

Volunteer Driver Training

The development of a recruitment strategy is the first step. However, having a plan for training and managing volunteer drivers may be just as important.

Volunteer management literature indicates that maintaining a well-trained, enthusiastic driving staff is key to the success of any volunteer transportation program. Two important features to remember when developing or managing a volunteer driver workforce are:

1. volunteer drivers, whether using agency vehicles or their own personal vehicles, should be appropriately trained to safely carry out their responsibilities
2. volunteer drivers should follow the same policies and procedures as paid drivers (if any) operating similar vehicles

The literature also suggests training applies to both the certainties and the uncertainties of the relationship. For example, equipping a driver to provide door-thru-door transportation might require training in how to provide assistance in helping a passenger stand and walk, and what to do when the passenger refuses assistance that is being provided. Some programs might also include older adult sensitivity training, emergency procedures training, organization information training, and behind-the-wheel driver training.

Additional policies you might want to consider are:

- standards for safe drivers and safe driving conduct
- specific criteria for selection and screening drivers
- driver training in defensive driving
- driver training for emergency measures
- driver training in passenger (especially older adult) treatment
- driver training for special vehicles

Finally, behind-the-wheel training also is of importance and many programs engage staff to train their volunteers. Training might include topics such as “rules of the road,” which are identified in the risk management materials. Unfortunately, many programs do not undertake volunteer driver training because they lack staff to provide it.