



The purpose of this Health and Wellness alert is to increase the awareness of direct support professionals involved in transporting individuals in vehicles. Transporting individuals is a tremendous responsibility and caution and care must be taken to do so successfully.

All DD Employees are required to be trained, annually, on identification and reporting of Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs) and Unusual Incidents (UIs) prior to unsupervised contact. This training includes the review of any Health and Welfare Alerts released since the previous calendar year's training.

For questions / comments, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.

Since 2013, there have been more than 230 allegations of neglect associated with transportation. While the majority (84%) of these incidents resulted in no injuries, a small percentage did. Many of these incidents and injuries could have been prevented. In ten percent of these incidents, a minor injury occurred like a scratch, bruise or a cut. Three percent of the injuries were considered moderate (meaning they impacted day to day activities) and seven percent were serious (in some cases lead to hospital admissions). Transportation-related neglect incidents occurred in a variety of ways including:

- **An individual was left at their home or work without needed supports or supervision;**
- **An individual's wheelchair was not properly secured** before transporting, causing the individual to fall over in transport;
- **Distracted or unsafe driving** which may include using a cell phone, excessive speed, or engaging in reckless driving;
- **Seat Belts or Harness not secured;**
- **Brakes on wheelchairs not locked;**
- **Wheelchair lift is not in correct position** causing individual to fall;
- **Individual is let out of van on wrong side** and walks into coming traffic and is hit by a car.

Consider the following Basic Safety Steps prior to any trip:

1. Safely secure individuals in their seats with a safety belt. If a seat belt is available in a vehicle, it should be used to provide safety for the rider. Severe injuries are often avoided when a seatbelt is utilized. Ensure that employee assignments are clear for driver and /or assistant. Address which staff is responsible to check the safety belts prior to departure. Be certain that this task is completed prior to moving.

Be certain to secure individuals in their wheelchairs before moving the vehicle. Secure the person in the wheelchair and also be certain that the wheelchair itself is secured. There have been some very sad and preventable accidents because proper care and attention were not given to wheelchair security prior to departure. Service Providers have been noted to be in a rush, or not paying attention to details, resulting in a preventable injury. Employees must receive training on properly securing individuals and wheelchairs prior to providing any transportation service. Many tie-down strap systems for wheelchairs can be complicated so assuring that all involved are well trained on utilizing the equipment safely is a must.

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2. Make sure that when dropping off individuals at any destination that the appropriate supervision is available to meet their needs. **A driver should never leave an individual at a destination without being certain that appropriate supervision is available.** Seeing a car in a drive way and assuming that someone is home is not a safe way to assure that proper supervision is being provided. It is a great idea to have a transfer of supervision procedure/policy such that all involved are aware of and follow proper steps to assure supervision is maintained. Seeing and acknowledging a responsible staff person or family member is recommended prior to any drop off. If there is any question about supervision, many transportation providers will continue on the trip and drop the person off at a later time when supervision can be assured.
3. **When driving a larger vehicle van/bus always complete a walk-through of the vehicle prior to departing.** Individuals may fall asleep or not realize that they have arrived at their destination. A walk-through will assure that all have properly vacated the vehicle safely. Many buses/vans have magnetic signs at the back of the vehicle that are required to be turned over after every trip... thus assuring that no one is ever accidentally left on a vehicle.
4. Be well-rested before driving. Avoid taking any medication that could make you drowsy.
5. Avoid distractions such as using a cell phone, texting, drinking, turning around to talk to someone, or eating.
6. Be patient and calm when driving.
7. Ensure that there is a safe place to unload and/or before dropping individuals off at destination.



Key Points to Remember:

- Never leave a person at their home and/or work without the appropriate supervision in place;
- Make sure wheelchairs are locked/tied down and brakes are secured;
- Fasten seatbelts before driving;
- Check that wheelchair lap belts and other safety equipment are properly utilized before your trip;
- Before using a wheelchair lift, ensure the lift is in the right position and the person and their wheelchair are secure;
- Avoid distractions while driving;
- Be well-rested and don't take medication that could make you drowsy before transporting;
- Ensure the vehicle is in good working order before using it; and,
- Check the vehicle before leaving to ensure that all individuals have departed.

More Info:

www.disability.gov

www.dot.state.ohio.us

www.thearrc.org

<http://ohiohighwaysafetyoffice.ohio.gov/index.stm>

https://www.osha.gov/Publications/Safe_Driving_Practices.pdf

For Questions or Comments

For questions or comments regarding this alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit.

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