



Vehicle Use Fact Sheet

Many field researchers use cars, trucks, or vans for transportation to field locations. Most fatal field incidents are related to vehicle travel.

Accident injuries

Roadside injuries

Vehicle breakdown

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

- ✓ The principal investigator is responsible for verifying the credentials of potential drivers.
- ✓ Make sure your vehicle is capable of going to the field area. Four-wheel drive may be required if you are going off-road.
- ✓ Keep a list of phone numbers for mechanics and towing companies in the field area.
- ✓ Pack a spare tire, jack, and a lug wrench to change a tire.
- ✓ Consider having drivers take an in-person defensive driving course. Some insurance companies grant a reduction in premiums to customers who complete this course. Contact ESSR for vendor recommendations.

GENERAL SAFETY

- ❖ Always wear seatbelts.
- ❖ Store cargo appropriately.
- ❖ Do not overload your vehicle.
- ❖ Inspect tires, lights, and exterior for minor damage daily.
- ❖ Check fluid levels every time you fill up for gas.
- ❖ Fuel for vehicles must be of appropriate grade for your climate conditions (e.g., arctic grade diesel).
- ❖ Consult a mechanic if a warning light is illuminated.
- ❖ Do not attempt to cross a body of water with a vehicle.
- ❖ When making a roadside stop, park in an area where you can pull the vehicle completely out of the lane. Maintain good visibility of traffic in both directions. Do not walk into the road for a photograph. Avoid crossing the road if possible, if need be cross quickly and only when it is safe.
- ❖ If you are using a University of Maryland state vehicle, you must obey the rules outlined by the Department of Business Services.
- ❖ State vehicles are to be used for University business only.
- ❖ Be advised that Motor Transportation Services is not responsible for any property left in state vehicles.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- ❖ If you are using a state vehicle, information on what to do in the case of an accident is contained in an accident packet within the vehicle. Contact Motor Transportation Services if your vehicle lacks an accident packet.
- ❖ Report all instances of vehicle accidents. This includes rental cars used during University business. Accidents must be reported within 24 hours to the Institutional Insurance Coordinator.
- ❖ The Insurance Coordinator will need:
 - Copy of police report
 - Rental agency information
 - Travel Authorization Request (TAR) number
 - Driver information
 - Department authorizing the rental
- ❖ For more information about insurance and reporting, please contact ESSR.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

UMD Department of Business Services [Motor Transportation Services](#)

UMD ESSR [Insurance](#)

CDC National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety [Motor Vehicle Safety at Work](#)