

VEHICLE SAFETY

Introduction

The following sections provide vehicle safety guidelines and procedures. This chapter covers the following topics:

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General Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death and crippling injury in the United States. Traffic safety laws are important components of vehicle safety, but the most important aspect of vehicle safety is the driver.

IMPORTANT:

All UT Arlington employees who operate a motor vehicle for University business (whether a University owned vehicle, rental vehicle, or personal vehicle) must possess a valid Texas driver's license for their vehicle's class.

The University Police Department is responsible for regulating moving vehicles on University property. To ensure driving safety, follow these driving practices:

- Never drink and drive. Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals.
- Respond to dangerous driving conditions as appropriate.
- Maintain a safe distance between your car and any car in front of you. Allow at least one car length for each 10 MPH of speed (e.g., three car lengths if you are driving 30 MPH).
- Keep your eyes moving to avoid fatigue, especially if you plan to drive for a long period of time.
- Always use your turn signal to indicate your intended action.
- Leave yourself an "out" by driving in the lane with a shoulder, driving in the middle lane of a multi-lane road, or following other vehicles at a safe distance.
- Wear safety belts (lap and shoulder).
- Yield to pedestrians.
- Pedestrian malls are off limits to vehicle traffic except in the case of "Heavy Load Delivery" or emergency vehicles.

Backing Vehicles

Backing a large vehicle can be very difficult. Try to avoid backing whenever possible. If you must back a vehicle, follow these guidelines:

- Get out of the vehicle and inspect the area before you back up.
- If possible, have someone outside help guide your vehicle into position.

- If your vehicle does not automatically sound a horn when in reverse, sound the horn once before moving backwards. Horns can be added to your university vehicle by contacting the Office of Facilities Management.
- Back slowly and check your mirrors often.

Railroad Crossings

Compared with other types of collisions, train/motor vehicle crashes are 11 times more likely to result in a fatal injury. On the average, there are more train/car fatalities each year than airplane crashes. Unfortunately, driver error is the principal cause of most grade crossing accidents. Many drivers ignore the familiar tracks they cross each day, and some drivers disregard train warning signals and gates.

All public highway-rail grade crossings are marked with one or more of the following warning devices:

Advance Warning Signs:

Advance warning signs indicate that a railroad crossing is ahead. These signs are positioned to allow enough room to stop before the train tracks.

Pavement Markings:

Pavement markings may be painted on the pavement in front of a crossing. Always stay behind the stop line when waiting for a passing train.

Crossbuck Signs:

Railroad crossbuck signs are found at most public crossings. Treat these signs as a yield sign. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck will indicate the number of tracks at the crossing.

Flashing Lights and Gates:

Flashing lights are commonly used with crossbucks and gates. Stop when the lights begin to flash and the gate starts to lower across your lane. Do not attempt to cross the tracks until the gate is raised and the lights stop flashing.

IMPORTANT:

You must stop at least 15 feet from a train track when:

- (1) warning lights flash;
- (2) a crossing gate or flag person signals an approaching train;
- (3) a train is within 1500 feet of the crossing; or
- (4) an approaching train is plainly visible and in hazardous proximity.

Follow these guidelines when you encounter a railroad crossing:

- Always expect a train.
- When approaching a crossing, LOOK, LISTEN, and LIVE.
- Be sure all tracks are clear before you proceed. Remember, due to their large size, it is easy to misjudge the speed and distance of an oncoming train. If you have any doubts, stop and wait for the train to pass.
- Watch for vehicles, such as school buses, that must stop before train tracks.
- Never race a train to a crossing.
- Always stop for flashing lights, bells, and gates. Never drive around a gate. (State law requires pedestrians to stop when a railroad crossing gate is down.)
- Do not allow yourself to be boxed in on a track with cars in front and behind you.
- Never stop on train tracks. If your car stalls on train tracks, call 911 immediately. If a train approaches, abandon the car and run away from the tracks.

- When driving at night, look low to the ground for moving trains. (One third of all train/car collisions occur at night when cars run into moving trains.)
- Watch out for a second oncoming train after the first train has passed.

Driving UT Arlington Vehicles

The University recognizes a responsibility for UT Arlington motor vehicles to be operated in a safe manner. Vehicles shall be used legally, courteously and safely. To reduce the risk of accidental loss associated with the use of vehicles by the University, UT Arlington has adopted a comprehensive fleet safety program to include policies and procedures for the following: minimum driver standards, driver's motor vehicle record checks for authorized drivers and potential drivers, post accident reviews and remedial actions, driver training, drug and alcohol testing for drivers of commercial motor vehicles, and other policies and procedures consistent with the State Vehicle Fleet Management Plan and UT System-wide policy [UTS157](#).

Individuals not completing these requirements will not be added to the Authorized Drivers List and will not be permitted to drive University vehicles. Please review the driving policy on the [EH&S website](#) or refer to UT Arlington [Procedure 8-6](#) for more information about requirements to drive University vehicles.

Operation of 12 and 15-Passenger Vans

UT Arlington requires that 12 and 15-passenger vans be operated only by experienced, authorized drivers who understand and are familiar with the handling characteristics of the vans, especially when the van is fully loaded. This shall include having all operators of 12 and 15-passenger vans attend van-specific training, including behind-the-wheel on-the-road training. This specialized driver training is required for each driver of University-owned, rented, or leased 12 and 15-passenger vans at least every three years.

For complete details and a list of available behind-the-wheel training dates, please see the [Driving UTA Vehicles](#) page of the EH&S website. If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact EH&S at 817-272-2185 or ehsafety@uta.edu.

Insurance

Under the provisions of Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code Section 101.027 and Texas Government Code Section 612.002, liability insurance has been purchased for officers and employees of the University covering liability arising from the use and operation of University-owned and operated vehicles while on official University business.

The UT System Office of Risk Management procures any necessary insurance coverage and issues certificates of insurance, copies of which shall be carried in all university owned vehicles. The Facilities Management Auto Shop places current certificates in vehicles when they are called in for service, or a copy may be obtained from the [Driving UTA Vehicles](#) website.

Accidents

If you are ever involved in a vehicle accident, follow these guidelines.

1. Check for injuries. If anyone is injured, immediately call the police (911).
2. If there are no injuries, you are blocking traffic, and your car can be driven, move the car to a safe location nearby. (If the accident occurs on a freeway lane, ramp, shoulder, median, or busy metropolitan street, you must move your car if it is safe and possible to do so.)

3. If you cannot move your car, try to warn oncoming traffic to prevent other accidents:
 - Raise your hood.
 - Turn on your hazard lights.
 - Light flares.

4. Exchange the following information with other drivers involved in the accident:
 - Name, address, and phone number
 - Driver's license number
 - Vehicle identification number, license number, and description
 - Insurance information
 - Also obtain name, phone, and address of all witnesses

5. Authorized drivers of University-owned vehicles should not make any representations regarding insurance coverage or admit fault to other parties involved in the accident. DO NOT admit responsibility nor sign any statement unless for the UT System insurance claim representative.

6. Report all vehicle accidents on campus to your supervisor and the UT Arlington Police Department (817-272-3381). The UT Arlington [Vehicle Accident Report](#) should be completed and returned to the EH&S Office at Box 19257.

7. If you are not on campus and there is damage to the university vehicle or other vehicle or property, make sure a Police Department investigates the accident.

Additionally, call the police in the following circumstances:

- Someone is injured.
- A car cannot be moved.
- A driver is intoxicated.
- A driver has no insurance.
- A driver leaves the scene of the accident without exchanging information.

Accident Review Board (ARB)

The objective of the Accident Review Board (ARB) is to encourage safe driving habits by UT Arlington employees and reduce the occurrence of preventable motor vehicle accidents and losses involving University employees. The ARB will review the causes of vehicle accidents to determine if they may have been preventable in an effort to generate recommendations to drivers, supervisors, and administrators to assist in the prevention of similar accidents.

For specific information regarding the Accident Review Board please see Section VII of UT Arlington [Procedure 8-6](#).