

# Swansboro United Methodist Church - Bus Policy

The Bus Ministry of Swansboro United Methodist Church shall be operated under the general supervision of the Trustees. The Transportation Committee, formed by the Trustees, is responsible to the Trustees for developing a written policy that clearly establishes standards for all drivers and vehicles. This policy, approved by the Administrative Board and the Trustees meets this requirement.

These standards are critically important because accidents are typically the result of basic driver safety violations, lack of safety precautions, and/or poor vehicle maintenance. The Administrator of this Bus Policy shall be appointed by the Trustees in conjunction with recommendations of the Transportation Committee (may be a member of the committee).

## Purpose

The Bus Ministry will provide safe, dependable group transportation for the church family to enhance the programs and ministries of the church.



## Operating Policy

### A. Use of the Bus

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1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Any SUMC group has approval and authority to use the bus. Groups sponsored by or connected to Swansboro UMC shall be allowed to use the bus upon special request made to the Administrator and subject to approval of the Trustees. The bus will not be available to individuals nor to outside groups or organizations. Trips out of state must be cleared in advance through the Administrator, in consultation with the Trustees.
2. **NUMBER OF PASSENGERS REQUIREMENT:** The maximum number of passengers MAY NOT exceed the capacity of the bus design, including the driver. The minimum number of passengers for an out of county trip is to be 15 (including the driver) for the 25 capacity bus and 5 (including the driver) for the 15 capacity bus. No minimum number is required for pick-up for Church services. Cargo may be hauled only with prior approval of the Chair of the Trustees. This does not apply to luggage.
3. **SCHEDULING PROCEDURE:** All proposed uses of the bus will be requested through the Church Calendar Secretary. Availability is a first come, first serve basis. Priority is given to Church services pick-up. The organization or group using the bus is responsible for securing a driver from the approved list and completing the Reservation Form.
4. **POINT OF ORIGIN:** The bus will leave from and return to the church parking lot. The bus will be parked in the designated parking area. Keys, Bus Log, and Checklists will be obtained from the Church Secretary. Be sure to get these items by Friday noon for weekend trips. Prior to departure, a listing of all passengers will be left with the Church office.
5. **TRIP SUPERVISION:** It is the responsibility of the group or trip sponsor using the bus to provide proper adult supervision. An adult assistant will be provided on every trip so the driver has access to immediate help with any distraction or other adverse situation. Adult/child ratios will be kept according to the church's *Safe Sanctuary Policy* guidelines.
6. **PASSENGER CONDUCT:** All users of the church bus are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies Christian principles. The Trustees reserve the right to deny use of the bus to passengers

whose conduct becomes detrimental to the general safety of the group. Vandalism or property damage shall be paid for by the person/group responsible for the damage and constitutes due reason to deny use of the bus for future trips. Trip sponsors and adult supervisors shall have sole responsibility for passenger conduct.

7. **BUS CLEANLINESS:** Each group is responsible for cleaning the bus, including picking up all refuse, cleaning spills, cleaning/sweeping/vacuuming all debris from the seats, floor, corners and ledges, seat backs and bottoms, and any dirty, sticky areas on floor and foot rests. Return seats (pushed together, arm rests up) and seat belts to stowage position (on top of seats). Clean and close all windows. A fee of \$50.00 will be assessed any group that does not adequately clean the bus per standards of the Administrator. The post-trip checklist for cleaning/trip completion will be used on each occasion.
8. **TRIP RECORDS:** The driver is responsible for completing the Bus Log & Trip Report, leaving a copy in the church office prior to departure, and returning the original with any comments to the church office following the trip. Forms will be filed in the Bus Book for at least one year. Maintenance needs will be specifically (orally) mentioned and recorded in writing.
9. **ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOL, or TOBACCO** are not allowed on the bus by passengers or driver.
10. **SAFETY EQUIPMENT.** The Administrator shall ensure that a first-aid kit, a fire extinguisher, and necessary items are maintained in all vehicles. Each driver is responsible for equipment and supplies appropriate for the season and trip planned (e.g. warm blankets, emergency food, water, maps, jumper cables, etc.). Drivers will complete their own pre-trip inspection checklists to ensure that all items are present. For every trip, at least one functioning cell phone must be taken. Record the telephone number on the Bus Reservation Form, which stays in the Church office.

## B. Drivers

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1. **REQUIREMENTS:** The Administrative Office shall maintain a list of approved drivers for the church bus, renewing it annually, with a copy to the church insurance agency, and a copy on the bus in the Bus Folder.
  - A. To be approved, a driver must be a member of SUMC, at least 25 years of age and have:
    1. Proof of insurance, and
    2. Class D License for the 15 capacity bus, or
    3. Commercial Drivers License with a passenger endorsement for the 25 capacity bus.
  - B. All drivers must provide a copy of their current license, date of birth, and attest that they have had:
    1. No DUI'S (driving Under the Influence) within the past five years,
    2. No reckless driving in the last five years, and
    3. No more than two moving violations in the previous two years.
2. **AVAILABILITY:** The Administrative Office shall maintain an up-to-date list of approved drivers. It shall be the responsibility of the organization requesting use of the bus to secure its own driver from that approved list. Drivers may be added as they meet the above requirements.
3. **TRIP RESPONSIBILITY:** The driver of the church bus will have sole responsibility and authority in matters pertaining to the bus operation, maintenance and safety (see pre-trip check list). The driver is responsible for complying with this policy, obeying all traffic laws, completing post-trip actions and returning the key, Log & Trip Report to the church office. Proper maintenance of the vehicle's safety equipment is especially important for the life of the driver and passengers. Prior to and upon return from every trip, check:

- A. **Brakes:** Check brakes regularly. Be sure fluid levels are correct. Have the mechanic check for wear at each tire rotation.
  - B. **Tires:** Check wear regularly. All tires should have at least 1/8-inch tread remaining. Rotate tires with every other oil change. Maintain tire pressure at the recommended 80 psi. Look for trouble if tires wear unevenly.
  - C. **Lights:** Review all safety lights prior to making each trip. Headlights, taillights, break lights and back up lights are very important. Turn signals and emergency flashers should also function properly.
  - D. **Windshield and Wipers:** Be sure the front windshield is unobstructed and no cracks exist in the driver's vision area. Wipers and washers must be operating correctly at all times. Side window vision should not be obstructed.
  - E. **Horn:** Test horn before departing.
  - F. **Mirrors:** Make sure the side and rear view mirrors function. The driver should adjust the mirrors prior to starting the trip. On larger vehicles, an interior view mirror is also recommended.
  - G. **Seats:** Drivers should adjust their seat prior to starting out. All passengers should have and use seat belts.
  - H. **Fluid Levels:** Check all fluid levels regularly perhaps prior to each trip or at least with every oil/filter change.
4. **CHURCH SPOKESPERSON:** In any accident or emergency situation involving the church bus, Swansboro UMC should be represented at the scene by only one individual in any ensuing discussion with authorities, insurance representatives, etc. The driver will be the spokesperson on the scene for the church in any such situation.
5. **TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITY:** The Trustees shall insure that all drivers are properly trained in the operation of the bus and that they are supplied with all pertinent information and instructions. Accordingly, prospective drivers will receive instruction on those areas listed on the Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation form contained in this policy, and he/she will drive the bus for a supervised (by the Administrator or committee representative) familiarization road test.
- A. Driving buses and towing trailers present significantly different driving challenges than normal passenger car operation. Also, adverse weather and road conditions, caravanning and transporting passengers all present hazards the untrained driver may not be prepared to handle.
  - B. When transporting passengers, extreme care must be taken during passenger loading and unloading. Pick up and drop off passengers on the same side of the street as their destination. If a child must cross the street, provide an adult escort. Plan transportation routes in advance to ensure this is done.
  - C. **Mechanical breakdown.** Make sure hazard lights are flashing and flares are available. When using flares, place them 100 and 200 feet to the rear of the vehicle. Keep passengers in the vehicle at all times unless fire or other dangers pose problems. Call for help (may call 911 in addition to Ford Motor Company Roadside Assistance (800.241.3673) as soon as possible and be prepared to make alternative transportation available to passengers.
  - D. **Accidents.** Written accident instructions from the Church's insurance agent are available in a convenient package and will be carried on the bus at all times. Information includes when to call police; how to report accidents; obtaining witness contacts; notification of organization and families; and notification of our insurance company. Also, see "Church Spokesperson," above.
  - E. Since driver error is the major factor in motor vehicle accidents, the driver becomes the greatest area of influence in a safe motoring experience. Consequently, there are some important, defensive driver skills to use in avoiding the terrible results of a highway accident. The National Highway Traffic Safety Agency (NHTSA) supports

schools throughout the country on defensive driving. The following defensive techniques are important for a driver to follow:

- Expect the unexpected, and always have a way out.
- Never tailgate. Stay two seconds behind the driver in front.
- Look out ahead. Be aware of what's happening several vehicles in front of you.
- Keep your eyes moving to the front, sides and rear.
- Anticipate potential accidents and situations, and prepare for a way out.
- Before entering an open intersection, look left, right and left.
- Don't insist on the right-of-way. Be willing to yield.
- Do not use cell phone while driving. Pass calls to a passenger.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

6. **BUS DRIVER CANNOT BE COUNTED AS AN ADULT SUPERVISOR.**

**C. Operations and Maintenance**

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1. **BUDGET:** An amount shall be allocated in the church budget to cover annual operating and maintenance expenses, and bus expenses for activities not reimbursed.
2. **TRIP CHARGES:** Each group shall pay for fuel consumed during their trip and will return the bus with a full tank of gas and all fluids topped off. No charge shall be made for the following groups:
  - A. Riders transported to and from worship services or special church wide services/events.
  - B. Church groups attending District-wide or Conference-wide events (when the budget will allow and when specifically pre-approved by the Administrator).
  - C. Other specific events approved by the Administrator and/or the Trustees.
3. **MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY:** The Trustees are responsible for major items of upkeep such as insurance coverage, tires and repairs. The Administrator (or facilities manager, when filled) will provide for operational maintenance such as registration, fuel, oil and filter/lube, exterior wash, tune-ups, and preventative/routine maintenance, etc..

**D. Insurance**

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The church shall insure the bus. Minimum coverage shall include bodily injury and property damage, liability, medical payments, uninsured motorist, fire, theft, comprehensive and collision. The cost of the insurance shall be provided for in the annual church budget.

**E. Safety**

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At all times, the driver of the church bus shall have final responsibility and authority in matters relating to the safety of the bus and its passengers. In this regard, passenger discipline is related to safety. Keep the Church informed of any trip abnormalities (910.326.4822).

**F. Review of Policies**

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As authorized by the Administrative Board and the Trustees, this may be reviewed at any time by the Transportation Committee. The Transportation Committee may approve exceptions to this policy on an individual basis.

Swansboro United Methodist Church

**Bus Reservation Form  
& Bus Log & Trip Report**

Sponsoring Group \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dates & Times desired \_\_\_\_\_ Destination(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Group Contact & Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Purpose of trip \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's name \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Driver/Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Driver / Alternate Driver License # \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Driver / Alternate Driver Cell Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Church Secretary/Bus Committee)

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**BUS LOG & TRIP REPORT (Return Form) –**

**Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- CHECKLIST, KEYS, BUS LOG & TRIP REPORT delivered to Church Office
- INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR CLEAN; and POST-TRIP INSPECTION COMPLETED
- GAS TANK FULL
- SERVICE OR REPAIR DONE OR NEEDED AS NOTED HERE: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Trip End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mileage at Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Mileage upon Return: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Church secretary) (Primary driver)

Swansboro United Methodist Church  
**Bus Driver Application Form**

Driver Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ NC Dvr Lic # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.Date \_\_\_\_\_

During the past 2 years, have you:

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Been involved in a motor vehicle accident   | YES | NO |
| If yes, were you at fault? Issued a ticket?  | YES | NO |
| 2. Had any moving traffic violations?  | YES | NO |
| 3. Been cancelled or refused vehicle insurance?  | YES | NO |
| 4. Had a license revoked, suspended, or restricted?<br>(Other than corrective eye glasses) | YES | NO |
| 5. Had any physical impairments other than corrective glasses?                             | YES | NO |

In the past 5 years, have you been ticketed for DUI or reckless driving?

If “yes” to any of the above, please provide full details.

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Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, Bus Committee Member)

# Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation

## Cab/Driver Controls

Windows / Door locks  
Hood release  
Parking brake & release  
Dashboard: lights, wipers, cruise, gauges  
Signals  
Mirrors – rear views and side mirrors  
Heat / AC – front / back  
Side passenger doors  
Audio Entertainment System (see Owner's Guide)  
PA System  
Ford Motor Co. Roadside Assistance 24/7, call: 1-800-241-3673  
    Warranty and non-warranty towing      Winch out service  
    Battery jump-start                      Flat tire change  
    Fuel Delivery                              Lock-out assistance

## Passenger Compartment

Wheelchair station & lock down straps  
Seats, belts, sliders & recliners  
Emergency exits – 3 (2 sides and 1 rear)  
Windows  
Courtesy lights  
Individual Reading lights

## Outside the Bus

Wheelchair station operation  
Gas tank  
Oil dip stick  
Tires – ensure tires are at 80#pressure  
Lights  
Height clearance 9'10" – plan for 10 feet.