



Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Protocol for Transportation of Children/Youth by Regional Employees

Supplemental to DCS Policy: [31.15, Guidelines for Transportation of Children/Youth by Regional Employees](#)

A. Transportation Guidelines and Requirements

1. Requirements:

- a) Full compliance with dress code procedures are required for all full-time transportation officers, see DCS policy [1.18, Uniformed Employee Grooming Requirements and Provisions for Uniforms](#) (Section B) and [Protocol for Employee Conduct and Dress Code](#).
- b) Use of personal vehicles in the performance of an employee's job duties is directed by DCS policy [3.16, Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement](#). Employees who transport in their personal vehicles are also responsible for providing adequate automobile insurance coverage and vehicle registration
- c) Operators of state vehicles review and adhere to DCS Policy [1.13, Assignment, Use Maintenance and Responsibilities of Operating State Owned/Leased Vehicles](#).
- d) All out of state transports follow the requirements listed in DCS policy [3.16, Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement](#).
- e) Prior to each transport employees ensure the vehicle is functionally and mechanically safe making sure the brakes function properly and turn signals are operational. A visual inspection of the vehicle's tires, fuel, oil level and equipment are completed prior to each transport to ensure the vehicle is in a safe, operable condition.
- f) Officers are required to complete all transports reports and documentation at the end of each transport.
- g) Program Coordinators will have MVM reports in by the 5th of every month from the month before, as per DCS policy [1.13, Assignment, Use, Maintenance, and Responsibilities of Operating State Owned/Leased Vehicles](#).

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2. Guidelines:

- a) The following guidelines apply for employee labor and co-riders during transportation:
- ◆ A maximum of two (2) youth may be transported by a single driver if no safety risks exist, excluding those transporting justice involved youth. If three (3) youth are transported together, the driver is accompanied by an additional employee. Transportation of three (3) or more children/youth without an additional employee is permitted at the discretion/approval of the Regional Director/Program Manager/designee.
 - ◆ If one (1) employee transports two (2) youth, a co-rider may be used based on youth needs or safety risk. It is preferred that justice involved youth and dependent and neglected youth who are in mechanical restraints are transported in a secure state vehicle. If a secure vehicle is not available the second preference is an unsecured state vehicle; however, a second employee is required to assist with the transport. The youth is seated in the rear passenger side seat with the second employee seated in the rear driver side.
 - ◆ When transporting a child over the age of twelve (12), an additional employee can be requested to assist with the transportation at the discretion of the supervisor.
 - ◆ When transporting a youth of a different gender than the transporter, a co-driver is required. Exceptions may be available at the supervisor's discretion.
 - ◆ Additionally, it is recommended an employee have a co-driver in the following circumstances:
 - If the transporter feels unsafe due to youth's history and/or recent exhibited behaviors;
 - When the child poses a safety risk to themselves or others;
 - When there is a history of false reporting on the part of the child/youth;
 - When the child/youth is at risk of running away;
 - When there is a history of mental health issues which may include disruptive behavior, self-harm, suicidal or homicidal ideation;
 - When the transport involves more than two children; or
 - When it is in the best interest of the child's safety.
- b) The escorting employee/co-rider's duties consist of the following:

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- ◆ Assist in maintaining constant visual observation, as well as verbal checks, with the youth ***in restraints*** at least every fifteen (15) minutes to determine if the restraints are presenting any discomfort.
 - ◆ Complete form, [CS-0350, Transportation Report](#), to document visual and verbal checks.
 - ◆ Offer relief driving when needed or requested by primary transporter.
- c) Identifying fatigue and minimizing associated risks are routine conversations between employees who transport and supervisors to minimize risk and safety of youth and employees, the following are assessed with each transport:
- ◆ If the transport causes the employee to work beyond twelve (12) hours for one (1) staff or 14 (fourteen) hours for two (2) staff, the employee will spend the night at a hotel or continue transport at the discretion of the Program Coordinators/Program Managers/Team Coordinator/Investigative Coordinator or their designee.
Note: DCS employees requiring in-state lodging must utilize a direct bill hotel as per DCS policy [3.16, Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement](#).
 - ◆ If an employee has been transporting a youth without a co-driver and works more than twelve hours (12) in a single shift, the employee is offered a minimum of eight (8) consecutive hours off-work, whenever possible, especially if the upcoming work shift involves face-to-face oversight of a youth.
 - ◆ If an employee who has worked beyond their regularly scheduled hours, but will not exceed the timeframes established above, the Regional Director/ Program Manager/Contract Agency/designee may designate another employee accompany the employee.
 - ◆ Employees, who need to make a request for additional assistance in coordinating transportation, refer to the [Protocol for Cross-Regional Social Services Transportation](#) for coordination in long distances or across multiple regions.
- d) When transporting youth in a state-owned vehicle the following equipment is to be taken
- ◆ All Staff Transports:
 - Gas card that is assigned to the vehicle.

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- Cellular Phone.
 - Cleaning supplies to sanitize vehicle.
 - ◆ Transportation Officer Transports:
 - First Aid kit.
 - Mechanical restraint equipment.
 - Statewide list of approved locations for stops/breaks.
 - ◆ YDC Transports:
 - First Aid kit.
 - Handheld Radio.
 - Post Orders.
 - Institutional Keys.
 - Statewide list of approved locations for stops/breaks
- e) Once a transport has begun, stops are only permitted:
- ◆ To refuel the vehicle;
 - ◆ In case of an emergency;
 - ◆ To adjust mechanical restraints in a safe and secure location (such as any government operated location);
 - ◆ Bathroom breaks (see note below), or
 - ◆ To purchase meals (fast food only) using the drive through window.

Note: While transporting youth, employees assess the youth's need for food, water, and use of bathroom facilities. ***For justice involved youth, public bathroom stops are prohibited.*** If a youth is being transported, bathroom breaks are only permissible at the supervisor's discretion.

B. Transport Assignments

1. All Transportation Officers will have designated assignments prior to receiving assistance from Corporals.
2. Corporals and Lieutenants will have designated assignments prior to assigning Program Coordinators transport assignments.

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3. Program Coordinators will assist with transports if needed and all Transportation Officers, Corporals, and Lieutenants are already assigned transport orders.
4. Transportation Officers will be assigned equal distance and time when assigned relays across the state when at all possible.

C. Regional Transportation Request and Required Paperwork

1. The Program Corporal/ Coordinator:
 - a) Assigns, monitors, and arranges transports. All assignments include times and locations of pickups/transfers of youth during regular business hours and after hours;
 - b) Places appointments on the appropriate Transportation Officer's Outlook calendar;
 - c) Sends a verification email to the individual requesting the transport, the Transportation Officer(s) and the appropriate regional staff;
 - d) Divides transportation into appropriate increments across regions. The Corporal will notify the Program Coordinator of any performance issues as it relates to Transportation Officers not answering phone calls, not answering emails timely, refusing to transport, etc.
2. Making Request for Transportation Assistance:
 - a) To request transportation, the requesting employee ensures all documents are completed and submits the following information to the Transportation Formstack request https://stateoftennessee-cvlyz.formstack.com/forms/transportation_request.
 - b) The documents/forms listed below are required to accompany the child/youth being transported.

D. Documents Required for Transportation

1. The documents/forms listed below are required to accompany the child/youth being transported:
 - a) ***Picture of the Youth-*** A current picture of the child/youth being transported;

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- b) ***Court order/commitment order*** or, in the case of child recently removed due to D/N issues, documentation from the file (for example the petition) or from the Regional Administrator or DCS attorney handling the case stating that a removal has occurred and DCS has the legal authority to transport;
 - c) [**CS-0206, Authorization for Routine Health Services for Minors**](#);
 - d) [**CS-0627, Informed Consent for Psychotropic Medication**](#) (when the child/youth is prescribed psychotropic medication);
 - e) [**CS-0813, Medication Transfer**](#) (when medication is being transported with the child/youth);
 - f) A copy of the child's TennCare card (or other health insurance card); or immediate eligibility form is TennCare card is unavailable.
 - g) [**CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History**](#).
 - h) [**CS-0827, Non-Custodial Consent for Transportation**](#), is completed and signed by the parent/guardian/custodian when transporting a non-custodial child/youth. The completed form is filed in the case record.
 - i) [**CS-0060, Facility Face Sheet**](#) (***YDC Transports***)
 - j) [**CS-1219, Search Request for Transgender and Intersex Youth**](#), if applicable.
3. If the parent/guardian/custodian refuses to sign form CS-0827, Non-Custodial Consent for Transportation, the transporting employee contacts their supervisor for instructions.

E. Secure Transports

1. Children who are not adjudicated delinquent can be restrained, including during transport, under certain circumstances. Criteria and requirements can be found in DCS Policy [**31.19, Use of Mechanical Restraints for Youth**](#) and Policy [**19.9, Psychiatric Emergency Use of Mechanical Restraints**](#).
2. Secure vehicles may be used to transport, regardless of adjudication type, if the child/youth's behavior presents the need for security.

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3. Secure transports will be approved by Regional Director/Program Manager or designee.
4. Children/youth requiring transportation in a secure state vehicle meet at least one (1) of the following criteria:
 - a) Adjudication of delinquency even if not committed as a delinquent child;
 - b) Documented historical or recent assaultive behavior;
 - c) Documented history of runaway;
 - d) Documented history of incidents of self-harm; or
 - e) The child/youth's current behavior is deemed to present a threat to the safe operation of a non-secure vehicle or a threat to the safety of the employee.

F. Youth Search Procedures

All youth searches will adhere to DCS policy [31.4, Search Procedures](#).

G. Emergency Situations During Transporting

1. If, during transportation, a child/youth attempts to runaway or escape, the safe operation of the vehicle takes precedence over preventing a runaway or escape.
2. If a child/youth escapes, the vehicle operator immediately notifies local law enforcement authorities and his/her supervisor. The incident is reported as outlined in DCS policies [1.4, Incident Reporting](#) and [31.2, Responsibilities Regarding Runaways, Absconders, and Escapees](#).
3. If a child/youth becomes seriously ill or injured in an accident or has a mental health emergency while being transported 911 should be contacted immediately. The vehicle operator then contacts his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
4. If an equipment malfunction interrupts transportation of the child/youth, the vehicle operator notifies his/her immediate supervisor to obtain assistance.
5. Employees involved in an accident while transporting a child/youth in a state- owned vehicle immediately report the accident to their Supervisor and follow procedures as outlined in DCS Policy [1.13, Assignment, Use, Maintenance, and Responsibilities of Operating State-Owned/Leased Vehicles](#).

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6. Employees involved in an accident while transporting a child/youth in their personal vehicle immediately report the accident to their Supervisor and document the incident in the child's record in Electronic Records System or complete form [CS-0496, Incident Report](#), if applicable.
7. Employees injured while in the performance of their duties follow procedures for reporting and filing worker's compensation claims as outlined in the [Department of Human Resources Employee Handbook](#), page 33.
8. The following actions are to be taken during inclement weather:
 - a) Employees are not expected to transport during any weather *warning* advisory (*weather watch*-means there is a threat, *weather warning*-means there is imminent danger); if a weather emergency arises during a transport, a supervisor should be contacted immediately to advise.
 - b) If caught in a weather emergency:
 - ◆ Immediately contact your supervisor and let them know where you are;
 - ◆ Seek shelter/identify a safe area to go; and
 - ◆ Follow the regional emergency response preparedness plan.

H. Emergency/After-Hours Assistance

1. In the event there is a vehicle emergency you may contact the following:
 - a) Day time emergency contact/ Motor Vehicle Maintenance (MVM): Dial 615-532-8903
 - b) After hours emergency contact: Dial 1-800-447-2277
 - c) TN Highway Patrol: Dial ***847**
 - d) For a list of statewide DCS offices and resources, refer to the [Transportation Resource List](#).

I. Transporting Youth with Medications or After Medical Procedures

1. If the child/youth being transported has medication scheduled to be taken during the transport, the FSW and transport officer/employee consults with the regional well-being nurse for instructions prior to the trip. Transport officer/employee will assist in administering the medication based off the nurse's instructions.

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2. Any child/youth having a surgical procedure, including surgical extraction of teeth, waits forty-eight (48) hours before transferring to a new placement. The FSW consults with the regional well-being nurse for instructions prior to the trip.
3. When transport involves a new placement or change of placement, it is the sending FSW/designee's responsibility to communicate with the receiving facility regarding medication a child/youth is taking. Any medications a child/youth is taking must be transported with them together with a completed [CS-0813, Medication Transfer](#). If a thirty (30) day supply or a refill of the medication is not available, the sending facility coordinates with the new placement regarding continued medication maintenance and appointments. (See DCS Policy [20.15, Medication Administration, Storage, and Disposal](#)).

J. Prohibitions Regarding Transportation of Children/Youth

1. Employee actions that are PROHIBITED when transporting a child/youth include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Leaving a child/youth unattended in a vehicle;
 - b) Mechanically restraining a child/youth to a vehicle;
 - c) Transporting a child or infant without a child passenger restraint system, a belt positioning booster seat system, or seat belt, as age appropriate by law;
 - d) Carrying firearms or ammunition;
 - e) Smoking/vaping or permitting anyone to smoke/vape in a state vehicle;
 - f) Causing property damage to a state vehicle; and
 - g) Transporting a child/youth in the front seat of a secure vehicle; and
 - h) Providing secure transportation for a child under the age of twelve (12) without the approval of the Regional/Director/Program Manager/Contract Agency Director/ designee.

K. Training Requirements

1. All employees transporting children/youth are properly trained.
2. Training includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a) Review of the requirements of this policy;
 - b) The following departmental policies and associated forms:

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- ◆ [1.13, Assignment, Use, Maintenance and Responsibilities of Operating State Owned/Leased Vehicles](#)
 - ◆ [31.4, Search Procedures](#)
 - ◆ [27.21 Contraband Collection and Disposition](#)
 - ◆ [31.19 Use of Mechanical Restraints for Youth](#)
 - ◆ [27.35 DOE, Use of Mechanical Restraints](#) (including attached [25.37 DOE Directive](#)).
 - ◆ [Protocol: Best Practice in the Use of Restraints with Pregnant Youth](#)
- c) Proper placement of children/youth in a child passenger restraint system, a belt positioning booster seat system, or seat belt;
 - d) Proper ways to engage, observe and de-escalate youth presenting behavioral problems when transporting;
 - e) Safety precautions and potential risks that may be encountered while transporting;
 - f) Control and disposal of contraband to include forms [CS-1098, Contraband Disposition and Monthly Disposal Log](#) and [CS-1099, Search and Contraband Chain of Custody/Possession](#); and
 - g) Contingency plan to include emergency contact protocols.
 - h) Search Procedures.
3. Persons teaching the training curriculum are proficient in the required training topics before delivering training.
 4. Transportation training is documented in the employees' training record in Edison.
 5. YDC employees sign form [CS-0184-1, Signature Legend YDC Post Orders](#), indicating knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities for transporting youth, whether permanently or temporarily assigned.

L. Mechanical Restraint Procedures

1. Mechanical restraints are used when transporting justice involved youth. See DCS Policy [31.19, Use of Mechanical Restraints for Youth](#).