

Safe Transport of Customers & Cargo Policy

LINK Community Transport recognizes the importance of providing a safe and healthy work environment for all workers, volunteers, contractors, customers, and visitors. We are committed to meet our legal obligations and moral duty to ensure that workers health and safety is not adversely affected by reducing exposure of staff and volunteers to manual handling risks.

Manual handling includes a wide range of activities including lifting, pushing, holding, supporting, throwing, and carrying of objects and repetitive tasks. Tasks with higher risks involves repetitive or sustained awkward posture, application of high force, sustained vibration or handling loads that are unstable or difficult to hold.

Objectives:

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that at all times:

- The safety of customers whilst embarking and disembarking vehicles, and during transit,
- Appropriate assistance is provided to customers to meet individual support needs,
- Staff and volunteers always maintain safe work practices to minimize risk within LINK's operating environment, including pedestrians and other road users, and
- Provide a basis by which, continuous improvement initiatives can be developed and evaluated.

Responsibilities:

Link Community Transport staff and volunteers are not authorized to lift or bear the weight of a person or lift or carry heavy/bulky items. Nor must they take part in a manual handling activity which they ought reasonably to believe to be unsafe to themselves, customers, or others. LINK personnel must abide by the directions provided within relevant policy and procedure, and training and induction measures.

LINK's customer service team will:

- Encourage all customers to maintain their own mobility and assist with their own transfers and weight bearing as much as possible;
- Reserves the right to suspend or withdraw a service which exposes staff, volunteers, customers, or the public to an identified hazard involving manual handling;
- Prior assess clients for transport requirements that involve manual handling, such as the restraining of wheelchairs, fitting passenger and child restraints and assistance with shopping. Control methods will be assessed and reviewed following implementation, monitored for changing circumstances;
- Ensure that all handling aids, equipment, and items are maintained in good working order in the accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications;
- Implement modifications to the workplace as far as is reasonably practicable to eliminate or control an identified risk or hazard, and
- Refer a customer, deemed unsuitable for LINK's service, to an appropriate referral Agency to ensure the customer's needs are addressed and LINK's reputation is preserved, wherever possible.

Drivers will, having due regard for the weighting of relevant factors:

- Park in an appropriate location as close as possible to an entrance whereby customers can access the LINK vehicle, on a flat, even surface to the maximum extent possible;
- Walk with the customer wherever possible, open the door and assist them to be seated with their seatbelt prior to storing walking frames and/or other equipment in a vehicle;

- Coordinate the entry and exit of all customers from LINK vehicles. The alert provided on the driver schedule to indicating any special transport needs of customer's, must be catered for in the prescribed manner;
- Extra assistance maybe required when a customer is entering and exiting a bus on an uneven or sloped surface. This must involve remaining in close proximity to the customer to apply supports as needed to ensure safety. Cautious and requisite restraint is permissible where no-restraint may lead to harmful accident or injury. At all times the even/sloped area in question must be prior assessed.
- Ensure customers are safely within the confines of the destination and purpose of their trip prior to departing, and
- Any safety concerns or incidents related to a customer must be phoned through to the Duty Officer immediately.

All staff and volunteers of LINK Community Transport will exercise personal responsibility to ensure that no hazardous manual handling is undertaken.

Staff Induction and Training

All employees and volunteers receive appropriate induction, providing drivers with the skills & knowledge to safely transport older people and people with disabilities. Prior to on-road deployment (or 'Pre-Start') all employees and volunteers will be given induction in:

- **Wheelchair assist** -Correct use of vehicle hoists & restraining wheelchairs/ Wheelchair etiquette;
- **Customer transfer** - between vehicle and destination – walking a customer;
- **Cargo constraints** - Safe stowage of cargo-walkers, shopping, shopping carts, and the like;
- **Passenger restraint** – Safe and comfortable transport of customers in car seat or wheelchair, and
- **On-road driving skills** – safe and comfortable ride for passengers.

Regular training is provided to refresh staff on these topics – see LINK's *Induction, Training, and Professional Development Program*.



Rick Lawford
Chief Executive Officer
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