



MEMORANDUM

TO: AUBURN UNIVERSITY FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS
FROM: DEPARTMENT OF RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE
SUBJECT: DOMESTIC TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR STUDENTS
DATE: PUBLISHED 11/18/2009

Domestic Travel Guidelines and Tips for Students

Personal safety is the traveler's responsibility. The following list of non-exclusive safety tips for domestic travel is provided by the Auburn University Department of Risk Management and Insurance to students traveling domestically.

General Guidelines – Before You Leave

- Getting information ahead of time about a destination and mode of travel will not only help ensure security, but will make travel more efficient and less stressful for all. Travelers need to play an active role in contributing to their personal safety.
- Review known risks of the area and proper way to handle dangerous situations.
- Keep emergency contacts/phone numbers with you.
- Have a filed plan of action should the trip need to be cancelled or terminated unexpectedly.
- If the trip is for University business or for a University related activity or field trip, prepare an itinerary and make it available to all participants and University representatives (i.e. administration, dean,) before departure.
- Leave a copy of your agenda/emergency contacts and phone numbers with a friend or family member.
- Review your program's and the University's policies on acceptable behavior and the consequences if behavior is determined to be unacceptable.
- Report any suspicious behavior or incident to the proper law enforcement agency.
- Understand that Auburn University provides no coverage for the trip. If you are injured or become ill during the trip, you will be responsible for all medical costs and expenses.
- Pay attention to news alerts or announcements regarding your travel plans.

General Guidelines – Traveling

- Stay alert to your surroundings while traveling, watching out for suspicious people, actions, and packages.
- Keep a watchful eye on your possessions at all times.
- Be aware of letting your guard down in restaurants, clubs, and while in transit.
- Stay away from suspicious situations.
- Be careful of “overly” friendly people.
- Always look for the nearest exits, notice if they are accessible or blocked

- Comply with all security instructions.

General Guidelines – Travel by Automobile for University and Non-University Business

- Reliable transportation should be selected. A Pre-Trip inspection of the vehicle you will be driving is recommended.
- Driver should operate the vehicle in a professional manner.
- Driver should be in possession of a valid driver license.
- Driver should have an acceptable motor vehicle record.
- Seat belts and other occupant restraint devices should be worn at all times by the driver and occupants.
- Driver should operate the vehicle in accordance with all traffic laws, ordinances and regulations.
- Vehicles should not be used to transport unauthorized passengers.
- Vehicle should be driven at speeds that are appropriate for road conditions.
- Driver should not use a cellular phone when vehicle is in motion.
- Driver should not drive if drowsy or under the influence of any substance.
- Driver should not drive for long periods of time without breaks. Breaks are recommended at a minimum of every two hours. Maximum driving time recommended in a 24 hour period is eight (8) hours.
- Driver should know the route and an alternative route prior to departure.
- Driver should know the predicted weather prior to departure. If inclement weather is expected, consider setting guidelines for alternate transportation.
- Driver should turn off the vehicle, remove the keys and lock the doors when left unattended.
- If operating the vehicle on University business:
 - Driver should have experience driving the type of vehicle he/she will be operating for Auburn University.
 - 12 & 15 passenger vans should not be used to transport passengers.
 - Driver should attend Auburn University's Defensive Driving Course or other approved defensive driver training program.
 - Driver of 12 & 15 passenger vans should attend Auburn University's Van Driving Course.
- Drivers on University business should immediately report all accidents to the local law enforcement agency, immediate supervisor, and Risk Management and Safety.

Use of Privately Owned Vehicles

- Students driving privately owned vehicles should:
 - Have a valid driver's license
 - Possess personal automobile insurance coverage as mandated by the State of Alabama
 - Have a current vehicle registration
- *If you use your own personal vehicle, and/or transport others as passengers, be aware that your own personal insurance will be primarily responsible for any liability that may arise from such use.*
- Personal vehicles should only be used on a voluntary basis; the owners/drivers must provide their own insurance coverage; all students choosing to ride in a private automobile do so voluntarily and at their own risk.
 - The University shall not insure or accept liability for any damage, loss or injury resulting from the use of a student's vehicle(s).
 - The University does not provide comprehensive or collision (physical damage) insurance for a student's personal vehicle driven either on University or non-University business and the student is responsible for primary liability insurance.

- The University does carry non-owner excess liability coverage to protect the University and student in the event of a suit resulting from an automobile accident in which a student was driving on University business.
- While private automobiles provide a very cost effective means of transportation, there are disadvantages that must be considered. Liability issues should be a primary concern for those that choose to use personal automobiles to travel. Be sure that your personal vehicle has appropriate insurance, current inspection and registration and that others traveling with you in your private vehicle understand that they do so at their own risk. Drivers should be aware that by choosing to drive, they assume responsibility for the safety of those traveling in their vehicle. This means that drivers should take care to follow all traffic laws and safety guidelines, and should also make sure that their vehicle is in a safe working condition before beginning the trip.
- Auburn University is not responsible for personal items left in a vehicle.
- It is also recommended that, for University related activities, group travel contract with an outside vendor whenever possible/practical.

Hotel Accommodations and Security

- Choose a hotel with adequate security service.
- Use the hotel to book taxi or shuttle service. Check the fare before boarding.
- When arranging to meet people you've never met before (such as business associates), wait for them in the lobby. Don't ask them to come up to your room.
- Use the door viewer (peephole) before opening the door to visitors.
- Do not discuss your business or travel plans in public areas where they may be overheard. Discuss your travel plans and movements during your stay with as few people as possible.
- Do not discuss your room number while standing in the lobby or leave your room key on restaurant or bar tables.
- Stay together if traveling with others and travel as a group.
- Do not give away personal information.
- Remain alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid areas "off the beaten path" and choose a guide whenever possible.
- If you arrive by auto, park as close to a hotel access point as possible, and park in a lighted area. Remove all property from the car interior and place it in the trunk. Avoid leaving valuables or personal documents in the glove compartment. Prior to leaving the security of the vehicle, note any suspicious persons or behavior.
- If using valet service, leave only the ignition key, and take trunk, house, or office keys with you. Often, valets are not employees of the hotel and work for contract firms.
- Parking garages are difficult to secure. Avoid dimly lit garages that are not patrolled and do not have security telephones or intercoms.
- Review the Hotel Evacuation Plan located on the back of your hotel room door. Note the location of all fire exits on your floor.
- Selecting a hotel room on the third to fifth floor generally will keep you out of reach of criminal activity from the street but still within reach of most fire truck ladders.
- Take note of emergency exits, stairwells, fire escapes and emergency plans, just in case.
- Locate nearby fire alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Practice unlocking and opening windows in your room. Look outside to see if you could escape without injury.
- Learn the layout of your room, and know how to unlock your door in the dark. This will help prepare you for quick evacuation at night or during a power outage.

- Place your room keys on a night stand where you can find them quickly. Take your room key with you when you evacuate in case emergency exits are blocked by fire and you must return to your room.
- Always lock your hotel door when retiring for the night. If there is a chain included, use it.
- Never leave valuables in your hotel room exposed or unattended, even in a locked suitcase.
- Place valuables (money, jewelry, airplane tickets, credit cards, passport) in a hotel safe deposit box or room safe.
- Keep your room neat so you will notice disturbed or missing items quickly.

For information on domestic travel, refer to the Transportation Security Administration's website:
<http://www.tsa.gov/index.shtm>

This site details subjects such as:

- Permitted and prohibited items at security checkpoints
- Timesaving travel tips (including packing tips)
- Information on security and screening procedures
- Questions and Answers on luggage/baggage concerns
- Collection of links to guide you to other travel resources (National Weather Service, Travelers' Health - National Center for Infectious Diseases, U.S. Customs Information for Travelers, Federal Aviation Administration, etc.)
- Traveling with children.