

## **Driving for Work Policy**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Westcare Homecare to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with driving for work. In this regard Westcare Homecare is committed to complying with its legal obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 by ensuring that work related road safety is a priority, and recognises that safe driving for work makes good sense as this protects employees, other road users and Westcare Homecare.

Driving for work includes any person who drives on a road as part of their own work (not including driving to and from work unless in receipt of travel expenses) either in:

- A Westcare Homecare vehicle, or
- Their private vehicle, receiving travel expenses from the WCHC

### **2. Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to harness a safe driving culture by ensuring that all employees or any other person or persons driving on behalf of the WCHC do so in a safe, reliable and responsible manner

2.2 The Policy requires WCHC to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, all reasonable, foreseeable risks associated with driving for work and to detail arrangements to achieve this reduction in line with legislative requirements

### **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to all WCHC employees driving on behalf of WCHC, either driving their own private vehicle receiving travel expenses, or driving a WCHC vehicle. It is recognised that a significant part of the work of certain staff groups (e.g. Ambulance service) involves driving. Others may drive occasionally or for short journeys only. This policy encompasses any driving that meets the definition for driving for work as outlined in Section 5.0.

### **4. Legislation**

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and associated Regulations
- Road Traffic Act, 1961 and subsequent amendments

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Responsibilities of Managing Director**

5.1.1 The MD has overall responsibility to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees and others affected by the activities of WCHC.

5.1.2 The MD delegates accountability for co-ordinating and monitoring implementation of this Policy and any associated procedures to The Area Managers, Regional Managers and Care Managers.

### **5.2 Responsibilities of The Area Managers, Regional and Care Manager**

5.2.1 Ensure arrangements are in place for identifying, evaluating, managing, monitoring and auditing the risks associated with work related road safety

5.2.2 Ensure the necessary resources are provided for implementing this Policy

5.2.3 Ensure there are adequate and appropriate arrangements in place for the successful implementation, monitoring, evaluation, audit and review of this Policy throughout their respective areas of responsibility

5.2.4 Ensure necessary resources are allocated and are available for the implementation of this Policy

5.2.5 Integrate performance indicators in relation to work related road safety

5.2.6 Ensure that all hazards and the risks associated with driving for work are identified and assessed, and appropriate measures put in place to eliminate, control or minimise the risk

5.2.7 Ensure this Policy is brought to the attention of, and implemented by all employees and others as appropriate

5.2.8 Where there are legitimate reasons for concern on occupational health grounds seek occupational health assistance

5.2.9 Monitor and review the risk assessment and systems of work following an incident while driving at work

5.2.10 Ensure procedures are in place in the event of an accident / incident and brought to the attention of all drivers

5.2.11 Refer any medical concerns about drivers to the local Occupational Health Service

### **5.3 Employee Responsibilities**

5.3.1 Take reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of others

5.3.2 Adhere to this Policy and any associated risk assessments

5.3.3 Adhere to the rules of the road and speed limits unless the employee is entitled to avail of the exemptions outlined in section 87 of the Road Traffic Act 2010.

5.3.4 Co-operate with their employer or any other person as appropriate

5.3.5 Not engage in improper conduct or behaviour or place anyone at risk whilst driving

5.3.6 Attend training as appropriate

5.3.7 Use safety equipment or PPE provided, or other items provided for their safety, health and welfare at work

5.3.8 Ensure they are fit to drive at all times and aware of the implications which alcohol / illegal substances, medication and fatigue could have for driving safely

5.3.9 Respond truthfully to questions from the health professional regarding their health history and status and the likely impact on their driving ability, including disclosure of drug or alcohol dependence

5.3.10 Adhere to prescribed medical treatment and monitor and manage their conditions and any adaptations with on-going consideration of their fitness to drive

5.3.11 Notify the line manager of any change in their medical status that may impact their ability to drive

5.3.12 Comply with requirements of their licence as appropriate including periodic medical reviews

5.3.13 Adhere to the procedures in place in the event of an accident or incident

5.3.14 Report to the line manager as soon as is practicable:

- Incidents / accidents, near misses while driving for work
- Any injury or illness or anything that may affect their ability to drive

5.3.15 Drivers driving their own vehicle must

- Hold a valid driving licence and insurance specifying WCHC indemnification (specifying the carrying of passengers and goods)
- Ensure driving licence is carried with them at all times while driving
- Ensure vehicles are roadworthy, fully taxed, have a valid NCT (if required) and have both discs displayed
- Report to the Line Manager if driving licence has been suspended or cancelled

## **6. Risk Factors**

The following risk factors may result in harm while driving on a public road and must be considered when conducting the risk assessment.

### **6.1 Risk Factors**

The following main risk factors associated with driving for work have been identified by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), RSA and must be considered by the Manager when carrying out the risk assessments in consultation with their employees:

1. Speeding
2. Alcohol and drugs
3. Seat belts

4. Driver fatigue
5. Distracted Driving

### **6.1.1 Speeding**

All drivers must always be aware of their speed and judge the appropriate speed for the vehicle taking into account:

- driving conditions
- other users of the road
- current weather conditions
- all possible hazards
- speed limits

When travelling at higher speed, drivers have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them and it takes longer to stop. Drivers must know the speed limit on the roads they are using and on the class of vehicle they are driving.

### **6.1.2 Alcohol and Drugs**

It is the responsibility of all employees to report for duty in a fit manner free from all intoxicants that may pose a threat to their own safety, that of their colleagues or other road users. Where medication has been prescribed / sourced over the counter for legitimate use, employees should ascertain from the prescribing Doctor / Pharmacist if there are any possible side effects which may interfere with the safe operation of a vehicle. Alcohol consumption and drug misuse is not permitted during working hours including rest or lunch breaks or during periods of on call. The consumption of alcohol and drugs (including some over the counter and prescription drugs) impairs judgement, makes drivers over confident and more likely to take risks. It slows reaction times, increases stopping distances, affects judgement of speed and reduces the field of vision. Drivers are more likely to have impaired driving the 'morning after' alcohol consumption which can lead to hazardous driving. It is important to remember that it takes 1 hour for the body to process 1 unit of alcohol. (RSA & HSA, 2012) Westcare Homecare encourages employees who are concerned about their own intoxicant use to seek assistance and counselling. The presence of Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Dependence condition requires the employee to inform both management and the National Driver Licence Service. The presence of such a condition should prompt a management referral to local Occupational Health Services where the employee will be medically assessed for fitness to resume driving for the organisation. (RSA, 2015)

### **6.1.3 Seat Belts**

Seat belts must be worn by all drivers and passengers when a vehicle is being driven. The driver is responsible to make sure that all passengers, including rear

seat passengers wear seat belts on every journey, no matter how short. This applies to all vehicles. In keeping with the Road traffic Act 1994, Part III section 2 the use of seatbelts in the rear salon of an ambulance is compulsory in all forward facing seats. While occupying a rear facing seat seatbelts are required to worn. Drivers of vehicles carrying passengers seated in wheelchairs must ensure that the wheelchair and its occupant are fully secured by means of appropriate wheel clamps and seat belt.

#### **6.1.4 Driver Fatigue**

Fatigue is a major contributing cause of fatal and serious injury vehicle collisions and incidents. Drivers are most likely to feel sleepy when driving:

- On long journeys and monotonous roads
- Between 2am and 6am
- Between 2pm and 4pm
- After having less sleep than normal
- After use of intoxicants
- After taking medicines which cause drowsiness. (RSA, 2015)

If a member of staff is concerned about their driving hours, journeys or schedules, this should be discussed with the Line Manager. If appropriate or requested, consult with Occupational Health.

#### **6.1.5 Distracted Drivers**

##### **Use of technology while driving**

The use of a hand-held device while driving is not permitted. Using a mobile phone while driving (even a hands free model), drivers are four times as likely to be involved in motor collisions and accidents involving serious injury than drivers who do not use mobile phones. (SCA, 2015).

Under current legislation, the use of a hands free device is permitted for calls but not recommended by the State Claims Agency, Road Safety Authority or Health and Safety Authority. Drivers can be prosecuted for dangerous driving, careless driving or driving without due care and attention if found using hands free equipment. Line Managers must risk assess the provision of hands free devices prior to sanctioning purchase of same.

The use of personal entertainment systems through earphones e.g. personal radios, MP3 player etc should be avoided. Sat Nav / GPS systems should not be interfered with while driving; drivers should pull over where safe to do so in order to make the necessary changes.

### **Other distractions**

Eating, drinking, smoking, are all distractions to the main driving task.

Other factors which should be taken into consideration include:

- Transportation of clients
- Transport of dangerous goods e.g. specimens, clinical waste, medical gases and chemicals that are subject to dangerous goods regulations
- Adverse weather conditions
- Breakdowns
- Vehicle maintenance
- Driving at night
- Driving in remote / high risk areas
- Emergency procedures for dealing with incidents
- Parking
- Reversing
- Types of journeys

### **7. Risk Assessment**

Managing driving for work forms a core part of WCHC's overall health and safety management system with a focus on the hazards and identified risk factors associated with the Driver, the Vehicle, and the Journey. Managers must ensure that the risks associated with driving for work are considered and documented within their departmental risk assessments. The outcome of the risk assessments should determine what if any additional control measures are required.

### **8. References**

RSA (2015) Slainte agus Tiomaint: Medical Fitness to Drive- Chapter 6- Guidelines on Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Dependence

RSA & HSA, (2012) Safe Driving for Work, Drivers Handbook, version 1.0

SCA, (2015) State Indemnity & Driving for Work – Motor Guidance, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005

### **Useful websites and links**

<http://stateclaims.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/State-Indemnity-Driving-for-Work-MotorGuidance.pdf>

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Work\\_Related\\_Vehicles/Driving\\_for\\_Work\\_CD\\_2010.pdf](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Work_Related_Vehicles/Driving_for_Work_CD_2010.pdf)