

*The Children's Aid Society
of the District of Thunder Bay*



OACAS Worker Safety Project

VEHICLE SAFETY GUIDELINES

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Introduction

This document highlights some practical guidelines for safe driving – including where emergency and first aid kits should be used. Additionally, the guidelines cover other aspects of vehicle safety that would be important in any type of safe driving policy. The goal is to help ensure the safe operation of motor vehicles while conducting CAS business. All employees must act responsibly while operating a vehicle while conducting Society business.

Overview

All employees driving a personal vehicle to carry out business on behalf of The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay must follow all of the rules of the road. All vehicle operators are responsible for using the vehicle in a safe and responsible manner while conducting company business and are to abide by all traffic laws while operating a vehicle.

Principles

Complying with the Rules of the Road

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that:

- Their vehicle is properly maintained and mechanically sound when used for Society business;
- Their own vehicles for use during Society business are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer requirements.
- They hold a valid G-Class Driver License;
- They maintain the appropriate level of insurance;
- They carry their license at all times;
- They adhere to all applicable traffic laws;
- They drive in a manner that utilizes safe driving strategies.
- They notify the Society immediately if their Driver's License is suspended, revoked or cancelled.
- They notify the Society immediately of any traffic or criminal code violations which would impact their ability to drive for your position/ role with the Agency.

Safe Driving Techniques

Observing Speed Limits

- Employees are directed to drive within the posted speed limit at all times.

- Vehicles should be operated at speeds that are safe for the conditions, recognizing that, in some circumstances (such as rain, snow, or fog) this may be below the posted speed limit.

Use of Seatbelts and Other Safety Features

To ensure their safety, drivers should:

- Wear a seatbelt all times and ensure that passengers do the same;
- Drive with the headlights on at all times; and
- Adjust headrests so the top of the rest is level with the top of the drivers and/or passengers head.

Check-In/Check-Out Procedures

- Check-in and check-out programs are used to ensure you are accounted for in the event of an emergency. To ensure your safety employees are required to utilize their department white boards to indicate what time they have left the office and remove their names from the white board upon return.
- While driving to remote areas employees are required to use the handheld SPOT device to indicate their check in status

Driver's Abstracts/Liability Insurance/Licensing

- Agency staff driving personal cars on Agency business and transporting passengers must provide the Society with satisfactory proof of liability insurance (minimum of \$1,000,000) as per Section 27.11 of the Collective Agreement
- Driver's Abstracts will be completed upon hire for all drivers of The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay. This information will be used to confirm the operator's license, and any suspensions, convictions, and demerit points.
- Employees operating a motorized vehicle for business use are required to possess a valid driver's license in good standing, and the license held must be valid for the type of motor vehicle being used. Any operator who has his/her driver's license revoked or suspended shall notify The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay immediately. In this event, the operator shall immediately cease any usage of personal vehicles for business use

Mileage Coverage

When an employee uses their own motor vehicle for work purposes, the employee shall be reimbursed for the distance travelled at a specified rate in accordance with the CAS policy and or collective agreement.

It is the employee's responsibility to:

- Ensure that the condition of their vehicle is in good working condition for work related purposes
- Utilize reimbursements for mileage travel to maintain good condition of their personal vehicle

Vehicle Circle Checks

Before starting out, make sure the vehicle is in good working condition. Get in the habit of doing a periodic "circle check" before leaving the driveway or parking lot. Frequency can be agreed to with your supervisor and it is recommended the "circle check" is conducted when the worker is not familiar with the vehicle.

The following checklist is intended to provide guidance on what to look for before driving your vehicle, and to help ensure you will have a safer trip:

Exterior

- Leaks or other visible body damage
- Windows (clean, in good condition and unobstructed)
- Lights (head, turn signals, tail, brake, hazard) functional
- Tires in good condition (not damaged or flat)
- Windshield wipers functional and in good condition

Interior

- Brakes (including park brake) working
- Heater/defroster working – allow for the vehicle to warm up for a few minutes before departing
- Engine (no rattling, lack of power)
- Adequate fluid levels (e.g. gas, window washing fluid), no warning lights
- Typical emergency equipment or plan in place (i.e. booster cables, flashlight or access to road assistance)
- First aid/survival kits
- Seats are free of objects that may be projectiles or used as weapons
- Seatbelts/car seats (if any) are in good condition/working properly
- All lights and gauges on the dashboard control panel/horn are working

Ergonomic Considerations

- Seat position (good view of road, sufficient headroom, able to reach and depress pedals and controls without stretching, top of headrest aligned with top of your head, seat back and cushion provide full support of back/thighs)
- Steering wheel (adjust to minimize reach, position centre of wheel 25-30 cm from your breast bone)
- Mirrors (unobstructed, position so you can see comfortably without slouching/craning)

Please report any concerns directly to your supervisor.

Transporting Clients

- All employees who are transporting clients where the following factors exist must consider with their Supervisor the appropriateness of transporting with the client alone including a consideration of:
 - The potential for out of control behaviors while travelling
 - The potential for sexual abuse allegations
 - The number and ages of children being transported
 - Client history of violence and staff's feeling of vulnerability
- In the event that an employee acquires a bed bug infestation in their personal vehicle from transporting a client, the employee will receive reimbursement based on Section 27.02 paragraph b) of the Collective Agreement.

Car Restraint/Safety Devices

- Car seats and booster seats must be used in transporting children as per the Highway Traffic Act and product installation instructions.
- Training will occur for relevant staff as to proper installation and use of such devices at the outset of their role and annually thereafter.
- If a staff member gets into a car accident on or off duty they are required to report the incident in order to replace the car seat, photo evidence is also required.
- Car and booster seats will need to be replaced continuously based on expiration dates
- Staff are required to evaluate a car seat to ensure its safety when it has been put into a vehicle by a family member

Alcohol, Drugs and Driving

- Drivers should never drive under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, medications or other drugs that are likely to affect your alertness or driving performance.

Smoking/Vaping

- Smoking/Vaping in a vehicle is strictly prohibited by The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay employees during working hours.

Not Driving When Fatigued

- Driving when fatigued significantly increases injury risk by impairing driving skills or the inability to resist falling asleep at the wheel.
- A good night's sleep is required before any long trip.
- A general rule to remember is driving more than 13 hours since your last night's sleep is equivalent to driving with a blood alcohol level greater than .05.
- Alternatives such as taxis and/or public transport should be considered where practical. If you are concerned about your level of fatigue, please contact your Supervisor or the Human Resources department.
- If you have questions/ concerns about your fitness to drive (fatigue, illness etc.) please contact your Supervisor or the Human Resources department.

Use of Mobile Phones

- Children's Aid Societies strictly prohibit the use of mobile phones, and Personal Assistance Devices (PAD) while operating a vehicle on Society business.
- The use of hands-free mobile phones and Bluetooth devices should not be used when driving for work purposes.
- To make or receive calls or to use applications:
 - Pull over and stop – make sure to park in a parking lot, or at least well off the freeway; or,
 - For a call, use voice mail and respond to the call at a safer time.
- Phones are used as a safety measure to connect with managers

SPOT Program

- Employees are required to utilize the GPS SPOT portable devices while travelling in rural or remote areas in case of an emergency
- The following features are included on the SPOT device in order to ensure safety

SPOT for Head Office Reception and District Manager's



SPOT for District Workers



Other Distractions

- Distractions may include: Adjusting the radio, Mobile Phones, Food and Drink, Personal Grooming and other Electronic Devices (e.g. GPS devices, Laptops, etc.).
- Employees are expected to make all necessary preparations prior to beginning their journey to minimize distraction, and should pull over and stop before using any electronic devices, eating or drinking, or attending to any personal grooming matters.

Inclement Weather

- Employees/drivers are not expected to place themselves or their passengers at risk by driving in inclement weather. In general, it is expected that employees will exercise good judgement and not drive if conditions are unsafe.
- Use your personal discretion to determine whether it is safe to drive
- Inclement Weather may include Snow, Fog, Rain, Ice, Hail, and/or High Winds.
- During periods of inclement weather, employees should reduce their speed and drive in a safe fashion to allow for decreased visibility, decreased traction and increased stopping distances.

- Snow tires are highly recommended for winter driving.
- In the event that the inclement weather is at a level that makes driving unsafe, or the roads are impassable, all employees are directed to stop their vehicle in a safe position, and wait until it is safe to proceed. If they have not yet left for their destination, drivers are directed to inform their immediate Supervisor as soon as possible to alert them to the situation, and the inability to travel safely.
- Employees must advise their Supervisor if they are uncomfortable driving due to extreme weather conditions and alter plans accordingly.
- Employees are expected to never drive on roads that are closed due to accidents or inclement weather.
- The Executive Director or a designate will determine when conditions (i.e. Ice, snow, sleet or other unforeseen circumstance) makes it necessary to close the Agency and/or any of the Branch offices. If the decision to close has been made, emergency on-call procedures will be put in place.
- Details outlining additional Inclement Weather can be referred to in the Inclement Weather Policy located in the Business Continuity Plan
- Employees should ensure that they have removed snow from brake lights and their vehicle before departing
- When school buses are not running workers should use their judgement whether or not to reschedule appointments
- Employees are to refer to the Office Closure Policy for further details

Driving at Night

- Employees should exercise increased levels of caution while driving at night.
 - If the distance needed to come to a complete stop exceeds the distance to which you can clearly see, you are over driving your headlights.
- As with Inclement Weather, drivers should reduce their speed and drive in a safe manner

Wildlife Safety When Driving

For wildlife safety when driving, you should do the following:

- Scan the road ahead from shoulder to shoulder. If you see wildlife beside the road, slow down and pass carefully as the animal may suddenly bolt onto the road.
- Watch for the yellow wildlife warning signed that indicate an area of increased risk. Slow down when travelling through these areas
- Take extra precautions if it is necessary for you to travel at night as visibility is greatly reduced. It is not recommended that employees travel at night. Use high beams where possible and watch for the dark silhouette of an animal and its glowing eyes.
- Steer and stay in control. Watch your speed. Slowing down will give you that extra second to respond. Never swerve suddenly. This could cause your vehicle to go out of control or head into incoming traffic.

- Look in your rear view mirror for other traffic that may be approaching from behind you.
- Brake firmly if an animal is standing on or crossing the road. You should never assume the animal will move out of your way.
- Stop as safely as possible if a wild animal is crossing the road. Remember, if one animal crosses the road, others may follow. If possible, avoid driving during dusk or dawn when most wildlife collisions occur. Swerving to avoid hitting a wild animal may result in a more serious collision.
- If hitting a wild animal is unavoidable, remember to stay in control – watch, steer, break and stop.

Emergency Road Kits

- Per WSIB Regulation 1101, if a worker's vehicle is considered to be a workplace (i.e. mileage is paid and they are required to have a personal vehicle in order to do their regular duties), it is the employer's responsibility to provide a first aid kit in each vehicle. This does not apply to staff driving to and from work or using a vehicle for non-work purposes.
- It is also the employer's responsibility to develop and implement a process to check the kits to ensure that they are in good condition and stocked with non-expired items. If an employee requires additional supplies for their first aid kit, they can provide the replenishment details to the Property Clerk who will have supplies to provide.
- A summary of First Aid Kit requirements per WSIB Regulation 1101 can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/901101>
- First aid kits in vehicles do not necessitate the need for first aid certification. In case of an emergency, workers are expected to call for help as necessary.
- Winter Driving Kits are available through the Property Clerk. All district employees are provided a Winter Driving Kit and Head Office employees can sign out one of the three kits available. A sign out form must be signed to ensure that the kits are available as required.

Winter Boots

- While travelling in the winter months employees shall bring winter boots along with them in their vehicle in case of an emergency

Accidents on Duty

- If an employee has an on-duty vehicle accident, they must notify their respective Supervisor and Human Resources immediately.
- The employee will be held liable for any accidents, damages or losses incurred by the employee while using a personal vehicle for business purposes.

Out of Town Travel

- When an employee is travelling out of town, special precautions should be taken to ensure his/her safety.
 - Survival Kits have been purchased for the use and safety of all Agency employees. In order that kits are available as needed, employees will be asked to sign a Release Form
 - The purpose of this form is to ensure that Kits are returned intact and by the date agreed to. By doing this, we are better able to ensure Kits will be available for the next employee who requires them
- It is an employee's responsibility to have emergency money, or access to emergency money, to cover unexpected expenses. The Society will reimburse employees for Emergency Road Service while travelling on Society business.