



Environmental Analysis Program

Pomona College
Biogeochemistry Laboratory

SOP-F100

EA Program Vehicle Use

Standard Operating Procedure

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1. Purpose

This SOP describes the procedures for reserving, inspecting, operating, and returning EA Program vehicles. Following these procedures ensures that vehicles remain safe, reliable, and available for all program research and teaching activities.

2. Scope

- **Applies to:** All use of EA Program vehicles for field research, class field trips, and program-related transportation
- **Does not apply to:** Personal vehicles used for commuting to field sites; rental vehicles; Facilities and Maintenance fleet vehicles
- **Location:** EA Program vehicle parking (campus garage)

3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
EA Coordinator	Manage reservation calendar, maintain insurance records
PI / Instructor	Approve vehicle requests, ensure drivers are authorized
Authorized Driver	Follow this SOP, complete pre-trip and post-trip checks
New Students	Submit insurance form and complete training before driving

4. Definitions

- **Authorized driver:** A person who holds a valid driver's license and has a completed, approved Pomona College driver insurance form on file with the EA Coordinator; the only persons permitted to operate EA Program vehicles.
- **Drowsy driving:** Operating a motor vehicle while significantly impaired by fatigue; a leading cause of serious crashes on long drives to remote field sites; if any crew member feels impaired by fatigue, pull over safely and rest before continuing.
- **Fuel card:** A fleet credit card stored in the center console of each EA vehicle; used to purchase regular unleaded gasoline (87 octane) at participating stations; if declined, pay out of pocket and submit the receipt to the EA Coordinator for reimbursement.
- **Pre-trip inspection:** A walk-around check of the vehicle before departure to identify safety issues (warning lights, tire damage, fluid leaks) that would make the vehicle unsafe to drive; required before every trip.
- **Post-trip return standard:** The condition in which the vehicle must be returned after every use – clean interior, at least 3/4 tank of fuel, fuel card in the center console, no warning lights, parked in the designated garage spot.
- **Pomona College driver authorization:** The college insurance form required before driving any Pomona College-owned or -leased vehicle; submitted to the EA Coordinator with a copy of a valid driver's license; must be approved before the first trip.

5. Safety and Hazards

Hazards

- **Physical:** Motor vehicle operation on public roads and unpaved field-site access roads; loading and unloading heavy field equipment.
- **Environmental:** Driving in adverse weather, reduced visibility, or on unfamiliar roads near field sites.
- **Fatigue:** Long drives to remote field sites increase the risk of drowsy driving.

5.1. Requirements

- Valid driver's license (must be carried while driving)
- Completed and approved Pomona College driver insurance form on file with the EA Coordinator
- Familiarity with this SOP and [SOP-F001 Field Safety](#)

5.2. Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or breakdown:

1. Ensure all occupants are safe; move to a safe location if possible
2. Call 911 if anyone is injured
3. Contact Pomona College Campus Safety: (909) 621-8170
4. Notify the EA Coordinator and PI
5. Document the incident (photos, written description, other party information if applicable)
6. Do not admit fault at the scene; exchange insurance and contact information only
7. Complete a college incident report within 24 hours

Refer to [SOP-F001 Field Safety](#) for general emergency response procedures.

6. EA Program Fleet

Vehicle	Make / Model	Seats	Notes
EA-1	Ford Explorer	7	Garage card in center console
EA-2	Ford Explorer	7	Garage card in center console

Both vehicles are parked in the campus garage when not in use. Keys and fuel cards are stored in each vehicle's center console.

7. Procedure

7.1. Before You Drive: Insurance Authorization

Before driving any EA vehicle for the first time, you must:

1. Obtain the Pomona College driver authorization and insurance form from the EA Coordinator.
2. Complete and submit the form with a copy of your valid driver's license.
3. Wait for written approval before operating any EA vehicle.

! No Exceptions

You may not drive an EA vehicle until your insurance form has been approved and is on file with the EA Coordinator. This is a college requirement, not a suggestion. Driving without approval puts you and the program at serious liability risk.

7.2. Reserving a Vehicle

1. Contact the EA Coordinator to check availability.
2. Provide: date(s) and times needed, destination, number of passengers, and the name of the PI or instructor authorizing the trip.
3. Confirm the reservation before your trip; cancellations should be communicated as early as possible so others can use the vehicle.

7.3. Pre-Trip Inspection

Before departing, walk around the vehicle and verify:

- ☐ Fuel gauge reads at least 3/4 full (refuel before departing if below 3/4; see §6.5)
- ☐ Fuel card is present in the center console
- ☐ Tires appear properly inflated with no visible damage
- ☐ All lights (headlights, brake lights, turn signals) are functional
- ☐ Mirrors are adjusted for the driver
- ☐ Windshield is clean and wipers are functional
- ☐ First aid kit is present and stocked (see [SOP-F001](#))
- ☐ No warning lights are illuminated on the dashboard
- ☐ Any pre-existing damage is noted and reported to the EA Coordinator before departing

If any safety issue is found (warning lights, tire damage, brake problems), do not drive the vehicle. Contact the EA Coordinator immediately.

7.4. During the Trip

- Obey all state and local traffic laws at all times.
- All occupants must wear seatbelts (California law).
- The driver must not use a handheld cell phone while driving (California Vehicle Code §23123).
- Do not exceed the vehicle's passenger capacity.
- Secure all field equipment so it cannot shift during transport.
- On unpaved roads, reduce speed and increase following distance.
- If conditions become unsafe (severe weather, road hazards, driver fatigue), pull over and reassess before continuing.

7.5. Refueling

1. Use the fuel card located in the center console.
2. Select regular unleaded gasoline (87 octane).
3. If the fuel card is declined or missing, pay out of pocket and submit the receipt to the EA Coordinator for reimbursement.
4. Replace the fuel card in the center console after refueling.

7.6. Returning the Vehicle

After every trip, complete the following before leaving the vehicle:

1. **Refuel:** Return with at least a 3/4 tank of gas. If you used the vehicle, you are responsible for refueling.
2. **Clean:** Remove all personal items, trash, and field equipment. Brush or vacuum out dirt and mud. Wipe down surfaces if visibly soiled.
3. **Fuel card:** Confirm the fuel card is back in the center console.
4. **Park:** Return the vehicle to its designated spot in the campus garage.
5. **Report problems:** If anything is wrong with the vehicle (warning lights, unusual noises, damage, low tire pressure), notify the EA Coordinator immediately. Do not assume someone else will report it.

Return It Ready

The next person to use the vehicle should find it clean, fueled to at least 3/4 tank, with the fuel card in the center console, parked in the garage, and free of warning lights.

8. Prohibited Uses

- Personal errands unrelated to EA Program activities
- Transporting hazardous materials not approved by the PI (standard field samples and preserved water samples are acceptable)
- Allowing unauthorized or uninsured individuals to drive
- Off-road driving beyond established field-site access roads
- Towing trailers or other vehicles without prior approval from the EA Coordinator

9. References

For driver authorization requirements, consult the EA Coordinator or the Pomona College Office of Risk Management directly. There is no publicly accessible bib entry for this internal policy; confirm current requirements with the EA Coordinator before each field season.

- [SOP-F001 Field Safety](#)

10. Related SOPs

SOP	Title	Relationship
F001	Field Safety	Required reading; emergency procedures
F002	Field Equipment Checklist	Vehicle pre-trip checklist

11. Training Record

Before driving EA Program vehicles independently, personnel must:

1. Read this SOP and [SOP-F001 Field Safety](#) in full
2. Submit a completed driver insurance authorization form to the EA Coordinator and receive written approval
3. Familiarize themselves with the vehicle (controls, mirrors, fuel card location) before the first trip
4. Be signed off by the PI or EA Coordinator