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INTRODUCTION

It is in the nature of our work that we will find ourselves from time to time tasked with providing transportation assistance for our clients and frequently doing so in an agency owned or personal vehicle. The nature and frequency of these transports will vary from program to program. While each program area will have a specific procedure tailored to the particularly applicable circumstances and needs of the clients, the guidelines which follow are universal and apply across the board. Program level procedures must meet or exceed these requirements.

DRIVERS

All Family resources staff members who may be expected to drive a vehicle on agency business are required to have a current, valid, driver’s license from their state of residence, have liability insurance in effect and have demonstrated a safe driving record. The following additional requirements apply to all staff for which it is anticipated that transportation of clients will be part of their job responsibilities:

- ✓ Staff transporting clients must have a current valid and unrestricted driver’s license. Any staff person with a temporary restricted license or permit must receive the specific approval of the CEO to transport clients.
- ✓ All staff transporting clients must have a current driving record on file with HR, updated annually. Any driving record rising concern with regard to the safety of clients may lead to employment action or reassignment in the discretion of the agency.
- ✓ Any staff transporting clients in their personal vehicle must have valid liability insurance in force and have documented same with HR.
- ✓ Any staff transporting clients in an agency owned vehicle with a capacity for seven or more passengers must possess a valid and current Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) for their state of residence. A staff member who has been designated and required to meet this requirement as part of their individual job responsibility will be reimbursed the additional fees attendant to obtaining the license. Any staff so designated must have demonstrated experience in the operation of a vehicle of that size or have received an orientation in the operation from an experienced driver.

- ✓ Any staff whose major job responsibility includes transporting clients will be provided CPR training.

VEHICLES

The following requirements apply to the vehicles that are used to transport a client or clients:

- ✓ If an agency owned vehicle primary insurance is provided by the agency and vehicle maintenance is provided by the facilities department. The driver is responsible, however for following the proscribed protocols for reserving and documenting use, including completion of the Vehicle Shift Logs as required.
- ✓ Any personal vehicle used for the transportation of clients must have up to date license, registration and liability insurance in place which includes the staff member as a primary user and which is documented in the HR office. Evidence of insurance must be also maintained in each vehicle as required by law.
- ✓ Any vehicle used in transportation must have operating seat belts of appropriate child restraint devices for all occupants. (See section on transporting children for detail).
- ✓ Any vehicle used in transportation of clients must have all mechanical maintenance up to date, be maintained in a neat and clean condition, and clear of any unsecured items or objects which may become projectiles in the event of sudden stops or accidents.
- ✓ All vehicles, agency or personal should have a basic first aid kit including mask and gloves suitable for blood born pathogen protection.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

The transportation of children confers special responsibility on us. Whether they are placed in our care directly, or whether we simply assume the task of safely getting them from one place to another, they are ours until we get them where they are going. In all cases of transporting children the following requirements are in force:

CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINTS

All children must be provided an appropriate child safety restraint suitable for their size and age in accordance with NTSB recommendations. In general those recommendations provide as follows:

1. Infants and children up to at least one year and 20 pounds in a rear facing seat. New recommendations suggest that children are much safer when rear-facing up until the age of 2.
2. A harnessed forward-facing seat after the child has outgrown a rear-facing seat. The NTSB recommends that children should stay in this seat until they reach a weight of 40 pounds, or their ears reach the top of the seat.
3. A booster seat when the child has outgrown the forward-facing seat. A child needs to use a booster seat from about 4 to 8 years old or until the child reaches about 4 feet, 9 inches.



4. An adult lap-and-shoulder belt may be used when the child is tall enough (usually about 4 feet, 9 inches) to sit against the back of the car's seat with their legs bent at the knees with their feet hanging down. The seat belt should lie across the chest between the neck and arm and the lap belt must be across the upper thighs, not the soft stomach.

Arrangements to have the proper device available and installed according to manufacturer's recommendation must be made prior to transport.

GENERAL RULES FOR TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Transporting children provides potential issues beyond having the right car seat. In light of that the following rules and guidelines must be followed:

- ✓ No child may be left unattended in a vehicle or otherwise under any circumstances. The age of the child is not relevant as different ages present different issues, but all present issues. In practical application this means planning for length of trip, anticipating the need for rest breaks for staff and providing additional staff or other suitable resources, such as a parent, if needed to attend to children during rest breaks.
- ✓ The behavioral needs of each child should be assessed prior to any transportation and additional staff or support provided in the case of anticipated difficulty.
- ✓ In the event of behavioral or other crisis with a child staff must pull over and stop the vehicle at the earliest safe opportunity to respond consistent with the following protocol:
 - ✓ If at the roadside, turn on hazard lights.
 - ✓ Attempt to de-escalate the client, if at all possible. If the client is not able to be de-escalated and is a safety risk to themselves and others, use your best judgment in determining how best to increase the safety of all involved. Possible solutions may include:
 - ✓ Remove the other clients from the vehicle and have them stand on the side of the vehicle as far away from the street as possible.
 - ✓ Call for assistance if it can be quickly obtained.
 - ✓ Call 9-1-1

RULES FOR ALL CLIENT TRNSPORTS

Aside from the special rules in place for transporting children, the following rules and guidelines apply to the transporting of any client:

- ✓ All occupants of the vehicle must have seat belts or child restraint devices secured at all times.
- ✓ Cell phone usage or texting by the driver when the vehicle is in motion or stopped in traffic is prohibited. This includes 'checking' a display for the nature of a received call or message unless stopped at a red light or stop sign with no vehicles behind. For any other usage the vehicle must be safely parked.



- ✓ Notwithstanding the above, any staff transporting must be equipped with a cell phone or other suitable emergency communication device for use in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ All posted speed limits and traffic rules must be strictly observed. Any citation for a moving violation must be immediately reported.
- ✓ All programs must have a system in place that will allow for 'agency awareness' of any transport contemporaneously to the event. At a minimum we should know who is transporting whom, from where to where and when.
- ✓ Family Resources will decline to provide transportation to any individual or to any location which is deemed to present an unpreventable safety issue to staff or client. Under those circumstances, alternative means of enabling transportation required for the client will be sought.
- ✓ Family resources will not provide routine, non-emergency, transport of clients during unsafe weather conditions. In the case of weather potentially impeding travel, the Family Resources Weather Emergency procedures will apply.

PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY WITH MULTIPLE CLIENTS

There will likely be occasions when we will be providing transportation for more than one client on the same trip. It is necessary on those occasions that the privacy and confidentiality rights of the clients and families be preserved. How that is done is dependent upon the circumstances. The following guidelines apply:

- ✓ **Residential Programs:** Transportation in groups incidental to participation in the residentially based programs of the Wittenmyer Youth Center or Domestic Abuse Shelter are governed by the consents and agreements provided when clients enter the program and do not require additional trip specific documentation.
- ✓ **Single Event Group Transportation:** The agency may from time to time offer participatory events or activities which may involve group transportation, particularly of children. Parental consents are obtained for each of those events or activities which include transportation authorization as needed.
- ✓ **Transporting Multiple Clients for Convenience:** There may be occasions within programs that provide or assist clients with transportation as part of the service plan where timing and route efficiency recommends the inclusion of more than one client or client family in all or part of the route. This should only be done when it has been pre-determined that the needs of the clients are such that it can be done safely. Once the determination is made, the consent of any referring agency should be obtained and it is required that confidentiality releases be obtained from those involved for the limited purpose of allowing the joint transport.