

Richland County School District One

Defensive / Safe Driving Program Guidelines

## **Purpose**

To maintain all District vehicles in a safe, clean and roadworthy condition to ensure the maximum safety of the employee, occupants, and other road users at all times. To ensure that employees who drive vehicles in the course of their work demonstrate safe driving techniques at all times. The District will not require employees to drive under conditions which are unsafe and/or likely to create an unsafe environment, physical distress, fatigue, etc.

## **Administration**

Risk Management has overall responsibility for coordinating safety programs for the District and will review and update the program. Copies of this program may be obtained from Risk Management. Suggestions for improving this Plan, which are welcomed, should be given to the Risk Director. Employees shall receive instructions and training in the purpose and use of driving District vehicles from their department manager / supervisor(s). The District wants a safe work environment and strives for participation by everyone in the implementation of safety.

## **Training**

While only those employees whose primary responsibility and/or delegated duty is to drive District vehicles in the execution of their job duties, all employees may be trained on all aspects of defensive and safe driving safety and will be able to recognize the hazards associated with driving and to understand the procedures to control or minimize these hazards.

## **Code of conduct**

\*\* Richland County School District One Guidelines: All accidents will be reported immediately!

1. Absolutely No Smoking in District Vehicles.
2. Drivers and all occupants must wear a seat belt at all times.
3. Cell phones, smart phones, and other electronic devices must be operated with a hands-free device at all times.
4. Talking on a cellular or two-way radio device that is not hands-free, text messaging and emailing are strictly prohibited when the vehicle is in drive and /or in motion. When possible and safe to do so, pull over (to talk, take notes, etc.)
5. Vehicles will only be used for purposes related to School District business and/ or District sponsored events.
6. No person, other than District employees (and students where appropriate) will be transported in a district vehicle.
7. When equipment, supplies, etc. are being transported, the driver will ensure that all items are properly secured to prevent shifting or falling from vehicle.
8. No person will be allowed to ride on or in any vehicle non-passenger compartment including running boards, truck beds, etc.
9. A driver whose vehicle is towing a trailer, dolly, or other equipment will ensure that the trailer hitch is securely latched and that safety chains and other safety equipment are properly attached and operable.
10. No driver will operate a vehicle with an obstructed view.
11. All vehicles should be equipped with a back-up alarm or use an observer.
12. When work requirements make it necessary for a District vehicle to block or construct traffic, the driver will place warning signs and / or traffic cones to warn motorists of the obstruction.

Employees driving District vehicles, must comply with traffic legislation, be conscious of road safety and demonstrate safe driving and other good road safety habits when driving on District business. The following actions in District vehicles will be viewed as serious breaches of conduct which could result in termination of duties as a consequence:

- Drinking or under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while driving.
- Any change in the status of your driver's license (suspension, revocation, expiration, tickets, or arrests).
- Any accident or moving violation involving a district vehicle.
- Reckless or dangerous driving causing death or injury.
- Failing to stop after a crash.
- Points reduction.
- Any actions which warrant suspension of a license.
- Repeated accidents / incidents.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Drivers of District vehicles will:

- Ensure they hold a current driver license for the class of vehicle they are driving
- Immediately notify their supervisors or managers if their driver license has been suspended or cancelled, or has had limitations placed upon it
- Promptly notify supervisor of any changes to your driving record within 24 hours.
- Be responsible and accountable for their actions when operating District vehicles
- Assess hazards while driving and anticipate '*what if*' scenarios
- Drive within the legal speed limits, including driving for the conditions
- Wear a seat belt at all times
- Report vehicle defects to a supervisor or manager before the next vehicle use
- Comply with traffic legislation when driving a District vehicle
- Regularly check the oil, radiator and battery levels, and tire pressure of District vehicles they regularly use
- Report any near hits, crashes and scrapes to their supervisor, including those which do not result in injury
- Follow the procedures outlined in these guidelines.

### **In addition it is required that all drivers:**

- Take regular and adequate rest breaks, at least every two hours, especially while driving in extreme heat conditions.
- Stop when tired
- Plan the journey, taking into consideration pre-journey work duties, the length of the trip and post-journey commitments and use daytime running lights on the open road.

### **Driving In Rain**

In stormy conditions, it is more difficult to see other vehicles, road signs and the road itself. It is critical to make sure you can see and be seen. First and foremost:

- Slow down! It takes longer to stop or adjust in wet weather. Stay toward the middle lanes - water tends to pool in the outside lanes. Maintain proper following distance (**3 Second Rule**). This needs to be increased in wet weather. Drive in the tracks of a vehicle ahead of you. Don't follow large trucks or busses too closely. The spray created by their large tires reduces your vision.

- Be more alert when driving in wet or slippery conditions.
- Watch out for brake lights in front of you.
- Avoid using your brakes; if possible, take your foot off the accelerator to slow down.
- Turn your headlights on even in a light rain, or in gloomy, foggy or overcast conditions. Not only do they help you see the road, but they'll help other drivers to see you.
- If your District vehicle has daytime running lights you still should put them on, so other vehicles behind you can see you better.
- Before it starts to rain, have old or brittle wipers replaced.
- Avoid off-road driving: it's hard to judge the actual depth of puddles and you can easily become stuck, even in an SUV.
- Never drive beyond the limits of visibility.
- Never drive through moving water if you can't see the ground through it; your vehicle could be swept off the road.
- When driving through a puddle of uncertain depth, go slow. If its deeper than the bottom of your doors, turn around and find another route. Deep water can be a risk to your life and health and cause serious damage to a vehicle's electrical system.

### **Before you go**

- In wet-weather scuff the soles on the rubber matting or carpeting of the vehicle before you start the engine.
- All employees should regularly check that their headlights, tail lights, brake lights and turn signals are working properly.

### **Tires**

- Check your tires on a regular basis.

### **Wipers**

- Have your wipers checked regularly
- Use the windshield washing liquid liberally

### **Headlights**

- During inclement weather keep your lights on.
- Slow down to give yourself more distance to stop.
- Never have your vehicle's headlights on high within 1000 ft. of an oncoming vehicle
- Keep your vehicle's lighting equipment clean and in good working condition especially the lenses of your lights.
- Turn your eyes away from glare with oncoming traffic by looking toward the right side of the road and watching the white line marking the outside edge of the traffic lane or adjust your regular mirror to cut out as much of the bright light as possible.
- Reduce your speed until your eyes recover from the glare.

A good rule of thumb is to turn your headlights on when it is raining or when visibility is reduced to less than 500 feet.

### **Fog**

- In air conditioned vehicles, turn up the heat and direct the airflow to your defrosters with the AC switch engaged.
- In a vehicle without AC the procedure is the same, but you may need to open your side windows to get the air moving. Most District and modern vehicles have a built-in rear window defroster that easily clears a misted rear windscreen by heating up electrodes embedded in the glass. If you don't have one, put your defroster on high and its' hot air will eventually follow the inside of the roof down to the rear window.
- If the vehicle has swiveling dashboard vents, adjust them so that the air flow strikes the upper edge of the side windows. The airflow will clear the side windows first, finally

- traveling to the rear of the vehicle.
- If necessary, use a rag or article of clothing will work as well; you'll just need to clear the window more often.

Employees/Drivers should regularly clean their windshield and windows, both on the inside and outside, to help them see in good and bad weather.

- Reduce your speed and turn on your headlights. Keep an eye on your speedometer.
- Make sure that you can be seen.
- If you have them on your vehicle, turn on your fog lights, and make sure your high beams aren't turned on by accident. High beams direct light up into the fog, making it difficult for you to see. Low beams direct light down onto the road and help other drivers to see you.
- Don't rely on your parking lights alone: they do little to increase your visibility in daytime fog.
- Don't use your emergency flasher, drivers are attracted to flashing lights and tend to drive into them inadvertently.
- Don't turn off your headlights in heavy fog, even if they interfere with your forward visibility a little.
- Don't stop in the middle of a roadway. If you can't continue, pull well onto the shoulder, getting your vehicle completely off the road.
- Use the right edge of the road (aka fog line) as a guide rather than the center line, to avoid running into oncoming traffic or becoming distracted by their headlights.
- Keep your minimum safety gap to three seconds in ideal conditions; with the decreased visibility fog causes, this interval should be increased substantially.
- Slow down and signal early and when you use your brakes, don't stomp on them.

### Handling a skid

- Prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves.
- Brake before entering the curves.
- Steer and brake with a light touch.
- Remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go. (This procedure, known as "**steering into the skid**," will bring the back end of your vehicle in line with the front).
- For vehicles without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. If your vehicle has ABS, brake firmly as you "steer into the skid."

### Expressway / Interstate Driving

- Leave lots of space between you and the vehicle in front because it takes longer to stop.
- If possible, drive in the fast lane at the mandated speed limit, where there are fewer vehicles and less oil deposited on the road.
- Avoid lane changes, as water tends to build up between the tire ruts in the lanes.

### Oily deposits

- Watch for intersections because of the oil spots in the road.
- Be extra careful immediately after it starts raining because it takes a while for the worst of the dirt and oil to get washed off the road.

### Driving through water

- Where water has flooded onto the road, drive very slowly and cautiously.
- Never drive through moving water if you can't see the ground through it: you and your

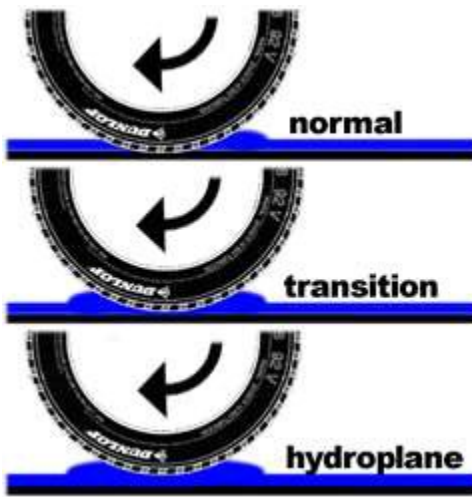
- vehicle could be swept off the road.
- Stop the vehicle before entering any flooded area and check the water level ahead. Generally, if the water is deeper than the bottom of your doors or the bottom third of your wheels, it is inadvisable to attempt driving through it.
- Seek a detour rather than braving the flood and risking your life and the lives of others or damage to your electronic control systems.

For employees on call or who work varying shifts, at night it's much harder to see water hazards. Use good road observational skills to notice the difference between a wet road surface and flood water. Watch the contours not only of the road but also of fences, trees, hedges and buildings at the side of the road ahead. If they appear to be unnaturally low, slow down at once as the road is probably flooded.

If you determine it's safe to go on, proceed slowly and avoid making large waves in the water. If you have a manual transmission, engage first gear and keep the engine running fast by releasing the clutch just enough to partially engage gear and giving more acceleration than usual. This keeps the exhaust gases moving, helping to prevent water from entering your tailpipe.

Vehicles with automatic transmissions should place the vehicle in first gear and feather your brake, slowing the vehicle while at the same time keeping your revs up. Doing this for longer than a few seconds can seriously damage your vehicle and is not recommended.

**Stalling in deep water** - Call your supervisor! Do not attempt to pull or push your vehicle.



### Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs when water on the roadway accumulates in front of your vehicle's tires faster than the weight of your vehicle can push it out of the way. The water pressure can cause your vehicle to rise up and slide on top of a thin layer of water between your tires and the road. While hydroplaning your vehicle rides on top of the water, like a water skier on a lake. In less than a second, your vehicle can completely lose contact with the road, putting you in immediate danger of sliding out of your

lane. This usually happens at higher speeds, over 40 miles per hour.

### The 3 main factors that contribute to hydroplaning:

**Vehicle speed-** As speed increases, wet traction is considerably reduced. Since hydroplaning can result in a complete loss of traction and vehicle control, you should always reduce speed, paying attention to the traffic around you.

**Tire treads depth-** As your tires become worn, their ability to resist hydroplaning is reduced

**Water depth-**The deeper the water, the sooner you will lose traction, although even thin water layers can cause a loss of traction, including at low speeds.

**Tire size-** the size and shape of a tire's contact patch has a direct influence on the probability of a hydroplane. The wider the contact patch is relative to its length, the higher the speed required to support hydroplaning.

**Tire tread pattern** - certain tread patterns channel water more effectively, reducing the risk of hydroplaning.

**Tire tread depth** - as your tires become worn, their ability to resist hydroplaning is reduced.

**Tire pressure** - keep your tire pressure within the manufacturers recommended pressures

**Water depth** - the deeper the water, the sooner you will lose traction, although at higher speeds even thin water layers can cause a loss of traction.

**Water composition** (oil, temperature, dirt, & salt can change its properties and density)

**Vehicle speed**-as speed increases, wet traction is considerably reduced. Since hydroplaning can result in a complete loss of traction and vehicle control, you should always reduce speed.

**Vehicle weight** - the lighter the vehicle, the more likely it is to hydroplane.

**Road surface type** - non-grooved asphalt is considerably more hydroplane-prone than ribbed or grooved concrete surfaces.

#### **Hydroplane essentials:**

- ❖ Do not apply your brakes
- ❖ Do not turn your steering wheel

If you find yourself hydroplaning, do not brake or turn suddenly. This could throw your vehicle into a skid. Think of your steering wheel as the rudder of a boat (your vehicle is a boat when in the middle of a hydroplane). Hold the wheel firmly and don't steer in any other direction but straight ahead. Ease your foot off the gas until the vehicle slows and your steering returns to normal. If you need to brake, do it gently with light pumping actions.

If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, then brake normally; the vehicle's computer will mimic a pumping action, when necessary. If your vehicle's tires are still in partial contact with the road surface, you should be able to regain control of the vehicle in the same way that you would on snow or ice.

#### **Winter Driving**

If when and where applicable, before driving, remove snow and ice from the vehicle (especially the hood and windows). Be sure that your windshield wiper fluid contains antifreeze. On really cold days, be very careful about using the windshield washer and wipers when driving at high speeds. It is very important not to start driving before your engine is warmed up but do not warm it up too much. Thirty seconds is usually enough time to allow your engine to idle. When the weather is unusually cold remember to drive at slower speeds for a few miles to give your vehicle time to warm up.

Use your brakes while driving slowly to find out just how slippery the road is. Adjust your speed accordingly. If your vehicle is equipped with "cruise control" you should avoid using it when driving

on slippery roads. When the road surface is extremely icy, or covered with hard-packed or very deep snow, reinforced tire chains are much more helpful.

Be prepared for winter driving emergencies.

**Vision**

- Watch for highway signs, pedestrians, animals, slow-moving vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles that may be on the road ahead of you. They are difficult to see, especially at night.
- If there is another passenger in the vehicle with you, he or she can serve as a "second pair of eyes" for you. Have him/her keep a close watch for road signs and unexpected hazards on the road ahead.
- Keep your eyes moving...from side to side, near to far ahead, and so forth to prevent eye fatigue.
- Keep all windows and mirrors in your vehicle clean and free of defects. They should never be clouded by frost or steam, or marred by large scratches or cracks.

**Speed**

Obey the speed limits; drive at a lower, safer speed.

**Accidents and Emergencies**

- Pull your vehicle off the main highway as far as possible and call 911.
- Follow the guidelines on your yellow card (blue for supervisors)
- If there is a shoulder, use it.
- Turn on emergency flashers if you have them. If not, leave your headlights on low beam and turn on your right turn signal.
- If your vehicle is disabled, put up the hood of the vehicle unless it is raining or snowing.
- If you have reflectors place them from 100 to 500 feet behind your vehicle on the right-hand edge of the main road way.

**Maintain a Safe Following Distance (The 3 Second Rule)**

<b>Three-Second Rule</b>		Safe Interval Should Be >	3 seconds	6 seconds
Speed	Distance Traveled	For These Conditions >	Good	Marginal
25 m.p.h.	37 ft. per second		111 ft.	222 ft.
35 m.p.h.	52 ft. per second		166 ft.	312 ft.
45 m.p.h.	66 ft. per second		198 ft.	396 ft.



55 m.p.h.	81 ft. per second	243ft.	486 ft.
65 m.p.h.	96 ft. per second	288 ft.	576 ft.
75 m.p.h.	111 ft. per second	333 ft.	666 ft.
		Safe Following Distance in Feet	

**Check your brakes** - If you successfully pass through a deep water hazard, test your brakes. They may be saturated, and only driving very slowly and braking lightly at the same time will generate enough heat to dry them out. Be sure they are pulling evenly on all wheels before building up speed again.

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