**Operation of Teen Challenge Vehicles**

Good driving habits and proper vehicle maintenance are part of our Christian responsibilities. All intern/staff members are expected to obey local and state traffic laws. Safety should always be our first priority, because the lives and property entrusted to our care are precious.

All Teen Challenge vehicles are to be used for Teen Challenge business only, unless permission is granted by the Executive Director or his/her designee.

Each program's director is responsible to see that every vehicle is properly maintained and that accurate records of vehicle use are kept. Vehicle Maintenance Checklists are to be kept on file at each center.

All intern/staff members must be flagged by another individual while backing up a Teen Challenge van (this applies to vehicles moving on our property as well).

Any tickets, fines, or fees incurred by an intern/staff for a parking or moving violation are the intern/staff’s personal responsibility.

Some job assignments may require an intern/staff member to upgrade their driver's license to higher class. Whenever that is necessary Teen Challenge will reimburse them for any upgrade fees.

All Teen Challenge vehicles must have a valid registration, insurance card, first-aid kit, and fire extinguisher.

As a Teen Challenge driver you are expected to drive the speed limit. You will be responsible for the safe operation of your vehicle. This includes making sure the vehicle is supplied with the proper equipment:

* spare tire
* lug nut wrench
* jack
* valid registration and sticker
* insurance ID
* accident report forms
* fire extinguisher
* first-aid kit

Each driver should be familiar with the operator’s manuals for the vehicles they drive.

Each new intern/staff member and any newly licensed driver will be checked out by his/her immediate supervisor before being cleared to drive a Teen Challenge vehicle.

Please also remember to:

* Consolidate your trips: bank, post office, auto parts store, etc.
* Keep tires properly inflated and check inspection stickers.
* Let the vehicle sit and warm up for 3 minutes after you first start the engine, then drive slowly for the first few miles.
* Anticipate the traffic ahead of you and adjust your speed for red lights, hills, blocked lanes, etc.

**Accident Procedures**

*Damage or Abuse to Vehicles*

Damage or abuse to Teen Challenge vehicles shall be reported immediately to the program’s director.

If a vehicle is disabled for whatever reason while off Teen Challenge property, it is the responsibility of the driver to get it safely back to Teen Challenge. If the disability is the result of carelessness or negligence on the part of the driver, the driver will be responsible for any costs incurred in getting it back to Teen Challenge. Do not abandon your vehicle if you have a breakdown. Call your immediate supervisor (24 hours a day) for help and wait with the vehicle for assistance.

If an accident occurs, do not try to determine or discuss who was at fault. Leave that up to the insurance companies. The driver must then secure the following information:

* Name, address, and phone number of the other driver and the owner of the vehicle or vehicles involved.
* Their drivers license number and state.
* The name, address, and phone number of their insurance company.
* Their license plate number and state.
* The make of the vehicle involved.
* The model of the vehicle involved.
* The location of the accident.
* The names, addresses, and phone numbers of all other witnesses involved.

If the police were called, you need to get the accident number assigned to the accident by the police and the name, badge number, and station number of the police who come.

Do not walk away from the accident without this information. Report the accident immediately to your supervisor who must then notify the Executive Director or Administrative Director.

**Vehicle Use Policy**

A valid Driver’s License is required. Interns and staff personnel shall possess a valid driver’s license prior to the use and operation of any Teen Challenge vehicles.

Teen Challenge vehicles are only to be used by interns or staff who are licensed in the state where their Center is located.

Interns and staff personnel shall be at least 21 years of age to use and operate Teen Challenge vehicles.

Safety belts will be worn at all times by all occupants.

It shall be the responsibility of the staff person last using and operating a Teen Challenge vehicle to see that it is completely fueled and ready for the next driver’s use.

Interns or staff personnel using and operating a Teen Challenge vehicle shall be responsible for enforcing all applicable rules and regulations pertaining to the use thereof.

Damage or abuse to Teen Challenge vehicles shall be reported immediately to the program’s director.

Prior to the first daily use of any Teen Challenge vehicle, and each subsequent 200 miles thereafter, interns or staff personnel shall visually check engine fluid levels (gas, oil, water, and tire pressure) for appropriate operating conditions. The mechanical operation of headlights, turn signals, brake lights and warning devices shall also be monitored for correct operation.

Interns or staff personnel who violate the policies and procedures set forth herein, governing the use and operation of Teen Challenge vehicles, shall be subject to:

* Disciplinary action
* Payment for any damages caused to a vehicle by an intern/staff member due towillful negligence.

**Responsibilities on the Road**

Once it is determined that the vehicle is safe for travel, the driver's responsibility is to drive safely. The following tips can help drivers stay in control at all times.

Defensive Driving

The safety of your passengers depends on things the driver sees and does. Drivers should know what is happening in every direction. Remember the keys to defensive driving:

* Do not text or read text when driving.
* Use of cell phone should be should be by hands free device,
* If the call is longer than few seconds pull over.
* Keep your eyes moving.
* Be courteous to other drivers.
* Use caution.
* Plan ahead.
* Maintain proper following distances.
* Be prepared for the unexpected.

**Recognize Human Limitations**

Even the best drivers have built-in limitations. If you're driving a large vehicle, you may be forced to drive with limited visibility to the rear. Obviously, you can't remove these limitations, but drivers can try to understand them and compensate for them.

**Reaction Time**

Some people may react a little faster or slower than others, but on the average, drivers take one second to realize that a reaction must be taken. Remember that in one second your vehicle travels approximately 60 feet at 40 miles per hour.

Here are some things that may affect reaction time:

* Illness or fatigue
* Highway hypnosis.
* Anger or preoccupied thoughts.
* Effects of alcohol or other drugs.

**Safe Driving—Weather or Not**

No matter what time of year it is, you might encounter inclement weather, which means that you must use extra caution to keep your passengers safe. Here are some ways to minimize the effects of foul weather on the safety of you and your group.

*Reduced Visibility:*

* When visibility is reduced, whatever the reason, turn on headlights and clearance lamps.
* Low beams are recommended for driving in snow or fog.
* If you can't see a safe distance ahead of you, reduce speed or pull off the roadway and stop.
* Use the center line or the edge of the roadway as a guide when visibility is reduced.

*Wet Pavement:*

* Remember, highways are most slippery just after rain starts to fall.
* Reduce speed.
* Increase following distances.
* Keep to the right to allow room for maneuvering to the side of the road if evasive action becomes necessary.
* Don't lock the brakes. Apply brakes intermittently when stopping.
* Make sure the vehicle has good tires with deep tread to maintain traction and maneuverability.

**Ice and Snow:**

* If your wheels start spinning, ease up on the accelerator.
* Shifting to a higher gear may reduce wheel spinning.
* Don't lock the wheels when braking. Locked brakes often cause skidding.
* If possible, stop in clear or sanded patches of roadway to improve traction when you start out again.
* Use the engine and transmission as a brake.
* Downshifting is often more effective than brake application.
* Increase following distances.
* Drive at a steady reasonable speed to compensate for reduced vision when snow is blowing.
* Remember, if you have trouble making your stop, other drivers are having the same problem. Consider this before allowing passengers to leave the vehicle or cross the road.

**Highway Emergencies**

Even perfectly maintained vehicles can break down once in a while. Here, step by step, is the best way to handle emergencies on the road:

* Raise the hood.
* Tie a white handkerchief to the antenna or left door handle.
* Turn hazard lights on.
* Place traffic warning at the following locations:
* At the traffic side of the vehicle about 10 feet from approaching traffic.
* Approximately 100 feet to the rear, in the center of the occupied lane.
* Approximately 200 feet to the rear, in the center of the occupied lane.
* Use flares at the intervals described above, on the shoulder of the road.
* Stay in the vehicle until help arrives, or send two adult passengers for help.
* Keep a list of local emergency phone numbers in each vehicle including:
* Sheriff
* Police
* Hospital
* Mechanic

Please take a moment to answer three questions regarding this information:
[Good Idea Survey](https://tcusa.wufoo.com/forms/m20ekh20a18s22/def/field21%3DSupplemental%20Student%20Progress%20Report%200414)