



Church Vehicle Policy

First United Methodist Church
Howe, Texas

Applicability:

This policy and procedures are applicable to all persons, lay and clergy, who desire to use a church owned vehicle, or employees/volunteers who run errands for the church in their own vehicle, as well as anyone who transports passengers on behalf of the church or leases/rents a vehicle for church business

References:

1. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.
2. The Transportation Code of the State of Texas
3. The North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church “Driver Eligibility Guidelines” provided by MHBT Insurance
4. NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE UMC / MHBT APPLICATION FOR “QUALIFIED DRIVER” STATUS
5. Texas Motor Vehicle Records (MVR)
6. FUMC “MinistrySafe Policy”

Policy:

The use of vehicles owned by FUMC Howe is restricted to FUMC Howe activities, or such activities that are approved by the Board of Trustees and Pastor. The “Driver Eligibility Guidelines” of this policy shall apply and care should be made to ensure that insurance protection covers any person allowed to operate a church owned vehicle, or anyone who uses their own vehicle for church related business.

Guidelines also apply to employees/volunteers who run errands for the church in their own vehicle as well as anyone who transports passengers on behalf of the church or leases/rents a vehicle for church business. Anyone who uses their personal vehicle on church business should be made aware that their personal insurance is primary. The church does not have an insurable interest and is not responsible for liability, comprehensive or collision.

All requests for use of a church owned vehicle will be scheduled through the church office. Requests will be honored on first-come-first-serve basis. Approved requests will be placed on the church calendar. The church office will maintain an approved list of drivers.

It is the user’s responsibility to ensure the vehicle is returned clean, fueled, and in good condition. Keys to church owned vehicles must be returned to the church office immediately, or as soon as is practical if the vehicle is used at night or when the church office is closed.



Any person who desires to operate a church owned vehicle must be approved annually (usually in January) and their name placed on an approved driver list before operating any church owned vehicle. Every person who desires to operate a church owned vehicle must submit:

1. An Application for Qualified Driver Status
2. A photocopy of their current driver's license
3. A photocopy of their personal motor vehicle insurance
4. A background check release form. (for driving history)

All must be turned into the church office, Pastor, and/or Trustees for review and approval.

Driver Eligibility Guidelines:

- No driver under the age of 21 is an eligible driver.
- No driver under the age of 25 or over the age of 74 is eligible to drive vehicles designed to transport more than 15 passengers.
- Any driver over the age of 71, who drives vans or buses, is required to provide a physician's statement annually in order to be an approved driver.
- Drivers ages 75 and over are ineligible. However, the insurance underwriters may have exceptions to this criteria. The church may assist interested drivers in ascertaining the exceptions, if any exist. It is the driver's responsibility, however, to present evidence that they meet the insurance underwriting criteria before the driver is added to the approved driver list.

The church staff and Trustees shall consider the following guidelines, as well as the maturity level, behavior of the applicant, and other information deemed appropriate, before approving the applicant to operate church owned vehicles and placing their name on an approved driver list:

Any driver with any of the following the past three years does not meet the guidelines of church insurance underwriters and is therefore an unacceptable driver:

- More than 3 moving violations in the last 3 years
- More than 2 accidents in the last 3 years
- More than 1 accident in any 1 year
- Speeding over 80 miles per hour or 21 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.



Any driver with any of the following is unacceptable:

- Operating a vehicle during a time of suspension or revocation
- Operating a vehicle without a license
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Reckless driving
- Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.

Drivers shall have the appropriate driver's license for the type/class of vehicle being operated.

No person who has experienced glaucoma, epilepsy, or has a history of heart attacks should operate church owned vehicles.

Operating Rules:

- The driver and passengers must wear seat belts at all times. Children of appropriate age must be secured in approved car seats or approved booster seats (seats are not furnished by the church).
- The driver shall not type or operate any texting device while the vehicle is being operated. While it is useful for the driver to possess a cellular telephone in order to make emergency calls, drivers should use extreme caution in using any such device while operating a church vehicle.
- No arms, feet, or heads should be outside of the vehicle while moving. No objects should be thrown from the vehicle.
- All traffic laws must be obeyed. Any infractions or citations are the responsibility of the party who received them and those incidents shall be reported to the church staff and Trustees within 24 hours.
- No hitchhikers shall be picked up.
- No smoking or alcoholic beverages are permitted in church owned vehicles.
- The driver or chaperone should limit the use of audio and/or video equipment that may distract the driver.

Maintenance:

While the Board of Trustees is responsible for maintenance of church owned vehicles, the driver of the vehicle is not relieved from exercising reasonable care and responsibility for inspecting the vehicle for problems or issues related to safety and functionality, prior to driving or using and church owned vehicle. Concerns should be reported immediately to the church staff and Trustees. Any damage to the vehicle should be reported to the church staff and trustees upon return.



Church Bus Policy:

The pastor will interpret this policy, and the pastor will make decisions regarding unforeseen circumstances requiring new determination of the rules.

- The bus is intended only for the use of legitimate church activities and will not be loaned.
- Boy Scout Troop 45 will be allowed to use the bus like any other church group.
- The bus shall only be used for a minimum of 10 riders.
- All drivers must have at least a Class B or better Commercial Drivers License with passenger endorsement.
- Costs for operating on a particular trip, such as gasoline or rental for a trailer, will be paid by the group using the bus.
- Costs for insurance, maintenance, taxes, etc. will be paid by the church.
- The bus shall be returned to the church clean and with a full tank of gas.
- Any group wishing to use the bus needs to contact the church office. All requests will be placed on the church calendar. Requests will be given on a first come basis.
- Seatbelt use is mandatory.

Mower Use Policy:

The church owns a Zero-Turn mower, a push mower, and a weed eater that can be used by members who volunteer on the church mowing calendar. Use of the church Zero-Turn Mower shall follow the following guidelines:

- No one under the age of 18 shall operate the church Zero-Turn Mower without parent permission and training.
- Those ages 16 and 17 may use the Zero-Turn Mower if they have turned in a parent permission form to the church office and have been trained to use the mower.

Trailer Use Policy:

The two 14 ft. cargo trailers were purchased for use by the Church and its programs. Use of the trailers will follow the following guidelines:

- Drivers towing the trailers must be at least 21 years old, and shall have experience in towing a trailer.
- Trailer and its contents shall be returned in working condition.
- Any damage is the responsibility of the borrower.
- All requests to use the trailers will be made to the church office.

Amendment:

These policies and procedures may be amended at any time by Board of Trustees and the Church Council provided the amendment does not violate the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.