

## SEBS/NJAES/RCE POLICY FOR USE OF STATE VEHICLES

This policy applies to all state vehicles available for use by SEBS/NJAES/RCE faculty and staff. A state vehicle is any vehicle purchased with University-controlled funds (including state funds, discretionary funds, and grant funds), inventoried as property of Rutgers University, and/or insured by the Rutgers University Department of Risk Management. Some vehicles may be assigned to specific individuals for their use; other vehicles residing within a departmental or farm motor pool may be signed out by employees for official business. Pool vehicles assigned to and located at specific on-campus departments will be managed by an on-site motor pool administrator.

Our primary concern here is the safe and appropriate use of state vehicles by all faculty and staff. This policy reiterates and expands upon the official *University Policy Section 20.1.6, Administrative Policies, Procedures and Services, Vehicle Use*. It does not replace any part of the University policy; all provisions of University Policy Section 20.1.6 apply to SEBS/NJAES/RCE vehicles. Violation of policy may result in the loss of the privilege to use a state vehicle.

### 1. Vehicle Use

State vehicles are available for use in support of official instructional, research and extension program activities conducted by SEBS/NJAES/RCE faculty and staff. Official Business is defined as “all necessary travel relating to instructional, research and extension activities”, as follows:

- Official instructional use: Includes class field trips and other student transport for instructional purposes.
- Official extension use: Includes use to convey persons, materials, supplies, and/or equipment necessary in the administration, planning, conduct, and evaluation of extension programs conducted with RCE-controlled funds or for other closely related activities.
- Official research use: Includes use to convey persons, materials, supplies, and/or equipment necessary in the administration, planning, conduct and reporting on research conducted with funds received for research or services closely related to research

Official use of a state vehicle may include taking the vehicle home at night on occasion, in light of your scheduled activity for the following day(s), if that would be the more efficient use of your time and departmental resources (e.g. gasoline). However, you should be prepared to explain or defend this use in the event of an accident or challenge. Under no circumstances should a state vehicle be used for routine (daily) commuting between home and work location.

In general, use of the state vehicles should be avoided in ALL situations that may “appear” to be personal use. If the ordinary New Jersey citizen perceives a use as improper, there may be significant public relations damage to SEBS/NJAES/RCE and the University. Note that vehicle use is particularly sensitive to claims of misuse.

Passengers in state vehicles should include only University employees, students, and others in an “official use” capacity. Visitors and business associates involved in cooperating with specific research, extension, or instructional activity may also be included as “passengers.” Friends, spouses, or family members may not operate a state vehicle.

State vehicles may be used for approved out-of-state travel when this is the most efficient or economical means to travel, based on the availability of other modes of transportation, the necessity of bringing considerable materials, or equipment, and/or other considerations.

Operators of state vehicles must have at least two years of driving experience and a valid driver’s license with a classification corresponding to the type of vehicle to be driven. In addition, drivers must have completed the Rutgers Defensive Driving Course. A vehicle should not be assigned to an employee who cannot present the required documentation. Motor pool administrators will review required driver documents (valid driver’s license, certification of completion of the University’s Defensive Driving Course, and Driving Privilege Form); copies of these documents be kept on file for “frequent” users of pool vehicles. A driving record that reveals motor vehicle violations indicating a pattern of unsafe driving may result in the suspension of driving privileges and its related consequences.

Drivers are responsible for operating the vehicle in accordance with all vehicle, parking, and traffic regulations. The driver will be held responsible for resolving all traffic and parking citations issued while operating or controlling an SEBS/NJAES/RCE state vehicle, including E-Z Pass violations. Please be aware at all times that, when you are driving a state vehicle, your behavior behind the wheel is more likely to be noticed by others. Avoid engaging in any action or activity that would draw adverse attention to Rutgers University or to SEBS/NJAES/RCE.

When not in use on official business, SEBS/NJAES/RCE state vehicles will be parked/ stored in assigned lots or other on- or off-campus location, as determined by the assigned motor pool administrator or, in the case of vehicles assigned to individuals, an on- or off-campus lot associated at that individual’s work location.

## 2. Vehicle/Vehicle Use Documentation

Each SEBS/NJAES/RCE state vehicle, whether controlled by an individual or by a departmental pool administrator, must have the following documents at all times:

- Valid New Jersey State Registration
- Valid insurance identification card
- Valid New Jersey inspection sticker

A log of all vehicle use will be maintained for each vehicle and made available to SEBS/NJAES/RCE administrators for inspection upon request. This log will include the following information:

- Date of use

- Destination and Business Reason
- Driver
- Odometer Start
- Odometer End
- Total miles driven

This log will be submitted at the end of each fiscal year (by May 15<sup>th</sup>) to the Office of Financial & Business Administration in Martin Hall.

The Office of Financial & Business Administration will maintain a list of all vehicles controlled by SEBS, NJAES or RCE, and will oversee all aspects relating to procurement and disposal of these vehicles, in conjunction with the primary drivers/motor pool administrator, as per University and SEBS/NJAES/RCE policy.

### 3. Accidents involving NJAES/RCE vehicles

If involved in an accident, drivers of state vehicles should use New Jersey vehicle codes as a guide on appropriate actions to take. Regardless of assessment or perception of fault, local or State police must be called to the scene, and a police report filed. The Office of Risk Management must be notified as soon as possible (and within 48 hours of the accident) by:

- Completion of the online Accident Report Form by the employee.
- Completion of the online Automobile Page of the Accident Report by the employee's supervisor.
- Forwarding a copy of the police report, when available, to the Department of Risk Management.

Prior to making any repairs to the vehicle, the individual/department will submit two (2) repair estimates from reputable collision repair shops to the Department of Risk Management. All repairs must be authorized by the Department of Risk Management in order to be eligible for payment

Any University-owned or leased vehicle that has been stolen must be reported immediately to local law enforcement authorities and the University Department of Risk Management.

### **Rutgers self-insures its comprehensive/ theft coverage**

Further details regarding University Policy on addressing vehicle accident/damage issues can be found in *University Policy 40.3.1, Risk Management and Insurance Policy*.

### 4. Maintenance of NJAES/RCE Vehicles

Maintenance of SEBS/NJAES/RCE vehicles is the responsibility of the individual driver to whom the vehicle is assigned or, in the case of pool vehicles, the motor pool administrator. Maintenance records

will be kept by the individual to whom the vehicle is assigned or, in the case of pool vehicles, the departmental administrator. Each vehicle should be placed on a program of preventive maintenance. Drivers of pool vehicles should report any malfunctions or other maintenance items that need attention to the motor pool administrator.

The individual vehicle driver or motor pool administrator is responsible for meeting motor vehicle inspection requirements for each vehicle.