances. Thus, each driver must prepare by becoming familiar with this policy to be able to accomplish basic safety procedures. Calm, deliberate action by the driver and group leader in time of trouble will help greatly in avoiding panic by passengers. The Transportation Committee welcomes your comments and suggestions for improvement to the policy.

A. Mechanical Disablements

The vehicle will be maintained in good operating condition by the Transportation Committee; however, any vehicle has certain components subject to sudden or premature failure. The major items such as brakes, wheel bearings, and drive train are routinely checked by mechanics. The driver can help prevent breakdowns by following the tasks set down under the Normal Operation section of the policy and by being observant.

The driver is expected to investigate any unusual noise, vibration, or circumstance whenever it is first detected, and not wait until it forces the vehicle to be stopped. For disablements that appear to be major, i.e., more than \$500 or in which the vehicle will be out of service and alternate transportation must be rented, please call the church office or the Associate Pastor. The driver must use sound judgment. If the vehicle is disabled on a busy highway, the driver's first priority is to get the passengers to a safe place. If major repairs are needed, please contact the church office or the Associate Pastor.

1. Stop the vehicle completely clear of the travel lane; if possible, drive into a parking lot or take an exit off a busy highway.
2. Stop the vehicle, put it in park, and secure the parking brake. Turn on the emergency flashers.
3. If the vehicle is near a hill, curve, or other hindrance to the vehicle being seen, or if the vehicle is not clear of the travel lane, evacuate the passengers to a safe place.
4. Prevent collisions by setting out warning devices that are stored in the vehicle.
5. If it is obvious that the vehicle cannot be moved until repairs are made, or it has to be towed for service, the following actions to be taken by the group leader are recommended:
 - a. Contact the State Highway Patrol for assistance by dialing *HP or 911.
 - b. Use a repair service that will honor the church credit card in the driver's possession.
 - c. Some decisions will have to be made by the driver. If the driver needs assistance, the driver should contact the church office, Associate Pastor, or a committee member.

B. Accidents (Property Damage Only)

State laws vary somewhat regarding requirements for drivers involved in accidents with property damage only. The following steps should be taken by the group leader:

1. Stop the vehicle, place it in park, and secure the parking brake.
2. Turn on emergency flashers.
3. Verify that there are no injuries in the vehicle.
4. Prevent further accidents by setting out warning devices, which are stored in the vehicle.
5. Notify the proper authorities, e.g., the Highway Patrol, immediately by phone.
6. If the passengers can be safely evacuated from the vehicle, move them to a safe place such as to the shoulder, behind a guardrail, or to another protected area. **Extreme caution should be exercised in moving small children.**
7. If you judge that the vehicle is in a dangerous place, move it clear of the travel lanes if it can be done safely.
8. When the authorities arrive, the driver should give the required information, and insist that a report of the collision be filed by the officer, regardless of its possibly minor appearance. Obtain the insurance information and other pertinent information from the driver of the other vehicle, if a second vehicle is involved in the accident.
9. The group leader should call the church office or the Associate Pastor at the earliest opportunity to notify them of the situation, and so assistance can be given with alternate transportation, repairs, or communication to family members concerning delays.

C. Accidents (With Injuries)

1. Stop the vehicle, place it in park, and secure the parking brake.
2. Turn on the emergency flashers.
3. If injuries are obvious, immediately contact the police and EMS by dialing 911. All drivers and group leaders should have or have access to a cell phone.
4. Prevent further collisions by setting out warning devices, which are stored in the vehicle.
5. Remain calm and use good judgment in assessing and deciding whether to evacuate the vehicle, and what aid to render to those who are injured. **Trained assistance must be summoned immediately.** Advise the party to whom the accident is reported about the number of injuries and their severity.
6. Cooperate completely with the agency investigating the collision. Provide all necessary information to the authorities. Render all reasonable assistance to anyone injured in the accident. In the event of transport by EMS, and depending on the condition of the patient, someone from the church group may need to accompany the patient to the hospital to provide pertinent information if possible.
7. Contact the church office, or the Associate Pastor as soon as possible to notify them of the accident and the injuries sustained, so they may assist with transportation, repairs of the vehicle, and communication with family members.

8. The group leader should make all calls to communicate with authorities for assistance, church office, and family members of passengers. The driver's responsibility is to make sure the passengers are moved to a safe location.

D. Fire

Contrary to what is often seen on TV, fire is a rare occurrence in vehicle collisions. Unless there is a tank burst and ignition upon impact, the vehicle will rarely catch fire and explode. In rear-end collisions, in which the struck vehicle's fuel tank does ignite, time is extremely critical.

Extrication of passengers must be done immediately. Fires do begin in collisions due to electrical shorts and/or fuel leakage in the engine compartment. However, there is usually adequate time to evacuate passengers. Remain calm and remove the passengers swiftly to a safe distance away from the vehicle.

Once the vehicle is evacuated, and the passengers are in a safe location, extinguishing the fire can then be attempted. A dry chemical extinguisher is located in the vehicle at the front of the cab near the driver.

E. On Board Emergencies

If any on board emergencies occur while in transit, the situation is to be handled by the group leader or a designated person. The driver is responsible for driving during the trip. The driver should continue driving, unless instructed by the group leader to pull off the road to a safe area, or to travel to the closest medical facilities for medical assistance.