

**Responsible Party:** Transportation Director

**Reports to:** Executive Director and Business Manager

**Scope and Application:** The Driver Safety Program applies to all agency owned, leased and rented vehicles, and all programs which have responsibilities of these vehicles. All individuals operating these vehicles must be qualified under this program.

**Purpose of Program:** Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska (Mid) realizes the most dangerous routine task our employees perform is the operations of motor vehicles. Mid promotes the safe operations of agency vehicles while on agency business. This program is designed to increase the safe operation of agency vehicles, reduce collisions arising from the operation of agency vehicles, reduce traffic citations and citizen complaints.

The emphasis of this program is on taking corrective action to prevent repeats of system failures of any type regarding the operation of motor vehicles while in the course of Mid business and to change attitudes and behaviors which may have contributed to the failure.

This program is designed to protect the agency from severe financial disruptions due to preventable loss and create a safe work environment by reducing the likelihood of injury to employees, clients and the general public while pursuing work related activities.

This program will make the agency a better citizen in the communities which we serve by adhering to all local, state and federal laws regarding the operations of motor vehicles and agency requirements. This program will further the agency goal of helping people and changing lives.

**Proposed outcome of program:**

1. To create and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all Mid employees, clients and the general public, in regards to vehicle operations in the course of Mid business.
2. To reduce the number of traffic citations, collisions and citizen complaints arising from the operation of agency employees.
3. To identify the failures which lead to the incidents/accidents and develop and implement changes to prevent a repeat of these failures.
4. For all employees to understand the necessity of the program and to keep vehicle safety as a primary goal.
5. To modify behaviors which contribute to vehicle incidents among employees and treat the underlying causes.

**Responsibilities:**

Transportation Director:

- ❑ Develop, implement and maintain Driver Safety Program.
- ❑ Train all agency staff on Driver Safety Program.
- ❑ Clearly communicate what is expected of agency drivers.
- ❑ Educate senior agency staff as to program and impact on individual agency programs.

Program Directors:

- ❑ To report all vehicle incidents/accidents in a timely manner, following agency policies set forth by this program.
- ❑ Monitor staff under direct supervision for infractions.
- ❑ Enforce program policies.
- ❑ Report all changes in driver qualifications to the responsible party promptly.

Human Resources Department:

- ❑ Perform yearly driver status reports and submit them to responsible parties.
- ❑ Communicate third party exclusions to program director.

All Staff:

- ❑ Adherence to the Driver Safety Program and policies set forth within.
- ❑ To identify system failures prior to and after incidents.

**Program Procedure:**

Major areas covered by this program include:

Driver Qualifications  
Driving Privilege Revocation  
Vehicle Operations  
Vehicle Maintenance  
Vehicle Failure  
Accident & Incident Reporting  
Rental Vehicles

Driver Qualifications:

In order for a driver to be qualified to operate a vehicle owned, leased or rented for business purposes of Mid or to use a personal vehicle on Mid business, they must:

- 1) Have a valid United States Drivers license.
- 2) Complete a Driving History Form, as required.
- 3) Meet the underwriting criteria of the provider of Mid's auto insurance.
- 4) Sign and return a vehicle use agreement.
- 5) File proof of insurance with the agency, in the case of personal vehicles.
- 6) Pass a pre-employment Drug and Alcohol Screen, as required.
- 7) Pass a pre-employment physical, as required.

Once qualified by the agency, employees will be subject to annual review of driving privileges. If the employee has a change in status with regards to any qualification, it is the employee's duty to communicate the changes to their immediate supervisor or program director within 24 hours of the next business day. Failure to communicate changes within this time period may be subject employees to administrative action, up to and including termination.

#### Driving Privilege Revocation:

Driving an agency vehicle is a privilege and not a right. Disciplinary action may be used to modify driver behavior. Driving privileges may be revoked, suspended (temporarily or permanently,) the employee may be reassigned or terminated for any reason, including but not limited to, the following:

- ❑ Violating any of the policies in this program.
- ❑ Violating local, state and federal laws pertaining to the operations of vehicles.
- ❑ Attempting to, or successfully, disabling any safety devices in an agency vehicle.
- ❑ Operating an agency vehicle or personal vehicle for agency business after ingesting alcohol, narcotics or amphetamines.
- ❑ Leaving the scene of an accident, if the accident resulted in property damage, injury or death.
- ❑ Indicated gross negligence or incompetence in causing an accident involving property damage, injury or death.
- ❑ Indicated negligent or incompetent driving by accumulating two or more preventable accidents in the course of agency business.

Revocation of driving privileges and other administrative actions based upon violations of local, state or federal laws or the policies and procedures in this program will be undertaken by the employee's supervisor, program director and other agency personnel as needed to comply with general agency policy.

#### Vehicle Operations:

- 1) Agency vehicles are to be used for agency business only. Use of agency vehicles for personal business is prohibited.
- 2) Any and all drivers of agency vehicles must have a current, state issued driver's license with them.
- 3) Only personnel of Mid who have been qualified are allowed to operate Mid vehicles or personal vehicles on Mid Business.
- 4) Temporary Mid employees and non-Mid employees are forbidden from operating agency vehicles.
- 5) Mid employees shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations and Mid policies while operating a vehicle during the course of Mid business.
- 6) The driver of any Mid vehicle will make a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle to determine the vehicle is in safe operating condition prior to operating the vehicle.

- 7) All defects need to be reported to the Transportation Coordinator or Transportation Director as soon as they are found. Any item which affects the safe operation of the vehicle will warrant the vehicle to be removed from service for the trip.
- 8) When operating a vehicle during the course of Mid business, all pedestrians shall have the right of way.
- 9) Non-Mid employees are allowed to ride in Mid vehicles (as part of official agency business,) with qualified drivers, as long as prior approval is given by the direct supervisor or program director.<sup>1</sup>
- 10) Where safety restraints are provided, they shall be used. This applies to all vehicles being used during the course of Mid business.
- 11) When loading vehicles, the load needs to be balanced equally in the storage area of the vehicle.
- 12) When loading and unloading vehicles, the vehicle needs to be shut off when possible. If the vehicle cannot be shut off for loading and unloading, the vehicle must be placed in Park. All loads need to be secured, using available equipment and tie downs.
- 13) All windows must be free from obstructions such as snow, ice or splatter, prior to operating the vehicle.
- 14) If visibility is obscured and personnel are available, a “spotter” needs to be placed outside of the vehicle to help the driver move the vehicle into an un-obscured area. If a spotter is not available, the driver will need to do a walk around inspection of the obscured area.
- 15) Drivers need to make every attempt to minimize the amount of backing they do in agency vehicles. If you do need to back an agency vehicle, please follow these guidelines:
  - a. Back into a parking place whenever possible
  - b. If personnel are available, a spotter will be used
  - c. Check the area you are backing into before you back
  - d. Back slowly
- 16) When parking an agency vehicle on an incline, the vehicle will be placed near the curb with front tires turned towards the curb and the emergency brake set.
- 17) Caution needs to be taken when opening doors on agency vehicles to minimize hazards to the driver, occupants and other people and objects.
- 18) Agency drivers are to minimize distracted driving when at all possible. Distracted driving includes, but is not limited to the following activities while driving; cell phone usage\*, adjusting radios, eating, drinking, looking at maps and taking notes.
- 19) Eating while operating an agency vehicle will be minimized to the best extent of the driver.
- 20) All agency vehicles must have a vehicle mileage log filled out in a timely manner during and after use, including all signatures.
- 21) All agency vehicles are to be locked with the windows rolled up after every use.
- 22) All agency vehicles are to be fueled after each use and the proper paperwork filled out.

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<sup>1</sup> The exception is for Public Transportation vehicles.

- 23) Any trash accumulated during the course of your trip is to be removed by the driver prior to returning the vehicle.
- 24) There is to be no smoking in any agency vehicle.
- 25) When entering a parked vehicle, a visual inspection of the interior is to be made whenever possible.
- 26) No firearms or explosives shall be transported in agency vehicles.
- 27) All traffic offenses, fines, payments or penalties are the personal obligation of the driver. All traffic offenses which occur during the course of Mid business must be reported immediately to your direct supervisor.
- 28) Trips should be planned during normal business hours, if at all possible. Scheduling trips during this period will help the agency respond in case of vehicle failure or other emergency and will help minimize driver fatigue.

\* Cell phone usage: Cell phones have become a reliable way for agency employees to communicate while in the field. However, the utilization of cell phones while driving increases the risk for accidents and incidents. Mid does not permit employees to use hand held cellular phones while driving an agency vehicle or personal vehicle on agency business.

Rendering Aid and Assistance: Rendering roadside aid is purely voluntary in every case. Agency employees are not urged or expected to render aid. Employees should do only what they are willing and trained to do. Employees who render aid do so as a private person, entirely at their own risk and cost, and not as a representative of the agency.

Vehicle Sales and Repair Contractors: Vehicle Sales and Repair contractors may operate agency vehicles, at their own risk, and as necessary for the pick up, delivery, diagnosis and test drives.

Trip Planning: Trip planning is an important portion of safe vehicle operations. As an employee of the agency, it is necessary for you to do the proper trip planning to help ensure safety for yourself and your passengers. As requested, plan your trip during normal business hours, where possible. If you are planning a trip during a period where there is a chance of inclement weather, listen to the weather forecast as early as possible before starting your trip. If adverse weather creates unacceptable risks, consider alternatives such as rescheduling or teleconferencing. The State of Nebraska Department of Roads has a statewide "511" system to help with trip planning.

Summer: During warm weather, drivers fatigue quicker due to the heat.

- ❑ Keep yourself hydrated by drinking clear liquids and avoiding large amounts of caffeine.
- ❑ Stop every 2 hours and walk to minimize fatigue.
- ❑ Listen to the radio and be aware of the weather.

Winter: Prepare yourself and your vehicle for the trip.

- ❑ Inform someone else of your trip and times to expect you.
- ❑ Check the weather before you leave.
- ❑ Prepare yourself by making sure you have proper winter attire with you.
- ❑ Give yourself plenty of time for your trip to account for changes in the weather.
- ❑ Allow time for your vehicle to warm up before your trip.
- ❑ Reduce your speed. Even clear roads can pose a hazard during winter.
- ❑ Increase your following distance.
- ❑ Listen to the radio and be prepared for changes in the weather.

Driver fatigue: Drivers of agency vehicles and personal vehicles for agency business need to be aware of fatigue and how to handle fatigue when driving. Some symptoms of driver fatigue are:

- ❑ Yawning
- ❑ Poor concentration
- ❑ Tired or sore eyes
- ❑ Drowsiness
- ❑ Slow reactions
- ❑ Boredom
- ❑ Making fewer and larger steering corrections
- ❑ Missing road signs
- ❑ Having difficulty staying in the lane

To help relieve fatigue when driving, use the following as a guide:

- ❑ Get enough rest. Do not start a trip late in the day. Long-distance driving is hard work, and you need to be fresh and alert.
- ❑ If possible, don't drive alone. Passengers can take turns driving and also serve as conversation partners to keep you awake.
- ❑ Avoid long drives at night. The glare of lights, both on your dashboard and outside your car, increases the danger of highway hypnosis.
- ❑ Adjust your car's environment so that it helps keep you awake and alert. Keep the temperature cool, with open windows or air conditioning in the summer and frugal amounts of heat in the winter.
- ❑ Turn the radio volume up, and switch stations frequently, but avoid soft, sleep-inducing music.
- ❑ Do not use cruise control; keep your body involved with the driving.
- ❑ Watch your posture. Drive with your head up and your shoulders back. Tuck your buttocks against the seat back. Legs should not be fully extended, but flexed at about a 45 degree angle.
- ❑ Take frequent breaks. At least every two hours, stop at a gas station, restaurant or rest stop. Get out of the car, walk around, even jog or do calisthenics. Exercise fights fatigue.

- ❑ In addition to exercise breaks, stop for light meals and snacks.
- ❑ Don't allow your eyes to become fatigued or hypnotized. Wear sunglasses to fight glare (but never wear sunglasses at night).
- ❑ If anti-fatigue measures fail and you start noticing the danger signs of fatigue you must cease driving until you acquire adequate rest.

Remember, when driving an agency vehicle or your own vehicle for agency business, you represent the agency. Your behavior and attitudes while driving reflect on the entire agency. It is vital your driving techniques reflect the goals and mission of the agency. When driving during the course of business, it is easy to become distracted or annoyed at other drivers on the road. It is important for agency employees to know this and practice safe and defensive driving techniques whenever they are on agency business. By mitigating aggressive (road rage) driving behaviors, the agency is protected from unnecessary risk from vehicle operations. Below are some techniques for helping with road rage.

- ❑ Know what makes you mad and avoid it. If it is congestion, try scheduling your trip during off peak travel times. If it is road work, try to avoid areas where major construction is going on.
- ❑ Keep a cool head. Avoid replying to gestures from other motorists.
- ❑ Avoid flashing headlights or honking the horn.
- ❑ Make sure you signal all lane changes.
- ❑ Maintain proper following distances, even of slow moving vehicles.
- ❑ Concentrate on the traffic and not individual drivers.
- ❑ Try to avoid eye contact with other drivers/passengers.
- ❑ Let the aggressor have the road.

#### Vehicle Maintenance: (See Also Preventative Maintenance Program)

Due to the de-centralized nature of the agency, each employee needs to help convey information regarding agency vehicles so proper preventative maintenance may take place. Information such as tire wear, brake wear, unusual noises, damaged glass, changes in the operation and other information should be communicated, in as timely a fashion as possible, by the employee to the Transportation Director or Transportation Coordinator.

#### Vehicle Failure: (See Also Preventative Maintenance Program)

Due to the diversity of programs Mid offers and the large area our employees cover, no one vehicle failure program will cover all of the possibilities of vehicle failures. These are general guidelines to follow. Vehicle failures which occur during normal business hours, need to be immediately reported to you supervisor or program director. If they are not available, please call the central office and ask for either the Transportation Coordinator or Transportation Director. When calling in a vehicle breakdown, please have a phone number or location where you can be reached available.

For vehicle failures occurring after hours, use your best judgment. If it is minor repairs, either use the fleet card provided by the agency to pay, or pay using personal means. Keep all receipts. You will need them to be reimbursed.

For all vehicle failures, please do not leave the vehicle unattended. If the vehicle needs to be towed, please remove all personal and agency valuables from the vehicle prior to the towing. If the towing company will not transport you, or your passengers, please call 911 and seek help from local law enforcement.

Some programs offer memberships into emergency driver service clubs. If you are an employee covered by your program under one of these services, please follow the instructions on the back of the member service card.

The State of Nebraska Department of Roads and the Nebraska State Patrol offer the "Motorist Assist Network." This network is available on a large portion of Nebraska highways. To contact motorist assist, please call local law enforcement. Motorist Assist volunteers may be able to transport you and your passengers to a safe location, and help with minor repairs.

#### Accident & Incident Reporting:

Incidents & Accidents are a part of vehicle operations. This program is to help minimize the frequency of these events in order to make the agency a safer environment for our employees and to make the agency a better citizen in the communities in which we serve.

#### Agency Reporting

##### **Driver:**

- 1) Complete Form Tran – 250 Accident Reporting Form, at the scene of the accident.
- 2) Report Accident or Incident promptly to your supervisor or Program Director and submit completed Tran – 250 to your supervisor at the beginning of the next business day.
- 3) As soon as possible, pick up and fill out any necessary state reporting forms from the proper authorities, submit copies of these forms to your supervisor.
- 4) Do not discuss accident or incident, its causes or results, with any other employees within the agency.

##### **Supervisor:**

- 1) Contact Transportation Director or Transportation Coordinator, as soon as possible and give verbal report of the accident.
- 2) Expedite for Tran – 250 to either Transportation Director or Transportation Coordinator, as soon as possible.

**Transportation Coordinator/Transportation Director:**

- 1) Contact agency insurance company and provide requested information.
- 2) Retain all records regarding accident with vehicle file.
- 3) Obtain any repairs, as necessary, to make the vehicle road worthy.
- 4) Report accident to senior agency staff, as requested.

The agency may choose to review accidents and incidents involving agency vehicles or personal vehicles being used on agency business. This review may assess some of the following: accident preventability, vehicle safety, program changes or disciplinary action resulting from the accident or incident. This review will be conducted by senior agency staff as needed.

Rental Vehicles: When driving a rental vehicle on agency business the same standards of vehicle use apply. Use of the vehicle should be limited to the person directly responsible for renting the vehicle on behalf of the agency. If the vehicle being rented is for long distance trips, it is suggested there be two authorized drivers in the vehicle. Agency insurance may cover the vehicle. Prior approval for renting a vehicle must be obtained from the employee's supervisor. Rental vehicles may be used for incidental personal use if being used for an extended stay away from the employee's normal employment area. Such use should be limited, to the best extent possible by the employee.