

Undergraduate Medical Education

Student Vehicle Travel Safety Guidelines

Approved by the Undergraduate Education Council of Faculties of Medicine (UE COFM) April 2014

Approved and adopted for Queen's UGME by MD PEC April 2014



Preamble

In the curriculum of Ontario medical schools, students may need to travel outside to complete academic placements. The purpose of this statement is to provide general recommendations to medical students and schools for safe travel during school-sanctioned events.

We acknowledge that institutions may have other policies, protocols and/or guidelines with which students also need to be familiar. In approaching travel, students are to choose the most appropriate method of transportation considering: distance to destination, time of day, season, weather conditions, and academic responsibilities. In travel decision making, common sense and practical considerations for reducing risk should take precedence. The Undergraduate Education Council of Faculties of Medicine (UE: COFM) encourages adhering to the following guidelines wherever possible.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are provided to assist students making decisions on travel by motor vehicles. These guidelines are for information purposes only and to direct students to the appropriate regulators for further information. These guidelines are in no way comprehensive or sufficient to provide adequate advice regarding automobile insurance and vehicle operation on provincial roadways. Students are encouraged and strongly advised to seek information from the appropriate provincial and insurance regulators regarding safe vehicular travel (i.e. FSCO and the Ministry of Transportation).

Students may wish to observe the following general travel principals:

- Listen to the radio or consult the Internet for weather and road condition updates.
- Use a map or Global Positioning System device.
- Notify a friend or family member of the destination and anticipated arrival time.
- Drive at an appropriate slower speed if the weather is inclement.
- Allow additional time to reach their destination if weather conditions are not ideal.

In approaching a decision to travel students should understand the effects of:

1.0 Weather

Weather conditions can be unpredictable in all seasons. Students are reminded to assess the weather forecast and road conditions for their route before travelling to ensure they are proceeding under safe conditions. If weather conditions are not conducive to safe travel, students should consider alternate methods of travel or delaying travel plans.

2.0 Winter Travel

Students should take additional precautions when travelling during winter months.

Students should review their vehicle to ensure it is properly equipped for winter driving:

- Have a maintenance check-up performed prior to winter.
- Ensure tires are appropriate for winter travel.
- Keep the fuel tank at least half full.
- Be sure that the windshield washer fluid is full and is rated a minimum of -40°C temperature range. Keep an extra container of washer fluid in the vehicle.
- Completely clear snow and ice from the roof, hood, trunk and all windows, lights and mirrors.
- Consider familiar travel routes that may provide safer driving conditions (e.g., divided highways versus two lanes, inland roads versus lakeshore routes, etc.).
- Ensure the vehicle is equipped with a winter driving kit which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Ice scraper/snowbrush, shovel, sand or other traction aid such as cat litter
 - Tow rope or chain, booster cables, road flares or warning lights
 - Flashlight and batteries, fire extinguisher, candle and a small tin can, matches
 - First aid kit, small tool kit
 - Extra clothing and footwear, blanket, non-perishable energy foods – e.g., chocolate or granola bars, juice, soup, bottled water

Students driving in winter weather for curriculum should:

- Slow down and allow extra time to reach their destination.
- Keep a safe distance between one's vehicle and the vehicle in front
- Know how to handle the vehicle in all weather conditions.
- Watch for the flashing lights of winter maintenance vehicles and emergency vehicles.

During the trip if the weather is inclement, stop and stay overnight in a safe place.

3.0 Vehicle Insurance

There is additional potential liability if a student transports other students to classes or electives. Students should ensure that their insurance is adequate for those purposes and to cover themselves. Students should also ensure that they have appropriate insurance coverage for travel outside the province.

4.0 Distraction

A common cause of motor vehicle accidents and fatalities is the driver failing to maintain their full attention to operating the vehicle. This may include, but is not limited to “texting” while driving, rendering the driver’s ability to drive safely.

It is paramount that students ensure that their full attention is given to driving the vehicle and navigating the traffic, weather and road conditions. Students should:

- Not at any time send, read or create text or e-mail on any cellular device while driving.
- Not engage in conversations that may deter from you delivering your full attention to driving.
- Pull over to a place of safety to refer to maps or check messages.
- Only use cellular devices that are Blue Tooth compatible and able to dial and be answered through hands free technology.
- Avoid loud music that may mask warning road sounds.
- Drive the vehicle with safe loading.
- Not eat while driving.
- Drink beverages only if this can be done safely.
- Watch the road and ignore activities away from the road
- Ensure passengers respect the need for you to watch the road and conditions.
- Not drive after having ingested any alcoholic beverages or medications/drugs that may impair your judgment.
- Always start a trip thoroughly rested and not fatigued.
- Consider purchasing a GPS device for instructions in driving routes that are not familiar to you.

5.0 Law and Legislation

Professionalism is more than interactions between patients and caregivers. A medical student’s interaction with other professionals (police) and members of society (drivers) is as important as that with patients.

Acknowledgements:

For further information, students may wish to consult the following sources, which are acknowledged with thanks:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/distracted-driving/index.shtml>

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h08_e.htm

[www.ou.edu/content/studentlife/get_involved/student_organizations/advisors/jcr%3Acontent/mid_par/download/file.res/Student%20Travel%20Policy%20-%20Registered%20Student%20Organizations\(2\).pdf](http://www.ou.edu/content/studentlife/get_involved/student_organizations/advisors/jcr%3Acontent/mid_par/download/file.res/Student%20Travel%20Policy%20-%20Registered%20Student%20Organizations(2).pdf)

<http://studentaffairs.fsu.edu/travel/>

<http://studentaffairs.fsu.edu/travel/tips/drivers.html>

http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/icesnow.html

https://cq5publish.ou.edu/content/studentlife/studenthandbook/jcr%3Acontent/mid_par/download_6/file.res/Student%20Travel%20Policy%20-%20OU%20Sponsored%20or%20Organized%20Events.pdf

<http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/24RiskManagement/24.02.02.R1VanSafety.aspx>

www.tamu-commerce.edu/administration/Rules&Procedures/rules_procedures.asp?RID=87

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/vehicle/register.shtml>

<http://www.fsco.gov.on.ca/en/auto/Pages/default.aspx>