

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Transportation

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that all participants in Catholic schools, when involved in an activity sponsored by the school, be transported in a manner that is consistent with the conditions stipulated in the Diocese of Des Moines Vehicle Safety Policy and by the Diocesan insurance carrier, Catholic Mutual. These conditions are stated in Regulation 652.1.

Policy Adopted: May 19, 2003
Policy Revised: May 20, 2013
July 30, 2021

Transportation
Regulation 652.1

It is important that the schools adhere to the requirements for student transportation as stipulated below:

A. General Information

1. Bus transportation is the most desirable method for any trip, and whenever possible this mode of transportation should be provided.
2. Use of 11-15 passenger vans for the transportation of students is a violation of Federal Motor Vehicle Standards and are not to be used.
3. If a school rents/leases/borrows a vehicle, the school must contact the Diocesan insurance carrier (currently Catholic Mutual, 1-800-228-6108 prior to signing any contract or agreement.
4. The use of private passenger vehicles is discouraged and should be avoided.

B. Permission Slips

1. Written consent of parents/legal guardians must be obtained for every participant prior to a field trip, sponsored/sanctioned by the school. Permission slips must inform the parents/legal guardians of the following:
 - a. Nature and date of event.
 - b. Mode of transportation to be used.
 - c. Name of person in charge of trip.
 - d. Parent's/legal guardian's responsibility and school, parish and diocese release from liability.

2. Also, there must be a permission slip for each specific field trip and all slips must be signed by the parent/legal guardian.
3. Written consent of parents/legal guardians must be obtained for every student in on-going, recurring activities originating from the school during the current year, prior to the first such activity. Such activities may include, but are not limited to
 - Formation activities
 - Liturgical assistance at a church away from the school site
 - Recreational activities
 - Service projects
 - Small group athletic events
 - Small group contests
 - Student recruiters/school ambassadors
 - Student tutors at an elementary school
4. Permission slips must inform the parents/legal guardians of the following:
 - a. Name and nature of activity/program.
 - b. Mode of transportation to be used.
 - c. Name of person in charge of activity/program.
 - d. Parent's/legal guardian's responsibility and signed waiver from liability.
5. Also, there must be a permission slip for each different recurring activity/program, and all slips must be signed by the parent/legal guardian. The school may NOT allow one field trip permission for all trips throughout the year.
6. Programs containing high school aged students who have drivers licenses must develop a means of communication to be used when small numbers of students may be involved in activities that are endorsed or encouraged by the school and are conducted during the normal operational hours. This means of communication must state that the transportation from the specific activity is the responsibility of the student in consultation with her/his parents. Examples of such activities are shown in paragraph 3 above.
7. Transportation to an event from a participant's home (i.e., not originating from the customary school site) is the sole responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of the participant.

C. Institution Owned Vehicles

1. Vehicles owned by the institution cannot be used for personal use without authorization. A copy of the **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR)** from each state where he/she has ever had a valid driver's license is required and will be obtained in the background check process.
2. Each institution will implement a quarterly vehicle maintenance and inspection program in addition to the manufacturers' operation and maintenance recommendations for all vehicles that they own.
3. All Church owned vehicles must be equipped with a road safety kit and inspected fire extinguisher
4. Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used while operating a motor vehicle on behalf of the Church.

D. Privately Owned Vehicles

1. All privately owned vehicles used on behalf of the Church must be insured. They must have a valid and current registration, license plates and proof of insurance card.

2. The vehicle must be in safe operating condition.
3. The private automobile insurance company of the owner of the vehicle will be the primary insurance carrier.
4. The minimum liability limit for privately owned vehicles is: \$100,000/\$300,000. A **Private Vehicle Use Application** (Regulation 652.2) must be completed for each vehicle.

E. Drivers

1. Drivers must be 21 years of age or older.
2. A driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that would impair his/her ability to drive the vehicle safely.
3. Operators must possess a current valid driver's license for the type of vehicle they will be operating.
4. No operator will be hired or be allowed to provide volunteer transportation on behalf of any Church entity who has had any of the following citations or convictions in the past three years:
 - Operating a vehicle during a period of license suspension, revocation or forfeiture
 - Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Hit and run accident
 - Failure to report an accident
 - Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
 - Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
 - Operating a motor vehicle without the owner's authority
 - Permitting an unlicensed person to drive
 - Reckless driving
 - A combined total of three or more accidents and/or moving violations
5. It is the responsibility of the operator to ensure that passengers adhere to the current State of Iowa safety belt laws and regulations.
6. All operators are expected to take the online defensive driving course Be Smart-Drive Safe. <http://www.cmgdrivesafe.com/>
7. Any volunteer who drives on a regular basis for Church/school business must complete the **Volunteer Driver Application** (Regulation 652.3) and the background check forms. Please retain the Volunteer Driver Application in your office.
8. A copy of the Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) from each state where he/she has ever had a valid driver's license is required and will be obtained in the background check process.
9. Potential drivers should not be utilized if they answered "YES" to any of the questions asked on the Volunteer Application (Regulation 652.3)
10. The driver must be informed that his/her insurance is primary and diocesan insurance is secondary in case of accident or liability.

F. Accident Reporting

1. If an accident occurs:
 - Obtain medical assistance, if needed, **at the scene** as soon as possible.
 - Contact local police, sheriff or highway patrol authorities as required.
 - Exchange driver, vehicle and insurance information.
 - Report the accident/moving violation to the insurance agent.
 - Report the accident/moving violation to the Church/School.
2. Complete the **Vehicle Accident Report** (Regulation 652.4)

G. Record Keeping

1. Records pertaining to driver selection and training should be kept on file for a period of three years following termination of their driving privileges.
2. Vehicle maintenance logs and vehicle inspections must be maintained for the duration of ownership of Church owned vehicles.
3. All organization owned vehicles must carry, at all times, a current **vehicle proof of insurance identification card**.
4. Retention of Forms:
 - **Volunteer Driver Application**, retain for a minimum of 3 years
 - **Private Vehicle Use Application**, retain for a minimum of 3 years
 - **Vehicle Accident Report**, retain for 7 years from date of school

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