

Effective Date: June 2017

Responsible Official: Executive Director

## **2.1 Driver Safety and Motor Vehicle Use Policy**

### **Reason for the Policy:**

To establish policy, procedure and safety guidelines for Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium employee use of Consortium owned, leased and rented vehicles as well as personal vehicles used on Consortium business.

### **Applicability of the Policy:**

This policy applies to all Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium employees.

### **Driver Eligibility:**

Drivers must possess a valid driver's license for the type of vehicle to be operated and keep the license(s) with them at all times while driving.

### **Insurance Requirements:**

Employees who use their personal vehicles for company business are required to carry adequate limits of liability, with a required minimum of \$300,000 for bodily injury and property damage. A copy of the declaration page of your personal automobile insurance policy must be provided to GMHEC upon hiring and following annually by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Basic Vehicle Operation Guidelines:**

Employees are required to adhere to the following basic vehicle operation principles:

- Always use seat belts.
- Drive defensively. Always anticipate what other drivers on the road might do wrong and plan your mode of escape. Never move through traffic aggressively.
- Respect speed limits and traffic signs. Follow all traffic signals.
- Always lock the vehicle and apply the parking brake when getting out, even if it remains in sight.
- Avoid driving in dangerous conditions, including drowsiness and inclement weather.
- Observe all rules and regulations for safe driving as defined by the State of Vermont Motor Vehicle Department, or by the Department in whose state the vehicle is operated.
- Drinking, possession of intoxicating liquor, illegal drugs in vehicles or driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.

### **Traffic Violations:**

- GMHEC is not responsible for any traffic violations or parking tickets acquired by violation of city ordinance, state or federal laws regarding your driving habits and operation of your motor vehicle.
- Any ticket issued is the employee's responsibility, even if the ticket is issued while conducting business for GMHEC.

### **Distracted Driving:**

GMHEC is committed to employee safety, and for this reason firmly prohibits all behavior that distracts employees while they are operating a company vehicle. General guidelines for behavior while driving are as follows:

- Use of cellphones while driving is strictly prohibited—this includes all functions of the cellphone including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messaging/SMS, email, MMS, Internet use and camera use.
- Use of electronic devices—including laptops, PDAs, cameras and pagers—while driving is strictly prohibited unless specifically outlined below.
- Voicemail must handle all calls while driving, and calls may only be returned when stopped or pulled off the road.
- Passengers making or taking calls for the driver is permissible provided the interaction does not affect the driver's performance.
- Regular callers must be informed that you are unavailable while driving and be notified of the best times to call based on your driving schedule.
- Employees who receive calls from co-workers who are driving are obligated to ask that the coworker call back at a more appropriate time.

### **Headset/Hands-free Use:**

The use of headsets or hands-free devices while driving is permissible if:

- Device is preapproved by the Executive Director for use.
- Use of the device does not cause distraction (for example, fiddling with the device or taking eyes off the road to get it to function properly).
- Any dialing or use of the handset is handled while stopped or pulled to the side of the road.
- Conversations do not interfere with the driver's ability to drive safely.
- Road conditions are generally good and do not threaten your safety

### **Emergency Calls:**

The only exception to the cellphone use guideline is calls placed to 911. If placing or accepting an emergency call, it should be kept short, with a hands-free option if available. The vehicle should be pulled over if possible.

### **GPS Systems:**

GMHEC understands that sometimes, especially when traveling in unfamiliar areas, drivers require assistance with directions. GPS systems are extremely helpful devices, but they can also be distracting if used improperly.

Employees must adhere to the following:

- Mounted GPS systems may not block or obstruct the driver's view in any way.
- GPS systems must be voice-narrated and must not require that the driver look away from the road to follow instructions.
- Employees may not program the system while in motion.
- Programming or otherwise engaging with the GPS screen may only occur while stopped or while pulled off the road.

**Prohibited Behavior:**

Behaviors that may result in suspension or termination include:

- Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Negligent homicide
- Operating a vehicle with a suspended license
- Using a motor vehicle for commission of a felony
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
- Reckless driving
- Hit and run
- Three convictions for moving violations
- Three or more major traffic violations
- More than two preventable accidents involving personal injury or property damage in any three-year period