

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 an event or program in association with a student organization should do so in a safe, inclusive, and responsible manner. This policy serves as a guide for our students and volunteers who organize and provide transportation in association with student organization travel.

Definitions

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

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

Student Organization Event – Any activity or gathering 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 event, activity, or gathering is held at a location reserved for, owned by, rented by, or otherwise associated with an organization; 3) promotional material associates the event, activity, or gathering 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 the destination and back. Student Activities may consider travel with off campus starting and/or ending points as part of a student organization event.

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 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 by investigating the accessibility of the destination as well as transportation resources.
- Once the student organization voluntarily undertakes to provide transportation for its members to an off-campus event, it assumes a duty to do so safely.
- No alcoholic beverages or 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 while driving is strictly prohibited unless a hands-free device is used. 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 Event

- Student organizations arranging transportation by participants of the trip must certify that all drivers are fully licensed and insured to operate a motor vehicle. Student Activities will provide details to students upon submission of the off campus event request.
- Student Activities requires students complete “Acknowledgement of Risk and Emergency Information” forms prior to travel. These forms are available through Student Activities and 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 event (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.
- Travel generally begins and ends on campus. Students who join or leave at any other point do so at their own risk.
- Student Activities encourages 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 during 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.

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.

Drivers:

- Ensure the vehicle is fully operational and in good condition to complete the trip in both directions.
- Verify that all mirrors are fully operational.
- Travel to/from only the outlined destinations. While rest stops are at times necessary, outline 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, 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.

Example Scenarios

- **Scenario 1: Student organization rents a bus or van to transport all participants, with a fully-licensed professional driver**

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: Participant uses their own vehicle to transport others**

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: Participant rents a vehicle and drives it**

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.