

National Youth Science Academy

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<https://www.nysacademy.org/>



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Motor Vehicle Operating Policy and Procedures

This policy is adopted in accordance with the National Youth Science Academy's (NYSAcademy) desire to provide a safe and healthy environment for students, employees, and guests. This policy and included procedures are intended to safeguard people, protect equipment, reduce operating costs, and reduce the frequency and severity of accidents involving NYSAcademy vehicles. **Driving an NYSAcademy vehicle is a privilege.** The NYSAcademy reserves the right to deny or revoke driving privileges in the event that the NYSAcademy determines that the individual's use of the NYSAcademy vehicle poses a risk to the NYSAcademy or to the public.

I. Policy Scope

This policy applies to any person to whom the NYSAcademy grants the privilege of operating an NYSAcademy vehicle.

II. Definitions

NYSAcademy Vehicle - any vehicle that is owned, borrowed, rented, or leased by the NYSAcademy; used for NYSAcademy business; and intended to be insured by the NYSAcademy's automobile insurance policy.

Motor Vehicle Record (MVR)

- *At-Fault Accident* - Accident that is deemed chargeable or is recorded on the driver's license record as at-fault.
- *Violation* - Any motor vehicle driving violation other than a parking ticket.

Eligible Driver - A person who:

- Is at least 21 years of age,
- Possesses a valid United States of America driver's license for the class of NYSAcademy Vehicle that the individual drives or seeks to drive, and

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- Has an Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record (defined below).

Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record - A *Motor Vehicle Record* that does not have any of the following within the last five (5) years:

- Reckless driving or driving to endanger
- Driving under a suspended or revoked license
- Any hit and run, eluding a police officer, or fleeing the scene of an accident
- Vehicular homicide or assault with a motor vehicle
- Use of a motor vehicle in the commission of a felony
- Driving Under the Influence (DUI), Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), or operating a vehicle while impaired
- Filing a false accident report
- More than four (4) moving violations
- Two (2) or more at-fault accidents
- A combination of violations or at-fault accidents so that the total number of violations and at-fault accidents is more than four (4)

Authorized Driver - The NYSAcademy may authorize an eligible driver to operate an NYSAcademy vehicle if the eligible driver completes the required training and maintains the criteria set forth below. The NYSAcademy may revoke this authorization at any time especially if the driver is determined to not meet the criteria set forth below, violates any provision below, or fails to follow the requirements of this policy and procedures.

1. Authorized drivers must:
 1. Immediately notify the program director if their driver's license has been restricted, suspended, or revoked, or has any action that affects their Motor Vehicle Record.
 2. Meet the insurability standards set by the NYSAcademy's automobile insurance carrier.

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3. Observe all applicable federal, state, and local motor vehicle laws, ordinances, and regulations.
4. Report all incidents in accordance with procedures outlined in Section V. (Accident Reporting and Analysis) and cooperate in any investigation of the incident and any subsequent proceedings.
5. Wear a seat belt at all times and ensure that all passengers do so as well.
6. Operate the vehicle in a courteous and safe manner.
7. Maintain a motor vehicle record that meets the NYSAcademy standards set forth in this policy (“Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record”).

IV. Procedures

1. Before the NYSAcademy shall authorize a driver to operate an NYSAcademy vehicle, the NYSAcademy must determine that the individual has met the requirements of this Policy, including having an Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record.
2. In order to make a determination that a driver has an Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record, the driver must submit a copy of their Driver’s License and driving record to the program director and/or submit to a background check. The driver may obtain a copy of their driving record by visiting the licensee’s home state Department of Motor Vehicles or by going online^[1] with the licensee’s home state Department of Motor Vehicles’ website and requesting the record.
3. The NYSAcademy may at any time review a driver’s Motor Vehicle Record to determine if the driver still has an Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record. The NYSAcademy expects to review the driver’s Motor Vehicle Record at the time of hire/volunteering, annually, or at a more frequent interval.
4. If a new employee’s position requires that the new employee operate an NYSAcademy vehicle, employment will be contingent upon the NYSAcademy determining that the new hire has an Acceptable Motor Vehicle Record and meets the requirements of this Policy.

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5. The NYSAcademy may at any time review the activities or Motor Vehicle Record of a driver to determine whether the driver meets the requirements of this Policy and is still permitted to drive an NYSAcademy vehicle.
6. Drivers receiving traffic citations or violations while operating an NYSAcademy vehicle shall be responsible for paying in full any outstanding fines in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

V. Accident Reporting and Analysis

The purpose of the accident investigation is to determine what factors, conditions, and/or practices contributed to the accident involving an NYSAcademy vehicle so that proper action can be taken to prevent the same type of accident from reoccurring. A complete accident investigation includes gathering pertinent data and making objective evaluations of facts, statements, and related information, which should lead to recommendations for preventive measures. An insurance identification card and accident information kit, located in the glove compartment of each NYSAcademy vehicle, lists the procedures to follow when involved in an accident.

1. Reporting

1. In the event of an accident:

1. Stay at the scene of the accident, check for personal injury, and seek medical attention if necessary.
2. Set emergency signals to prevent further damage or injury.
3. Call the local police and notify the appropriate NYSAcademy program director immediately.
4. Stay calm, be courteous, and avoid arguments. Secure assistance from police and request that an accident report be completed. Make no statement concerning the accident to anyone except the police. Obtain the police officer's name, badge number, and phone number. Do not admit fault, make no promises, settlements, or excuses.

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5. Complete applicable sections of the **State of West Virginia Uniform Traffic Crash Report**^[2].
 6. Record the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the occupants of involved vehicles and all witnesses.
 7. Obtain the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all persons injured, regardless of how minor the injury. Attempt to learn where any injured individuals have been sent.
 8. Record the insurance carrier of other parties, policy number, agent's name, address, and phone number.
 9. Drive the vehicle only if it has been determined by law enforcement authorities to be safe to do so.
 10. Before leaving the accident scene, verify that all the facts have been obtained.
2. The NYSAcademy's executive director must be notified within 24 hours of the accident. A completed **State of West Virginia Uniform Traffic Crash Report** must be submitted to the NYSAcademy's executive director no later than two (2) business days of the accident; attach appropriate photographs. A police report must be submitted to the NYSAcademy's executive director no later than seven (7) business days of the accident.
 2. Investigation - the NYSAcademy's executive director in consultation with the chair of the NYSAcademy's Board of Trustees will determine if further investigation is necessary.
 3. At-fault accidents and violations - The NYSAcademy's executive committee shall serve as an Accident Review Committee whose role will be to determine whether it is still in the best interests of the NYSAcademy to permit the driver to continue to drive an NYSAcademy vehicle after an accident or a Violation has occurred.
 1. The Accident Review Committee will review the facts relating to the accident or violation to:
 1. In the event of an accident:

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- Determine if the accident was chargeable or non-chargeable
 - If it is determined the accident was chargeable, then the accident will be deemed an At-Fault Accident and used to evaluate whether the driver continues to have an acceptable Motor Vehicle Record.
 - In the event of a Violation: The driver's Motor Vehicle Record will be reviewed in conjunction with the new Violation to determine whether the driver continues to have an acceptable Motor Vehicle Record.
 - The Accident Review Committee will notify the driver and their supervisor of the Accident Review Committee's findings and required actions. Required actions may include training, suspension, and/or revocation of driving privileges.
2. In the event that driver refuses to cooperate in the reporting and investigation of the accident or provides false information, the accident shall be deemed an At-Fault Accident.

VI. Training

Potential drivers must complete in-person training that will cover the following topics:

1. Safe loading guidelines: load from front to back in a manner that maintains the lowest possible center of gravity.
2. Passenger safety guidelines: the driver and all passengers must wear safety belts.
3. Driving safety guidelines: obey all laws, back carefully using a spotter when visibility is compromised, and be aware of vehicle limitations, including the impact of vehicle weight, braking capacity, and road conditions.
4. Vehicle maintenance guidelines: maintain fluid and fuel levels and correct tire pressure.
5. Vehicle alarm systems: Some NYS Academy vehicles have alarms that have to be disarmed as part of the shutdown procedure for the vehicle.

All drivers must demonstrate competence through a road test to include:

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- Drive each type of vehicle that they will operate on behalf of the NYSAcademy
- Safely back each vehicle.
- Safely park each vehicle.
- Operate all safety equipment and systems.
- Locate spare tire/wheel when appropriate.
- Inspect fluid levels including, as applicable, fuel, Diesel Exhaust Fluid, engine oil, transmission fluid, washer fluid, and coolant.
- Add fuel and fluids as needed.

VII. Vehicle Inspection

1. Drivers must check their vehicle for obvious body damage prior to each use and immediately report any signs of new body damage to the program director.
2. Drivers who suspect that their vehicles are unsafe must report it to the program director. The vehicle is not to be driven until the safety issue has been addressed.

VIII. Maintenance

The program director shall verify that each vehicle under his/her control receives appropriate scheduled preventive maintenance and West Virginia State Inspections if required.

IX. Fifteen (15) Passenger Vans

No one is permitted to purchase, lease, or rent fifteen (15) passenger vans for NYSAcademy activities or business.

X. Operating Guidelines

1. Obey all laws and regulations.
2. Use headlights at least 30 minutes before sunset and after sunrise and during reduced visibility (i.e. rain, fog, snow) and whenever required by law.
3. Use headlights whenever the windshield wipers are in use.
4. Acquaint yourself thoroughly with the route/road map prior to departure when traveling on unfamiliar roads. Remember that many WV backroads lack cell service so it is highly

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recommended that the driver download maps to their phone for offline use before departing.

5. Reduce speed according to weather and road conditions, especially on icy, wet, dirt, or gravel roadways (braking is more difficult under these conditions).
6. Use engine-braking techniques when appropriate (downshifting) to preserve the life of braking system components.
7. Use turn signals to indicate changing lanes or making turns at intersections.
8. Exercise caution when backing up any NYSAcademy vehicle; deploy a spotter and use the side and rearview mirrors.
9. Turn off ignition switch, (disarm the alarm if using one of the buses), remove key, and lock vehicle when unattended.
10. Allow sufficient time for contingencies when planning the time to arrive at your destination.
11. Do not allow the number of passengers to exceed the number of seat belts.
12. Load the vehicle from front to back and maintain a low and central center of gravity.
13. Do not place any objects on the roof unless supported and secured by an appropriate roof rack designed for the purpose.
14. Verify that the driver and all passengers are properly wearing their safety belts before moving.
15. Maintain an adequate fuel supply. Refill the tank whenever the gauge indicates $\frac{1}{4}$ tank or less or report the need for refueling to the program director.
16. All NYSAcademy vehicles are equipped with hands-free phone holders. Drivers are required to use these holders if using their phone for navigation. Hands-free devices must be used if taking a phone call while driving, however, using the phone while driving is strongly discouraged regardless and if possible drivers should pull off the road temporarily to take any and all calls. Text messaging while driving is strictly prohibited.
17. The information contained in this Policy is subject to change by the NYSAcademy at any time. Users of this Policy should consult with the NYSAcademy office to verify the

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current text or status of the policies, procedures, or information contained in this Policy and to determine whether the information in this Policy or other publications has been superseded or changed.

18. Do not:

- Knowingly operate an unsafe vehicle.
- Offer rides to hitchhikers or persons unknown to the driver.
- Allow unauthorized personal use of the NYSAcademy vehicles.
- Permit unauthorized persons to ride in NYSAcademy vehicles.
- Smoke (traditional or vaporized) in NYSAcademy vehicles.
- Add scented air fresheners to an NYSAcademy vehicles.
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance that may cause impairment while operating an NYSAcademy vehicle.
- Engage in any activity that exposes a risk to the NYSAcademy or to the public.

XI. Vehicle Inventory

Each NYSAcademy vehicle should be equipped with the following:

- A. NYSAcademy Motor Vehicle Operating Policy and Procedures
- B. Current vehicle registration certificate or facsimile
- C. Current insurance certificate or facsimile
- D. West Virginia Department of Highways' road map
- E. Fuel credit card
- F. First aid kit
- G. Emergency contact card
- H. Flashlight
- I. Driver Accident Report form

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[1] In West Virginia, <https://transportation.wv.gov/DMV/Drivers/Pages/Driving-Record.aspx>

[2] https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/wv_par_17c_rev_02_2007.pdf