

Diocese of Covington

Policies & Procedures Manual

Section: Compliance – Insurance and Parish Events

Policy: Vehicle Policy



Safety in and around our church facilities is of utmost importance and the responsibility of every individual and employee. One of the most significant risks has to do with vehicular transportation. Whether transporting our children to school, to youth outings, or adult meetings, their safety is of paramount importance.

Proper risk management requires that there be reasonable precautions and actions to provide for the safety of people. As a member of the Catholic Umbrella Pool II liability insurance group with 52 other Dioceses, the Diocese of Covington is required to establish a vehicle safety program.

There are three basic elements that are essential to an effective and successful vehicle safety program. The first deals with the **selection and training of drivers** who, through their employment, will be required to operate Diocesan vehicles on a full-time or occasional basis, or who through volunteerism, will be asked to operate a vehicle, either the Diocese or their own, to transport people to a function. The second deals with **proper maintenance** and equipping of Diocesan vehicles. The last element has to do with accurate and **detailed record keeping and reporting**.

Each employee should become familiar with this policy, especially those who drive vehicles or who are authorized to transport people. Inspection of the records will become a standard part of the insurance self-inspection report and review by the Catholic Mutual Risk Management.

DRIVER SELECTION AND TRAINING

Care should be exercised in selecting individuals who are required or asked to operate a vehicle on behalf of the Diocese. Accordingly, the following steps should be followed and documented:

Employee Operators

1. An "[Employee Driver Application Form](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) must be completed by all employees who are required by their job description or responsibilities to operate a vehicle. This form must be kept on file at the parish, school or institution.
2. A copy of the Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) must be obtained from each state where the application has a valid license.
3. Any employed driver who causes an accident in a Diocesan vehicle or is cited for two moving violations within a 12 month period will be required to attend a defensive driving course.

Volunteer Operators

1. A "[Volunteer Driver Form](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) must be obtained from all volunteers who are going to drive a Diocesan owned, or their personally owned, vehicle to transport people to a Diocesan function on behalf of the Diocese. This form must be kept on file at the parish, school or institution.
2. Current insurance laws and regulations state that the insurance for a vehicle, no matter its purpose, owner or driver, is the primary insurance carrier for any accident. There is a policy within the Diocese that could offer additional liability coverage should a claim exceed the limits of the private policy.

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All Operators

1. All operators that drive vehicles on behalf of the Diocese must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Possess a current, valid and non-probationary driver's license for the type vehicle they will be operating, and
 - b. Be at least 25 years of age, and
 - c. Have no physical disability that would impair his/her ability to operate the vehicle safely.
2. A commercial driver's license (CDL) will be required if the following types of vehicles are to be driven:
 - a. Vehicle's that have a manufacturer's weight rating of over 26,000 pounds, or
 - b. Vehicle's designed for 16 or more passengers, including the driver.
3. No one will be allowed to drive on behalf of the Diocese who has any of the following citations or convictions in the past THREE years:
 - a. Operating a vehicle during a period of license suspension, revocation or forfeiture
 - b. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - c. Hit and run accident
 - d. Failure to report an accident
 - e. Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
 - f. Using a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
 - g. Operating a motor vehicle without owner's authority
 - h. Permitting an unlicensed person to drive
 - i. Reckless driving
 - j. Speed contest, OR
 - k. Any combination of accidents and/or moving violations which total three.
4. All operators and passengers are required to adhere to the current Kentucky State safety belt laws and regulations. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure all passengers comply with this requirement.
5. Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used while operating a motor vehicle for the Diocese.
6. All operators are required to take the online defensive driving course entitled "Be Safe – Drive Safe". This course is available on the Catholic Mutual website.

Privately Owned Vehicles

All privately owned vehicles used on behalf of the Church must meet the following requirements:

1. Be insured and have a valid, current registration, license plate and proof of insurance card. The vehicle.
2. The vehicle must be in a safe operating condition.
3. The private automobile insurance company of the owner of the vehicle will be the primary insurance carrier.
4. The minimum limits of liability for privately owned vehicles is \$100,000/\$300,000.
5. A "[Private Vehicle Use Application](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) must be completed and kept on file for each vehicle.



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT

Preventative maintenance and inspection of vehicles is the cornerstone of a vehicle safety program. Accordingly, a schedule vehicle maintenance program is to be instituted and documented for every Diocesan owned vehicle. The groundwork for a good preventative maintenance and service system always starts with the manufacturer's recommendations concerning necessary maintenance and the time or mileage at which this service should be performed. This should provide some assurances that the vehicle is in good operating condition as well as to receive the most economical and long-lasting service from the vehicle.

1. All multi-passenger (16 people or more, including driver) Diocesan owned vehicles must obtain a complete inspection once per year by a licensed mechanic. A form similar to the "[Vehicle Inspection Report](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) must be completed and kept on file.
2. All Diocesan-owned vehicles should be placed on a preventative maintenance system according to manufacturer's recommendations or similar to the "[Vehicle Service Log](#)" (available on the Diocese's website).
3. All multi-passenger, Diocesan-owned vehicles must be equipped with a first-aid kit.
4. Because of new U.S. Department of Transportation regulations, no Diocesan-owned multi-passenger vehicle is to be driven across Kentucky State lines without local institution approval.
5. All privately owned vehicles used on behalf of the Diocese must be insured according to Kentucky law.

RECORD KEEPING AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

A very important element of a comprehensive vehicle safety program is complete reporting and maintenance of the various records obtained in the implementation of the program. All driver's applications and motor vehicle reports should be kept on file for a period of at least three years following termination of their driving privileges for the Diocese. Vehicle inspection and maintenance service logs and forms should be kept for a period of three years or until the vehicle is sold. Accident reports and if injuries are involved, the vehicle maintenance records and driver information records should be kept on file for a period of seven years following the accident. All accidents which involve an injury should be reported to the Diocesan Finance Office immediately.

Accident Reporting

1. Obtain medical assistance at the scene as soon as possible, if needed.
2. Contact local police, sheriff or highway patrol authorities as required.
3. Driver should make no comment regarding the fault of either party.
4. Exchange driver, vehicle and insurance information.
5. Report accident/moving violation to the Diocese upon return and complete a "[Vehicle Accident Report](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) and a "[Vehicle Inspection Report](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) as soon as possible.
6. Report the accident to Catholic Mutual by calling 1-800-228-6108 as soon as possible.

Vehicle Safety Report

Upon return from any trip in which safety or mechanical problems are noted by the driver, a "[Vehicle Inspection Report](#)" (available on the Diocese's website) should be completed and reported to the church or school administrator.