

Greater Inner West Community Transport

Protocols for Individual Transport Driving Staff

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The primary role of driving staff is to provide safe, comfortable and timely transport services to passengers of [Insert Name of Group Here]

Becoming a driver

To become an individual transport driver a person must:

- present a current driving licence;
- have successfully been through a criminal check;
- have a current senior first aid certificate;
- have successfully been through an assessment with an experienced Community Transport driver;
- show they have a suitable knowledge of the area in which they will work;
- have completed training including occupational health and safety, lifting and handling techniques and disability awareness;
- be an Endorsed Community Transport Driver and agree to abide by the Community Transport Driver Standards.

Number of trips per day

Drivers will be expected to complete a standard of 12 passenger trips per day.

This figure may be lower if the trips are very long or there is significant empty running.

This figure may be higher if the trips are very short or multiple passenger can be carried at one time.

Relief drivers will not be expected to achieve as many trips as regular drivers.

Preparing for the service

Suitable clothing and identification

Drivers must present themselves for work in neat and tidy attire and must wear enclosed footwear suitable for driving.

Drivers must carry a badge or other means of identifying them as being from Community Transport.

Drugs and Alcohol

No driver may drive on a service if they have a blood alcohol level of 0.02 or above. Drivers should note that alcohol can stay in the blood stream for up to 24 hours.

No driver may drive on a service while under the influence of any legal or illegal drug or medication that might affect their ability to drive safely.

Ancillary vehicle equipment

Drivers shall have the responsibility to ensure that the vehicle first aid kit has all of its necessary components and that the contents are within their use by dates.

Drivers shall have the responsibility to ensure that there are 'sick bags' in the vehicle.

Drivers must ensure that an appropriate Australian Standard approved fire extinguisher is carried in the vehicle.

If a Mobility Parking Authority is required, the driver should ensure that one is obtained from the Community Transport office.

All ancillary equipment must be stowed in the glove box or secured in another suitable compartment or with a suitable restraining device.

Route and passenger information

Drivers will be provided with a run sheet by the scheduler which will include a list of pick-ups and drop-offs and times to be achieved.

Drivers will check the route to be taken with the scheduler.

Drivers will note from the run sheet whether specialist equipment is required and whether it can be secured safely in the nominated vehicle.

Drivers will discuss any special needs of passengers with the scheduler before embarking on a service (such needs will be noted on the run-sheet).

Drivers are to receive training about other services that passenger may require and could be referred to.

When appropriate, the driver is to be informed of medicines to be carried by passenger. In the event of an accident or emergency, it can be useful for the driver to be aware of any medication that the passenger is using, or may need to use.

Fares

Fares will be charged according to the current fare schedule.

Payment is normally to be made to the driver who will issue a receipt. Other arrangements can be made with the booking office.

Passengers who do not have the ability to pay the full fare will not be denied a service.

Drivers will not negotiate fares with passengers. If a passenger is unwilling to pay an agreed fare the driver must refer the matter to the office.

On receiving fares, drivers must issue a receipt.

Drivers are to return fares to the office on the day of collection.

On the service

Smoking and perfumes

Drivers must not smoke while driving or while in close proximity of passengers or in the vehicle, even when passengers are not on board. Doing so will be considered a dismissable offence.

Drivers should not use strong perfumes or air fresheners in the vehicle as they may affect passengers with breathing disorders. Some people's breathing may also be irritated by the air conditioner, so it is also a good idea that new passengers are asked if they mind the air conditioner being on.

Passenger pick up

Drivers will pick up passengers from the kerb or their driveway and will not oblige them to cross the road to access the vehicle.

At the destination

If it is necessary the driver should accompany the passenger into their destination.

Passengers are to be advised about the return trip when they are dropped at their destination. If the return time is not known the passenger should be provided with a card with the telephone number of either the driver or the booking office on it so that they can let the service know when they are ready to return home. The latest pick-up time should be written on this card. If the passenger is confused or suffers from a form of dementia the card should be handed to the doctor's receptionist.

Use of mobile telephones

Using a mobile phone while driving may distract the driver from driving and is a dangerous practice. Using a handset while driving is illegal. As a result, all phone calls are to only be made while the vehicle is pulled over and stationary. If a call is received by a driver they must pull over before answering even if this means missing the call and having to retrieve the message from the message bank.

Personal assistance to passengers

Individual transport drivers will not normally leave the vehicle except to assist a passenger into and from their home or destination. Drivers will, however, stay with the passenger until they have reached their destination. Passengers that require additional assistance will need to be accompanied by a carer or companion.

Drivers must be made aware that a passenger's physical and mental condition may change due to treatment at their appointment.

Some passengers may experience travel sickness. Travel sickness bags are to be kept in the Community Transport vehicle. If a passenger is experiencing travel sickness, the driver should reassure them that they are willing to 'pull over at any time'.

Some passengers may not be used to travelling by car. They should be advised to sit in the seat before swinging their legs in, this avoiding excess stress on one leg.

Assessment of passengers

Drivers have a role to play in monitoring the welfare of passengers. If drivers have any concerns about a passenger's welfare they may ask them how they are and with the passenger's permission relay any relevant information back to the office for further action.

Bookings

Drivers must not take bookings directly from clients, even for a return trip. Passengers who wish to make a booking are to be referred to the office. Business cards should be provided to passengers for this purpose.

Passenger restraints

Before starting the vehicle the driver must make sure everyone is safely and comfortably fitted with a seat belt or other restraint device.

All passengers must wear a seat belt apart from children under 5 who must use a child restraint or infant restraint suitable for their age and size. The only exception to this is passengers who can produce a letter from their doctor recommending that a seat belt not be used. Such a letter should be carried by the client when on a community transport vehicle.

Child seat restraints are not to be used in the front seat where an airbag is fitted to the vehicle. This practice is illegal and potentially dangerous.

Infant restraints should be used for infants up to 9 kilograms in weight (approximately 6 months old). A child seat should be used for children over 9 kilograms and up to 18 kilograms (approximately 6 months to 5 years old) and a booster seat should be used to improve seat belt effectiveness for children over 18 kilograms and up to 26 kilograms (approximately 6 years old).

Transport of oxygen cylinders

Some passengers may require the carriage of an oxygen cylinder with them. Oxygen greatly increases the risk of fire and the risk of damage to the cylinder, regulator, valves and connection hoses must be avoided. Oxygen cylinders must therefore not be carried unless they can be secured in an upright position, away from sources of ignition. They should not be stored near objects that may move and entangle the hoses (such as the wheel spokes of a wheelchair).

When oxygen cylinders are to be carried drivers are to refer to the risk management guide for the transport of oxygen cylinders (see attachment to these protocols).

Mobility aids and baggage

Some passengers will need to take mobility aids or baggage with them when they travel. All such equipment or baggage must be stowed securely before commencing the journey. In general such items should be stowed in the boot or the rear section of a station wagon. In the latter case, if a cage is not fitted, the items must be secured with straps so that they cannot become a missile in the event of sudden braking or an accident.

At the passenger's home

No-one home situations

If the driver receives no answer from the passenger upon calling at the door, and when there is good reason to suspect that the passenger is within the home, a "walkaround" of the premises, including discreetly looking in windows, whilst calling the passenger, will be undertaken (the passenger may be in the back yard).

Wherever practicable, the booking office shall be immediately notified of the situation and then kept informed of any further developments.

If necessary, neighbours should be discreetly questioned to establish the possible whereabouts of the passenger (e.g. perhaps the intended passenger was seen leaving).

Unless there is clear evidence that the passenger is within the house and in need of immediate first aid (in which case entry to the passengers house should be achieved, where practicable, using minimum necessary force) no further action shall be taken.

Equipment and baggage

Drivers will ensure that any equipment or baggage accompanying the passenger or provided by the transport service is secured safely within the vehicle.

At the passenger's home

Drivers must not use the toilet at passengers' homes.

Drivers must not use the telephone at the passengers' homes unless there is an emergency.

Drivers are not to visit passengers out of hours and are not to visit them in their homes as this may establish false expectations and dependency. These invitations are to be politely refused. In any case passengers are to be treated equally and some passengers are not to be favoured in this way over others.

The return journey

The driver and passenger must agree as to exactly where the return pick-up is to be made.

Passengers are to be advised about their return trip before the driver leaves them at the destination. There are several options if taking a passenger to an appointment:

- if the duration of the appointment is unknown - leave the driver's mobile phone number with the doctor's receptionist;
- if the duration of the appointment is known, take the doctor's telephone number and ring the doctor's rooms to check the passenger will be ready on time;
- if the driver has time and the appointment is short, wait for the passenger.

Issue of taxi vouchers

In some circumstances a taxi voucher may be issued for a passenger's return journey. If the voucher is provided to the passenger by the driver on the outward journey, the driver must fill out the date and the trip details on the voucher before they are given to the passenger. If a driver issues the voucher the details must be recorded on the driver's run sheet.

Transport after medical procedures or anaesthetic

A Fitness to Travel Certificate must be obtained for passengers who have undergone day surgery.

It shall be noted on the certificate that if the passenger requires care at home after treatment and there is nobody there on arrival, the passenger may be taken back to the facility where the treatment took place. If when dropping off a passenger at home a driver has concerns about the passenger's wellbeing the driver must either ring the office and inform them of their concerns or if the situation appears to be serious to call an ambulance.

Stops on the way to or from appointments that have not been arranged beforehand are not permitted if they would affect the schedule for the day.

Medication and prescriptions

One exception to the above may be a request to pick up an urgent prescription. If there is no time to make a stop then the driver will endeavour to pick up the prescription at a later time during the day.

Caution - Some medications cannot be found in all local chemists. Drivers are to check the urgency of medication with the doctor or health facility and where the item might be found.

No staff should ever administer medication, even if requested by a passenger.

Lost Passengers

The following procedures shall apply where passengers do not turn up as arranged for return services.

Passengers with memory loss may sometimes become confused or 'wander off' from their departure point. There is no single answer to finding passengers who are missing and the steps taken will depend on the circumstance.

Minimise the risk beforehand by recognising passengers who may wander, and ensure they are clearly given instructions.

If a passenger is noticed with unusual behaviour and appears to be at risk the Duty of Care procedures should be followed.

If a passenger cannot be found at the departure point, ask for assistance from staff at the pick-up point (if available).

The driver shall make all reasonable attempts to locate the passenger.

If the passenger still cannot be found, notify the booking office immediately of the situation and then keep them informed of any further developments.

The driver should not leave the area until the person is found or their whereabouts can be established, and it is reasonably known that the passenger is safe and they have transport home or to a place of care.

Under no circumstances should a 'fuss' be made when the passenger is found. This could cause extreme embarrassment to the person concerned. However all care should be given the passenger to ensure they are safe and well.

An incident report should be filed, and if the passenger's behaviour is out of character this should be drawn to the Manager's attention as it may indicate the onset of certain conditions.

At the passenger's home

When the passenger arrives home the driver should ensure that they have safely entered their house or flat before leaving.

Breakdowns or emergencies

Passenger Illness or Injury

The following procedures shall be applied if a passenger becomes unwell or is injured:

- Drivers shall monitor the health and wellbeing of passengers at all times during the delivery of services. If a passenger takes ill, reassure the passenger, make them comfortable and assess the passenger's condition. If this happens while driving, the driver should pull over first.
- If the passenger's condition appears to be serious the driver should ring 000 and call an ambulance. The driver must not leave the passenger until the ambulance, a doctor or another competent person has arrived.
- If it appears necessary, suitably qualified staff can administer first aid can be using Universal Precautions Procedures (NB. Gloves provided in vehicle first aid or Universal Precautions Kit should always be worn when providing first aid).
- Any blood or body fluid spill must be dealt with using Universal Precautions procedures.
- If necessary the passenger should be conveyed to an appropriate source of assistance (e.g. medical centre or hospital).
- The driver should call the booking office and inform them of the situation and keep them informed of any further developments.
- The next passengers on the run sheet should be contacted and informed if there will be a delay in the service or that alternative transport arrangements are to be made for them.

Vehicle breakdowns

In the event of a vehicle breakdown the immediate concern of the driver is to be the health and safety of passengers. Drivers must take the following actions:

- if possible, move the vehicle to a safe place away from the traffic flow; passengers may stay in the vehicle if it is safe for them to do so;
- if the vehicle cannot be moved and is in a potentially dangerous position, the passengers must be removed from the vehicle to a safe location;
- hazard indication devices may be used (such as hazard warning lights or reflective triangles) when appropriate;
- passengers are to be reassured that help is being sought and they should be made as comfortable as possible (e.g. out of the sun or rain and, if possible, seated);
- the office is to be informed of the situation as soon as the passengers' safety has been attended to.
- if the delay in the service is likely to be significant, the office should be asked to arrange alternative transport;
- if appropriate, the NRMA is to be called for assistance;
- where a mechanical fault renders the vehicle unroadworthy, the vehicle must not be used on any service until it has been repaired; and
- a report on the breakdown should be made to the Community Transport office.

Vehicle accidents

When an accident occurs the following procedures must be followed by drivers:

- the vehicle should be stopped at once, in a safe place if possible;
- if it is not possible to move the vehicle to a safe place, passengers must be removed from the vehicle to a safe location;
- passengers most able to help themselves are to be assisted first to ensure that the greatest number of people are successfully removed from the vehicle;
- passengers are to be reassured that help is being sought and they should be made as comfortable as possible (e.g. out of the sun or rain and, if possible, seated);
- hazard indication devices may be used (such as hazard warning lights or reflective triangles) when appropriate;
- passengers should be checked for injury or distress;
- first aid assistance may be offered by trained staff;
- if necessary, contact emergency services;
- if a passenger has been injured the Community Transport office should be informed;
- contact the Community Transport office and advise them of the situation, including an estimate as to whether the service will be delayed and if alternative transport arrangements need to be made;
- do not admit liability for the accident;
- gather the names and addresses of any witnesses to the accident; and
- at a suitable time, complete an accident report form and any relevant documentation required by insurance companies or the police.

Running to time

If a driver is running late either the driver or the scheduler must ring and let the passenger know when the likely arrival time will be.

Documentation

On finishing the trip the driver shall complete the run sheet. This shall be returned to the Office at the earliest opportunity.

The driver will ensure the run sheet contains the following information:

- Vehicle number.
- Date of trip.
- Passenger's name.
- Booking number.
- Booked pick up time.
- Actual pick up time.
- Pick up address.
- Set down address.
- Set down time.
- Costs of extras.
- Distance travelled between pick up and set down points.
- Details of any taxi voucher that has been provided to a passenger.
- Details of any tolls that have been paid.

The driver will also return copies of any receipts that have been issued. These must tally with any cash received.

Risk management guide for the transport of oxygen cylinders

Requests for the carriage of oxygen cylinders may be approved providing satisfactory risk management has been undertaken by the driver. The driver must ensure the following:

1. While some cylinders may be empty they must be treated as if they contain oxygen.
2. The service date on the cylinder should be checked before the trip begins. The cylinder should have been serviced within 12 months of the transport service taking place.
3. Make sure there is sufficient ventilation in the vehicle in case the cylinder leaks either during use by a passenger or because of faulty valves, tubes or fittings. This can be achieved by rolling a window down, or having the fan on a high setting. Ventilation should not be set on "recycle" as this will prevent the gas escaping the vehicle.
4. Secure the cylinder to an attachment point or other suitable immovable point so that it cannot move in the event of sudden braking or accident.
5. Secure the cylinder away from possible ignition points. No smoking should take place anywhere near the cylinder.