Mobile Equipment and Utility Vehicle Safety Program

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Introduction

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is committed to providing a safe and healthful environment for its employees and visitors. All activities and work involve some level of risk to people and property. Many activities involve low-level risks of a type and magnitude routinely encountered and accepted as requiring no special measures for mitigation. Other activities may involve increased levels of risks and require additional appropriate measures be taken to mitigate such risks.

The success of any risk management program is dependent upon each affected person understanding, accepting and adhering to the policies and procedures of this program as well as other agency policies and programs.

Equipment referenced in this program includes, but is not limited to: utility vehicles, golf carts, Club® Cars, Gators®, tractors, mowers and four wheel all-terrain-vehicles (ATV). For simplification purposes, the term “utility vehicle” will be used throughout this program as reference to include all mobile equipment and utility vehicles.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to enhance awareness of risk levels associated with mobile equipment and utility vehicle operations and limit exposure of personnel and property to the lowest practical level of risk through philosophy of risk management, training of personnel, engineering controls and establishment of policies and procedures.

The program is also designed to provide all affected TTI employees with information needed to safely operate mobile equipment, utility vehicles and/or similar slow moving vehicles (SMV) on the campus of Texas A&M University (TAMU) and other locations used by TTI.

These procedures, when carried out by TTI employees, will help ensure the safe and efficient accomplishment of our work objectives.
Nature of Utility Vehicle Use

Utility vehicles are typically used in areas where standard motor vehicles might be prohibited or not preferred. Utility vehicles might be used to transport employees, official visitors and equipment or materials in support of the following official activities.

- Research activities on the TAMU main campus, TAMU Riverside Campus and other locations used by TTI as allowable by law.
- Official agency activities at golf courses or other venues as allowable by law.

Operator Criteria

All operators of utility vehicles must meet the following criteria before operating an official utility vehicle:

- Be an employee of TTI.
- Possess a valid Texas driver's license.
- Know and adhere to State of Texas motor vehicle laws.
- Review these procedures as required.

Rules and Responsibilities

The following outlines procedures for the safe operation of utility vehicles:

- Agency owned utility vehicles are to be used for official agency business only.
- Supervisors must ensure that employees operating utility vehicles have completed the required training.
- Operators are responsible for payment of any citations received while operating a utility vehicle.
- Departmental custodians are responsible for ensuring that all original equipment safety features are maintained in good working order.
- Agency owned utility vehicles are to be maintained in accordance with manufacturer’s specifications.
• Modification or tampering with a utility vehicle governor is prohibited and is a violation of Federal Law.

• Do not exceed the recommended carrying or load capacity.

• Utility vehicles shall not be operated between dusk and dawn without properly working headlights and taillights.

• The slow moving vehicle reflective triangle must be clearly displayed on the rear exterior of the utility vehicle and any trailer towed by the utility vehicle.

Example of the required slow moving vehicle reflective triangle:

![Reflective Triangle Diagram]

• Seat belts must be used when provided.

• No one is permitted to ride on the running boards, fenders, or any part of the utility vehicle except the provided seats.

• All body parts – feet, legs, and arms shall be kept inside the utility vehicle while it is in motion. The exception is for the operator while they are signaling for a turn.

• Utility vehicles should always travel in the outside lane, unless moving to an interior lane to make a left turn.

• Utility vehicles may operate on TAMU roadways, but must adhere to posted speed limits.

• The maximum speed limit for utility vehicles off standard roadways is 10 mph and 5 mph when pedestrians are present.

• Speed is to be reduced to a minimum (5 mph maximum) when driving near or crossing sidewalks to avoid potential accidents with pedestrians.
• Pedestrians have the right-of-way on the TAMU campus. Utility vehicles must yield to pedestrians on sidewalks.

• Operators should pay particular attention to pedestrians as limitations in vision, hearing or mobility may impair their ability to move out of the way.

• Operators are not to block the path, limit pedestrian access on walkways or park at entrances to buildings.

• Operators must park utility vehicles away from heavily traveled pedestrian areas.

• Before exiting the utility vehicle, the operator should:
  o Turn the key to “off” position.
  o Engage brake.
  o Remove and secure the key.

• Personally owned utility vehicles are prohibited from operating on University property (except at golf course).

**Accidents**

The term “Accidents” is used in this program in correspondence with the State Fleet Vehicle Management Plan and the TAMUS Comprehensive Compliance Plan.

If a TTI vehicle is involved in an accident, these procedures should be followed:

• Call police (911) or local emergency number. Inform the person to whom you are speaking that you are in a state vehicle.

• Take necessary steps to prevent any additional accidents.

• Move the vehicle to a safe location away from traffic, if possible. If the vehicle cannot be moved, do not stand near the vehicle.

• Render aid to the injured until help arrives. Provide first aid, as appropriate and trained.

• Do not make any statement, oral or written, as to WHO was at fault. Any admission of fault may impair the insurer’s ability to defend a case of questionable legal liability. The appropriate legal authority will decide fault or liability.
While the operator’s signature is required if a traffic citation is issued, the signature does not constitute an admission of guilt, it indicates that the operator has read and understands the charge.

- Record the names, addresses, telephone numbers and license numbers of any persons involved in or witness to the accident. Record insurance information from all involved.

- Provide all required information to the law enforcement officer.

- While at the scene, secure all information needed to complete the following forms (found in the emergency section of the vehicle book):
  - TAMUS Motor Vehicle Accident Report- to be submitted to the TTI Business Office
  - Employer’s First Report of Injury or Illness- to be submitted to TTI Safety Office (they will forward to TTI Human Resources)

Seek assistance from the law enforcement officer for needed information. Do not leave blank spaces.

- Obtain the police report case number to provide to the vehicle custodian, who is required to obtain the police report to submit for insurance matters.

- All accidents within the state of Texas that involve the injury or death of any person or damage of property exceeding $500 must be reported to the Texas Department of Public Safety. This report must be made within 10 days of the accident by means of a Driver’s Confidential Accident Report provided by the police officer.

- Call TTI Facilities, Safety and Support Services at 979-845-6595 to report the incident. They will advise the appropriate Business Office staff for insurance and claim purposes.

- Do not discuss the accident with anyone other than the responding law enforcement and the TTI Facilities, Safety and Support Services or Business Office representative.
Life Safety and Emergency Response

Dial 911 for ambulance, fire and police. From a phone system that requires you to dial a “9” prefix, dial 9-911.

- Provide the 911 dispatcher with the following information:
  - Location of emergency
  - If there are any injuries, describe type of injury, if known
  - Brief description of injured person (gender, age, etc.)
  - Your name and phone number (in case you are disconnected or dispatcher needs additional information)

- If an ambulance is not needed:
  - Render first aid, only as trained.
  - Assist with transportation of employee to their personal physician, if appropriate.
  - Make injured as comfortable as possible - do NOT move injured person unless directed by the 911 dispatcher (or if injured person is in immediate danger).

- Employees, an event witness or the employee’s supervisor shall complete an Employer’s First Report of Injury or Illness form to report any work injuries. Only facts, not opinions, should be stated on the form.

- Any time a safety issue arises, employees shall contact the appropriate supervisor immediately.

Additional Information

- The TTI Safety Office can assist with arrangements for personnel safety training in various areas and assist with written safety protocols.

- The TTI Safety Office shall review this program, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

- The TTI Safety Office is responsible for updating and maintaining this program with comments from the TTI Safety and Environmental Council.