How to Transport Mentally Ill Clients
Texas Department of State Health Services

Driver’s must:

◦ Be at least 19 years of age
◦ Hold a valid driver’s license issued by the state of Texas
◦ Undergo a criminal background check and not have been convicted, received a deferred or probates sentence related to any crime which includes any sexual offense, drug related offense, homicide, theft, assault, battery or any other crime involving personal injury or threat to any person
Texas Department of State Health Services

- Be able to ensure persons transported are protected from harm and injuries due to abuse, self-abuse, neglect, sexual incidents, serious injuries and other sources of immediate danger.
- Must be able to provide emergency care or have an established plan to access emergency care.
- Must be trained in effective communication skill with persons with mental illness.
- Must be able to recognize and plan for problematic behaviors in a therapeutic and safe manner.
- Must be familiar with the statues and standards related to transporting clients.
Texas Department of State Health Services

Must transport clients in a vehicle which
  ◦ Has a current valid Texas inspection sticker
  ◦ Is well maintained and in good mechanical condition
  ◦ Must have the following equipment operational:
    • Air Conditioner
    • Heater
    • Chemical-type fire extinguisher, or at least a one-quart capacity, located in the same compartment of the vehicle as the driver.
Definition of a Voluntary Client

- Clients that are agreeable to go to the destination without an OPC
- Clients that are mentally stable enough to sign themselves in
  - Not overly medicated
- Watch for signs of aggressive or psychotic behavior
General Driving Safety Tips

- Conduct a safety check of the vehicle prior to driving including:
  - Walk around the vehicle to make sure everything is in order; pay particular attention to lights and tires.
  - Report any unsafe conditions to your company representative.
  - Do not drive unsafe vehicles. All unsafe vehicles must be repaired prior to transporting any client.
  - Make sure you have everything you need for the transport.
    - i.e. a full tank of gas, the insurance card, first aid kid, etc.
No driver shall operate a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. This includes both illegal drugs and prescription drugs that can impair your ability to drive safely.

Drivers must follow all traffic laws and must not exceed the posted speed limit.

Drive defensively and cautiously, especially in inclement weather.

Always use your turn signals.

Use caution when backing. Walk around the vehicle to make sure no person or object is in your path.
Driver Safety Continued

- Avoid tailgating or following too close even in slow moving traffic.
- Vehicles must be parked in legal parking spaces.
- Drivers and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times. This is the law and any fine for this will result in the driver of vehicle being held responsible for any fine incurred.
- Keep valuables and all client belongings out of reach of the client during transport.
- Do no pick-up hitchhikers.
Do not carry gasoline in your vehicle.
- Keep company vehicles clean.
- Place equipment or tools in the trunk or in a storage container out of reach of the client to ensure safety in case of a sudden stop or a hostile client.
- Don’t stop the vehicle for any reason with a client in it unless it is a medical/psychiatric emergency.
Avoid Becoming a Victim of Road Rage

- Avoid setting off other drivers by;
  - Do not cut people off.
  - Do not tailgate.
  - Do not make obscene gestures.
- Avoid using high beam lights as a way to get someone to move out of the lane.
- Do not escalate minor disputes by getting into an argument with other drivers.
- Slow drivers should always use the right hand lane.
- Take deep breaths and keep your emotions calm.
- Distance yourself from other drivers.
- If someone chases or makes threatening gestures and you feel you are in danger, call 911.
Client Rights While Transporting

- All vehicles used to transport clients must be adequately heated in cold weather and adequately ventilated in warm weather.
- The client must be transported directly to the Facility of Destination within a reasonable amount of time and without undue delay.
- Special diets or other medical precautions recommended by the client’s physician must be followed.
- The person transporting the client shall give the client reasonable opportunities to get food or water and to use a bathroom. Do this before you leave the Facility of Origin.
- If extremely hazardous weather conditions exist or a disaster occurs, refer to your supervisor as to how to safely proceed with the transport.
Vehicle Safety During a Transport

- Make sure that the child locks are on in the back of the vehicle
- If the vehicle has electric windows, make sure they are turned off.
- Put the belongings in the front of the vehicle with you or in the trunk of the car
- Make sure you have a first aid kit relatively handy just in case (should be somewhere in the vehicle)
- Never place a client directly behind the driver
- Use the Rear view mirror to monitor the client
Fire Response

- If a fire occurs in a vehicle, immediately evacuate all clients on the vehicle and yourself.
- Next immediately contact emergency response personnel via 911
- Once everyone is safe, contact your company representative
- Unless trained, do not attempt CPR if indicated as instructed in CPR.
- Do not attempt to move a person who has fallen and appears to be in pain.
All drivers transporting any client shall receive CPR including First Aid. Each vehicle should be equipped with a First Aid Kit.

In the case of a medical emergency, the driver shall immediately pull over to a safe place and call 911.

- Provide detailed information on the location of the ill or injured person.
- Unless trained, do not attempt to render any first aid before assistance arrives.
- Unless trained, do not attempt CPR if indicated as instructed in CPR.
- Do not attempt to move a person who has fallen and appears to be in pain.
Medical Emergency

- Attempt to obtain the following information from the ill or injured person:
  - Name, if not known
  - Description of symptoms
  - Allergies
  - Medications
  - Major medical history (heart condition, asthma, diabetes, etc.)
- Remain at the scene after emergency personnel have arrived to provide information.
- If the client is transported to a medical facility by EMS, notify your company representative, the Facility of Origin and the Facility of Destination of the status of the client.
- Complete an Incident Report as instructed by your company.
- Have your company representative report the incident to Value Options.
Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)

- The driver shall immediately call 911 in the case of any MVA.
- The driver, if no injuries are sustained, shall immediately render any necessary First Aid to the client involved in the MVA.
- The driver shall immediately notify his/her company representative following the resolution of any First Aid needs.
- Once the EMTs have arrived, determine if the driver and/or client(s) require further medical treatment.
- If no injuries are sustained by the driver, the driver should obtain any photographs/video of the MVA, if possible.
- The driver shall obtain the insurance of the other driver involved.
- The driver shall obtain any witnesses’ names and contact information.
- The driver shall obtain the name and badge number of the investigating police officer.
- The driver shall remain at the scene until police and/or fire representatives have given authorization for the driver to leave.
In the event the client denies need for further medical treatment or the EMTs have determined the client is not in need of further medical treatment, obtain any documentation the EMTs may have detailing the client’s refusal and/or no need for medical treatment.

The driver and his/her company representative shall determine any alternate transportation strategies if required.

The driver and/or his/her company representative shall notify the Administrator at the Facility of Origin and the Facility of Destination the following information:

- client Name/ Value Options Id
Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)

- Time of MVA
- Notification of any injuries sustained
- Complete Incident Reports per your companies protocol and any other protocols required.
- The driver and/or his/her company representative shall notify Value Options with details of the MVA including the client’s name and Value Options ID.
Elopement

- The client that you are picking up in most cases should be fully discharged from the facility of Origin. However, if you assess the client could be a danger to themselves or others and require further treatment it is recommended:
  - If you are on the property of the Facility of Origin or the Facility of Destination, notify staff at that facility for assistance.
  - Call 911, and your supervisor to notify them of the elopement.
  - Provide the 911 operator of the situation, all identifying information including a description and what the client was wearing.
  - Make every attempt, if possible, to follow the client on foot or in your vehicle. Notify the 911 operator of your location and/or what direction the client went.
  - Once the officers arrive, get his/her badge number and the missing person report number, if applicable.
If the officer(s) have the client in their custody, the disposition shall be up to them.

If the officer on the scene or the staff at the Facility of Origin determine it is safe to release the client, have the client sign his/her Personal Belongings Form including date and time. Give the client his/her belongings and release the client at your present location.

If the client refuses to sign the Personal Belongings Form, write client refused, date and time where his/her signature should be. Give the client his/her belongings and release the client at your present location.

Do not transport the client to any other destination they may request.
Elopement

- Be sure you have notified your company representative, the Facility of Origin, the Facility of Destination and Value Options of the incident.
- Fill out an Incident Report according to your company’s policy and procedures.
We strongly recommend you document the client’s belongings when you pick them up. We also recommend your facility develop a Belongings Form for a record of this documentation. Doing this and having a record of the client’s belongings will eliminate the possibility of being liable for the client’s belongings.
On your Personal Belongings Form, have two separate signature lines. The first line should have a line for the staff at the facility of origin to sign, date and time. Another line for the client to sign, date and time. Finally a third line for you to sign date and time.

The second line on the Personal Belongings Form should have a line for the staff, family member, etc. at the final destination to sign date and time. A second line for the client to sign, date and time. A third line for you to sign date and time.

If the client is either unable or refuses to sign their portion of the Belongings Form, write where their name should go, “Refused/Unable to Sign, date and time”. Just be sure you have the facility of origin and the final destination sign their portion.
Inventory of Personal Belongings/Effects

- Document non-valuables (i.e. clothing, shoes, any non-valuable) by writing on your form (i.e. one clear plastic bag).
- Itemize all valuables that should be in a sealed bag. (i.e. one brown wallet, one Texas Drivers License, 1 Visa card, etc.).
- If the client has cash, count the cash in front of the client, the staff at the facility of origin, and yourself. Document exactly what the cash consist of (i.e. two five-dollar bills, one twenty-dollar bill, etc.). **NOTE**: Never take the word from the staff from the facility of origin or the client that the client has the cash in their possession. The reason for this is once you arrive at your final destination, the client could say they do not have the cash and you could be liable.
- Keep all valuables in your possession until arrival at your final destination.
Inventory of Personal Belongings/Effects

- If the client has luggage/bags/boxes, it is not necessary to go through these items and itemize all effects but be sure and list how many of each item the client has. (i.e. one white plastic bag, one brown plastic bag)
- Medications should be itemized. Document on your Belongings Form:
  - How many bottles and the name of each medication.
  - All prescriptions must also be written down on this form as well.
- If the client does not have any belongings, you are to write no belongings and still have everyone sign.
The Personal Belongings Form we use comes in triplicate form. The separation is as follows:

- One copy for the facility or origin.
- One copy for the final destination.
- One copy for your records.
- If your form is not in triplicate, be sure to leave a copy at the facility of origin and if possible a copy for the final destination and/or the client.

It is our policy that no client shall have possession of any of their personal belongings before or during the transport.

The rationale for the driver to have possession or keep the belongings in a place in your vehicle away from the client is we are unaware of what the client could have in their possession. This helps minimize the risk of clients having access to any possible weapons, medications, etc. they may possess.
The minimum staff to client ratio for a voluntary transport is 1:1.

If a “voluntary adult” refuses to consent to the transport, they cannot be forced.
Prior to Pick up

- Make sure that a date and time has been firmly arranged with the discharging hospital.
- If there is an appointment time at your SPN, make sure you’ve got plenty of time to get the client and get them back for their appointment.
- Make sure the client has a way to get to their home or boarding home after their appointment.
The Pick Up

- Make sure you are parked in the appropriate spot at the hospital, they are all different.
- Try to make it as accessible as possible
  - You don’t want to walk the client all over the hospital
- Once you get the unit, verify with the RN discharging the client that all of the appropriate things have been done
  - If you’re in a medical hospital, have they removed the IV, is the client dressed, were they to receive any medication prior to discharge, have they eaten, etc.
  - If at a psych hospital, has the client had the last set of vitals, has the Doctor written the Rx, have they eaten, etc.
Initial Meet with the Client

- Identify the correct client upon arrival at the Facility of Origin as stated below:
- Verify the first and last name of the client with the name given to you by Value Options by matching the client’s ID bracelet he/she is wearing.
- Verify the client’s DOB with the client or the staff at the Facility of Origin.
- Introduce yourself to the client and the agency you are with.
- Explain to the client where you are transporting the client to and that they have been discharged from the Facility of Origin. (The client may not always be aware of why and where they are being transported).
Initial Meet Continued

- Always treat the client with dignity and respect in order to achieve a mutual respect for each other. This will greatly increase the chances that the client will be cooperative.

- Verify with the client and staff discharging the client that they have all of their belongings and you get a copy of all discharge orders.
  - Make sure they have a RX, any crisis referrals, or other discharge information that the client might need.

- Offer the client to use the restroom one more time before you leave
  - Never stop the van during a transport, unless an emergency arises
Before leaving the unit, make sure the client does not have any more questions and is 100% ready to go.

Have an escort from the hospital walk you and the client out to the vehicle if possible.

Carry the clients belongings, do not give the belongings to the client until you arrive to the destination.

- This helps with an elopement risk
What happens if the client refuses Transport?
If after verbal intervention explaining to the client in a calm, respectful manner where, why and by whom they are being transported, they continue to refuse to the transport:

- Notify staff at the Facility of Origin the client has refused the transport. Explain to the Facility of Origin you cannot force a voluntary client into a transport.
- Notify your company representative the client has refused the transport.
- Notify the representative at Value Options the client has refused the transport.
- If during the transport the client informs you he no longer wants to go to the Facility of Destination, explain to the client you are not allowed to stop the vehicle until you arrive at the Facility of Destination and once there you can discuss it further.
A Voluntary Adult Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- Utilizing proper verbal intervention, encourage the client to go inside the Facility of Destination.
- If you are on the property of the Facility of Destination when the client is refusing to go inside, notify staff at that facility for assistance.
- The driver should **never** transport the client to any other destination the client may request unless authorized by Value Options.
- If the client continues to refuse, notify your company representative and Value Options for further instructions.
A Voluntary Adult Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- If all efforts have been exhausted and the client continues to refuse to go into the Facility of Destination:
  - It is highly recommended you (if qualified) or a qualified QMHP at the facility you work, that is available by phone, do a crisis intervention over the phone with the client to determine the client is not a risk to himself/herself or others prior to being released from your vehicle.
  - If it has been assessed the client is a danger to self or others and requires further treatment, if the client is voluntarily willing for hospitalization, call a Value Options representative with the information and they will inform you as how to proceed.
A Voluntary Adult Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- If it has been determined the client is a danger to self or others and is not willing to voluntarily consent to treatment:
  - Step out of the vehicle with the keys, and telephone 911 for assistance with an Apprehension by a Peace Officer Without a Warrant (APOWW).
  - If an APOWW is done by police, they will transport the client to psychiatric facility.
  - Once that is completed call a Value Options representative with the details of the episode.
A Voluntary Adult Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- If your clinical staff and Value Options have determined it is safe to let the client out of your vehicle:
  - Have the client sign, date and time the Personal Belongings Form, give him/her their belongings and let them proceed as they wish.
  - If the client refuses to sign for his/her belongings, write “Refused to Sign, date and time where the client’s signature should be. You then can give the client his/her belongings.
  - If the client asks to be transported to a destination other than the Facility of Destination, tell the client you are not allowed to transport to any other location.
  - Any other destination must be authorized by Value Options.
Refusal by a Facility of Destination to Accept the Client

- The driver or the driver’s company representative shall contact the Facility of Destination to get the rationale for the refusal to accept the client.

- The driver and/or his/her company representative shall contact Value Options and the Facility of Origin for an alternate Facility of Destination.

- Once authorization from Value Options to transport to an alternate Facility of Destination, if the client agrees with the disposition, you may continue on to the alternate Facility of Destination.
The staff ratio for a Minor is 2:1
- A female staff member must be on board with a female patient.

The LAR and/or Parent must agree to the transport of any minor from the Facility of Origin.

Obtain written authorization from the LAR/Parent for the transport of the minor. This authorization includes:

- Name of Minor
- Minor’s DOB
- Name of Parent/LAR
- Address of minor and the LAR
- Phone number of LAR
- Specify the Facility of Destination
- Parent/LAR’s signature with date
- Witness’ signature if obtaining verbal consent only before the transport event and the date
Transport of a Voluntary Minor

- If the LAR/Parent is not present at the Facility of Origin to sign the form for consent to transport, you can transport after obtaining verbal authorization. The information needed for this consent is the same as above but includes the signature of a witness for the verbal consent. The LAR/Parent can sign the form once everyone has arrived at the Facility of Destination.
- If the LAR/Parent is at the Facility of Origin upon your arrival, they can follow you to the Facility of Destination.
- We do allow the LAR/Parent to ride with the minor during the transport but we will not transport the LAR/Parent to any other destination.
- We do allow the LAR/Parent to ride with the minor during the transport as long as the LAR/Parent is not an irritant to the minor.
Transport of a Voluntary Minor

Once you arrive to the Facility of Destination with the minor, if the LAR was not present at the Facility of Origin, the LAR should be present at the Facility of Destination when you arrive with the minor. They can sign your form at that time.
  ◦ You should have 2 consent forms if you have the LAR sign at the Facility of Destination.

Be sure you have coordinated with the LAR/Parent your arrival time at the Facility of Destination. They must be present when you arrive with the minor. Always be sure you have a contact number for the LAR in case they are not at the Facility of Destination when you arrive with the minor. The minor cannot be left anywhere without the LAR/Parent being present.

If the LAR/Parent refuses or does not consent for the transport, you can not transport the minor.

Even with the consent of the LAR/Parent, if the minor refuses to go with you, after using verbal intervention, you cannot force them to go.
  ◦ Notify the Facility of Origin if this is the case.
If a Voluntary Minor Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- Utilize proper verbal intervention, encourage the minor to go inside the Facility of Destination.
- If you are transporting the minor to their residence, there may be occasions the minor will state they refuse to go to the residence. If this occurs, notify the staff at the Facility of Origin.
- If you are on the property of the Facility of Destination when the minor is refusing to go inside, notify staff or the LAR/Parent at that facility for assistance.
- The driver should never transport the minor to any other destination the minor may request unless authorized by Value Options.
- If the minor continues to refuse, notify your company representative, the LAR/Parent and Value Options for further instructions.
If a Voluntary Minor Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- If all efforts have been exhausted and the minor continues to refuse to go into the Facility of Destination:
- It is highly recommended you (if qualified) or a qualified QMHP at the facility you work, that is available by phone, do a crisis intervention over the phone with the minor to determine the minor is not a risk to himself/herself or others.
If a Voluntary Minor Refuses to go Inside the Facility of Destination

- For a higher level of care, the LAR/Parent has to sign the minor into the facility.
- If you are unable to contact/locate the LAR/Parent, the minor does not meet criteria ii. (A) above, call 911 to obtain an APOWW. The police can take the minor into their custody and transport the minor to a psychiatric facility.
- Notify a representative of your company and a Value Options representative with the information.