

University Baptist Church
Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Manual

Expectations for Rental Vehicle Drivers

The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts; small children should be properly secured in booster seats, child seats, or infant seats, as appropriate.

Each day the vehicle is driven, a vehicle checkout should be performed to ensure that all major systems are operational. Tire pressure is especially important to check, since it can affect the vehicle's handling.

Before driving, take the time to adjust the vehicle's mirrors and note where blind spots exist. Smaller vehicles such as convertibles and bicycles may be especially difficult to see. If interior mirrors are provided for the driver to see passengers, don't forget to adjust those; they keep you from having to turn around to check on passengers.

Unless the transmission is in Park, the driver shall not use a cell phone. Texting is especially dangerous, but talking can also lead to distraction, even with hands-free operation. Let a passenger handle operating a phone or navigation system when needed. If driving alone, find a safe stopping location to adjust devices or make a call.

Drivers are expected to promptly notify the church office of any collisions or traffic violations involving a rented vehicle. In the event of a collision, and after seeking help via 911 for any injured person(s), the driver is expected to immediately call the following entities, in the order noted:

1. One of the UBC ministers,
2. immediate relatives of the UBC group involved, and
3. the rental company.

To the extent possible, the driver should also record and bring to the church office the names, addresses and telephone numbers, of all persons involved including witnesses and the name of the investigating police officer. The name of the other driver, the license of the vehicle they are driving, and their insurance coverage is very important and needs to be provided to the church office and the rental company along with the copy of the report which the investigating officer will provide.

Guidelines Regarding Vans

Be aware that a full-size van handles differently than a car. It requires more braking distance than a car. It also has a higher center of gravity, making it more prone to a rollover or loss of control due to sudden lane changes or aggressive driving. That center of gravity changes as the van is loaded; as of 2002, vans carrying 10 to 15 occupants were almost three times more likely to roll over in an accident than vans carrying five or fewer occupants. Van designs have improved since then, but when driving a van, it is still important to avoid distractions and remain attentive, make maneuvers smoothly, and maintain a sufficient following distance from the vehicle in front of you—at *least* 3 seconds when traveling less than 50 mph and at least 4 seconds when traveling over 50 mph or in adverse weather or road conditions.

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Example: A common cause of rollover crashes for large vehicles occurs when (often due to distracted driving) the vehicle drifts off the edge of the pavement on one side of the roadway and the driver overcorrects in trying to steer back onto the roadway. This leads to a loss of control and the vehicle crashing on the other side of the road. If the vehicle drifts off the edge of the pavement and shoulder conditions permit, a safer recovery is possible by *not* attempting to immediately return all wheels to the pavement. Instead, reduce speed gradually (panic braking can also cause loss of control), then smoothly steer back onto the pavement. Similarly, avoid changing lanes in situations where one lane is higher than the adjacent lane, which often occurs during repaving projects.

A fully loaded van is relatively light on its front wheels during normal driving, but when braking, the weight shifts to the front wheels, making the vehicle much more responsive to steering input. This can make driver overcompensation worse. When the van is not full, the back row should remain empty to minimize this weight shift.

A van is also taller than most cars and SUVs, meaning you must know the vehicle's height and be especially aware when encountering underpasses with *low* clearance or entering parking structures.

A "cushion of safety" is the area around your van that you should try to keep free of other vehicles and pedestrians. Maintaining a safe following distance for vehicle control is perhaps the most critical part of the "cushion of safety." Scan 12-15 seconds ahead, which is about 1-1½ blocks in the city and only a ¼ mile on the highway. Know what is going on ahead of your vehicle.