



The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

DRIVING IN THE SOUTH-WEST Standard Operating Procedure for 2018

Current as at the 11th August 2017

Welcome to Bunbury

Living in Bunbury, it is likely that you will be doing lots of driving, back and forth to surrounding towns and Perth, as well as exploring the beautiful scenery of the South West. You will get to know, and feel a growing connection, to this place. Driving is an integral part of being able to access this opportunity and is a valued activity in the RCSWA.

Unfortunately driving is also the single riskiest regular activity in the South-West. A number of students over the past years have crashed, on occasion sustaining serious injuries. Elsewhere in the state RCSWA staff and students have lost friends or colleagues to crashes.

This policy must be adhered to for all trips while in the RCSWA, and read in conjunction with the RCSWA driving policy and the two relevant UWA policies:

<http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/topics/off-campus/driving> <http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/topics/off-campus/field-work-remote>

On EVERY trip, the RCSWA requires:

- **A safe vehicle**
- **A safe driver**
- **A safe journey plan**

A safe vehicle:

Private vehicles:

The owner is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is road-worthy, and appropriately fitted out.

All vehicles leaving the town boundary must be in good mechanical condition and must have:

- Good tyres
- Communication device (e.g. mobile phone and charger)

If travelling on unsealed roads or distances further than 400km

- A roadworthy spare tyre (two if going long distances on unsealed roads)
- 5L water / person / day, including some in a container that can be carried with you if you need to leave the vehicle
- Maps / navigation aid
- A toolkit for the car, including a working jack
- Small first aid kit





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- A blanket

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, Building 3, Edith Cowan University, Robertson Drive, PO Box 412, BUNBURY WA 6230
Phone: +61 8 9722 0500 Fax: +61 8 9722 0555 Email: Bunbury@rcswa.edu.au

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: admin@rcswa.edu.au Web: www.rcs.uwa.edu.au



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Pre-travel vehicle check:

Before every trip, ensure the vehicle is fit for the journey (by visual inspection, checking gauges, checking oil, water and tyres).

A safe driver:

As with all drivers, staff and students must have a valid driver's licence and adhere to all traffic regulations. Always wear a seat belt.

Obey all road signs! In particular temporary signs such as 'road closed' or signs related to dangers ahead.

Preparing for travel on country roads:

- All students must pass the pre-RCSWA Driving course.
- All students and staff must complete an "Assessment of country driving experience" form when commencing with the RCSWA. This form will be reviewed and signed off by the lead MC / administrator in each site. If areas of concern are noted, these will be discussed and an individual plan created to address concerns.
- Each site will have a discussion about driving risks and safety tips specific to the region in orientation week.

No RCSWA staff or student is permitted to drive if:

- Tired
- Under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

The single largest driving risk for students in Bunbury is **Fatigue**.

A safe journey plan:

Staff and students need to be aware of the conditions they are heading into, aware of the risks they may face and to take appropriate steps to minimise these risks.

This includes regular journeys (for example car travel Bunbury – Busselton/Margaret River, Bunbury - Perth) and other journeys which may be part of the "Down South" experience are considered private travel and/or related to RCSWA requirements. These journeys fall within the guidelines of the South West SOP as they fall within a 200km radius of Bunbury.

Anything **not** detailed as above will require RCSWA students to complete a driving plan. This plan needs to then be signed off of a MC and/or Site Administrator, PRIOR to the journey. Preferably 48 hours beforehand.

See attached documents for risks that may be faced, regular driving plans and personalised driving plans for other long journeys.





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Risks when driving in the South
West:

Risk	Relevant information / measures
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not drive when tired• What seems like a short trip (eg back to Perth for a day or week-end) can be very tiring when you have been busy with clinical work and study for the remainder of the week.
Unsealed roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow down - reduce your speed to suit the conditions. There is less traction on gravel roads & it is easier to lose control, compared to driving on a bitumen surface.• Engaging 4 wheel drive (If available) when driving on unsealed roads improves traction and provides more control.• If traffic signs warn of a gravel road ahead, slow down while still on the bitumen.• On unsealed roads follow tyre tracks wherever possible - this will provide firmer ground. Keep away from the loose sand or gravel on the edge of the road – may get bogged or lose control.• Slow down for corrugations.• Slow down more for corners – loose surface reduces traction – very easy to lose control.• ABS will work differently on gravel & may increase your braking distance. If you have to brake heavily be aware of the difference in the braking sensation of ABS.• Consider using a lower gear when driving to assist with braking.• Avoid sudden braking or change of direction – risks loss of control.• Watch for dust ahead - oncoming vehicle, or coming up behind a vehicle - headlights on low beam when driving in dust.• Slow right down & keep left on the approach to blind corners and crests – other drivers may not be careful on roads used less often.
Sand tracks/ Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only in a 4WD vehicle, preferably with low range or equivalent• Consider decreasing tyre pressure if sand is loose/hot• Best done by those with experience of these conditions
Damaged roads and other hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drive slowly and especially carefully after heavy rain as wash outs and large holes can appear unexpectedly.• Be careful of deep tyre tracks and ruts from heavy use of unsealed roads/tracks





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Animals on the road (stock and wildlife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kangaroos are very common especially at dawn and dusk. Avoid driving at these times.• Cattle are often found on minor roads, particularly at milking time.• Don't swerve to miss an animal - you may lose control of the vehicle. Slow down as much as possible & stop, if necessary, until the road is clear. Better to hit the animal if you can't stop than to kill yourself or your passengers.
Travelling on remote roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always let someone know where you are going and arrival time. (call or text immediately when you get to your destination)• Carry appropriate recovery gear, plenty of water and also food (if something goes wrong you can be stuck for long periods in remote locations)
Extremes of weather	<p>Heavy Rain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow down (lights on low beam, wipers on high speed) or stop (pull off road and engage hazard lights).• May cause flash flooding – watch for water on road <p>IMPORTANT - Once safely across even shallow water touch the brake pedal a few times to dry out brakes.</p>
Bushfire	<p>Fires move fast and are unpredictable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headlights on low beam.• Wind up windows, engage the recycle option for air conditioning.• Follow advice of police or fire-fighters if present.• Remain away from the fire until safe to pass through.• Smoke can obscure oncoming vehicles so drive with care.
Driving into the sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan your trip to avoid driving into the sun if possible.• Wear sun glasses• Slow down as visibility may be impaired• Put your lights on to low beam• Make sure your windscreen is clean.• Take extreme care if you have to overtake, and with animals crossing the road due to reduced visibility.• If necessary stop until the sun has gone down sufficiently so that it is safe to resume driving.
Breaking down / Flat Tyre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you break down, STAY with your vehicle. It will be your shelter/security and a point to find you as it is easier to find than you are if a search is needed.• Do not attempt to open a radiator of a vehicle to check for water if the engine is hot. Leave for several hours to cool before opening.• Take care when changing flat tyres that your vehicle is on a stable base.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pull off the road as far as possible and engage hazard lights○ Engine turned off and passengers out of vehicle.○ Hand brake on and car in gear (or Park for automatic).○ Put a block/rock behind and in front of other wheels.○ Loosen the nuts of flat wheel before jacking up.○ Have the spare wheel ready to put on before jacking up





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> car. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure jack is in correct position so that it can't slip. • Re-tighten wheel nuts once jack is let down, and re-check at 50 km.
No mobile coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the South-West it is common not to have mobile coverage. Telstra has the best coverage and has some remote coverage (but still gaps). Have a Telstra phone with you. • Think about whether another device is required (e.g. sat phone, UHF radio, GPS tracking device) for longer trips.
Injury / illness on the road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone (not just the injured) is protected from the elements, rig up shade or rain cover and provide water. • Use mobile or satellite phone if there is coverage. Coverage may be better on a hill. Activate EPIRB if available. • If there is no satellite or mobile coverage and there is more than one vehicle travelling send someone to nearest settlement with information of distance, (location) number of injured or people involved • If there is no coverage and you have let someone know the time of your arrival then be prepared to wait.
Long trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't drive more than 10 hours per day • Don't drive when you are tired • Share driving with others • Plan a stop at least every two hours for 20 minutes. • Don't plan to drive after a day's work. • Plan to have a good night's sleep before you go.

While driving or riding you CAN use your mobile phone:	
✓ To make or answer a call	<i>ONLY if the phone is either:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a cradle fixed to the vehicle and doesn't obscure your view of the road • can be operated without touching any part of the phone, such as via Bluetooth or voice activation
✓ To use the audio playing function (e.g. music)	
✓ As a driver's aid (e.g. navigation, Speed Advisor app)	ONLY if the phone is in a cradle fixed to the vehicle and doesn't obscure your view of the road
While driving or riding you CANNOT use your mobile phone for anything else, including:	
✗ Texting or audio texting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want to use your phone for any of these functions, your vehicle must be parked out of the line of traffic • These functions are not permitted when your vehicle is stopped,





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While driving or riding you CAN use your mobile phone:	
	including when waiting at traffic lights or stuck in traffic

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