

HOCUTT BAPTIST VEHICLES & TRAILERS USE POLICY & PROCEDURE

The transportation ministry is dedicated to transporting to and from church, and other activities of the church, people who would otherwise be unable to attend. The safety of our church members, guests and drivers is of primary importance to us. It is also important to maintain our vehicles in a manner that indicates our love for God and for our church. Therefore, we have established guidelines and procedures for church transportation. These policies provide guidance on the proper use of church vehicles and trailers. Violation of policies will result in suspension of driving privileges or auto use.

Use

1. The vehicles are only to be used for church-approved events and activities, or by members of the church staff on church business. There should be a minimum of five persons on any out-of-town trip. Use of church vehicles for personal purposes or outside groups is not allowed.
2. Requests for vehicles must be made at least one week in advance using the online request form. This allows ample time to prepare the vehicle, and assists with scheduling and stewardship of church resources. First priority will be given to annual or out-of-town events such as camps, mission trips, conventions and conferences. After that, reservations will be made on a first-come basis with proper approval.
3. Our General Fund budget covers gasoline and maintenance; individual ministries will not be charged for use. The trip driver is responsible for filling up the gas tank as needed, prior to or at the completion of the trip; do not leave the vehicle with less than half a tank of gas.
4. All keys are to be kept in the church office. The group leader or trip driver is responsible for signing out the keys during normal business hours prior to departure, and for returning keys to the church office at the conclusion of the trip.

Safety

1. Vans should never be loaded beyond a 15 person capacity, and there may never be more passengers than there are functional seatbelts. Whenever possible, the van should be operated with no more than 10 occupants, loaded toward the front and leaving the back seats empty, as this drastically reduces the possibility of a rollover. When the van is loaded beyond 10 passengers, we will not tow a trailer. At no time will we tow a multi-axle trailer. Nothing can be loaded on the roof of the van.
2. Our mechanic will be responsible for checking all vehicles thoroughly for safety and general maintenance at least every 3000 miles and before every major out-of-town trip.
3. Drivers are not allowed to use cell phones for any purpose (calls, texting, GPS, etc.) while vehicles are in motion. Safely park or pull to the side of the road to use or answer cell phones.

Driver Requirements

1. Drivers must be at least 25 years old with a valid North Carolina driver's license on file in the church office. Additionally, drivers must have the appropriate license for the vehicle being used.
2. Drivers must have a good driving record, with no more than one moving violation, no more than one at-fault accident and no more than one minor traffic violation within the last three years. Drivers having violations such as careless driving, reckless driving, or driving under the influence will not be allowed to operate church vehicles.
3. Drivers must be members in good standing of the church. Additionally, if children under the age of 18 are being transported, drivers must be approved children/student workers.

Driver Responsibilities

1. Drivers will perform a visual inspection and safety check of vehicles before driving
 - a. check for proper tire inflation and tread wear (daily on a multi-day trip)
 - b. look for fluid leaks (engine, radiator, etc.), and ensure adequate fuel for the trip
 - c. adjust rear and side mirrors for proper viewing, inspect windshield wipers for wear, and clear all viewing aids (windshield, front door windows, rear door windows, outside mirrors, headlights, etc.) of obstructions like frost, snow and debris
 - d. confirm all seatbelts and other safety systems are in proper working order
 - e. verify that a fire extinguisher and stocked first aid kit are on board
 - f. complete the pre-trip paperwork, including mileage log
2. Every occupant is required to wear a seat belt at all times. Passengers are not to move about the vehicle when it is in motion. Passengers should occupy the seats at the front first, then fill in seats to the rear as needed. Children must meet all current state laws regarding safety, riding only in approved child safety seats when required. Drivers are personally responsible for enforcing these requirements.
3. In coordination with the group leader, drivers are responsible for having emergency contact information available on each passenger and filling out a seating chart for each trip.
4. Drivers are obligated to follow all traffic laws and obey the speed limits at all times. Drivers should drive cautiously, maintaining a speed that is safe under the driving conditions and that is under any recommended speed limits during turns and curves and in other dangerous situations.
5. Drivers are personally responsible for traffic and parking citations, tickets, and fines incurred while they are driving. These must be reported to the church office immediately. Drivers are also responsible for reporting any maintenance problems or violations of these guidelines. If accident or injury occurs, drivers should contact the police and the senior pastor.
6. Radios/speakers will only play age-appropriate and ministry-appropriate music.
7. When vehicle use is complete, drivers are responsible for returning the vehicle and/or trailer in like or better condition than it was when borrowed.
 - a. Cleanliness: the driver and/or group leader is responsible to see that his/her passengers properly dispose of all drink containers, food wrappers, candy, etc.; the vehicle should be vacuumed, and washed if needed
 - b. Security: the driver is responsible to ensure that all doors (including rear doors) are locked and each item on the post-trip checklist is completed
8. Drivers are responsible for returning all keys and necessary paperwork to the church office (in person or via the after-hours drop box) at the conclusion of the trip.