

# NorthStar Community Services

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON SAFE TRANSPORTATION

### 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 the company, staff will assist in transporting, handling, and transferring persons served in a safe manner and according to their *Support Plan* and/or *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. 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. Staff will transport persons served with a program's vehicle. If there is no program vehicle, staff will attempt to use public or contracted transportation. If those options are unavailable, staff will use their own vehicle for transportation of persons served.
- D. 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.
- E. 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 *Support Plan* and/or *Support Plan Addendum*. Any necessary information will be presented to the staff or other responsible party.
- F. In accordance with state laws, anyone riding in a moving vehicle must wear seatbelts and/or child safety restraints.
- G. Staff are prohibited by state law (MN Statutes, section 169.475) from using a wireless communications device (cell phone, GPS, etc) while operating a motor vehicle in motion or a part of traffic upon a street or highway. This includes a program vehicle or a staff person's own vehicle. Staff may not initiate, compose, send, retrieve, or read an electronic message; engage in a cellular phone call, including initiating a call, talking or listening, and participating in video call; and access the following types of content stored on the device: video content, audio content, images, games or software applications.
  1. The prohibitions stated previously do not apply if a person uses a wireless communications device:
    - a. Solely in a voice-activated or hands-free mode to initiate or participate in a cellular phone call or to initiate, compose, send, or listen to an electronic message;
    - b. To view or operate a global positioning system or navigation system in a manner that does not require the driver to type while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic, provided that the person does not hold the device with one or both hands;
    - c. To listen to audio-based content in a manner that does not require the driver to scroll or type while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic, provided that the person does not hold the device with one or both hands;
    - d. To obtain emergency assistance to (i) report a traffic accident, medical emergency, or serious traffic

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- hazard, or (ii) prevent a crime about to be committed;
  - e. In the reasonable belief that a person's life or safety is in immediate danger; or
  - f. In an authorized emergency vehicle while in the performance of official duties.
2. The exception in Letter G, 1, a, does not apply to accessing non-navigation video content, engaging in video calling, engaging in live-streaming, accessing gaming data, or reading electronic messages.
- H. 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 transporting persons using wheelchairs.
- I. 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.
- J. 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.
- K. 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.
- L. 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.
- M. Persons served are prohibited from driving program or staff vehicles at any time.