

Safety Reminder

To: Pastors, Principals, Business Administrators, Directors, etc.

From: Ron Zucca
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Date: July 22, 2010

Subject: **Automobiles Owned by Volunteers or Employees used on Parish/Diocesan Business**

Volunteers and employees may, from time to time, use their own personal vehicles on parish/diocesan business. However, this should be done at an absolute minimum and drivers must comply with diocesan guidelines (see below).

The greatest cause of vehicular accidents is the person behind the steering wheel. It is the driver's responsibility to drive defensively. The following are twenty tips for safe driving that you can share with those individuals who are driving on behalf of your parish and diocese:

Tip # 1

Do not tailgate – it will not get you to your destination any faster. Use an adequate following distance between your vehicle and the one in front. Use the three second rule. When the vehicle in front of you passes a stationary object, begin counting. (One, one thousand, two, two thousand...) The front of your car should not reach the object until at least three seconds have passed.

Tip #2

Signal early. You should generally turn your signal on at least five to eight seconds before you plan to change lanes or turn.

Tip #3

Be aware of what is going on around you. Every ten seconds look down the road to see if there are any potential trouble spots. Stay aware of what is happening beside and behind you as well.

Tip #4

Properly adjust your headrest and lock it in place. This can significantly reduce the chances of a neck or head injury should you be in a collision.

Tip #5

If your vehicle is equipped with anti lock brakes, know how to use them! If you need to stop quickly, stomp on your brake and keep your foot firmly on the pedal. Do not pump your brakes!

Tip #6

A green light does NOT mean go! Look to both sides and proceed only if there are no other cars in the intersection.

Tip #7

Adjust your mirrors to reduce the blind spot next to your car.

Tip #8

Stay focused at the wheel. Avoid distractions when you drive, such as using your cell phone, eating, etc.

Tip #9

Avoid glare from the sun. Have sunglasses handy so that you can put them on when the glare is intense.

Tip #10

Turn on your headlights when you use your wipers.

Tip #11

Keep your car windows clean. Clean both the inside and the outside of your car windows on a regular basis. Both the sun and the headlights from on coming traffic will reflect off a dirty windshield, making it very difficult to see clearly.

Tip#12

Do not use cruise control when the roads are wet. Activated cruise control applies power and keeps your wheels spinning. When the roads are wet, you need to reduce vehicle power and wheel spin to maintain control of your vehicle.

Tip #13

Use your seat belt – ALL THE TIME!

Tip #14

Be aware of the center of gravity of your vehicle. For example, the center of gravity on an SUV is higher than the center of gravity on a passenger car. If you turn too quickly, there is a greater likelihood of your vehicle rolling over.

Tip #15

Know how to drive around large trucks. Trucks can not stop or turn as quickly as a passenger car and also have larger blind spots. If you can not see the driver in the mirror of a truck, the driver can not see you!

Tip #16

Watch your speed.

Tip #17

Check the pressure in your tires at least once a month. You should also check the tread at the same time.

Tip #18

Select a designated driver before you and your companions start drinking.

Tip #19

Watch out for road rage. If you see a driver exhibiting aggressive behavior, back off!

Tip #20

Keep your vehicle well maintained. Do not skimp on regularly scheduled service checks.

AUTOMOBILES OWNED BY VOLUNTEERS USED ON PARISH/SCHOOL BUSINESS (SACRAMENTO – 2002 – 1)

Volunteers may, from time to time, use their personal vehicles on parish/school business. They must, of course, provide insurance for accidents involving their own vehicles.

Chartered transportation, with driver provided, is preferable. Certificates of Insurance must be provided by the charter company. Liability limit of \$5,000,000 will be required. Please alert the Diocesan Risk Manager 60 days prior to using the chartered transportation so that the fulfillment of diocesan insurance requirements can be monitored. Use of private automobiles for transporting large groups on field trips must be avoided whenever possible.

If volunteer vehicles are to be used in conjunction with diocesan events or business, observance of the following guidelines are suggested.

- **REDUCE THE USE OF VOLUNTEER VEHICLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.** Necessity should be the watchword.
- Drivers must be over 21 (preferable over 25) years of age. All drivers must be screened carefully. Age and health as well as physical and mental condition should be considered.
- Drivers must provide evidence of valid, unrestricted driver's license.
- The driver must produce evidence of liability insurance on the vehicle to be used. We require a \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident limit of liability for bodily injury and property damage to be minimum for diocesan purposes. This is not to suggest that this limit is adequate for anyone else's purposes.
- One seat belt must be provided for and used by each vehicle occupant.
- No more than nine persons, including the driver, may be transported in any private vehicle or in other vehicles except than in an official school bus or by a charter company. No private (non-chartered) vehicle, including vans, with more than nine seats should be used (regardless of the number of passengers).
- No driver shall transport any child without providing and properly securing the child in a child passenger restraint system, unless that child is at least 6 years of age or weights 60 pounds or more. The restraint system must be furnished and installed by a parent.

AUTOMOBILES OWNED BY EMPLOYEES USED FOR PARISH/SCHOOL BUSINESS (SACRAMENTO – 2002 – 2)

Employees may, from time to time, use their personal vehicles on parish/school business. They must, of course, provide insurance for accidents involving their own vehicles.

If an employee owned vehicle is to be used in conjunction with diocesan events or business, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Drivers must be over 21
- Drivers must have a valid, unrestricted California driver's License.
- The driver must carry liability insurance on the vehicle to be used. Minimum limits as required by state law. This does not suggest that this limit is adequate for anyone else's purposes.
- No driver shall transport any child without providing and properly securing the child in a child passenger restraint system, unless that child is at least 6 years of age or weighs 60 pounds or more. The restraint system must be furnished and installed by a parent.
- Copies of California Driver's License and evidence of insurance on the vehicle used must be kept on file at the site.
- Motorcycles may not be used.

OPERATION OF VEHICLES THAT BELONG TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

We require that diocesan employees and volunteers be instructed not to drive motor vehicles that belong to others in conjunction with diocesan events. Car washes and valet parking are obvious examples of operations where motor vehicles belonging to others may be operated. Car washes should be arranged so that patrons drive their own cars.

Valet parking must be avoided unless it is operated by contractors who provide evidence of insurance and required additional endorsements. Please contact the Diocesan Risk Manager for assistance in such cases.