



Government  
of South Australia

***SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
GOVERNMENT***

***SAFE DRIVING POLICY***

*For SA Government Fleet Vehicle  
Managers and Drivers*

September 2002

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## **1 Safe Driving Policy**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The South Australian Government is committed to ensuring that its employees work in a healthy and safe environment. Departments, agencies, and statutory authorities have a responsibility to ensure safe driving practices are implemented. Adopting and implementing a Safe Driving Policy will contribute to addressing the following:

- preserve the health safety and welfare of employees
- better service to customers/clients
- lower running costs and improved utilisation of Government fleet vehicles
- managing environmental issues
- raise awareness that the public sector has a responsibility as a good corporate citizen
- meet Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare obligations

The South Australian Government will strive for improved Government fleet safety, not only for its own benefit, but also for the benefit of the community.

The South Australian Government Safe Driving Policy positively contributes to the National Road Safety Strategy 2001 – 2010 and the current SA Government road safety initiatives by improving road user behaviour.

### **1.2 Application**

This Policy has been developed for use by all South Australian Government departments, agencies, and statutory authorities (agency(s)) and employees at all levels, that utilise Government fleet vehicles. All agencies must ensure safe driving practices are adopted and adhered to at all times when using vehicles.

Departments, agencies and statutory authorities may use this document in whole or as a framework to implement a Safe Driving Policy in their agency. The Safe Driving Policy can be used to develop safe work procedures for guiding the safe use of vehicles in the workplace.

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## 1.3 Policy Objectives – General

- increase awareness and understanding among employees of safe driving practices
- have employees behave in a manner that is conducive to road safety
- obtain commitment from drivers, passengers and managers to use vehicles safely and efficiently
- demonstrate to the community at large the benefit of a safe driving policy
- contribute towards meeting OHS&W obligations with regards to using vehicles in the workplace

## 1.4 Policy Objectives-Specific

- minimise risk and exposure of employees to work place injuries
- reduction in total vehicle crashes
- reduction in workplace direct and indirect vehicle crash related costs
- minimise the impact of vehicles on the environment
- minimise the operating cost vehicles
- monitor and review performance on a regular basis.
- minimise the financial and social cost to the community by achieving the above objectives

## **2 Driver Safety**

Employees who use Government fleet vehicles have a responsibility to drive safely, to assist in maintaining their vehicles in a safe condition, report suspect or unsafe vehicle conditions and to demonstrate safe driving practices to other road users.

### 2.1 Managers and Supervisors Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees who use vehicles in the course of their employment:

- are correctly licensed
- have access to and are aware of the current road rules
- are trained, educated and adopt safe driving practices
- aware of the effects of pharmaceutical preparations, drugs, alcohol and fatigue
- respect the rights of all other road users
- are interviewed after any vehicle crash.

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Managers and supervisors are also responsible for ensuring appropriate vehicle selection and facilitating vehicle maintenance requirements.

## 2.2 Driver Training and Education

Traffic conditions, road rules, driver behaviour, vehicle options and handling characteristics can all change. Therefore, training must be provided regularly to update and reinforce safe driving awareness attitudes and behaviour.

Fleet SA, the South Australian Government fleet vehicle manager, manages the SA Government Driver Training and Education Program, which has been specifically designed and authorised for Government passenger and light commercial fleet vehicle users.

Information regarding the SA Government Driver Training and Education Program can be obtained from Fleet SA (ie. Fleet SA web site) or the local agency Occupational Health and Safety Representative.

### *2.2.1 Who should be Trained?*

Driver training and education will be of benefit to all employees, the agency and the South Australian Government.

Managers may identify and prioritise (if necessary) staff members in the following categories:

- (a) employees who drive in excess of 300 kms per week or who drive three days or more per week in a Government fleet vehicle, for work related purposes
- (b) drivers who have experienced two or more accidents in Government fleet vehicles within the last two years
- (c) all other drivers.

### *2.2.2 Frequency of Training*

All drivers should receive at least one formal driver training and education session every two (2) years. Safe driving education will be worked into conferences and other forums, where possible, as an opportunity for reminder and reinforcement. Employees will receive refresher and updated training on a regular basis.

### *2.2.3 Content of Courses*

Training opportunities will emphasise awareness of hazards, encourage safe driving behaviour, attitudes and overall contribute to addressing the objectives of the Safe Driving Policy.

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## 2.3 First Aid Training

A recognised course in first aid will be available to all drivers whose principal place of work is their vehicle.

## 2.4 Driving Practices and Hazards

The management of the following hazards and risks will be undertaken to minimise risk to employees and improve driving practices.

### 2.4.1 *Substance Abuse*

#### 2.4.1.1 Alcohol and drugs

No driver shall operate Government fleet vehicles while under the influence of alcohol and or while impaired by drugs, or with a blood alcohol content in excess of that prescribed by law. Drivers are encouraged to completely avoid consuming alcohol when using a Government fleet vehicle.

The following medications can also effect driving:

*Depressants* slow down all the body's systems and may cause sleepiness, slow reactions and poor co-ordination. Commonly used medicines which may contain depressants include tranquillisers, sleeping pills, some pain killers and allergy medicines; some medications for epilepsy & blood pressure, nausea, inflammation and fungal infections. Most hay fever treatments, travel pills and many cough and cold remedies also contain depressants. When inhaled, solvents also have a depressant effect.

*Stimulants* speed up the body's systems and can make people jittery, uncoordinated and overly-anxious. Appetite suppressant drugs and some decongestants and cough and cold remedies contain stimulants.

Anyone taking medication should ask their doctor or chemist whether it will impair driving and check the container for any warning messages. Some medications may increase the effect of alcohol.

*Illegal drugs* are a factor in a number of serious crashes. No driver shall operate a Government fleet vehicle while under the influence of any illegal drugs.

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## 2.4.2 *Speeding*

Speeding is defined as travelling faster than the posted limit or travelling faster than appropriate for the conditions.

Speeding reduces the reaction time available and increases the impact, injury risk and cost of collisions.

Employees, managers and supervisors are to plan and allow adequate time for travel between appointments or work commitments.

Employees are responsible for the cost of speeding fines incurred and will not receive reimbursement under any circumstances.

## 2.4.3 *Seat Belts*

Use of an available seat belt restraint decreases the likelihood of serious injury in the event of a crash. The wearing of seat belt restraints in seating positions will contribute towards the effective operation of airbags when fitted.

Drivers and passengers in all vehicles are required by law to use available seat belt restraints when the vehicle is moving, or is stationary but not parked.

The use of seating positions with lap sash seat belts is preferred for vehicle occupants as lap only seat belts offer reduced occupant restraint.

When required, an approved child restraint will be used which is appropriate to the age, development and mass of the child.

## 2.4.4 *Driver Fatigue*

Driver fatigue is a major contributor to crashes both in the metropolitan areas as well as rural driving.

To avoid fatigue, employees, managers and supervisors will:

- plan driving schedules realistically
- be well rested before driving
- take regular refresher breaks, it is recommended that 10 minute refresher breaks should be taken after each two (2) hour driving period
- avoid driving when they would normally be asleep, especially between the hours of 12 pm and 6 am



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- inform their supervisor or manager if they are too tired to drive.

### 2.4.5 *Driving in Remote Areas*

Driving in remote areas can place employees in high risk situations. Risk mitigation strategies will be considered and adopted to manage and preserve employee safety and well-being. Employees, managers and supervisors will:

- assess the risks and hazards associated with the travelling requirement
- select the appropriate vehicle type for the journey
- check the predicted weather and the road conditions for the duration of the journey
- ensure scheduled communication procedures are practiced and that appropriate reliable communication system(s) are used ie. radio, telephone and personal contact
- inform the appropriate authorities of remote area travel plans including, persons travelling, destination and estimated time of arrival
- consider where appropriate, the carrying of an EPIRB (Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacon)
- ensure that the vehicle is appropriately equipped to undertake the journey, tasks and specific terrain(s)
- ensure that the vehicle has been properly maintained and fully serviced prior to departure
- plan for vehicle maintenance and servicing requirements that may be required during the duration of the journey
- ensure clear procedures are adopted for emergency situations including personal injury, vehicle accident, breakdown and vehicle bogging
- ensure drivers and or passengers are appropriately trained to operate the vehicle and all equipment carried including communication and vehicle recovery equipment.
- ensure a First Aid kit and fire extinguisher is carried in the vehicle and the driver and or passengers are appropriately trained in their use
- ensure appropriate provisions are carried for emergency situations including food, water and fuel.

### 2.4.6 *Driving Alone*

Where duties require periods of driving alone, employees, managers and supervisors will:

- ensure that drivers have emergency contact information and an appropriate communication system available

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- encourage drivers to inform appropriate persons of their departure and estimated destination arrival time
- ensure that drivers are aware of personal security and safety practices while in a vehicle and when boarding and alighting a vehicle. This includes awareness of vehicle locking, alarm and duress systems and vehicle storage and security arrangements.

### *2.4.7 Mobile Phones*

The use of mobile phones while driving will significantly increase the risk of being involved in a vehicle crash. The use of hand held mobile phones without a hands free communication system in traffic is an offence by law.

Drivers whose principal place of work is in the Government fleet vehicle, shall have fitted (if required) a hands free mobile phone communication system. A personal hands free kit or vehicle hands free communication system shall be used for short term and temporary requirements.

Failure to concentrate on driving while conducting a conversation on a hands free communication system can still attract a charge of "driving without due care" should you be involved in an accident. Drivers who use Government fleet vehicles and require access to a mobile phone while in transit are recommended to legally park the vehicle, and attend to the call.

Employees will not be reimbursed for the cost of Traffic Infringement Notice fines under any circumstances.

### *2.4.8 Vehicle Refuelling*

All portable electrical devices (including radio communication equipment, mobile phones, pagers etc) shall be turned off before exiting the vehicle when stopping at a vehicle refuelling / filling station.

Portable electrical devices shall not be used at vehicle refuelling / filling stations.

### *2.4.9 Smoking in Vehicles*

Smoking in vehicles while driving can raise the risk of being involved in an accident. Smoking in a vehicle that is mobile or stationary can also expose the driver and or passengers to secondary smoke and potential risk to their health. Smoking by

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passengers can also contribute to driver distraction.

Drivers and passengers shall note that smoking in any Government fleet vehicle is prohibited.

### *2.4.10 Other Hazards*

Employees, managers and supervisors will conduct a hazard identification and risk assessment process to identify hazards that are particular to the work environment that a vehicle operates in. Contingency planning and training may be required to mitigate these hazards. Other hazards may include, risk of violence from client passengers, sudden illness and heat stress.

## 2.5 Driver Performance

Persistent failure to comply with SA Road Traffic Act, Rules and Regulations, or unsafe driving practices while driving a Government fleet vehicle will constitute unsafe work performance.

In cases where an employee does not improve their driving performance to an acceptable level, the right to use a Government fleet vehicle may be removed.

## 2.6 Reporting of Crashes and Near Misses

It is the responsibility of the driver of a vehicle involved in a crash, "near miss" or where personal injury has been sustained, to report the occurrence in accordance with the driver's Agency workplace hazard and injury notification procedures as required by the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986.

The driver of a vehicle involved in a crash is responsible under the SA Road Traffic Act, Rules and Regulations (or as required in other States) to report any accident to the Police as soon as possible but within 24 hours, where the estimated damage total exceeds the prescribed amount (as stated in the Road Traffic Regulations 1996). Where damage does not exceed the prescribed amount, the accident shall be reported to the Police and requested to be noted in the daily journal.

All vehicle crashes and occurrences of vehicular damage must be reported to Fleet SA within 24 hours or by the close of business on the next working day.

### 3 Vehicle Safety

Consideration will be given to all vehicles in equipping them with features that may enhance the safe performance of those vehicles and to maximise occupant safety. All Government fleet vehicles will be maintained and operated in a roadworthy condition for maximum safety.

#### 3.1 Vehicle Safety Considerations

##### 3.1.1 *Reducing crash risk*

Being seen, and clearly seeing other vehicles, are important factors in reducing involvement in crashes. So is efficient braking and vehicle control. This policy promotes and supports:

- use of daytime driving lights. Employees on country trips are encouraged to travel with headlights on (low beam). In dull and rainy weather, and well before dusk, employees should switch headlights on to improve the visibility of their own vehicle, regardless of location
- limited window tinting, as this reduces driver visibility
- ABS brakes - drivers will be educated in the characteristics and effective usage of anti-lock braking systems where applicable
- Supplementary Restraining Systems (including airbags) – drivers will be educated in the characteristics and function of Supplementary Restraining Systems where applicable
- driver education in the characteristics of other vehicle control or intelligent transport systems where appropriate

##### 3.1.2 *Additional Equipment*

Additional or optional equipment installed / fitted to Government fleet vehicles shall not affect the manufacturers designed operation, change the intended purpose of the vehicle, or increase the potential for injury to pedestrians or vehicle occupants. Such equipment will be fitted to vehicles in a manner that minimises vehicle damage without compromising any compliance with applicable vehicle Australian Design Rules (ADR's).

Attention will be given to Government fleet vehicles which may require the fitting of additional equipment including:

- cargo barriers in wagons etc, manufactured and fitted to comply with Australian Standards

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- mobile phone hand free systems
- first aid kits
- fire extinguishers
- bull bars should preferably be the manufacturers' integrated bars. After market fittings can affect vehicle crumple rate, cause greater passenger injury, affect airbag performance and cause greater injury to pedestrians and other vehicles
- communications and other business related equipment

### 3.2 Vehicle Condition

#### 3.2.1 *Maintenance*

The safe and efficient operation of Government fleet vehicles is a priority. Agency management is responsible for ensuring that their allocated vehicle(s) are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's schedules and driver initiated reports on vehicle safety are acted upon. Drivers are to assist agency management in meeting these requirements by making the vehicle available at the appropriate times or scheduled service periods. Items requiring attention between routine services (e.g. tyres, brakes etc) are to be rectified promptly, to ensure vehicle roadworthiness, safety of driver and occupants, to maintain service to clients and to ensure that Government fleet vehicles are not a hazard to other road users. A properly maintained vehicle will operate efficiently and minimise the effect of vehicle emissions on the environment.

Tyre pressures, oil and coolant are to be checked at regular intervals between scheduled services. Drivers will carry out a daily visual check of tyres, and keep the windscreen, windows and headlights clean to ensure safe clear vision.

#### 3.2.2 *Appearance.*

The cleanliness and tidiness of Government fleet vehicles reflects upon the driver, the agency and the South Australian Government. Government fleet vehicles are to be well presented at all times.

The driver or responsible person to whom a vehicle is allocated, is responsible for washing the vehicle on a regular basis. Expenses for cleaning and or required materials will be met by the agency where appropriate.

The interior of the vehicle is to be kept clean, tidy and well-presented at all times. All objects in a vehicle shall be adequately secured, placed in the boot or kept behind the cargo barrier if fitted.

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Spot checks of vehicle maintenance records, condition and appearance may be performed by the agency management at anytime.

### 3.2.3 *Short Term Hire Vehicles*

Vehicles that are sourced from short term hire providers (whether they be SA Government or private sector hirers), drivers should ensure that they are familiar with the vehicle and providers guidelines for use and any prescribed emergency procedures.

Drivers shall expect to receive such vehicles in a clean, safe and roadworthy condition. Drivers should perform a brief visual check of the vehicle for any obvious faults prior to embarking on their trip.

Drivers shall report any unsafe vehicle conditions to the responsible hiring body.

## **4 Management Responsibilities**

The Safe Driving Policy is a major initiative for the welfare of staff and clients of the South Australian Government and the community at large. Individual agency management (responsible for the agency allocated vehicles) will set appropriate objectives, monitor and review progress.

Prime responsibility for specifying and implementing a Safe Driving Policy rests with each individual agency. SA Government agencies will be responsible for the funding of obligations (ie Driver training and First Aid) in relation to this policy.

### 4.1 Monitor the Crash Data

Management shall monitor the incidence and cost of motor vehicle crashes. Management shall monitor:

- number and type of vehicle related injuries
- indirect cost of crashes (including rental of temporary vehicles, time lost, injury treatment, temporary staff etc)
- total number of vehicle crashes per year
- number of driver at fault crashes per year

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## 4.2 Set Objectives

The agency will implement strategies to achieve a reduction in:

- vehicle related injuries
- the number of crashes
- the number of driver at fault crashes
- indirect and direct cost of crashes

## 4.3 Performance

Responsible agency managers shall measure, report and assess performance against the above objectives. Appropriate strategies and actions shall be implemented by responsible agency management to assist in achieving these objectives.

## 4.4 Charge Insurance/Repairs to Cost Areas

The cost of Government fleet vehicle operation, repairs and incidentals will be charged to appropriate cost centres from which they emanate. Managers will monitor these costs on a regular basis.

## 4.5 Review all Crashes

The immediate manager or supervisor will interview all drivers involved in crashes as soon as possible after the event, with a written report prepared which may incorporate the submitted Fleet SA Accident Report form. The purpose of this interview is to enable management and the driver to analyse and implement appropriate strategies to minimise exposure to similar risks in the future.

Employees are encouraged to report any “near misses” to their responsible manager. Reporting of near misses will enable management to assess and implement appropriate strategies to minimise exposure to similar risks in the future.

## 4.6 Publicise, promote and support the Safe Driving Policy by:

- making available the Safe Driving Policy and objectives statements to all staff
- conducting regular reviews of crash performance
- conducting random inspections of vehicle condition and maintenance status
- public recognition of good driver performance
- display promotional material in canteens, parking lots, staff notice boards and other appropriate areas

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- inclusion of Safe Driving Policy issues and information in staff newsletters
- provide access to driver training and education for all appropriate employees
- provide refresher training on a regular basis
- ensure safe driving is an OHS&W agenda item at staff communication meetings, forums, and other training sessions.