

# TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## *Driving, Personal Vehicle*

- A. The use of your personal vehicle must be pre-approved by your supervisor, and you must give written permission.
- B. Field staff are encouraged not to transport SOAR students in their personal vehicles.
- C. Course Directors may transport students, though they are encouraged not to be alone with students if possible.
- D. Personal vehicles are to be parked in designated parking areas at SOAR Base.
- E. If a staff is required to use their personal vehicle, they will be reimbursed for fuel or mileage.

## *Driving, SOAR Vehicles*

- A. SOAR vehicles include 15-passenger vans, 4-WD trucks, and passenger cars. Vehicles should be loaded within the passenger limits established by the manufacturer.
- B. It is best to reserve SOAR vehicles as far in advance as possible to avoid not having one available when needed.
- C. Ensure anyone driving a SOAR vehicle has an up-to-date SOAR drivers certificate. They are free and do not take long to get. No one is allowed to drive a SOAR vehicle without this certificate. The certificate and a photocopy of the driver's license will be kept in the individual's personnel file.
- D. Staff transporting students shall adhere to SOAR's general Staff to Student Ratios in the Risk Management protocols unless an emergency or safety dictates otherwise.
- E. Staff transporting students will always carry with them in the vehicle each student's Medical Information Form and Permission to Treat.
- F. Staff must perform a safety briefing, head-count, and seat-belt check before they drive anywhere.
- G. No eating, drinking, or smoking are allowed in SOAR vehicles.
- H. Passengers should be buckled into their seat belts before the vehicle is started. Ask, "On belay?" and wait for a unanimous "Belay on."
- I. All passengers should remain seated and doors should be locked while underway.
- J. Lock the vehicle when it is going to be left unattended.
- K. It is best not to leave anything in the vehicle if it is going to be left unattended. Items left inside invite the possibility of a break in.
- L. Don't leave a set of keys hidden under the vehicle while away. Keep them in driver's possession.
- M. Do not leave credit cards in the vehicle. Ideally, the driver should keep them on their person.
- N. Stay within the posted speed limit. Any tickets for moving violations are the responsibility of the person driving.
- O. Staff utilizing vehicles for programming in North Carolina shall only listen to the radio during travel. Staff utilizing vehicles for programming in Florida and Wyoming may listen to tapes or CDs with appropriate consideration being given to listening content.
- P. Keep track of fuel fill-ups by keeping receipts. Also, keep track of mileage for records.
- Q. Check the vehicle thoroughly during "Check-Out" looking for any damages which could end up being attributed to you even though it was not. Things to look for include: cracked glass, dents, scratches, or some feature which does not operate as it should i.e. window cranks, seat belts, brakes, doors, etc. You must bring any problems to the attention of the Logistics Coordinator or one of the Directors before completing Vehicle Check-Out.

Otherwise, the repair for the damage can be billed to you.

- R. Return all vehicles fully re-fueled. Likewise, refuel at every logical opportunity. Students should remain inside the vehicle during refueling unless accompanied by a staff for bathroom use.
- S. Be sure the vehicle is clean before returning it. Have students do this since it is most likely they who left it unclean. Assist them with this responsibility issue. This means clearing out all paper, personal gear, and any bits of trash.
- T. When students unload from a SOAR vehicle, have them stay close to the vehicle until a "sweep" of the vehicle has been completed ensuring all personal gear and trash has been removed. You and your group can decide which student will conduct this sweep.
- U. Keep track of all paperwork, so it can be returned to SOAR for proper accounting and record keeping.
- V. SOAR vehicles are for program use and not for personal travel and errands.
- W. Staff are not to put SOAR students at risk by stopping at the scene of an accident.

### ***Driver Qualification / Orientation / Training / Certification***

#### **Driver Qualification**

SOAR drivers must:

- A. Be 21 years of age or older.
- B. Have a valid Driver's License.
- C. Have no record of a DUI.
- D. Have no more than one moving violation in the past twelve months.
- E. Be willing to have SOAR's insurance company conduct a background check.
- F. Complete SOAR's Driver Orientation / Training.
- G. Have an updated SOAR Driver's Certificate on file.

#### **Driver's Orientation / Training**

Driver's Orientation and Training will include:

- A. Check-Out / -In Procedures
- B. Fluid Checks
- C. Location of Emergency Equipment
- D. Seat / Mirror Adjustment
- E. Function and Location of Gauges
- F. Operation of Vehicle
- G. Familiarization / Test Drive
- H. Attachment, Pulling, Backing, and Detachment of Trailer
- I. Location of Gas Stations for Refueling
- J. Completing of Driver's Certification form

#### **Driver's Certification**

A copy of the *Driver's Certification Form* is found in the Form Section of the Staff Manual. Please review it thoroughly and ask any questions pertaining to the form or the process it describes.

This form must be completed and on file for a staff member to operate a SOAR vehicle.

## ***Check-Out / -In Procedure***

The Check-Out / -In procedure is designed for your protection and your vehicle's mechanical health.

A copy of the Check-Out / -In Form is found in the Form Section of the Staff Manual. Please review it thoroughly and ask any questions pertaining to the form or the process it describes.

All SOAR vehicles must be checked out prior to use. The Check-Out form and clipboard will travel with the vehicle and be returned at Check-In with appropriate credit card receipts, etc.

Vehicles can be checked out for a maximum of one course before a new Check-Out Form must be initiated with the Logistics Coordinator.

## ***Van Cleanup Check List***

- \_\_\_ 1. Remove all trash
  - \_\_\_ a. Check and insure cup holders are empty
  - \_\_\_ b. Check under seats and between seats and side of van
- \_\_\_ 2. Wipe down seats, floor, and dashboard
- \_\_\_ 3. **Fill gas tank and turn in receipt to the program director**
- \_\_\_ 4. Change oil if needed (We have an account at Grease Monkey in Waynesville)
- \_\_\_ 5. Wash the vehicle (Car was off of exit 98 in Waynesville, by Ingle's)
- \_\_\_ 6. Vacuum out vehicle
- \_\_\_ 7. Note any vehicle problems on vehicle maintenance form and turn in
- \_\_\_ 8. Check for any dents or damage (If so, report to the program director)

## ***Student Arrival & Departure Procedures***

- A. Families arriving at SOAR will park only in designed sites at both Balsam Base and Eagle View Ranch. These sites will be indicated by staff parking monitors and by appropriate signage.
- B. Students being dropped off at SOAR will be accompanied by either their parents or a SOAR staff and will proceed immediately to an administration building to check in.
- C. Families will be reminded in their accept packet literature to observe all posted speed limits on approach roads and to use caution when arriving and departing base camp.
- D. Students leaving SOAR will be accompanied by either their parents or a SOAR staff to their vehicle.
- E. Staff will inspect all areas for safety prior to allowing students to load into or unload from vehicles. Staff will also insure that the vehicle is in park and turned off while students load and unload from vehicles. Staff will then accompany students to appropriate areas of base or to their supervising staff.

## *Driving of Vans*

- A. Keep rear windows closed while the vehicle is operating and moving.
- B. Designate a "navigator" to assist the driver with radio control, climate control, etc.
- C. Insure a SOAR staff is seated in the back seat to assist with group control. This is mandatory.
- D. No food or drinks in the van.
- E. When starting the vans the transmission should be in Park and your foot on the brake.
- F. The vans are fuel injected and do not need to have the accelerator pedal depressed or pumped. Have the lights off when starting.
- G. In some cases you will drive a van with the overdrive button and light on the end of the gear shift lever. These are Fords. The "Off" light should not be lit. You would want the overdrive button "Off" if the van is constantly shifting between 3rd and overdrive (you can hear the engine switching back and forth). This can happen in hilly terrain or when pulling a trailer.
- H. Shift out of overdrive (turn it off) when using the transmission to hold down speeds when coming down hills.
- I. Make adjustments of seats and mirrors prior to moving.
- J. Have another person help direct a driver backing a van to avoid hitting objects. If driver is alone, get out and look at the area to be backed into to be sure it is clear.
- K. Remember the van is 18 feet long and that the driver sits very close to the front wheel. This is different than in a car, therefore requiring slightly wider turns to avoid hitting other objects and curbs which can slice a tire.
- L. Remember that the van is tall. Roof racks will add to the height. Be aware that it will not fit under low roofs such as drive through fast food places or automatic tellers.
- M. The van is heavy. It is much heavier than a car when it is loaded with people. It will not corner well due to the high center of gravity. Do not attempt any fast tight corners or you can risk tipping the van over. The van will also take much more distance to stop than a car; especially if you are pulling a trailer. Plan your stops well in advance.
- N. On down hill grades down shift the transmission to a lower gear to save the brakes from Overheating, but do not let the engine over rev. On the Ford vans push the button on the end of the shift lever. This will shift it down a gear from fourth to third.
- O. Drive with your hand on the wheel. Accidents are more likely to happen when the driver is not paying attention to the road and instead has attention diverted to changing the radio stations, eating, reading a map, etc. Have your "navigator" help with the directions and other information.
- P. Drive slower in bad weather. Rain, icy roads and snow reduce visibility and/or require longer stopping distances. Give more room between the van and the vehicle in front. On very slippery roads, pump the brakes to help stop in a straight line (unless the van has ABS brakes).
- Q. Keep an eye on the gauges. If one is pointed in the wrong way or if a warning light comes on, do not keep driving. It could damage the vehicle if you proceed. Figure out whether the problem indicated requires immediate action or not and do it if needed. Do not, for instance, keep driving as the engine continues to overheat.
- R. Staff are not to put SOAR students at risk by stopping at the scene of an accident.

## ***Long Trips***

- A. Change drivers every four hours, as a maximum amount of time behind the wheel, to avoid fatigue. If the driver ever feels tired and feels like closing their eyes, they should pull over at the first place possible to change drivers. It is dangerous to everyone to deny tiredness. Even if the driver has only been at the wheel for a few minutes, a change may be necessary. Travel from midnight and 5am may be limited if staff feel concern for safety.
- B. Never risk a driver falling asleep at the wheel. On night trips the person in the passenger seat should stay awake to help keep the driver awake with conversation and to help with navigation.
- C. Most cruise control systems are similar to one another. If more information is needed for the van you are driving, consult the vans owners manual provided with the van.
- D. Remember that cruise control is not an auto pilot, pay attention.

## ***Dirt Roads***

- A. Drive slowly on any narrow, winding or steep dirt roads. Stay in the middle until approached by another vehicle. When this happens, pull to the right and stop to see what the other driver will decide to do. Be careful not to pull off to the side of a road which is dangerous. This means a road shoulder that is unstable, a cliff side or a road side which may cause the van to get stuck. If the road is too narrow, be prepared to back up to a wider spot.
- B. Avoid jeep trails, vans cannot navigate them.
- C. Consider using a horn on very narrow roads with sharp turns.
- D. Make U turns only at "turn around points," not in the middle of the road.
- E. Speed limit for all SOAR vehicles on gravel roads is 15 mph.

## ***Pulling A Trailer***

- A. If a trailer is to be towed, the driver should have experience in driving, cornering and backing a trailer prior to driving a loaded van and trailer on a trip.
- B. When hooking the trailer to the van, make sure the ball makes a good connection, lock the hitch down, and install the safety chains.
- C. Make sure the trailer lights are working. If not, try reconnecting the plug and repair as needed.
- D. Be sure all items on the trailer are secured.
- E. At every stop, check the trailer hitch for a secure load and trailer tires for tightness of lug nuts and bearings.
- F. Lug nuts must be re-tightened after 10 minutes of travel if a trailer tire has been changed.
- G. Compensate for the extra length of the trailer when passing vehicles, parking and when rounding corners so as to not swipe curbs, cars or people.
- H. Backing a trailer requires the wheel to be turned the opposite way as what is required without one. Drivers need to practice this before heading out on the road. Have a person behind directing when backing up the trailer. Put the most experienced driver behind the wheel when backing up.
- I. If the situation calls for it, disconnect the trailer and maneuver it by hand.
- J. Be sure to check area to see if van and trailer will fit and there are no objects in the way.

## ***Emergencies***

- A. A SOAR staff certified in First Aid and CPR will always be present in any vehicle transporting students. The staff with the highest level of first aid certification will be responsible for administering care for the injured while all other staff will be responsible for the safety of the rest of the group.
- B. In the case of an accident, contact a SOAR Director first, *unless there is a life-threatening injury, in which case contact EMS immediately*. Stay on the scene until police arrive and do not attempt to assess blame. Obtain appropriate information (i.e., insurance information) and identify witnesses as necessary.
- C. If the vehicle goes off the road, do not endanger passengers by having them try to push the van.
- D. If the van gets a flat tire, check the van's owners manual if you are not sure of the location of all the components of the jack and where to place them to raise tire. Get well off the road, set the parking brake and check the wheels. Do not climb under the van when it is up on the jack. If you change a tire, have the passengers get out of the van while it is on the jack to lighten the load and avoid sudden shifts of weight.
- E. After you have changed the flat, stop and re-tighten the lug nuts after ten minutes of driving.
- F. Do not continue to operate a vehicle which is unsafe.
- G. In any accident or mishap requiring repairs to the van, have a police report done ASAP by the local jurisdiction where the mishap occurred. Obtain a copy of the report or have arrangements made to have sent to SOAR for insurance reasons.
- H. Complete the *SOAR Vehicle Accident Report Form* if you are involved in an accident.
- I. In an accident which involves personal injury, call SOAR Base and inform them of the details. Do not make statements or give interviews to any press.

## ***Winter Driving***

- A. If you know you will be driving a non 4WD vehicle in winter conditions, have chains of proper fit on hand. Other safety gear should be carried as needed (i.e., blankets, etc.).
- B. Roads tend to be more dangerous under snowy or icy conditions so keep in mind that all road signs are set up for summer driving conditions. If the sign says curve 35mph, you must compensate for winter conditions by slowing down an additional 10 to 20 mph depending on conditions.
- C. Speed on even flat or non-curving areas should also be reduced to fit road conditions. Remember - safety is number one in reaching your destinations, not speed.
- D. During winter driving conditions vehicles should be stocked with blankets or sleeping bags, food, and water in case of a breakdown.
- E. Stopping distances should be at least doubled during winter driving conditions in order to compensate for lack of friction due to ice or snow on road surfaces.
- F. Vehicles should be moved out of the line of traffic during winter conditions if a breakdown occurs and students should be evacuated from the vehicle.
- G. Drive slowly on any narrow, winding or steep icy or snow-covered roads. Stay in the middle until approached by another vehicle. When this happens, pull to the right and slow to see what the other driver will do. Be careful not to pull off to the roadside too far as the snow there will be unpacked and could cause a vehicle to get stuck.
- H. Check tire pressure in winter regularly due to the affects of cold weather on tire pressure. Proper tire pressure ensures better handling.

## ***Defensive Night Driving***

- A. At least one staff member shall ride in the back seat of the van at all times.
- B. Do not allow males and females to ride together in a van seat at night.
- C. Make stops every 3 to 4 hours for rest and driver changes.
- D. Stop whenever you are too tired to drive - it is better to be late than in a wreck.
- E. Check in at every stop with base or the director on duty.
- F. Semester Course Programs are required to suspend driving after 10:00pm unless an emergency dictates otherwise.

## ***Airport Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures***

- A. For both pick-ups and drop-offs, airport staff shall receive a packet of information from the Office Manager containing flight information, airline tickets, Student Medical Information Forms, Student Permission To Treat Forms, and the SOAR airport sign.
- B. Airport staff are responsible to insure that the vehicles and/or trailers being utilized are in proper working condition. Airport staff shall also check out a vehicle gas card from the Comptroller and shall turn in the card and receipts immediately upon return from the airport.
- C. Airport staff must coordinate with course staff to insure complete transfer of all student information and gear, including student medications.
- D. Airport staff shall always wear a SOAR staff t-shirt and be appropriately groomed when performing pick-ups and drop-offs.
- E. A first aid kit shall accompany airport staff for pick-ups and drop-offs.
- F. Airport staff shall meet all incoming students in the appropriate gate of the airport (unless other arrangements have been made) with a sign entitled SOAR and listing the names of all incoming students.
- G. Airport staff shall accompany all departing students to their gate (unless other arrangements have been made) and shall remain there until the airplane has left the gate.
- H. Airport staff shall contact the students' families utilizing a SOAR-issues calling card as soon as incoming students have been collected or as soon as departing students' airplane has left the gate.
- I. Upon arrival with incoming students at basecamp, airport staff shall walk the students through registration and shall remain responsible for their supervision until an official transfer has occurred with the course staff.
- J. Airport staff shall immediately notify basecamp of any changes discovered at the airport of student departure or arrival times.
- K. Should there be a "no-show" for an airport pick-up, the staff will immediately notify base camp. Base camp will then contact the family to determine where the student is and if they are coming to SOAR.
- L. Upon completion of airport pick-up or drop-off duties, airport staff shall return all student information and the airport information packet to the Office Manager.