

## G.20 Safer Driving Policy

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Motor vehicle accidents are one of the most common incidents and causes of injury at Mercy Services. This is similar to other health and community service organisations. It reflects the amount of time these services spend transporting clients within the community and the amount of time that workers spend travelling to client's homes to deliver services there.

### 2.0 SCOPE

This policy and procedure is to state behaviours expected of Mercy Services employees and volunteers when they are driving for work related purposes.

### 3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Mercy Services will take all reasonable steps to ensure staff/volunteers adopt "safer driving" practices. Safer driving is the adoption of low risk attitudes and behaviours that reduce the possibility of the driver being involved in a driving incident.

### 4.0 SAFER DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS

#### 4.01 Vehicle Safety Standards:

Mercy Services will provide light and heavy fleet vehicles that meet accepted safety standards, and WHS requirements for plant (See: D.08 Vehicle Management Policy).

Where staff/volunteers use their personal vehicle they will be reimbursed for this at a rate that includes provision for regular vehicle maintenance. Coordinators have the right to not allow the use of a vehicle if s/he believes it is unsafe or unsuitable for the Mercy Services activity.

#### 4.02 Minimum Driving Behaviours:

All employees and volunteers are to drive in a manner that minimises risk to self and others as well as damage to vehicles and property. Any parking, speeding, red light camera and other driving offence fines will be payable by the driver; NSW Roads & Maritime Services rules apply.

Mercy Services staff on a provisional licence may only drive organisation vehicles when NOT engaged in transporting clients.

#### 4.03 Training

The Learning and Development Coordinator will ensure that all Mercy Services staff and volunteers are made aware of safe driving behaviour at induction and that on-going education, awareness and training is provided. This will include ensuring that any in-vehicle driver training is done by an approved assessor.

It is recommended that all drivers responsible for transporting clients attend a “Safer Driving” course. The course must be focused on reduction of driver risk-taking, NOT enhancing driver skills.

Additional training needs for safe driving will be assessed for the work requirements of positions within Mercy Services. Training will be commensurate with the level of risk associated with the work requirements of the position.

#### **4.04 Identification of Hazards Associated With Clients in Vehicles**

Each Coordinator is to carry out a risk assessment, identifying and implementing appropriate controls for the safety of clients and personnel. As a guide, the potential risks that could be identified, may include but are not limited to:

- clients undoing seatbelts and standing up while vehicle is in motion;
- clients wanting to get off the bus;
- clients wanting to go somewhere other than current destination;
- clients distracting driver and other clients through noisy behaviour;
- aggressive behaviour by clients;
- clients throwing items out of windows;
- locking of driver/transport assistant out of vehicle;
- client accessing vehicle controls; and
- clients who are intoxicated.

#### ***Control of identified risks***

Mercy Services has procedures in place to control identified risks, such as:

- safe Work Practice for general situations and guidelines for particular clients addressing management of client behaviour on buses where appropriate. For example, this may include separating clients who have a tendency to be aggressive towards each other;
- the presence of a Transport Assistant on the buses at all times is the ideal. It is encouraged when it is at all possible. A Transport Assistant is a paid or volunteer person who provides assistance to clients during transport on Mercy Services buses. The Transport Assistant must be trained in management of client behaviours and in manual handling techniques;
- a second assistant where the client requirements indicate such a need;
- clear delineation in the roles of the Driver and the Transport Assistant;
- where required and available, arranging for carers of clients to meet vehicle when they are dropping clients at home. This prevents the driver needing to leave other passengers unaccompanied;
- when there is the disturbance on the bus and no Transport Assistant is present, the driver must pull off the road as soon as it is safe to do so to deal with a disturbance, and must not turn around to see what is happening while driving;
- employees and volunteers are required to be trained in management of challenging behaviours; and
- it is Mercy Services policy to refuse transport services to clients who are causing ongoing problems. This would only occur where the client's behaviour is such that the safety of other personnel/clients is at risk, and all other management options have been exhausted.

#### 4.05 Children

Children are not to be conveyed in a Mercy Services vehicle unless their parent/guardian is present. In exceptional circumstances the Chief Executive Officer can allow staff to transport children without their parent/guardian present. Appropriate child restraints must be used (see the section on child restraints in the Vehicles and Transport Procedure).

#### 4.06 Drug and Alcohol Usage

The Roads & Maritime Services stipulates a blood alcohol level of under 0.02 for any driver of a public passenger vehicle. Therefore, all drivers of vehicles transporting clients are to be below 0.02 blood alcohol level whilst undertaking Mercy Services activities. Where high levels of alcohol have been consumed, blood-alcohol levels can remain elevated for extended periods, for example up to 24 hours. Therefore, drivers should be mindful of alcohol consumed the evening prior to undertaking driving activities.

Mercy Services staff/volunteers must not drive whilst taking medication or drugs that may induce abnormal behaviour, affect sensory perception in any way, harm the client or themselves or place them in any danger.

#### 4.07 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited within all Mercy Services vehicles whether or not there are passengers on board. Staff/volunteers who use their own car to transport clients are not to smoke while transporting clients and are encouraged to keep to a minimum any smoking in a vehicle at other times, for later client comfort.

#### 4.08 Carriage of Equipment and Other Mobility Aids

- Only staff who have been trained for the task can transport potentially dangerous, awkward goods.
- Only staff who are competent in the Safe Work Practice may transport people with wheelchairs.
- Only staff who are competent in the Safe Work Practice should transport people needing oxygen devices.
- No item shall be carried in a Mercy Services vehicle in a manner which will allow it to become a missile within the vehicle in the event of sudden deceleration (e.g. an accident).
- No item shall be carried in a Mercy Services vehicle in a manner which will allow it to block doors, aisle or emergency exits.
- Wherever practicable, items will be stowed and restrained within designated storage bins or lockers.
- Mobility aids which cannot be appropriately secured within a vehicle shall not be carried within a passenger compartment.
- Where a client and their mobility aids exceed the safe working load of a vehicle's passenger/wheelchair lift, they shall not be carried.
- The driver will be responsible for assessing all movable objects and putting appropriate controls in place.

#### 4.09 Review of Vehicle Damage

The Coordinator is to review available reports on vehicle damage relating to staff and provide feedback to vehicle users. Where unsafe driving performance is identified positive steps must be taken to improve driving performance.

#### 4.10 Road Rage

Road Rage is a driver's angry or frustrated reaction to another driver's actions. It frequently leads to dangerous driver behaviour and can range anywhere between inappropriate gestures and abuse to driving with the intent to antagonise, and in the worst cases to actual bodily harm.

It is important for a driver, confronted by an aggressive act by another driver, to remain calm and try not to overreact. Adjust driving style to accommodate the behaviour of the other person, maintain defensive driving style and avoid eye contact with the aggressor. Reaction to the other person's aggressive behaviour with a similar response is not only likely to inflame the situation but place the Mercy Services personnel in breach of the Mercy Services Code of Conduct. Drive cautiously, remaining aware of the other driver's actions. Failure to confront the other person in an aggressive style may allow the situation to return to normal.

If necessary, drive to a safe, populated place (such as a police station or shopping centre) and use your mobile telephone or two-way radio to call for assistance or use the horn to attract attention. Do not get out of the vehicle and do not go home.

#### 4.11 Mobility Parking Cards

Where relevant, Coordinators have Mobility Parking Cards which can be used by staff or volunteers transporting clients with significant mobility difficulties.

The Mobility Parking Cards are to be secured in a safe place at the organisation office when not in use. Each Coordinator with Mobility Parking Cards must maintain a Register of all cards and all movements of the cards, so that the card can be tracked at all times. The Roads & Maritime Services conducts random audits of this procedure.

When the Mobility Parking Card is in use it must be secured in the vehicle at all times and used in accordance with the Roads & Maritime Services requirements.

All clients who are eligible should be encouraged to obtain their own Mobility Parking Cards.

#### 4.12 Visibility issues

##### 4.12.1 High visibility clothing

It is recommended that high visibility clothing be worn by personnel who are required to work in areas of high risk where there is a likelihood of interaction with other vehicles, for example roadways and car parks. The necessity for wearing high visibility clothing will be decided on the basis of a risk assessment.

#### **4.12.2 Headlights**

It is recommended that headlights be kept on while driving, as encouraged by the Roads and Maritime Services. Remember to turn the lights off when the engine is switched off.

#### **4.12.3 Rear vision mirrors**

It is recommended that nothing be hung from rear vision mirrors as this can reduce visibility or distract the driver.

#### **4.13 Driving competency**

Staff who are required to drive a vehicle as part of their job must demonstrate that they are competent to do so by holding an appropriate current class of licence. Drivers of vehicles with more than nine passengers are required to hold a Passenger Vehicle Authority.

#### **4.14 Workloads**

Co-ordinators must actively manage workloads involving driving to minimise fatigue. Staff and volunteers must ensure that they organise their own work involving driving in a way that minimises fatigue. Coordinators have an obligation to ensure that staff receive active management support in meeting this requirement.

#### **4.15 Storms and poor road conditions**

Mercy Services staff and volunteers are not to drive in dangerous weather. During extreme storms there is a risk of flash flooding and falling trees in many parts of the Lower Hunter.

Vehicles are not to be driven through water if the depth is over the bottom of the rim of the wheel and/or if the water is fast flowing.

The driver must use extreme caution if the condition of the road is unclear, unpredictable or poor.

#### **4.16 Compliance**

Compliance with this policy is being measured by:

- a) all staff who drive clients to have completed a safer driving course or found to be competent in the Safer Driving Safe Work Practice within three years of commencing with Mercy Services.
- b) Mercy Services has up-to-date record of drivers licences for all staff/volunteers who are required to drive for Mercy Services

#### **4.17 Evaluation**

The performance indicators for the evaluation of this policy are:

- a) 0% injuries from vehicle accidents.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

<b>1. Current issues</b>	a) None identified
<b>2. Australian Standards</b>	a) None identified
<b>3. Legislation</b>	a) Fair Work Act, 2009 (Cth) b) Work Health and Safety Act, 2011 (NSW) c) Work Health and Safety Regulations, 2011 (NSW) d) Anti Discrimination Act, 1977(NSW)
<b>4. Professional guidelines</b>	a) None identified
<b>5. Codes of Practice</b>	a) Safe Work Australia (2011) Code Of Practice: How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks <a href="http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/AboutSafeWorkAustralia/WhatWeDo/Publications/Documents/633/How_to_Manage_Work_Health_and_Safety_Risks.pdf">http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/AboutSafeWorkAustralia/WhatWeDo/Publications/Documents/633/How_to_Manage_Work_Health_and_Safety_Risks.pdf</a>
<b>6. Codes of Ethics</b>	a. Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics 2010 <a href="http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/1201">http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/1201</a> b) Australian Psychological Association Code of Ethics <a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/APS-Code-of-Ethics.pdf">http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/APS-Code-of-Ethics.pdf</a> c) Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia 2008 <a href="http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx#codesofethics">http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx#codesofethics</a> d) Integrity in the Service of the Church <a href="https://www.catholic.org.au/media-centre/media-releases/cat_view/10-organisations/38-national-committee-for-professional-standards">https://www.catholic.org.au/media-centre/media-releases/cat_view/10-organisations/38-national-committee-for-professional-standards</a> e) Mercy Services Code of Conduct
<b>7. Evidence</b>	a) Roads & Maritime Services Safe Driving Policy, Version 2.0 2013
<b>8. Mercy Services Values</b>	a) Justice, Respect, Care, Unity, Service

## 6.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A.03 Code of Conduct – Staff/Volunteers
- E.01 Service Guarantee
- F.01 Employment Conditions
- F.06 Staff Grievances
- F.07 Employee Records
- G.07 Anti-Aggression, Harassment and Bullying
- G.12 Stress Management
- G.13 Post Traumatic Incident
- G.21 Vehicles

## 7.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH STANDARDS

<b>Aged Care Accreditation Standards</b>	<b>Home Care Standards</b>	<b>Disability Standards</b>	<b>EQuIP Standards</b>
1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.3, 3.3, 3.4,	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4,	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.2.4, 3.2.1, 3.2.5

## 8.0 Document changes record

<b>Dates of change</b>	<b>Section altered</b>	<b>Natures of changes made</b>
Dec 2005	First record of document	
27/08/2007	a) Header and footer details, b) 7 addition of document changes record	a) Titles and dates b) added
03/02/2010	a) Introduction and Policy Statement b) Numbering of all sections within Policy c) Previous section 6 Responsibilities d) New 4.01 e) Various references to the General Manager	a) Added b) Changes in numbering of all sections to make consistent with other Mercy Services Policy c) Deleted as already in other parts of the Policy d) Added clause of standard of personal vehicles use for Mercy Services activities e) Replaced by reference to Coordinator- as more relevant
28/03/2011	a) 7.0 Relationship to Standards	a) Updated Community Care Common Standards and EQulP5 Standards
06/02/2012	a) All sections b) 4.5 Compliance c) 4.6 Evaluation d) 5.0 References	a) Updated with how new WHS laws and Codes of Practice apply at Mercy Services b) New section c) New section d) Updated with new WHS laws and Codes of Practice
10/12/2012	a) All Sections b) 4.02 minimum Driving Behaviours, 4.06 drug and Alcohol Usage, 4.11 Mobility Parking Cards, 4.12.2 Headlights c) 4.07 Smoking and 4.08 Carriage of Equipment and Other Mobility Aids d) 4.13 Accreditation Standards e) 4.16 Compliance	a) Organisation name updated b) RTA renamed Roads and Maritime Services c) Minor re-wording d) Renamed Driving competency e) Make low risk driving course an alternative to competence in SWP and add staff/volunteers
16/12/2015	a) All Sections b) 2.0 Scope c) 4.03 Training and 5.0 References d) 4.15 Storms and poor road conditions e) 5.0 References f) 7.0 Relationship to Standards	a) GM renamed CEO b) Minor rewording c) Remove reference to 1995 McKinnon article on driver training (too old) d) Clarify driving through water on road e) Update Codes of Ethics f) Update Disability Standards add Aged Care Accreditation Standards
Review due 16/12/2018		