

St. Martin's Lutheran Church
Transportation Policy

When the church or its members provide transportation, the Transportation Policy is to be followed.

A. DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

Driver Qualifications for Anyone Transporting Youth:

1. Be a screened adult volunteer including a criminal and driving record background check.
 - a. Driver must not have had any DUIs in the past 5 years and no more than one DUI conviction at any time.
 - b. Driver must not have had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last 5 years for any reason.
 - c. Driver must not have any reckless driving infractions in the last 5 years.
 - d. No more than 2 moving violations in the previous 2 years.
2. Possess a valid Texas Driver's License.
3. Be at least 25 years old and in good health.
4. If over the age of 75, provide the church Business Manager with a physician's statement of health to drive.
5. Must be trained on church transportation safety policy.
6. If driving a personal vehicle, must have proof of insurance that meets the State of Texas requirements and supply a copy to the church Business Manager.

Additional Driver Qualifications for Operating Church Bus

In addition to the Driver Qualifications for anyone transporting youth, all approved drivers for the church-owned bus meet the following requirements:

1. Possess a valid Texas Commercial Driver's License.
2. Be deemed eligible per standards established by the church insurance carrier.
3. Be listed on the church's list of approved drivers. The church Business Manager will maintain a list of the approved drivers.

B. Requirements for Minors

A parent or guardian must sign a Participant Consent Form (see Children and Youth Program Volunteer Policy) for each minor participant.

C. Seat Restraints

- a. The number of passengers in a vehicle may not exceed the number of working passenger seat restraints.
- b. The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts correctly at all times.
- c. Children 12 and under must ride in the backseat.
- d. Children under 8 must ride in a child safety restraint seat at all times.

D. Emergency Preparedness

Each vehicle shall have a copy of the Transportation Policy, a first aid kit, a cell phone and copy of Participant Consent Form for each passenger who is a minor.

E. Traveling in Groups

If more than one vehicle is involved in providing transportation to the activity:

- a. Drivers are to make sure each driver has directions, phone number of destination, and cell phone number of other drivers.
- b. Safety is first priority and drivers should not put passengers at risk to drive in a group.

F. In Case of an Accident

- a. Check for injured persons. If anyone is injured, make them as comfortable as possible. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE INJURED PERSON. Keep them warm. Administer first aid only if you have proper training. Do not leave the injured person(s) unattended.
- b. Call 911 for assistance. If anyone is injured inform 911 of the injury(ies). Provide your location. Do not hang up until they tell you to.
- c. An accident report with the police/law enforcement MUST be made.
- d. Call the Senior Pastor to inform them of the accident and the well-being of passengers involved.
- e. Cooperate with the police and fire department investigators.
- f. Obtain the following information for all parties involved in the accident: name, phone number, driver's license number, license plate number, VIN and insurance information.
- g. If you are driving a personal vehicle, inform your insurance agent of the accident.

G. Driver Responsibilities

- a. Complete advance planning of the route in conjunction with the sponsoring ministry or trip leader.
- b. Carry a cell phone and provide the number to the church for emergency contact purposes.
- c. Ensure the vehicle has been inspected and deemed to be ready prior to travel.
- d. Ensure a church-supplied or personally owned first-aid kit is in the vehicle.
- e. Ensure appropriate seasonal supplies are available in the vehicle (i.e. warm blankets, emergency food, water, jumper cables, etc.) for all non-local trips.
- f. Ensure no illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco are in the vehicle (sacramental purposes excluded).
- g. Obey all traffic laws at all times.
- h. Drive only when all occupants are properly restrained by seat belts, boosters, or car seats as defined by law.
- i. Drive no more than 500 miles per day not to exceed 10 hours of driving in a 24-hour period.
- j. Drive only between the hours of 6:00 AM and Midnight.
- k. No audio devices with headphones or earplugs covering one or both ears are permitted while driving.
- l. Refrain from using electronic devices such as cell phones, GPS units, and tablets while driving, regardless of laws in various jurisdictions.
- m. GPS may be used in hands-free mode.

n. Additional Driver Responsibilities if Operating Church-Owned Bus:

- i. Ensure a fire extinguisher and flashlight are in the vehicle.
- ii. Serve as the authority if actions on or around the bus endanger the equipment or riders.
- iii. Ensure an adult leader (not the driver) serves as an in-vehicle chaperone of minors on youth outings.
- iv. If the designated adult leader does not follow safety or discipline requirements for the safe operation of the bus, the driver is to report to the Senior Pastor at any time for assistance and action.
- v. Maintain records and receipts for bus fuel and maintenance and provide to the church Business Manager.
- vi. Complete a pre-trip & post-trip inspection and provide information to the church Business Manager.
- vii. Provide recommendations concerning the maintenance and improvements to the bus to church Business Manager.
- viii. Return the bus to the storage area after it has been cleaned, fuel tank filled, etc.

H. Driving Distances

- a. Any trip that exceeds 500 miles is required to have at least two (2) driver. Driving is to be divided equally among drivers each day.
- b. It is recommended that stops or breaks take place at least every three (3) hours for the safety and comfort of the passengers and drivers.

I. Prohibition on Use of 15-Passenger Vans to Transport People

a. NHTSA Advisory on 15-passenger Vans

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration issued a rare "consumer advisory" in 2001 warning of the rollover risk of 15-passenger vans. The advisory concludes that a 15-passenger van with more than 15 occupants has a rollover risk nearly seven times greater than a lightly loaded van (fewer than 5 occupants) in a single vehicle accident. The rollover risk is nearly 3 times greater with more than 9 occupants than with less than 10. The NHTSA reissued this safety advisory in April 2002, in part because of "several tragic rollover crashes involving religious groups on trips" during the summer of 2001.

b. The church prohibits the use of 15-passenger vans to transport people.

POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THE CHURCH BUS

J. Maintenance of Bus

- a. The church is responsible for expenses related to bus maintenance.
- b. The church Business Manager is responsible for regular service and maintenance of the bus.
- c. If maintenance is required during the trip, the driver is responsible for arranging for any needed bus maintenance.
- d. Any expenses exceeding \$200, require approval of Senior Pastor.

K. Passenger Guidelines for Church-Owned Bus

- a. Groups consisting of riders under 18 years of age must have a minimum of two responsible adults, one of whom will sit in the back and the other close to the front. One of these two adults must be 25 years of age or older.
- b. Management of passengers' actions is the responsibility of the designated adult leader; however, the driver has final authority if he or she believes those actions endanger the bus or riders for any reason.

L. Passenger Log

- a. The designated adult leader is to maintain a master list including bus passengers & any chase vehicles. A copy of the master list is to be sent to the Senior Pastor or Business Manager prior to departure.
- b. The designated adult leader will confirm the headcount prior to proceeding on the trip and at each stop prior to resumption of the trip.
- c. The designated adult leader is responsible for additions and departures on the master list and the bus list.
- d. The passenger master list is the responsibility of the designated adult leader, not the bus driver.

M. Driver Accommodations

- a. Drivers are volunteers.
- b. The ministry is to provide meals and lodging (private lodging when available) for driver. If the driver is attending the event, the cost of event should be covered by the ministry.

N. Requesting Bus Usage

- a. The church-owned bus is available for church or church sponsored events only unless prior written approval is obtained from the Senior Pastor and Executive Committee.
- b. Bus must be driven by church approved drivers who meet all the driver responsibilities.
- c. Request for bus usage must be made to the Business Manager a minimum of three weeks prior to the event and must include the following information: dates of the trip, number of passengers, driver(s), adult leaders and purpose.
- d. Any critical missing information must be provided in writing 10 days prior to the event.
- e. Requests are handled on a first come – first serve basis. If multiple requests for the same period are received, a charter bus or vans should be used for the shorter trip.
- f. Trips without approved bus drivers will be cancelled.

O. General Bus Policies

- a. The church is not responsible for personal items left on bus.
- b. Users are responsible for keeping the bus interior clean and doing the post-trip cleanup.
- c. Repair to the bus interior or exterior caused by malicious mischief will be billed to the offender or the ministry group using the bus.
- d. Each bus must have a responsible adult designated as a group leader.
- e. Safety of the group is always first consideration.
- f. The minister or leader is primarily responsible for group conduct.

- g. Driver is the final authority on all matters related to the operation, routing and use of the vehicle(s).
- h. Passenger capacity is limited to available seating on the bus. No standing or sitting in aisle permitted.
- i. Seatbelts are to be worn correctly at all times.
- j. No possession, consumption or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or tobacco (in any form) is permitted on church property, including buses.
- k. Food and beverages may be used on the buses but proper disposal is required.
- l. No tape of any kind is to be used to affix signs to the exterior of the bus.
- m. Nothing is to be written on or affixed to the windows.
- n. No installation or modification of equipment in the bus is permitted, including televisions, audio equipment, etc.