

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON SAFE TRANSPORTATION

New 7/13

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of persons served as well as staff during transportation and include the provisions for handling emergency situations.

II. POLICY

When transportation is the responsibility of Achieve Services, staff will assist in transporting, handling, and transferring persons served in a safe manner and according to their *Community Service and Support Plan* and/or *Community Service and Support Plan Addendum*.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Upon employment, staff are informed of the requirement that they must hold a valid driver's license, appropriate insurance, and maintain a safe driving record. Drivers that maintain a commercial license will need to pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol screen, and will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing throughout the year. Staff may also be required to complete additional training on safe transportation procedures.
- B. The Designated Coordinator and/or Designated Manager will ensure the safety of vehicles, equipment, supplies, and materials owned or leased by the company and will maintain these in good condition. Standard practices for vehicle, equipment, supplies, and materials maintenance and inspection will be followed.
- C. For contracted transportation, the Designated Coordinator and/or Designated Manager will ensure that all required documentation is completed and submitted before the first trip is scheduled. Staff will arrange ongoing use of contracted transportation or will assist persons served, as needed, in arranging transportation for themselves.
- D. When dropping off persons served at a site which requires a change in staff, transporting staff will ensure that staff or another responsible party are present before leaving the person served unless otherwise specified in the person's *Community Service and Support Plan* and/or *Community Service and Support Plan Addendum*. Any necessary information will be presented to the staff or other responsible party.
- E. In accordance with state laws, anyone riding in a moving vehicle must wear seatbelts and/or child safety restraints.
- F. Staff are prohibited by state law (MN Statutes, section 169.475) to compose, send, or receive an electronic message while operating a motor vehicle. This includes a program vehicle or a staff person's own vehicle. An electronic message (as defined by state law) "means a self-contained piece of digital communication that is designed or intended to be transmitted between physical devices. An electronic message includes, but is not limited to, e-mail, a text message, an instant message, a command or request to access a World Wide Web page, or other data that uses a commonly recognized electronic communications protocol. An electronic message does not include voice or other data transmitted as a result of making a phone call, or data transmitted automatically by a wireless communications device without direct initiation by a person."
- G. Persons served using wheelchairs will be transported according to manufacturer's safety guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, safe operation and regular maintenance of lift equipment, checks of straps to secure the wheelchair to the floor of the vehicle, and use of adaptive seating equipment (i.e. headrests, lap trays) when appropriate. Staff who are transporting persons served and who complete "tie-downs" of wheelchairs will receive training on how to do so and will be required to demonstrate competency prior to

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transporting persons using wheelchairs.

- H. Staff will receive training on each person's transferring or handling requirements for the person and/or equipment prior to transferring or transporting persons. All transfers and handling of persons served will be done in a manner that ensures their dignity and privacy. Any concerns regarding transportation, transfers, and handling will be promptly communicated to the Designated Coordinator and/or Designated Manager who will address these concerns. This will be done immediately if the health and safety of the person(s) served are at risk. In addition, all driving staff are trained in CPR, 1st Aid and fire suppression, and other safety related procedures.
- I. When equipment used by a person served is needed, staff will place the equipment in a safe location in the vehicle such as the trunk of a car. If a program vehicle does not have a designated storage space such as a trunk, staff will place the equipment in an area of the vehicle and secure it, when possible, so that there is limited to no shifting during transport.
- J. If there is an emergency while driving, staff follow emergency response procedures to ensure the person(s) safety. This will include pulling the vehicle over and stopping in a safe area as quickly and as safely as possible. Staff will use a cell phone or any available community resource to contact "911" for help if needed. If a medical emergency were to occur, staff will call "911" and follow first aid and/or CPR protocols according to their training. Achieve vehicles are equipped with cell phones, fire extinguishers and first aid kits.
- K. While transporting more than one person served and person to person physical aggression occurs, staff will pull over and stop the vehicle in a safe area as quickly and as safely as possible, redirect the persons served, and if necessary, attempt to contact another staff person, the Designated Coordinator and/or Designated Manager, or "911" for assistance.
- L. Persons served are prohibited from driving program or staff vehicles at any time.
- M. On days where there might be severe weather, it is important for all staff to be alert and aware of the possible weather forecast. With today's technology it is possible to be aware of circumstances where we may need to alter our schedule to wait out storms. All staff should remain alert to changing weather conditions. Severe weather alerts may be issued such as Severe Thunderstorm watches or warnings or Tornado watches or warnings. A watch indicates that severe weather or tornadoes are possible in that area. A warning means that severe weather (such as heavy rain, hail or damaging winds) or tornadoes have been detected or seen in the area where the warning is issued.

If there is severe weather imminently approaching our area, staff may plan to delay loading vehicles until the severe threat passes. Staff should follow agency protocol regarding where to seek shelter safely in the building.

If a vehicle is in route when severe weather approaches, staff will need to find the safest shelter possible. Examples would be; a sturdy building or a persons home for all passengers to seek cover in. Avoid windows, doors and outside walls, go to the lowest floor of the building when possible. If no suitable structure is nearby, lie flat, face down, in the nearest ditch or depression and use your hands to cover your head to protect against flying debris.

Winter driving conditions require use of extreme caution. Drivers should keep extra distance between vehicles. Blankets are available to use on vehicles during the winter months.

- N. Personal use of company vehicles is prohibited without prior permission from a supervisor. If permission is granted, the employee assigned to the vehicle will be the only driver allowed to operate the vehicle. Use of the vehicle is limited to travel to and from work and work related events. The vehicle is not be used for personal and/or entertainment purposes.