



DOC #:	EHS-0202	Revision #:	1.2
DOC Type:	Fact Sheet	Implementation Date:	09/01/2019
Page #:	1 of 2	Last Reviewed/Update Date:	01/08/2024
Owner:	Todd Numan	Approval:	Michael Labosky

Fact Sheet: Vehicle Use

Many field researchers use cars, trucks, or vans for transportation to field locations. Most fatal field incidents are related to vehicle travel.

- **Accident injuries**
- **Roadside injuries**
- **Vehicle breakdown**

Preparation and Training

- All drivers of an MIT vehicle being used for any MIT business are required to follow the Institute Vehicle Use Policy: <https://insurance.mit.edu/services/insurance-coverage-claims/automobile/vehicle-use-policy>
- The principal investigator is responsible for verifying the credentials of potential drivers.
- Make sure your vehicle is capable of going to the field area. Four-wheel drive may be required if you are going off-road.
- Keep a list of phone numbers for mechanics and towing companies in the field area.
- Pack a spare tire, jack, and a lug wrench to change a tire.
- Consider having drivers take an in-person defensive driving course. Some insurance companies grant a reduction in premiums to customers who complete this course.

General Safety

- Always wear seatbelts.
- Store cargo appropriately.
- Do not overload your vehicle.
- Inspect tires, lights, and exterior for minor damage daily.
- Check fluid levels every time you fill up for gas.
- Fuel for vehicles must be of appropriate grade for your climate conditions (e.g., arctic grade diesel).
- Consult a mechanic if a warning light is illuminated.
- Do not attempt to cross a body of water with a vehicle.
- When making a roadside stop, park in an area where you can pull the vehicle completely out of the lane. Maintain good visibility of traffic in both directions. Do not walk into the road for a photograph. Avoid crossing the road if possible, if need be cross quickly and only when it is safe.

Emergency Response

- Report all instances of vehicle accidents. This includes rental cars used during University business. Accidents must be reported to the [Office of Insurance](#) as soon as possible.
- The following information should be provided:
 - Date and location of accident
 - Make/model/year of vehicle
 - Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and registration number
 - MIT driver, contact name, and number
 - Other driver/owner name, insurance information, address and phone number (if applicable)
 - Extent of damage to vehicle(s), being as specific as possible as to the location of damage
 - Identification of any Injuries
 - Brief description and diagram of accident including photographs (if possible)
- Please be sure to obtain a copy of the police report if police arrived to the scene.

References and Additional Resources

- [MIT Office of Insurance](#)
- CDC National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety: [Motor Vehicle Safety at Work](#)
- Adapted from *Vehicle Use Fact Sheet*, by University of Maryland: Department of Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk (<https://essr.umd.edu/about/research-safety/field-research-safety/planning>) with permission.