

Vehicles/Driving Fact Sheet

Many field researchers use cars, trucks, or vans for transportation to field locations. A high percentage of serious or fatal field incidents are related to vehicle travel.

Accident injuries

Roadside injuries

Vehicle breakdown

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

- The principal investigator is responsible for verifying the credentials (valid license, insurance) of potential drivers.
- Make sure your vehicle is capable of going to the field area. Four-wheel drive may be required if you are going off-road.
- Keep a list of phone numbers for mechanics and towing companies in the field area.
- Have an alternative communication option (e.g., radio, satellite phone, InReach device) if cell phone coverage is unreliable.
- Pack a spare tire, jack, and a lug wrench to change a tire, and know how to use them. Check that the spare tire is properly inflated.
- Consider having drivers take an in-person defensive driving course. Some insurance companies grant a reduction in premiums to customers who complete this course. Contact EH&S for vendor recommendations.

GENERAL SAFETY

- Always wear seatbelts.
- Store cargo appropriately. Tie down any cargo that's stored external to the vehicle to ensure it will stay with the vehicle.
- Do not overload your vehicle.
- Inspect tires, lights, and exterior for minor damage daily.
- Check fluid levels every time you fill up for gas.
- Fuel for vehicles must be of appropriate grade for your climate conditions (e.g., arctic grade diesel).
- Consult a mechanic if a warning light is illuminated.
- Do not attempt to cross an unknown or flowing body of water with a vehicle.
- When making a roadside stop, park in an area where you can pull the vehicle completely out of the travel lane. Maintain good visibility of traffic in both directions. Do not walk into the travel lanes for a photograph. Avoid crossing the road if possible, if need be cross quickly and only when it is safe.

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- Familiarize yourself with and obey the rules outlined by the [Administrative Guide](#). University-owned vehicles are to be used for University business only.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Report all instances of vehicle accidents to your supervisor and to Risk Management. This includes rental cars used during University business. Accidents must be reported within 24 hours.
- Submit an [SU-17](#) for all injury and close call events.
- All information should be provided to the Office of Risk Management (Note: SLAC sends information to the Manager of Administrative Services). These offices can provide instructions regarding arrangements for repairs.
- The university will need:
 - Enough photos of the accident scene to accurately capture the nature of the accident. Take photos from multiple angles. Videos are also great with verbal narrative.
 - The description, nature and extent of damage to other property or vehicles. This should include registration number of all vehicles involved, make and model of vehicles, name and address of owner(s), driver's name(s), address(es), driver's license state and number(s) and date of birth;
 - Name of the insurance company for the other vehicle AND other driver or drivers (if different from vehicle's insurance), policy number and expiration date, and policyholder's name and address;
 - Time, place and date of accident;
 - Name, address and nature of injury to any persons injured in accident;
 - Agency, names and badge numbers of first responders.
 - Names, address and telephone numbers of any passengers or other witnesses.
 - At no time admit liability, make any reimbursement, or admit fault** in connection with any accident.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stanford Administrative Guide [8.4.2 Vehicle Use](#)

CDC National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety [Motor Vehicle Safety at Work](#)

Illness, injury and close call events shall be reported by submitting an [SU-17](#).

If you have questions or need support, contact EH&S's Field Safety Program at [ehs field safety support@lists.stanford.edu](mailto:ehs_field_safety_support@lists.stanford.edu).

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SI 22-059 Oct 4, 2022