

Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

1. Scope

This section sets forth requirements for safe motor vehicle operation, required training, and safe practices. It applies to all Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) employees who operate the following types of vehicles for official government business:

- government-owned vehicles (GOV)
- General Services Administration (GSA)-leased vehicles
- GSA short-term rental vehicles
- rental vehicles, and
- privately-owned vehicles (POV).

2. General Requirements

Operation of motor vehicles on official government business must comply with this section, as well as state and local requirements. Security, law enforcement, and emergency responders shall operate vehicles as directed by Department Manual (DM) Series 21, Part 446 Law Enforcement. Operators of GSA-leased vehicles shall comply with both this section and GSA requirements. All Reclamation employees who operate or are passengers in a GOV, GSA-leased, rental, or POV on official government business shall wear vehicle installed seatbelts whenever the vehicle is in motion. When using motor vehicles to transport hazardous materials greater than the Department of Transportation (DOT) thresholds, the vehicle must be placarded as required by DOT. A rental vehicle, paid for by the government, shall be treated as a GOV.

3. Responsibilities

a. Regional Safety Managers

- Shall verify if the region will participate in employer driving record programs with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or require obtaining an Appendix 1.21-A: Annual Motor Vehicle Operator's Certification from each operator.

b. Local Fleet Managers or Custodial Property Officers

- Shall correct any vehicle deficiencies which affect safe vehicle operation before the vehicle is returned to service.
- Shall ensure that applicable vehicles are equipped with portable fire extinguishers and/or first aid kits per paragraph 1.21.7 of this section.
- Shall ensure all GOV and GSA leased vehicles have a Motor Vehicle Accident Reporting Kit per paragraph 1.21.7.c of this section.

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Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

Applicability: Reclamation Employees, Facilities, and Operations. This section does not apply to contractors.

- Shall follow all GSA and Department of the Interior (Department) guidance for routinely scheduled maintenance for fleet vehicles in their area of responsibility.
- Shall perform safety and preventative maintenance inspections at regularly scheduled intervals as required by GSA and/or the manufacturer.

c. Area Office Safety Professionals

- Shall review requests for defensive driver training differing from those offered by the National Safety Council.
- Shall periodically review employee safety training records to ensure those employees operating motor vehicles to conduct official business have received training in accordance with paragraph 1.21.4.
- Shall work collaboratively with their local fleet managers to identify and resolve safety discrepancies or concerns with locally assigned GOVs.

d. First-Line Supervisors

- Shall ensure all motor vehicle operators under their supervision are aware of, and comply with, the requirements of this section.
- Shall monitor employee vehicle operation limitations (suspension, restriction, revocation, or cancellation of an employee's license) while on duty.
- Shall ensure employees who drive for official government business complete all defensive driving training requirements identified in this section.
- Shall ensure Reclamation employees operating vehicles requiring a Commercial Driver's License (CDL):
 - schedule and attend a Reclamation funded DOT medical examination,
 - schedule and attend a Reclamation funded DOT license examination, and
 - provide the medical clearance and license examination results to the Office of Human Resources for inclusion in the electronic official personnel file.
- Shall complete and maintain training logs along with applicable agreement documents for contract operators.
- At least annually, shall verify that motor vehicle operators are licensed, by either:
 - working with the DMV to obtain driving records, or
 - obtaining an Appendix 1.21-A: Annual Motor Vehicle Operator's Certification from each operator.
- Shall ensure employees transferring from another state obtain a driver's license within the timeframe mandated by state law if the employee will be operating motor vehicles for official government business.

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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- Shall ensure the position description lists motor and/or commercial vehicle operation as part of an employee's official job duties if the employee will be operating motor vehicles for official government business.
- Shall notify the local fleet manager of any vehicle damage or motor vehicle accidents identified or reported by employees.
- Shall enter all motor vehicle incidents in the Safety Management Information System.

e. Operators

- Shall obtain and maintain a valid state-issued driver's license.
- Shall participate in an employer driving record program with the DMV or complete the Appendix 1.21-A: Annual Motor Vehicle Operator's Certification, as required by the first-line supervisor.
- Shall promptly notify the first-line supervisor if there is a suspension, restriction, revocation, cancellation, or other disqualification on their driver's license.
- Shall adhere to the Department's Temporary Duty Travel Policy while operating a motor vehicle during official government travel.
- Shall report vehicle malfunctions, failures, damage, vehicle collisions, and property damage to their first-line supervisor, local fleet manager, and the custodial property officer.
- Shall pay with personal funds any fines received from moving and/or parking violations.
- Shall not use any tobacco products while operating a GOV, GSA-leased, or rental vehicle.
- Shall verify the Motor Vehicle Accident Report Kit is present and complete in GOV and GSA-leased motor vehicles prior to operation.

f. CDL Operators

- Shall have a valid CDL or commercial license permit (CLP) when operating types of vehicles specified in 1.21.4.b.

g. Training Officers/Coordinators

- Shall provide access to defensive driving courses.
- Shall provide accurate training reports to first-line supervisors and safety professionals upon request.

4. Training Requirements

a. Initial

- Defensive Driver Training. Reclamation employees who operate motor vehicles in the performance of their duties shall complete defensive driver training prior to operating motor vehicles while on duty. This includes individuals who operate POVs for official government business such as driving to and from the airport for temporary duty or work-

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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related errands. Employees shall obtain defensive driver training through any nationally recognized defensive driver course, such as that provided by the National Safety Council, or a locally developed course meeting the requirements listed herein. Training shall include familiarization with the Motor Vehicle Accident Report Kit (see paragraph 1.21.7.c.)

- Content Requirements. Locally developed defensive driver training and refresher courses may be provided online, in a classroom setting, hands-on setting, field driving course, or any combination and must incorporate the following:
 - definition and benefits of defensive driving principles,
 - identification of risky driving attitudes and behaviors,
 - familiarization with the NSC’s Defensive Drivers Collision Prevention Formula,
 - benefits of occupant restraint systems,
 - effects of alcohol and other drugs on driving ability,
 - distracted driving information related to cell phone usage,
 - physical and mental driver conditions affecting driving ability,
 - techniques to maintain control during adverse driving situations,
 - techniques to avoid and/or reduce collisions, and
 - skills associated with safe turning, passing, and backing maneuvers.

b. Certification

A CDL or CLP is required to operate any of the following vehicles:

- any combination of vehicles with a gross combined weight of 26,001 or more pounds, providing the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the vehicle being towed is more than 10,000 pounds,
- any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing another not more than 10,000 pounds,
- any vehicle, regardless of size, deigned to transport 16 or more persons, including the driver, or
- any vehicle required by Federal regulations to be placarded while transporting hazardous materials.

The operator shall obtain the CDL through their home state licensing bureau (e.g., DMV). License expiration and endorsement requirements vary state by state. All operators shall follow state and local laws regarding CDLs.

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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c. Refresher

Reclamation employees and volunteers who operate motor vehicles on official government business shall complete defensive driving refresher training once every five years from the initial training completion date.

d. Recordkeeping

The Department shall keep all Reclamation training records in the official Departmental repository. Acquisition/agreement documents shall track defensive driving training for volunteers and contractors operating vehicles for official government business.

5. Hazard Identification, Assessment, and Safety Measures

a. Substance Abuse Testing for CDL Operators

Reclamation employees whose position description require a CDL shall be enrolled in the Department's Drug Testing Program administered by the servicing human resources office.

b. Substance Abuse Testing for All Operators

Reclamation employees in testing designation positions, as identified in their position description, are subject to selection for random testing as stated in the Department's Personnel Bulletin No. 17-15, Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace Plan. Employees may be subject to testing when their actions are reasonably suspected of having caused or contributed to an accident which meets the following criteria: (1) the accident results in a death or personal injury requiring immediate hospitalization, and/or (2) the accident results in damage to government or private property estimated to be in excess of 10,000 dollars.

6. Hazardous Environmental Conditions (Weather/Other)

Operators shall check weather conditions and ensure vehicles are fit for anticipated driving conditions prior to vehicle operation and respond accordingly. Weather conditions may dictate a delay in vehicle operation, alteration of the route driven, selection of a different vehicle, or cancelation of the trip.

7. Safety Equipment

a. Fire Extinguishers

Portable fire extinguishers, minimum five pound 3-A:40-B:C rated, shall be provided in:

- GOV and GSA-leased vehicles used as a transportation van/bus,
- any vehicle over 26,001 GVWR, and
- service/special purpose/material hauling vehicles.

The custodial property officer or designated employee shall maintain and perform monthly inspections on all portable fire extinguishers in accordance with RSHS Section 1.09, Fire

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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Prevention and Protection. These employees shall also secure fire extinguishers so they are accessible in an emergency and prevent them from becoming a projectile in the event of an accident. Light duty passenger vehicles, pickup trucks, and SUVs do not require portable fire extinguishers.

b. First Aid Kits

Medium and heavy-duty GOV and GSA-leased vehicles, and any GOV and GSA-leased field-going vehicles (traveling to rugged and/or isolated areas) shall be equipped with a first aid kit meeting the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z308.1 and Section 1.05, Medical Services and First Aid. The assigned vehicle operator or pooled vehicle supervisor will maintain and perform monthly inspections on all first aid kits in accordance with ANSI Z308.1.

c. Motor Vehicle Accident Reporting Kit

All GOV and GSA-leased vehicles shall have a Motor Vehicle Accident Reporting Kit in the glove compartment of the vehicle. This kit includes a SF-91 Motor Vehicle Accident Report (one copy) and SF-94 Statement of Witness (two copies).

8. Safe Practices

a. Preventing Backing Accidents

Employees will conduct a walk-around of the rear of the vehicle prior to backing or will utilize a spotter when one is available and when the operator's rearview vision is obscured.

b. Prohibited Activities

Operators must follow state and local laws and will not drive while distracted in addition to the following activities:

- driving while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter drugs that warn against "operating heavy machinery,"
- driving with a suspended or invalid driver's license,
- transporting non-authorized persons or pets,
- using tobacco products, including vaping and smokeless tobacco, and/or
- conducting personal business unless authorized by management.

c. Cell Phone Use

Operators may use cell phones in hands-free mode while driving. Operators shall not text, instant message, email, program a global positioning system (GPS), or use any other electric device while driving.

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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d. Traveling to Rugged and/or Isolated Locations

When traveling to dangerous and/or isolated locations operators shall ensure there is at least one means of communication in the vehicle (e.g., cell phone, satellite phone).

e. Mechanical Problems

If mechanical problems occur while operating a GOV or GSA-leased vehicle, as soon as safely possible, the operator shall:

- move the vehicle to the road shoulder using turn signals,
- park the vehicle off the roadway,
- turn on the vehicle hazard lights, and
- contact the local fleet manager responsible for the GOV. If the vehicle is GSA- leased vehicle (license plate starts with the letter “G”), the operator shall call the phone number on the back of the fleet card. If the vehicle is a Department-owned vehicle (license plate begins with the letter “I”), the operator shall follow the procedure provided by the local fleet manager.

If mechanical problems occur while operating a rented vehicle, as soon as safely possible, the operator shall:

- move the vehicle to the road shoulder using turn signals,
- park the vehicle off the roadway,
- turn on the vehicle hazard lights,
- contact the rental car agency, and
- notify the operator’s supervisor and local fleet manager.

f. Vehicle Collisions

When involved in a vehicle collision with property damage or an injury (employee or member of the public), the operator shall:

- immediately contact 9-1-1 in the case of an injury,
- always file a police report even if there is no property damage,
- document with pictures,
- contact the operator’s supervisor and local fleet manager,
- complete the Motor Vehicle Accident Reporting Kit and submit to the first-line supervisor,
- not share personal insurance, as the Motor Vehicle Reporting Kit has proof of insurance information, and
- report the incident in the Safety Management Information System.

g. Inspections

- Walk-Around Inspections. Operators shall conduct a walk-around inspection prior to every use.

Reclamation Safety and Health Standards—2024 Edition

Chapter 1: General Requirements | Section 1.21 Motor Vehicle Safety

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- Safety and Preventative Maintenance Inspections. Fleet managers and operators of GSA-leased vehicles must comply with the safety and preventative maintenance schedules, instructions, and notifications issued by GSA for the vehicles. All Department-owned vehicles shall meet mandatory state emission and/or mechanical inspection requirements.
- Deficiencies. Operators shall report deficiencies identified upon walk-around inspections to the fleet manager and custodial property officer or the rental company if it is a government-rented vehicle. Vehicle deficiencies which affect safe operation shall be repaired or corrected by approved vendors before the vehicle is returned to service.

h. Hours of Service

Employees shall not operate motor vehicles for a continuous period of more than 10 hours in any 24-hour period. Moreover, no employee may operate a motor vehicle while on duty after being in a duty status for more than 12 hours during any 24-hour period. A minimum of eight consecutive hours shall be provided for rest in each 24-hour period. See RSHS 1.04.8.d, Fatigue Management.

i. Headlights

Employees shall always operate the vehicle with the headlights on, even in daylight.

j. Parking

The operator shall reverse/back-in to a parking space when reasonable and safe to do so.

k. Loads

Operators shall secure cargo loads, on or inside a vehicle, with adequate strength tiedowns, dunnage or dunnage bags, shoring bars, or a combination of these methods.

▲ RSHS Appendix A: Definitions

RSHS Appendix A ([Definitions](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.

▲ RSHS Appendix B: Additional References and Citations

RSHS Appendix B ([Additional References and Citations](#)) is available to print at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/safety/rshs/index.html>.

Appendix 1.21-A: Motor Vehicle Operator Certification

Appendix 1.21-A ([Form 7-2632: Annual Motor Vehicle Operator's Certification](#)) is available to print at: <https://teamssp.bor.doi.net/printanddup/forms/7Forms/7-2632.pdf>.