1. INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are part of the University Occupational Health and Safety Program and reflect the University’s commitment to the health and safety of employees. The Guidelines specify driving and duty hours to promote safe work practice.

These Guidelines specify procedures to minimise the chances of motor vehicle accidents resulting from fatigue. They should be read in conjunction with the Driving Hours Policy.
2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Safe driving practices should be actively encouraged at all times.

2.2 Staff should not be required to drive under conditions in which fatigue is likely to arise.

2.3 The taking of regular and adequate rest breaks during a long motor vehicle journey is of fundamental importance in avoiding driver fatigue.

2.4 The distance which can be reasonably covered during a day of driving will be governed by the type of vehicle that is used, the type of terrain involved, the road, weather and traffic conditions, the prevailing speed limits and the maximum time which should be spent driving (see Section 3).

2.5 Any driver who feels fatigued should stop as soon as practicable and take an adequate rest break. This may mean 20 minutes away from the vehicle or a night of sleep, depending on the time of day and the preceding period of driving.

2.6 In planning official journeys involving a period of driving, an employee and the supervisor authorising such travel shall take the following considerations into account:

   2.6.1 how long an employee will have been on duty prior to commencing driving and of the duration of any work duties at the end of the journey;

   2.6.2 the time at which the journey is to be undertaken, the duration of the journey and the distance to be covered. Particular care should be taken when the timing of the journey interrupts normal sleep patterns;

   2.6.3 the provision of adequate rest breaks before, during and after the journey;

   2.6.4 the avoidance of any unusual accident risks during the journey; (eg frost, flood);

   2.6.5 any need for the employees to perform other duties immediately after the journey; (This may require limitation of the duration of the journey.); and

   2.6.6 the possibility of more than one driver travelling in the vehicle to share the driving on long journeys or journeys undertaken in isolated areas or under hazardous environmental conditions.

3. SPECIFIC PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

The following practices and procedures shall be complied with as far as practicable:

3.1 No more than 10 hours of driving, including rest breaks, in a period of 24 hours should be undertaken. In circumstances where the driving is shared by two or more employees, the total time spent travelling, inclusive of rest breaks, should not exceed 10 hours in any 24 hour period.
3.2 When driving alone an employee should take a rest period of at least 20 minutes on completion of each two hour period of continuous driving. Where staff members are sharing the driving, a change of driver should take place at least every two hours.

3.3 An employee who has been the sole driver of a vehicle for 3 consecutive days should ensure that the fourth day is a non-driving day. A day of driving is defined as the maximum hours as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of these guidelines. Where work commitments include driving on consecutive days (e.g., practicum, field work) an employee should attempt to structure their program so each day includes non-driving activities.

3.4 The combination of work time and driving duty should not exceed 10 hours in any period of 24 hours.

3.5 With regard to the consumption and use of alcohol and drugs, the relevant State driving laws must be observed at all times. Employees must be cognisant of their ability to drive when taking legally prescribed drugs or consuming moderate amounts of alcohol as the effects of both can cause drowsiness and/or impede driving performance.

3.6 Where an employee drives half an hour or more to or from their place of residence to attend work, such time shall count as travelling time when observing any of the above procedures.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DRIVERS

Employees who drive University vehicles have a responsibility to be familiar with and observe University regulations and procedures concerning the driving and servicing of vehicles and the reporting of accidents.

These responsibilities include the daily checking of:

- tyres for inflation and tread damage;
- body for accident damage and missing fittings;
- radiator for correct water level;
- oil level;
- battery condition;
- spare wheel;
- tool kit for essential items;
- service sticker to ensure that servicing is not overdue.

NOTE: Drivers should familiarise themselves with the vehicle assigned to them before commencing a journey. It is important that each driver read the notes in the vehicle folder.

"DRIVER FATIGUE"

(Statement published by the Australian Road Research Board.)

Is driver fatigue a real problem?
Yes, several studies indicate that 'driver asleep' is a factor in about 25% of accidents on main highways. This kind of accident often results in death or severe injury.

**What causes drivers to fall asleep?**

There are several factors:

- A spell of 10 hours or more driving at the wheel. The risk of having an accident increases sharply if you drive for more than 10 hours.
- Long spells of driving on several days in a row. It becomes more likely that a driver will fall asleep as s/he extends into the third, fourth, fifth or later day of a period of driving duty.
- Older drivers, say, over 50, are more likely to fall asleep than younger drivers.
- Less than the usual amount of sleep makes a driver more likely to fall asleep at the wheel some time during the following day.
- Consumption of alcohol - even in moderate amounts - increases the tendency to fall asleep.

**Do stimulant drugs help?**

Not very much and the benefit does not last long. Drugs do help to keep you from falling asleep, but they are no substitute for sleep. Relying on stimulants instead of sleep can be very dangerous. Driving sometimes becomes erratic when stimulants are taken and your chances of having an accident increase.

**Does fatigue make people drive badly?**

Yes, but not very badly. You may find that your driving is rough and unskilful but not actually dangerous. The real danger is falling asleep.

**How long can I keep going?**

This depends on how often you want to drive. For one long journey, you may be able to go for 12 or 14 hours, if you are driving in the daytime and you have had a good night's sleep. If you are driving at night after a day's work, 3 or 4 hours may be too much. Recent research suggests 9 to 10 hours as a maximum. If you are driving on several successive days, you should not go beyond this limit.

**What can I do to keep awake?**

**NOTHING!** Once you have begun to feel drowsy, it is time to stop. You can open the window and get lots of cool, fresh air, stop and have a walk around, turn up the radio - these will smarten you up for about 20 minutes. You will feel just as drowsy again soon afterwards.

**What can I do?**

Avoid the kind of driving conditions that the professional driver finds difficult and dangerous. This means:

- do not start a long trip at night after a day's work; if you must do this, make sure you get to bed early the night before;
- not more than 10 hours on the road, unless you can share the driving with someone else;
• do not try to keep going after your first drowsy spell; the next will come quickly, and if you survive that, the next will come even more quickly;
• don't drink alcohol until the journey is over.