

Student Activities Registered Student Organization Activities: Policies, Laws and Good Practices for Travel/Transportation

The University of Connecticut believes that all members of our community who travel in order to participate in activities in association with a student organization should do so in a safe, inclusive, and responsible manner. This document serves as a guide for our students and volunteers who organize and/or provide transportation in association with student organization travel.

Definitions

Destination – The location in which the activity will take place.

Participant – Any affiliate with the University of Connecticut (i.e. a UConn student or their invited guest) who is traveling for a student organization activity.

Student Organization Activity – Any activity that can be reasonably associated with an organization by one or more of the following: 1) a significant number of attendees are members of an organization; 2) the activity is held at a location reserved for, owned by, rented by, or otherwise associated with an organization; 3) promotional material associates the activity with a specific organization; 4) the activities can be reasonably associated with a particular organization.

Travel – The act of going from the University of Connecticut to a destination and back. Student Activities may consider travel with off-campus starting and/or ending points as part of a student organization activity.

Trip – The experience of traveling to a destination and back.

Laws and Policies

- All participants must follow all state and federal laws and regulations.
- The Student Code of Conduct applies both on and off campus for UConn students.
- All participants are individually responsible for their personal conduct while on the trip. The University has no obligation to protect them from the legal consequences of their actions.
- Students with varying abilities and various disabilities must always be permitted to participate in trips, and trips should be arranged in ways that *reasonably accommodate* them. Full consideration should be given to the accessibility of the destination as well as transportation resources.
 - For more information as it relates to reasonable accommodations and disability accommodation requests, students can contact Center for Students with Disabilities (csd@uconn.edu)
- Once the student organization voluntarily undertakes to provide transportation for its members to an off-campus activity, it assumes a duty to do so safely.
- No alcoholic beverages, narcotics, illegal drugs/controlled substances shall be transported or consumed in any vehicle (private, rented, or leased) at ANY TIME or used, consumed, or possessed during the course of the travel.
 - Illegal drugs/substances may not be in the possession of, or used by, any participant at any point.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy for operating under the influence of any alcohol or drug.
- Drivers should be fully licensed in the state of their permanent residence and ensure that their license and motor vehicle insurance is kept active, unrestricted, and up-to-date.

- All vehicles must fully meet all registration and inspection guidelines of the state in which the vehicle is registered. Appropriate documentation must be in the vehicle during trips.
- Any parking fines, motor vehicle infractions or other liability charges are the personal liability of the driver.
- The use of cell phones (phones, texts, navigations, etc.) while driving is strictly prohibited *unless* a hands-free device is used (including but not limited to: hands-free device kits, Bluetooth navigation, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, etc.).
 - If a hands-free device is not available for use, Drivers should pull over to the side of the road or wait until they reach their destination before texting/using a phone.

Policies Requiring Student Organization Action before the Activity

- Student organizations arranging transportation via personal vehicles ('Carpool') for participants of the trip must certify that all drivers are fully licensed and insured to operate a motor vehicle. Student Organizations can help ensure this with the use of a **Verification of License and Insurance** form.
- Student Activities will provide an "Acknowledgement of Risk and Emergency Contact Information" template form to student organization leaders for activity participant use through the Off-Campus Activity Advising Process (OCAA). These forms are encouraged to be used as resources for the student organization in their risk management and emergency response planning. Completed documents are to be securely and confidentially retained by the student organization for their records. If the organization already has emergency contact information, then that information does not need to be collected another time.

Travel/Transportation: Good Practices

- Student Activities recommends that emergency contact information be securely and confidentially kept in multiple locations in case it is needed. A good practice is to bring at least one copy of the information with those who are traveling and also leave one copy with someone affiliated with the organization who is not attending the activity (this person could be back on campus). Information provided should include who is driving at which point, who is a passenger in which vehicle, and any other information pertinent to the trip.
- Student Activities encourages student organizations to rent a bus, van, or other large vehicle to transport all participants, with a fully licensed professional driver.
- If going on an extended trip, create a plan to switch drivers intermittently so the driver is always refreshed. On long trips (three hours or longer), the recommendation is that drivers rotate every three hours with no more than ten hours of driving throughout a period of one day.
 - **Driving between 11 pm and 6 am is strongly discouraged.**
- Rather than travel at a very late/early hour, look into providing overnight lodging for participants.
- If more than one vehicle is being used, it is recommended to not rely on caravanning. Each vehicle should be equipped with directions of the route to the final destination.
- If students choose to use Uber or Lyft, Student Activities recommends that students check the driver's ratings on the company website(s) prior to booking them for transportation.
 - Students should also verify driver's identity before getting in the car.
- Students traveling via airplane or railway are encouraged to create additional travel plans and preparations as it relates to travel delays, property loss/damage, or other risks associated with this type of travel.

Passengers:

- Know who the driver is.
- Ensure that the vehicle is inspected and registered.

- Passengers have an obligation to support the vehicle operator in ensuring the safety of the trip. This includes but is not limited to: not distracting the driver, abiding by the Student Code of Conduct, and obeying state and federal laws (i.e.: wearing a seatbelt).
- There should not be more passengers than there are seats available in the car. “Lapping” or other forms of doubling-up (in order to put more people into the vehicle) is prohibited.
- Should have their phones sufficiently charged. If traveling with multiple vehicles to the same destination, phone numbers or forms of contact should be exchanged prior to departure.

Drivers:

- Ensure the vehicle is fully operational and in good condition to complete the trip in both directions.
- Verify that all mirrors and other safety features of the vehicle are fully operational.
- Travel to/from only the outlined destinations. While rest stops are at times necessary, communicate the specific areas you will be stopping so participants are fully aware of potential risks.
- Drivers should have their cell phones sufficiently charged in case of an emergency.
- Drivers must not allow their attention to be diverted from safe vehicle operation.
 - Holding unnecessary conversations, using their cellphones, looking backward, reading, lounging with a foot off the floor, eating, drinking, adjusting equipment, and driving with one hand on the wheel while the vehicle is in motion are all discouraged.

Ground Transportation Example Scenarios

- **Scenario 1: Organization is PROVIDING transportation for participants by renting a bus or van to transport all participants, with a fully licensed professional driver (I.E.- DATTCO Bus)**

This scenario is encouraged as it may help reduce risk, since the students aren’t doing the driving, someone trained and licensed is. Make sure to follow good practices for entering into a contract for transportation. More information about contracts can be found on the Contract Good Practices information sheet available through Student Activities. The University has a list of transportation providers that you may want to consider:

Coach Buses – Peter Pan Bus Lines, Constitution Coach, and Post Road Stages

Shuttle Buses & Coach Buses – Rukstela Charters, Dattco Inc., and Premier Bus Lines

School Buses – First Student and Durham School Services

Airport Shuttles – Valet Park of America

- **Scenario 2: Organization member(s) uses their own vehicle to transport participants (‘Carpool’)**

In this scenario, the participant’s own automobile insurance policy serves as the policy for third-party liability and physical damage to their vehicles. The student organization must certify to Student Activities that all participants who drive on the trip are fully licensed and insured to operate a motor vehicle.

Prior to the trip, Student Activities recommends student organizations request and keep copies from all drivers of valid driver’s licenses and insurance coverages.

- **Scenario 3: Organization rents a vehicle and transports participants/themselves**

The University does not maintain a fleet of vehicles for use by student organizations. If a vehicle is needed for a trip, a member of the student organization can rent or lease a vehicle. Rental car companies may

have requirements student organizations should know. Their requirements might include having specific types of insurance, such as a damage waiver, or that drivers be older than 21.

Sources:

- Blueprints: Official Handbook for Registered Student Organizations at the University of Connecticut.
- Student Activities Community Outreach Transportation Policies.
- University of Connecticut Student Code of Conduct.
- University of Connecticut Undergraduate Education Field Trip Policy.
- Connecticut State Laws and Department of Administrative Services' General Letter No. 115.

This document supplements and does not supersede any other organizational or legal requirements.