

Algoma University Animal Care Committee	
#AU 0014 Driving	
Issue date: June 2012	Last revised: May 2025

1) Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes acceptable procedures for driving and operating a motor vehicle on highways and rural roads to minimize risk, prevent accidents, and ensure compliance with traffic laws.

2) Policy

CCAC guidelines and regulations

3) Responsibility

Principal investigator (PI), their research staff, and their student investigators
 Drivers are responsible for following this SOP at all times.
 PIs must ensure drivers are trained and understand the contents of this SOP.

4) Training Required

License Appropriate to the Vehicle being driven

5) Materials Required

Valid Drivers License
 Vehicle of Choice
 Valid Vehicle Insurance

6) Procedures

Procedure: Prevention/Precaution

1. At any time of year there are risks associated with driving, including vehicular malfunction and slippery driving conditions.
2. Only licensed and insured drivers can operate a vehicle under University Research Activities.
3. Drivers should drive with caution, never drive in excess of the posted speed limit, and should reduce speed when conditions warrant additional safety measures.
4. Be aware of the potential for CO poisoning while in an idling vehicle: never idle a vehicle in a closed space.
5. Please refer to SOP #AU00012 (Getting Lost) for precautions and preventive measures, always notify the
6. Always notify the Principal Investigator when embarking on a research activity, travel with a buddy, and carry a cell phone.

Pre-Trip Safety Checks

Inspect the vehicle for:

1. Tire pressure and tread
2. Oil, coolant, and brake fluid levels

3. Lights, signals, and mirrors
4. Windshield wipers and washer fluid
5. Full fuel tank or adequate fuel for the journey

6. Confirm that the GPS, mobile phone, or emergency communication device is functional.
7. Secure all cargo and ensure visibility is not obstructed.

General Driving Guidelines

1. Always wear a seatbelt, driver and passenger/s
2. Follow all posted speed limits and adjust speed based on:
 3. Weather conditions
 4. Road surface (e.g., wet, gravel)
 5. Visibility
6. Maintain a minimum 3-second following distance.
7. Avoid distractions (e.g., texting, eating, adjusting radio).
8. Never drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or extreme fatigue.
9. Highway Driving Best Practices
 10. Use turn signals for all lane changes or exits.
 11. Keep to the right lane except when overtaking.
 12. Observe and obey all highway signs and variable message boards.
 13. Be cautious of merging traffic at on-ramps.
 14. Do not stop on the shoulder unless it's an emergency.
 15. Use headlights during poor visibility (fog, rain, dusk/dawn).

Rural Road Driving Best Practices

1. Reduce speed on unpaved, narrow, or winding roads.
2. Be alert for:
 - Agricultural vehicles
 - Wildlife or livestock crossings
 - Poor or no lighting
 - Intersections without traffic signals
3. Sound the horn when approaching sharp turns or blind corners.
4. Slow down at railroad crossings, even if gates are up.

Emergency Procedure

In case of a breakdown

1. Pull over safely and activate hazard lights.
2. Use reflective triangles or cones.
3. Contact roadside assistance or emergency services.

If you are involved in an accident

1. Check for injuries and call emergency services immediately. Call 9-1-1 and ask for police assistance. They will contact roadside assistance if necessary.
2. Move to a safe location if possible.
3. Contact the Principal Investigator so that they are aware of the problem. Ensure that the scene is secured (e.g., do not move the vehicle or tamper with any evidence) and determine whether there are any witnesses whose contact information you can collect.
4. If you are injured, the police will contact emergency services, and an Accident/Injury Report will need to be filed by yourself and your supervisor and submitted to Human Resources within 24 hours. See the Algoma University Accident Investigation Policy for further information.

REVISION HISTORY		
Revision #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	November 2019	Modified
2	May 2024	Additional review by Algoma H&S Office
3	May 2025	Reformatting
4	May 2025	Department of Life, Health & Safety and Security, reviewed and provided comments and additions to SOP.