

Who Can Drive?

There are several key qualifications that drivers need to meet.

Acceptable age. The person should be at least twenty-one years old, but check with your local insurance agent to ensure that this is sufficient. Some companies require that drivers be twenty-five.

Driving record. Each driver's record should be checked for traffic violations and accident records. The committee should consult with its insurance company to decide what constitutes a satisfactory record.

Personal insurance coverage. The committee should know how much insurance each driver carries on his or her personal policy. It is wise to set a minimum level of coverage required to be a driver for the youth ministry. A starting point for minimum coverage would be \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident.

Agreement to safe driving standards. The committee should provide a written statement describing responsible driving. Each driver should read and sign the statement, and the statement should be kept on file by the committee. Any driver reportedly violating the agreed standard must be confronted by the committee.

Helping Drivers Do Their Best

Drivers are special volunteers who deserve quality treatment. Volunteer drivers need the careful support of the youth ministry leader so that they can do their best. Such support will generally include the following:

Written directions and information. Every driver needs written directions (including address of location, a map and phone number) to the destination. Provide in the same packet any money needed for gas or tolls and any special instructions about the trip, such as planned stops to eat or use the restrooms.

Adult support. Depending on the length of the trip, drivers may need other qualified adult drivers traveling with them. These drivers can share driving time, handle directions, and deal with any distractions in the vehicle. Requiring leaders to drive home after tiring weekends with little sleep puts the youth in that vehicle at risk. A reasonable alternative is to bring on the trip qualified adults whose main responsibilities are to drive, to serve as support staff, and to stay rested for the trip home. The extra drivers are also insurance in case any leader is unable to drive home because of illness or injury.

Trail run. Make sure every driver has a practice run in the vehicle he or she will drive prior to the actual trip. Driving a van or pulling a trailer is different from driving a passenger car, so give each driver the opportunity to practice tight turns, parking, braking, and backing up until he or she feels comfortable. Pay attention to seat position, checking for any changes needed to operate the accelerator and brake pedals or use the mirrors. The driver needs to feel comfortable and confident to do the best job for your youth program.

Emergency plan. Prior to the trip, discuss with all drivers your plans for communicating with other drivers or handling emergencies. If you are traveling in a caravan, what will your signal be if someone needs to stop immediately or at the next rest area? What should a driver do if he or she becomes separated from the caravan? How will you handle bad weather or driving conditions? After discussing the possible difficulties, the leader and the drivers can spend some time together in prayer asking God to help them as they serve.

Follow the example. The head of staff sets the pace. The volunteer drivers need to see the one who makes the rules living by the same rules. Uniform observance of speed limits, seat belt requirements, and other guidelines is a practical demonstration to the students of you and your drivers= commitment to safety.

Sample Ministry Vehicle Policy Statement

(Name of Church/Organization)

Vehicle Use Policy Statement

Date Approved

Usage:

Define what groups and staff members can use the vehicle and under what circumstances.

Define what groups and people cannot use the vehicle and under what circumstances.

Designated Drivers (here=s one church=s specific rules)

It will be the responsibility of the following groups to submit to the vehicle committee prior to September 1st each year their lists of proposed designated drivers.

Designated Drivers Must Meet the Following Qualifications:

1. Licensed driver must be 21 years or older.
2. Driver must be group sponsor/leader of one of the organizations designated to use the vehicle.
3. Driver must have a satisfactory Traffic Violations and Vehicle Accident Record.
4. Driver must sign acknowledgment of Responsibilities of Designated Driver, which includes an understanding of insurance coverage as it pertains to the driver.
5. Driver must exhibit responsible driving habits.

The vehicle committee shall evaluate and approve designated drivers prior to October 1st each year. Designated drivers shall be noted in the October youth committee meeting minutes and shall be in effect for the period of one year (October 1 to September 30). The vehicle committee shall have the right to revoke or suspend driver status (for cause) at any time.

Driver Checklist

Vehicle Committee Checklist

1. Warning to anyone violating the above policies and rules
2. Vehicle logbook
3. State purpose of logbook
4. Who is responsible for keeping log book
5. Items to appear on logbook report
6. Schedule of maintenance on vehicle
7. Responsibilities of vehicle committee and members
8. Specify who is to do what jobs
9. Sample form for designated drivers to sign

Driver Checklist

Prior to Any Trip (personalize this section)

1. Van pick-up procedure (write the details to fit local use)
2. Use of logbook and trip record sheet
3. Driver submits and signs acknowledgment of driving responsibilities
4. Driver test drives vehicle
5. Use of portable CB radio

Driver Checklist

During the Trip

- 1. Seat belt regulations
- 2. Capacity of vehicle rule
- 3. Obey state traffic laws
- 4. Drive defensively and carefully

Driver Checklist

After the Trip

- 1. Refueling and cleaning required
- 2. Return of vehicle to certain location
- 3. Reporting of any problems
- 4. Completion of log sheet/trip report

Acknowledgment of Responsibilities of Designated Driver

I have read and will adhere to the responsibilities governing the use of either church-owned vehicles or personal vehicles while transporting young people to and from church-sponsored activities.

I am aware that automotive insurance liability will generally follow the flow below in the event of an accident, and as such, subject me to certain liability risks.

- 1. Owner of Vehicle _____
- 2. Driver of Vehicle _____
- 3. Church (only in furtherance of church activity) _____

Signature of Driver _____

Date _____