



Transportation Safety Policy: Managing Behavioral Challenges During Transport

Purpose: This policy guides **self-hired staff, employer/family, and drivers** in the CFS Self-Direction (SDS) program on safe, appropriate responses to behavioral situations during transportation. The goal is to protect health and safety, prevent injury, and align with OPWDD expectations within the Self-Direction model.

Scope and Roles (Self-Direction Specific)

This policy applies to:

- Self-hired staff who transport participants (e.g., SEMP, Respite, Community Habilitation)
- Employer/family members acting in an employer or supervisory role
- Designated drivers transporting individuals during service delivery

Role Clarification

- **Driver (may be the self-hired staff):** Has primary responsibility for vehicle safety—keeps full control of the vehicle, minimizes distractions, and decides when to pull over or stop if safety is compromised.
- **Self-hired staff (if different from the driver):** Supervises/supports the individual and uses only strategies in the **individual's approved plan(s)**.
- **Employer/family (designated employer):** Ensures staff are oriented/trained and transportation expectations are communicated before independent service delivery.

Training and Preparedness Requirements

Employer/family is responsible for ensuring staff receive appropriate orientation prior to independent service delivery.

Self-hired staff responsible for transportation should:

- Be oriented to the individual's **needs, triggers, and approved strategies** before transporting
- Review relevant sections of the **individual's approved plan(s)**
- Know **vehicle safety** and basic **emergency response** expectations
- Do not use **restraints** or other **restrictive interventions** unless authorized in the individual's approved plan(s) and you are trained/authorized to implement them

Pre-Transportation Prevention (before leaving), Staff should:

- Review **known triggers** and transportation-related risks



- Confirm appropriate **seating arrangements and supervision level**
- Ensure all **seatbelts and safety equipment are properly secured**
- Secure/remove items that could become projectiles

If safety needs cannot be met, transportation should not begin, and the employer/family should be notified.

If a Behavioral Situation Occurs During Transportation

1. Prioritize Safety and Maintain Vehicle Control

- Maintain control of the vehicle at all times
- Do not attempt physical intervention while the vehicle is moving
- Reduce distractions and safely exit traffic when needed

2. Safely Pull Over

Pull over when behavior becomes unsafe or distracting, including but not limited to:

- Removing or unbuckling a seatbelt
- Throwing objects
- Interfering with the driver or vehicle controls

When pulling over:

- Choose the **safest available location** (e.g., parking lot, side street, rest area)
- Avoid highway shoulders unless necessary
- Turn on hazard lights
- Maintain supervision at all times

3. Assess and Respond

Once safely stopped:

- Use **approved de-escalation strategies** consistent with the individual's plan
- Provide calm redirection and reassurance
- Assess immediate risks (injury, elopement, medical concerns)
- Decide whether transportation can safely resume

If Staff is Alone (Common in Self-Direction)

- Do not attempt physical intervention
- Use calm communication and allow time for de-escalation
- Maintain a safe position while supervising
- If needed, contact the employer/family or authorized support for guidance



4. Request Assistance When Needed

- Contact the **employer/family or designated support contact** for guidance
- For imminent danger or a medical emergency, call **911**
- If requesting assistance, provide:
 - Location
 - Description of situation
 - Any injuries or safety concerns
 - Actions taken
- Follow required incident reporting per FI/CFS guidelines.
- Documentation Expectations:
 - Date/time and location
 - Behavior(s) observed
 - Known triggers (if any)
 - Interventions used
 - Outcome (transport resumed/ended, EMS involved)
 - Share documentation with the employer/family and report through FI/CFS channels when required

5. Resume Transportation Only When Safe

Transportation should only continue when:

- The individual is stable and calm
- Safety requirements (seating, seatbelts) are met
- The driver can operate the vehicle without distraction

If safety cannot be ensured, discontinue transportation and arrange an alternative plan