

20 Tips for Volunteer Drivers

Volunteering can be an enriching experience. Is being a volunteer good for the soul? Probably, but there is evidence that it is also good for the body! Studies reveal that helping others actually results in physical changes similar to those gained by exercise. Below are a few tips to help get the most out of your volunteer driving experience.

How to be a Good Volunteer Driver

- 1.** When you decide to volunteer to drive, make a commitment of time (every week or month) that you can live with and stick to it.
- 2.** Make sure your activities as a volunteer driver are covered by an appropriate amount of insurance.
- 3.** If you use your own vehicle, be sure it is clean and in proper operating condition because both will be important to your passenger, to the program, and to you.
- 4.** Take the time to read the materials given to you by your volunteer program and ask questions about any information that is unclear.
- 5.** Be aware of your own condition and limitations. Never drive if your reflexes or senses are impaired by medications, fatigue, or illness.
- 6.** Always follow traffic rules and regulations. Drive safely and do not speed.
- 7.** Always leave plenty of room between your vehicle and the one in front of you. If another car is tailgating your vehicle, pull over and let it go by.
- 8.** Give angry drivers lots of room and don't make eye contact. Avoid doing anything that would anger another driver.
- 9.** Most accidents occur at intersections. Be alert as you approach each intersection and carefully watch for pedestrians, cross traffic, lane changes, and traffic signs and signals.

How to Support Your Rider

- 1.** Always be prompt and on time when picking up a rider.
- 2.** Let each rider know that you are glad to be their volunteer driver.
- 3.** Think of your riders as friends. Show genuine interest in their lives and families.
- 4.** Be concerned for your riders feelings and comfort.
- 5.** Consider their capabilities and limitations.
- 6.** Be conversational and fun to be around.
- 7.** Stay positive and remember that riding with you may be the high point of their day!
- 8.** Treat your riders as individual adults and, whatever their personal challenges, emphasize their abilities.
- 9.** Do not lecture your riders about life or your beliefs.
- 10.** Do not argue with your riders, but be firm in establishing appropriate travel protocols. Always remember, you are the captain of your ship.
- 11.** If your rider suffers a medical emergency, follow the guidelines established by your program (e.g., call 9-1-1 and get professional assistance; if close to a hospital, get your rider to the emergency room immediately).