

Vehicle Use Procedure

1. Purpose

Inala Community House is committed to ensuring the safety of both workers and service users during transport.

Under workplace health and safety legislation, a vehicle is considered a workplace when it is being driven for a work-related purpose. This includes both ICH and worker's own vehicles.

This procedure aims to outline:

- The use of ICH and worker owned vehicles
- Requirements in planning the journey
- Vehicle familiarisation
- Safety while driving
- Client behaviour
- Particular hazards
- Incidents, emergencies and breakdowns
- Responsibilities

All drivers are expected to drive with care by complying with road rules, the directions of emergency services and by implementing safe driving practices. This procedure operates in conjunction with the ICH Vehicle Use Policy.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff, contractors, students and volunteers using a motor vehicle for work related purposes.

Contractors, students and volunteers must receive written authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer to drive ICH vehicles prior to use.

For the purposes of this policy staff, contractors, students and volunteers will be referred to as drivers or workers.

This procedure covers travel in a vehicle owned by ICH, a hire car or staff members' own car.

3. Procedure

3.1 Using ICH or Worker Owned Vehicles

3.1.1 Using ICH or Worker Owned Vehicles

ICH has a pool of vehicles which are assigned to different services. Availability of ICH vehicles will be prioritised according to the relevant risks and this will vary dependent upon the service.

	ICH Vehicles	Worker's Vehicles (not including motorcycles)
FIS	<p>Must be used at all times when transporting service users (except in extremely limited circumstances approved by the CEO, see Workers Vehicles section).</p> <p>Must be used for home visits except where authorisation is given by the Manager to use a personal vehicle.</p>	<p>May be used where attending a meeting in a professional location (e.g. CSSC), to move between ICH sites, etc.</p> <p>May be used in limited cases for home visits with pre-approval from the Manager (FIS) with consideration of any identified risks.</p>
OHC	<p>Must be used at all times when transporting service users (except in extremely limited circumstances approved by the CEO, see Workers Vehicles section).</p> <p>May be used for home visits, meeting, etc. depending upon availability.</p>	<p>May be used for home visits, meetings, etc.</p>
CE	<p>Must be used at all times when transporting service users (except in extremely limited circumstances approved by the CEO, see Workers Vehicles section).</p> <p>Cars are not generally available except where negotiated with other services. The bus may be available for occasions involving groups of people (e.g. day trips within a Healthy Ageing program).</p>	<p>Used to attend meetings, events and activities.</p>

FDC	<p>Must be used at all times when transporting service users (except in extremely limited circumstances approved by the CEO, see Workers Vehicles section).</p> <p>One vehicle available which should be used daily for the longest trips.</p>	Used to attend visits with Educators, meetings, etc.
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For services with assigned ICH vehicles, these should be prioritised wherever possible. Where an ICH vehicle is unavailable, a Manager or supervisor may approve a driver to use a personal vehicle and claim reimbursement (mileage) giving due consideration of any workplace health and safety risks and whether it is appropriate and safe to use a personal vehicle.

ICH Vehicles can only be used for work-related purposes and they cannot be garaged or kept overnight at a non-ICH premise except where pre-approved by the CEO.

Any worker who requests to use the ICH bus must undergo an induction process prior to any travel. This aims to familiarise the driver with driving a larger vehicle (manoeuvrability, size, controls). This also covers the risks associated with transporting passengers.

Workers' Vehicles

Worker's vehicles must be registered, in a roadworthy condition and appropriately insured (ICH recommends comprehensive insurance coverage). Workers should check with their insurance company to ensure that they can use their vehicle for work-related purposes. If work-related travel is not declared (i.e. it is listed for private use only) then insurance may refuse to pay for any work-related incidents. Vehicles should be safe and properly maintained.

Personal vehicles are not to be used to transport clients except in extremely limited cases which are pre-approved by the CEO. This is a safety issue and there may be issues relating to insurance if an incident were to occur.

Where approval is granted to transport a service user in a personal vehicle, this is subject to proof of registration, insurance (with the worker advising the insurance that they are using the vehicle for volunteering purposes) and at least an annual record of servicing. Approval will only occur for a specific worker, service user and vehicle. Any changes to these would require another approval.

Workers who claim mileage must record their trip details on the Employee Reimbursement Form. This must be signed and submitted to their Manager at the end of each pay fortnight.

3.1.2 Care and Maintenance of Vehicles

ICH Vehicles

As ICH has limited vehicles available, any damage or repairs required have a direct impact upon service delivery.

All drivers must take due care when using ICH vehicles. This includes driving and parking the vehicle in a safe manner but also promptly reporting any issues with the vehicles. Early reporting of identified issues can help to ensure that they are promptly addressed before the issue worsens, causes further damage or results in a mechanical failure.

ICH vehicles undergo regular maintenance to ensure they remain in a good condition. ICH will seek to promptly action any damage or repairs required to ICH Vehicles in order to minimise the impact upon service delivery.

Drivers are expected to ensure that the vehicle remains clean and tidy at all times. Eating or drinking in ICH vehicles should be minimised.

Workers' Vehicles

Vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition and clean and free of clutter which could result in injury to any persons using the vehicle (which must not include service users).

Drivers using their personal cars for work related purposes should be aware that any costs related to an incident or motor vehicle issues are the responsibility of the driver.

Both ICH and Workers' Vehicles

Any valuables or loose equipment must be stored in a safe and secure area (e.g. the boot with an appropriate cover). Loose items can become projectiles in an incident and can cause harm. Valuables in the open can encourage theft and/or someone breaking into the vehicle.

3.1.3 Care and Maintenance of Vehicles

Workers must report any damage or maintenance issues to ICH vehicles as soon as reasonably practical, this should occur no later than the close of business the following business day. Workers can report damage or maintenance issues/hazards by notifying Reception using the appropriate method.

If the vehicle is found to have damage (not including small scratches/scrapes), this should be reported to Reception using the Vehicle Damage form except if this occurred in an accident, then the Vehicle Incident Report should be completed.

Workers should be aware that some types of damage may result in a ticket being issued by police if the vehicle is used on the road (e.g. smashed headlight).

If a driver believes that a vehicle is unsafe to drive, this must be immediately reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Workers must not at any time drive a vehicle which they believe to be unsafe whether due to damage or mechanical issues, regardless of whether this is an ICH vehicle or not. Vehicles reported as unsafe will not be used without the authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer until the vehicle is declared safe and returned to service.

3.1.4 Filling Up

All ICH vehicles have a fuel card which is to be used to fill up the car. Workers should always check prior to filling up whether the station accepts Motorcharge and which is the correct type of fuel to use.

Fuel for personal vehicles is paid by the worker.

Vehicles should be filled up whenever the fuel is below the halfway point.

3.1.5 Vehicle Logs

ICH Vehicles

Drivers must complete logs which are located in the vehicle. These logs outline the trip details.

These must be kept out of sight as these may contain names of persons being visited.

Workers' Vehicles

If workers intend to claim mileage, the trip details must be recorded on the Employee Reimbursement Form.

Bus

In addition to the Vehicle Log, bus drivers are required to complete a Passenger Transport Form, these must be completed for each trip and submitted to Reception with the keys.

3.1.6 Driver Authorisation

General

All drivers must:

- Ensure that they have a valid drivers licence appropriate for the type of vehicle
- Comply with any drivers licence conditions (e.g. wearing glasses) while driving
- Carry their drivers licence with them

All workers prior to driving an ICH vehicle must have completed the Drivers Declaration.

Workers who require written authorisation from the CEO to drive ICH vehicles and transport service users include:

- P-Plate Drivers- due to the relative inexperience of provisional drivers and the increased risk factors
- Anyone under the age of 21 – for insurance purposes
- Contractors
- Students
- Volunteers (except bus drivers)

Reporting Requirements

Drivers who have medical conditions or use medication which affects their ability to drive must inform HR. A letter from the Doctor may be requested to outline any restrictions on driving.

Other reporting requirements apply in accordance with the Vehicle Use Policy.

3.2 Planning the Journey

Journey planning is an essential part of driving for work. Planning the route, prior to driving can have a significant impact upon the journey time and the journey itself. It also means that drivers can assess any risks specific to the trip. Each trip will be unique, even if it has been travelled before.

Workers should consider if a trip is necessary. At times, it may be appropriate to teleconference, email or phone rather than attend a meeting or visit in person. This will depend upon what is most efficient and will achieve the best outcome in each circumstance and will not be possible in all circumstances, however where it is an option, it is generally preferred as it eliminates the risks associated with driving.

Workers should consider whether public transport (e.g. buses or trains) may be a more suitable form of travel to areas which have significant traffic and where parking

is limited (e.g. centre of Brisbane). Any plans to use public transport must be pre-approved by the relevant Manager.

If teleconferencing or public transport is not an option, the worker should use an ICH vehicle or personal vehicle in accordance with section 3.1.1

When planning the journey, workers should consider:

- Environmental Risks
 - Weather
 - Time of day (e.g. sun position, wildlife etc.)
- Traffic Risks
 - Traffic
 - Road conditions (e.g. roadworks or changed traffic conditions)
- Journey Risks
 - Travel time (fatigue, allow time for rest breaks)
 - Service user behaviour / special needs / emergencies

Workers must comply with the route planning strategies listed in the Vehicle Use Policy.

When transporting service users, any risks arising from this transport should be identified and controlled as part of the journey planning process. For children, this means ensuring that child locks are on, that there are appropriate child restraints and/or that they have a toy or other item to keep them engaged. An example of potential journey planning risks and controls is located in Appendix 1.

Workers are prohibited from using rideshare companies such as Uber, or Didi for transport. This is due to concerns over safety with each driver responsible for their own safe driving practices.

3.2.1 Worker Safety

In order to ensure that workers are safe at work, workers must record the details of their planned journey including:

- The vehicle being used
- The expected start and return times
- The names of service users / places and the address/es they plan to visit
- Names of workers travelling

These details must be recorded in an accessible way or directly communicated to a supervisor in accordance with individual Service requirements.

Workers must communicate, any changes or deviations to the planned trip in accordance with Service requirements.

Workers must also ensure that they carry a mobile phone with sufficient battery life.

3.2.2 Service User Protection

ICH has a duty to ensure that service users are safe and protected from harm while services are being delivered to them, this includes during transport. It is important that all workers transporting service users can account for the time that they are transporting the service user (e.g. locations travelled from and to, etc.). This is particularly important when supporting vulnerable service users.

General Requirements Transporting Service Users

Workers should be able to account for the contact time with service users, particularly where they are alone with the service user. These details must be recorded on the service user's file.

Workers are prohibited from conducting personal business while transporting a service user.

Transporting Vulnerable Service Users

Vulnerable service users include any person who may be at increased risk of harm or who lacks capacity to take care of themselves (those with diminished capacity to whom a greater duty of care is owed). This can include: children, the aged, persons with a disability or illness and in some cases, this may also include those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) or those who have suffered significant trauma.

Workers will avoid being alone with vulnerable service users (e.g. without a parent, guardian or other person present) wherever possible, this includes during transport. Where this is not possible, alternative strategies may be used (as appropriate) such as:

- Planning destinations which are in public spaces, which are easily observed by others
- Monitoring and limiting the amount of contact time
- Regularly rotating workers

Where a worker is transporting a vulnerable service user (e.g. a child) without another person present, they should specifically confirm that they will take service users directly to and from arranged venues and not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

This means that drivers cannot 'pop in' to a place (e.g. a shop) with a service user, even if the service user requests it where it is not part of the planned trip. Any necessary detours (e.g. the service user needs to stop to use the toilet), the worker should notify their supervisor or Manager as soon as possible. To clarify this notification requirement does not apply to diversions due to roadworks, changed traffic conditions, etc. Although this should be noted on appropriate records if there is a delay of over 15 minutes.

This no detour rule is important for several reasons including:

- It aims to safeguard the worker from claims of impropriety (e.g. being able to show that the time taken to travel matches approximate time between destinations)
- It aims to ensure that ICH is aware of where workers are, in case of an emergency

It aims to ensure that service users are protected and feel safe during transport.

3.3 Vehicle Familiarisation and Pre-Start Vehicle Checklist

ICH requires all drivers take time to familiarise themselves with the vehicle prior to use, this includes locating all of the controls and adjusting seats, mirrors, etc prior to driving.

Workers must complete the Pre-Start Vehicle Checklist prior to travelling which seeks to ensure that the vehicle is in a good condition to drive. This checklist aims to ensure that:

- The fuel level is adequate to complete the journey or that the fuel card is in the vehicle
- The tyres are undamaged and adequately inflated
- Windows and mirrors are clean and undamaged
- The vehicle is clean and free of debris which could cause a hazard
- Any child restraints used are not older than 10 years old or have not passed their expiry date

3.4 Safety While Driving

Drivers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own safety as well as that of passengers and other road users. They must show due regard, judgement and responsibility on the road.

Drivers must obey all road rules, legislation, regulation and comply with the instructions of emergency services. Safe driving practices should be implemented, these include:

- Drive to the conditions
- Wherever possible, avoid driving more than 6 hours each day during work hours and no more than 2 hours at a time without a minimum 15-minute break
- Stop driving when tired
- Maintaining safe stopping distances
- Being aware of wildlife on or at the side of the road particularly during dawn, dusk or at night
- Keeping all loose items such as laptops, bags or other heavy/bulky items in the boot or other secure location as these can become projectiles in an incident

- Conceal any valuables in the vehicle
- Do not accept hitchhikers and be wary of people indicating for the car to stop, if possible, talk to the person through the window, which should only be partially wound down, and be ready to drive off
- Carry their valid drivers licence
- Not using their mobile phone while driving
- Locking the vehicle when unattended (and not leaving keys or gate remote in the vehicle)

The driver is responsible for ensuring that seatbelts are worn by all vehicle occupants and that children have an appropriate child restraint (with child locks engaged).

When transporting service users, at no time should they be left unsupervised in the vehicle. Workers should be aware of the risk of high temperatures in unattended vehicles, particularly for children who may not be able to leave the vehicle. Workers should check that nobody is left in the vehicle before locking and leaving it.

3.4.1 No Smoking

No smoking is permitted in ICH vehicles. Smoking is also not permitted in front of clients.

3.4.2 Awareness of Risks

It is essential that drivers plan their trip (to avoid or mitigate risks), remain focused on driving and keep eyes on the road and surroundings at all times. While drivers should continually be scanning for hazards along the road, this may include:

- Road and traffic conditions
- Pedestrians and cyclists
- Wildlife

Drivers should also be aware of hazards which may arise within the vehicle, this can include:

- Any warning lights on the dash (which must be checked and rectified as soon as possible)
- Any strange noises or handling of the vehicle
- Behaviour of passengers

3.4.3 Loading and Unloading of Passengers

Due to the manual handling risks of loading and unloading passengers, workers must only lift small infants or toddlers into vehicles. Workers may provide assistance to older children by giving them a hand into the vehicle but must never lift them in.

Wherever possible, workers should ask a parent, guardian or carer to load and unload a child into a vehicle if they require assistance.

Workers must gain approval from their Manager for any trip where a service user will require assistance from workers to enter or exit a vehicle. Managers must approve this only where there is adequate consideration of manual handling risks factors such as:

- The suitability of the vehicle
- Any controls to minimise risk of injury (e.g. assistive aids or having a second worker)
- The ability of the worker
- Any behavioural concerns, ability to communicate and understand, their willingness to assist, etc. of the service user

3.4.4 Loading and Unloading of Passengers

Drivers should always ensure that there is safe access and exit from the vehicle for themselves and any other passengers. This includes considering:

- The terrain (e.g. uneven or slippery surfaces)
- Other traffic nearby
- Available light to see any hazards
- Available space to access/exit the vehicle safely
- Any other environmental hazards

3.4.5 Flooding and Other Severe Weather Events

All drivers should drive to the conditions of the road. In severe weather, it may be more appropriate to postpone or cancel trips until it is safe to drive, this should be approved by the supervisor, Manager or the CEO.

If a worker is on the road when severe weather occurs which makes it unsafe to drive (e.g. heavy rain), the worker should:

- Park in the nearest safe space
- Contact the office
- Wait until it is safe to travel

If roads are flooded, do not attempt to drive through.

3.5 Safety While Driving

Transporting service users can be hazardous for multiple reasons. Some examples include:

- Being a distraction to the driver
- Becoming aggressive (whether directed at the driver or a passenger)

- Not complying with road rules including not using or taking off seatbelts and throwing litter or other items out of the vehicle
- Interference with vehicle controls
- Being under the influence
- Behaviour issues or concerns arising from mental or physical conditions
- Medical emergencies or illness occurring during transport

Before transporting, drivers should:

- Gauge the clients physical and emotional state e.g.
 - Do they appear angry, upset or otherwise experiencing other negative emotions?
 - Has the client's emotional state escalated during the time spent with them?
 - Have they had any previous instances of violence or aggression?
 - Does the client have any mental health conditions which significantly affect their behaviour?
 - Is the client known to be taking any medication?
 - Do they appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs?
 - Do they appear to be unwell?
- Have appropriate strategies to prevent behaviour escalations e.g.
 - Outline expected behaviour prior to travelling
 - Ensure any conversation, language and music is age appropriate
 - Have strategies to engage and/or distract service user if necessary (e.g. stuffed toy for a child, music/conversation for an adult)

The driver must ensure that all people are appropriately restrained with seatbelts, car seats or boosters (as appropriate to their age). For information about appropriate child restraints, please see:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/rules/children/types>.

During the drive, if clients become a distraction or behaviour escalates, the driver should:

- Pull over and park in the nearest safe place
- If possible, put the windows down
- Turn the engine off and remove the keys
- Attempt to de-escalate the situation, except if the worker feels threatened
- If necessary, get out of the vehicle
- Stay close to the vehicle unless feeling threatened

If the worker feels threatened, they should contact the police (000) and notify their supervisor or the office.

If a service user wants to leave the vehicle, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, the worker should follow at a safe distance, this is particularly the case where workers are transporting vulnerable service users (e.g. children or those who do not have capacity to keep themselves safe).

Complete the relevant Incident Report form and attend a debrief with a supervisor. It may be appropriate to place a warning on the service user file and/or restrict future travel.

3.6 Vehicle Breakdown

Workers should take steps to reasonably ensure the safety of all persons (e.g. pulling over in a safe space if possible and using hazard lights) and inform the office as soon as possible once safe to do so. Reception will organise roadside assistance as necessary.

3.7 Medical Emergencies

The driver is responsible for assessing the situation. In the event of an emergency, the driver will:

- Pull over and park the vehicle in the nearest safe place
- Assess the situation
- Call an ambulance (if required) and apply first aid (where necessary). Stay on the phone with the ambulance until they say to hang up.
- Contact the office
- Complete the relevant Incident Report Form

3.8 Incidents

If an incident occurs, drivers must immediately take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of themselves and other people.

3.8.1 Immediate Response

Where a worker is involved in an incident they should:

1. Ensure Safety of Everyone Involved

- Immediately stop and turn off the vehicle in the nearest safe place
- Turn on hazard lights if necessary
- If it is not safe, move to a safe place, stop and turn off the car
- If the car is at risk of fire, evacuate the vehicle and ensure the safety of all passengers
- If it is safe to do so, check to see if any persons involved in the incident have been injured and assess any hazards present at the scene
- Remain at the scene unless it is necessary to obtain assistance for injured persons

2. Seek Assistance (where required)

Call:

- Emergency services (000) if:
 - Death or injuries which require medical treatment from a paramedic, nurse or doctor is involved
 - Where there is a traffic hazard such as power lines, traffic congestion, spills, etc.
- Policelink (131 444) if:
 - There is suspicion of drugs and/or alcohol
 - A driver fails to exchange details
 - A driver with an impairment or disability requires police assistance

Follow instructions of emergency personnel and render aid to injured persons where possible.

3. Exchange Details

- Exchange details with other persons involved (including witnesses where necessary) including name and address of driver and if relevant, the vehicle's owner, registration number and any other information which can identify the vehicle (make, model, colour or other identifying characteristics)
- Provide their name and the address of ICH where required to the driver of the other vehicle. Drivers should not admit fault and remain polite and courteous at all times

4. Notify ICH

- Once it is safe to do so, and as soon as reasonably practicable, the driver should call the office and either notify their Manager or Reception of the incident
- Assess whether the car is safe to drive. Reception will arrange towing of vehicles if required. To assess the vehicle, drivers can look at things such as, but not limited to:
 - Any loose parts of the car (parts which may fall off, scrape or impede movement of the vehicle)
 - The extent to which normal operation has been affected (e.g. brakes, doors, lights etc.)

A Vehicle Accident Reporting form should be filled out as soon as practicable and returned to Human Resources (hr@ich.org.au) and copied to their manager. This form collects information necessary for insurance purposes.

3.8.2 Reporting Serious Incidents

Road incidents may be reportable where it results in:

- Death
- Immediate treatment in hospital as an in-patient
- Immediate treatment for a serious injury (e.g. amputation, scalping, spinal injury, loss of bodily function, serious laceration, burn, head or eye injuries)

This reporting requirement does not apply where an incident occurs whilst a worker is driving to or from work in their private vehicle.

Reporting will occur in accordance with funding guidelines or as required by law.

3.8.3 Post Incident

Workers involved in incidents will be reminded of EAP availability and will debrief with either their supervisor, Manager, HR or the CEO.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for monitoring the worker after an incident, as appropriate to the severity and impact of the incident.

Drivers may also be required to participate in a review of the incident, which will include a discussion of how their own behaviour was a factor.

3.8.4 Child Restraints

If a child restraint is installed in a vehicle when an accident occurs, the driver is responsible for ensuring that the child restraint is not used, removed from the vehicle upon return to the workplace and immediately tagged "Not in Use". A review of the incident will take place by the CEO to determine if the child restraint should be replaced. Removal from the vehicle and tagging is not necessary if a review can take place upon return to the workplace and prior to the vehicle being used again.

3.9 Exiting from the Vehicle

Wherever possible, drivers should pull over or park the vehicle in a safe area. Where this is not possible, workers must exercise caution and vigilance when exiting and walking around the vehicle (e.g. in an accident/breakdown). Workers must also be aware of other vehicle occupants such as service users and should, where possible, direct them to remain in the car or at another safe area.

Workers must ensure upon exiting the vehicle that:

- No person is left inside the vehicle
- All rubbish is disposed of
- Any spillages of food or drink are cleaned up
- The vehicle log sheet has been fully completed

Keys must be returned to the appropriate area.

3.10 Driving Performance

Questions may arise over the suitability and safety of drivers who receive traffic infringements, more serious traffic offences or are involved in vehicle incidents. ICH may take appropriate action based upon any changes in traffic history, licence status, or involvement in incidents, taking into consideration the number of infringements and any time which has passed. This may include:

- Reminding them of hazards relating to driving
- Re-training in the ICH Vehicle Use Policy and Procedure
- Providing additional training
- Removal of authorisation to drive

For some positions, a removal of authorisation to drive may directly impact their suitability for their position and could lead to termination of employment.

4. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed in conjunction with the policy.

This procedure remains in effect unless otherwise directed by the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Workplace Health and Safety Policy
ICH Vehicle Use Policy
ICH Service User Protection Policy

Procedures

ICH Incident Management Procedure

Forms

ICH Maintenance and OHS Reporting Form
ICH Vehicle Incident Reporting Form
ICH Vehicle Damage Form

Other Documents

ICH Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy