



Policy Regarding Transportation within Ministry

[Owner: Office of Property Insurance]

Policy

Commercial carrier or contracted transportation is the most desirable method to be used for field trips and, whenever possible, this mode of transportation should be provided. The use of private passenger vehicles is discouraged and should be avoided if at all possible. If commercial carriers are used (i.e. commercial airlines, trains, or buses), no further information is required. However, if transportation is contracted, signed contracts should be executed with an appropriate hold harmless agreement protecting the parish/school and the Diocese. Also, contracted carriers should provide proof of insurance with minimums of \$1,000,000 of liability and \$2,000,000 aggregate CSL (Combined Single Limit).

Leased Vehicles

If a vehicle is leased, rented, or borrowed to transport participants to and from the event, appropriate insurance should be obtained. Coverage can be purchased through the rental company or your local agent. If auto coverage is provided through our Catholic Mutual, contact should be made with your Member Services Representative. **Coverage cannot be automatically assumed for leased, rented, or borrowed vehicles.**

Personal Vehicles

1. All those who drive their own vehicles or their religious community's vehicle in service to the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, its parishes, its schools, and/or its institutions are hereby required to carry \$100,000/300,000 automobile liability coverage.
2. Certificates of these insurance policies must be provided to the Diocesan Office of Property Insurance when the policy is purchased and again upon each renewal date thereafter.

3. If a field trip is planned utilizing parent transportation and a parent cannot meet the insurance requirements, they cannot drive any children other than their own.

Parish Owned Vehicles

1. Drivers who are driving parish/school owned vehicles, must complete a MVR (motor vehicle record) check approval form and complete an online questionnaire and training. This process is available online with Catholic Mutual (CMGConnect), instructions for which are available at the location and on the Diocese website (under Property Insurance). This applies to anyone (employees and volunteers).

Vans, Shuttles, and Buses

1. The use of 11 to 15 passenger vans to transport children or adults is prohibited.
 - 1.1. 11 to 15 passenger vans may only be used for cargo hauling, so long as all but the two front seats are removed.
2. School buses and Multi-function School Activity Buses (MFSAB) are allowed.
 - 2.1. A MFSAB is a vehicle, which complies with the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) applicable to school buses for crash survivability and mirrors.
 - 2.2. If a MFSAB is used for transportation, the vehicle must meet the FMVSS as indicated below:
 - 2.2.1. FMVSS 111- Fulfills the safety requirement for the rear-view and cross view visibility.
 - 2.2.2. FMVSS 220 - Establishes requirements for the school bus body structure in rollover accidents.
 - 2.2.3. FMVSS 221 - Regulates the strength of body panel joints in school buses.
 - 2.2.4. FMVSS 222 - Establishes occupant protection requirements for school bus passenger seating and barriers.
3. Although MFSAB's are preferred, minivans are also allowed for the transportation of children or of adults. A minivan is defined as a passenger vehicle designed to transport no more than 8 total occupants.

Youth Transportation Policy

1. A school or church trip is any function relating to school or parish operations (including religious education and youth ministry programs).

2. When the parish, school, or office is *not* responsible for providing transportation; there are no regulations in this regard. Clearly state that transportation will not be provided by parish/school and that providing or arranging appropriate transportation to the event is the responsibility of the parent. However, if the parish, school, or office does *provide or arrange* transportation, the policy herein applies.
3. Rented school buses (meeting School Bus Safety Standards) or small capacity vans (9 or fewer persons including the driver) for school and church trips are the preferred modes of transportation for groups.
4. Private vehicles and volunteer drivers may be used so long as the following conditions are met:
 - 4.1. The drivers are required to be 21 years of age or older.
 - 4.2. The drivers are required to have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability which impairs the drivers' ability to drive the vehicle safely.
 - 4.3. The vehicles are required to have a valid and current registration and license plate.
 - 4.4. The vehicles are required to have a valid state inspection sticker.
 - 4.5. The vehicles are required to be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per occurrence.
 - 4.6. In order to protect volunteer drivers from further personal loss in the unfortunate event an accident should occur, it is recommended, though not required, that drivers carry an additional \$1 million umbrella.
 - 4.7. A signed Volunteer Driver Information Form certifying the above must be completed by the driver and submitted to the pastor, principal or designated program leader prior to the trip. Safe Environment policies must be followed as well.
 - 4.8. In order to avoid caravanning, the driver/chaperon should be given a copy of the approved itinerary and access to a map of the routes to be followed. If the drivers have cellular phones, numbers should be exchanged prior to the start of the trip.
 - 4.9. As directed on the Volunteer Driver Information Form, drivers shall review and agree to follow -- indicated by their signature -- their responsibilities prior to departure.
 - 4.10. The driver or other adult in the vehicle shall also have a list of names and emergency numbers of youth traveling in their vehicle.
 - 4.11. Daily maximum miles driven should not exceed 500 miles per vehicle. Maximum number of consecutive miles driven should not exceed 250 miles per driver without at least a 30 minute break.

Student Transportation

When students are allowed to transport themselves and other students to school/parish sponsored events on or off premises or if students like having the flexibility of driving their own vehicles to these events, this can create a liability exposure to the school/parish and to the Diocese.

The best risk management for this scenario is to reduce liability exposure to the school/parish and Diocese through risk transfer. If students drive themselves or other students to events, the school/parish should “divorce” itself from the responsibility of arranging the transportation. In other words, the school/parish should leave the arrangements of transportation for students involved in these circumstances to the parents by making it clear that the school/parish is not responsible for transportation to the event as indicated in Youth Transportation Policy #2 above.

Unacceptable Drivers

A driver is unacceptable if the driver’s accident/violation history in the last three years includes one or more of the following serious violations:

1. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
2. Hit and run
3. Failure to report an accident
4. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
5. Operating during a period of suspension or revocation
6. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
7. Operating a motor vehicle without owner’s authority (grand theft)
8. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive
9. Reckless driving
10. Speed contest
11. Any combination of accidents and moving violations which total 3
12. Drivers license expired/revoked/suspended
13. No record of a driver’s license found
14. International driver’s license