

UNIVERSITY UTILITY VEHICLES

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide standards to ensure the safe operation of utility vehicles on The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) campuses.

B. Persons Affected

This policy affects UTRGV persons who operate; are passengers in; and/or, are responsible for the maintenance of utility vehicles on the UTRGV campus. This policy is applicable to all utility vehicles owned, rented or leased by the UTRGV.

C. Definitions

1. Limited operations - The use of the roadway for a minimum distance and a short duration for travel between main campus locations.
2. Utility vehicle - Vehicles including, but not limited to, golf carts, Kawasaki mules, Cushman's, motor scooters, and/or electric vehicles designed for utility use and limited operation on regulated roadways.
3. ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act.
4. Persons – Faculty, staff, students or volunteers.

D. Policy

The policy of UTRGV is to:

1. Ensure the safety of all persons on the UTRGV campus that operate or are a passenger in a utility vehicle.
2. Ensure the safety of pedestrians on the UTRGV campus that cross in the path of or walk near a utility vehicle.
3. Ensure that access to UTRGV buildings or ADA paths or spaces are not blocked by utility vehicles.
4. Ensure that UTRGV paths and covered walkways are not congested with unnecessary utility vehicle traffic.
5. Permit the purchase and use of utility vehicles to the following limited circumstances as determined by the appropriate dean, director, or department head:
 - a. frequent transportation of persons that are physically disabled;
 - b. frequent transportation of routine items long distances;
 - c. frequent transportation of heavy or bulk items;

- d. completion of essential duties requiring the use of a utility vehicle (i.e. facilities).
6. Remove or restrict utility vehicle privileges from departments that do not comply with the responsibilities and rules of this policy.

E. Responsibilities

1. *Deans, directors and department heads are responsible for:*
 - a. Assuring that all operators within their unit comply with the requirements of this policy.
 - b. Assuring that each utility vehicle owned by their department is scheduled for, and receives, annual preventative maintenance.
 - c. Assuring that each utility vehicle owned by their department is registered with the UTRGV Police Parking and Traffic Division, in accordance, with UTRGV HOP ADM 10-902, Parking and Traffic Regulations.
 - d. Assuring that each utility vehicle owned by their department is registered with UTRGV Vehicle Services.
 - e. Assuring that all individuals in their department operating utility vehicles receive a copy of this policy.
2. *Operators are responsible for:*
 - a. Acknowledging and complying with this policy.
 - b. Promptly reporting all accidents involving a utility vehicle to their immediate supervisor, and to the UTRGV Police.

F. Procedures

Persons and Departments operating or riding in a utility vehicle shall adhere to the following rules:

1. *Department Purchasing and Registration Requirements:*
 - a. Departments purchasing, or receiving a utility vehicle from another department through an interdepartmental asset transfer are required to obtain prior approval from:
 - i. UTRGV Vehicle Services
 - ii. Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
 - b. The purchase of a utility vehicle is limited to those departments who can demonstrate a need that adheres to the following prerequisites:
 - i. frequent transportation of persons that are physically disabled;
 - ii. frequent transportation of routine items long distance;
 - iii. frequent transportation of heavy or bulky items;

- iv. completion of essential duties requiring the use of a utility vehicles (i.e. facilities)

2. *Operator Administrative Requirements:*

- a. Operators must be an employee of UTRGV unless otherwise approved by the Department of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management, the UTRGV Police or the Fleet Manager.
- b. Operators must be an approved UTRGV driver.
- c. Departments acquiring a vehicle must make prior arrangements for the appropriate storage of the vehicle. Vehicles are prohibited from being stored in locations not specifically designed for vehicle storage.
- d. Prior to operating the utility vehicle, departments are required to register the utility vehicle with the UTRGV Police Department. Upon vehicle registration, utility vehicles shall be inspected by the University Police for compliance with the Texas Transportation Code (TTC 547.104, TTC 547.703, TTC 551.403, TTC 551.404 and any other applicable statute or local ordinance), and issued a placard for rear display on the vehicle designating whether the vehicle is authorized for "Limited Operation" on a roadway or restricted to "Off Road Use Only." Department acquiring a utility vehicle must ensure that a governor is installed limiting the speed of the vehicle to 15 mph or less.

3. *Operator Driving Requirements:*

- a. Operators must obey all traffic rules and regulations as set forth in HOP ADM 10-902, Parking and Traffic Regulations.
- b. Operators must not drive on the city streets except to cross at designated pathways, trails or crosswalks, unless the vehicle has been classified and marked for limited operation on a roadway.
- c. Operators are prohibited from driving under the covered walkways between the hours of 8:00 A.M and 8:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.
- d. Operators are limited to accessing the internal portion of campus at locations that are designated by signage indicating Utility Vehicle Crossing.
- e. Operators must not exceed the five mile per hour speed limit, in pedestrian areas or as posted.
- f. Operators must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or medications that may impair driving.
- g. Operators must always give pedestrians the right-of-way.
- h. Operators must never operate a utility vehicle with more passengers than it is designed to hold.

- i. Operators may only drive under campus walkways in accordance with HOP ADM 10-902, Parking and Traffic Regulations. No smoking is allowed when in a utility vehicle.
- j. Operators and passengers must keep hands, arms, feet and legs inside the utility vehicles when the utility vehicle is in motion.
- k. Operators and passengers must fasten their seatbelts, if equipped, while the utility vehicle is in motion.
- l. Operators and passengers must never overload the utility vehicle.
- m. Operators must not drive or park on the grass unless there is no alternative.
- n. Operators must not park in or block ADA paths or spaces.
- o. Operators must ensure sufficient space for wheelchairs to easily pass.
- p. Operators must not block building access of pedestrian traffic entering and exiting the building.
- q. Operators must not park utility vehicle within 25 feet of building entrance and must not block building access of pedestrian traffic entering and exiting the building.
- r. Operators must not park in “no parking “zones unless the vehicle is marked as an emergency vehicle and is responding to an emergency.
- s. Operators must lock and secure the utility vehicle when not in use.

4. *Enforcement:*

- a. Compliance with the respective mandates outlined in this policy is enforced by the UTRGV Police and the Department of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management.
- b. The UTRGV Police are authorized to issue citations for failure to comply with the policies contained in this document.
- c. Operators and departments who demonstrate repeated failure (>1 infraction) to comply with the mandates outlined in this policy are subject to loss of driving privileges at the discretion of the Chief of Police or Director of Environmental, Health, Safety and Risk Management.

G. Relevant Federal and/or State Statutes, Board of Regents Rule, UTS Policy, and/or Coordinating Board Rule

UTRGV HOP ADM 10-902, Parking and Traffic Regulations

Texas Education Code, Title 3, Sections 51.201, 54.005, 54.505, 65.31, 78.02

The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 80109, Parking and Traffic Regulations

UTS157 Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles

Texas Transportation Code TTC 547.104, Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem Standards

Texas Transportation Code 547.703, Additional Equipment Requirements for Slow Moving Vehicles

Texas Transportation Code 551.403, Operations of Bicycles, Mopeds and Play Vehicles; Limited Operation

Texas Transportation Code 551.404, Operations of Bicycles, Mopeds and Play Vehicles; Operation in Municipalities and Certain Counties