



PeakCare
Queensland Inc.

Motor Vehicle Safety – Guidelines for Child Protection Placement Services

Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

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Background

In late 2023, the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) released the *Motor Vehicle Safety – Guidelines for Child Protection Placement Services*. These guidelines cover a range of vehicle safety requirements and aim to assist non-government organisations to develop and refine their own motor vehicle safety processes.

Following release of the guidelines, a number of questions were raised by child and family sector organisations relating to the interpretation and operationalisation of the guidelines.

In response to these questions, PeakCare facilitated a series of review and clarification activities with DCSSDS which has resulted in amendments to the guidelines and the development of the below Frequently Asked Questions and clarifications.

What are the Motor Vehicle Guidelines

The Motor Vehicle Safety - Guidelines for Child Protection Placement Services apply to both licensed and unlicensed residential care providers, including all staff in offices related to service delivery and outlines comprehensive vehicle safety requirements, with an emphasis on the following:

- secure storage and carriage of vehicle keys
- vehicle maintenance and roadworthiness
- safe operation of vehicles
- the use of child restraints and locks.

The guidelines aim to mitigate risks to children, young people, staff, and community members during transportation, and requires organisations to ensure these safety measures have been appropriately incorporated into their policies and procedures, and that all vehicles used in service delivery meet safety standards. Regular reviews, staff training, and monitoring are essential for compliance.

These guidelines also address safety considerations for activities such as transporting children, emergency situations, and vehicle security providing a framework for creating a safer transportation environment.

These guidelines aim to enhance the safety and security of vehicle use within residential care settings. Organisations are encouraged to review their current practices, seek clarifications as needed, and ensure compliance with these updated requirements to ensure the safety of children and young people in their care.

A copy of the Motor Vehicle Safety - Guidelines for Child Protection Placement Services is [available here](#).

Additional Information

If you have any questions relating to these Frequently Asked Questions and clarifications, please contact PeakCare by phone at 07 3368 1050 or email at office@peakcare.org.au.



Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

Scope of guidelines

| Question | Answer |
|---|--|
| Do these guidelines apply to both licenced and unlicenced providers? | Yes, the guidelines apply to both licenced and unlicenced residential care providers. |
| How will the guidelines be monitored and how will this be incorporated into existing Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) requirements? | Indicator 4.2 of the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) requires organisations to have documented and implemented processes for vehicle safety, including secure storage of car keys and compliance with Queensland child car restraint requirements. It is up to each individual organisation to demonstrate how they are ensuring all vehicles used to transport children and young people are registered and appropriately maintained and monitoring will occur as part of regular HSQF audits. Note: Organisations should ensure periodic vehicle safety checks are completed on all vehicles used to transport children and young people. Vehicles should also be maintained in a roadworthy condition including regular servicing based on the manufacturers recommended servicing schedule. Organisations must also have processes for reporting vehicle breakdowns, roadworthy issues and damage to vehicles. These requirements apply to both organisation owned vehicles and private vehicles used for transporting children and young people. |
| Do these guidelines apply to foster and kinship carer households? | No, the guidelines apply to organisation staff during all aspects of service delivery and are not applicable to foster/kinship carer households. |

Secure storage

| Question | Answer |
|---|--|
| How do we store keys when they are not being used? | Keys not in use must be stored in a combination lock safe, securely fixed to floor or wall within a locked office. If it is not possible to secure the safe to the floor or wall, the safe should be tamper resistant and reasonably immovable. |
| How do we store emergency access keys? | Emergency access keys must be stored separately in a secure location. |
| What would be considered a suitable safe in instances where the landlord does not permit it to be affixed to a wall or floor e.g., how heavy and secure is considered reasonable to meet the standard? | Where it is not possible to affix the safe to the floor or wall organisations may consider securely affixing the safe to an item that cannot be detached, picked up, or moved without considerable effort, e.g., a three-drawer (heavy) filing cabinet that is secure and is in a locked room/office. The intention of this requirement is to ensure barriers are in place that reasonably prevent young people being able to easily access, remove or break into the safe. Whilst the department does not promote any specific brand of safe, or retailer, this example would be considered appropriate as a standalone safe that is not affixed to the floor or wall in a locked room/office. DCSSDS Licensing or Regional Investment & Partnerships teams can be consulted on a case-by-case basis where variations to this need to be considered. |



Carriage of keys

| Question | Answer |
|---|--|
| What do we do if we cannot carry vehicle keys on our person (e.g. engaging in activities such as swimming) | In circumstances where it is not possible for a staff member to carry vehicle keys on their person, consideration should be given to other mechanisms to ensure vehicle keys are secure. Portable vehicle padlocks can be fastened to various parts of the car or on items such as a backpack. |
| Does the department recommend a specific brand of portable vehicle key padlock? | The department does not recommend any specific brand or supplier of portable vehicle key padlocks. The following padlock is an example of an appropriate padlock: https://surflock.com.au/ . The website also offers examples of where to fasten the padlock. |
| Why do we need to securely lock keys away while carrying them? | The intent is to provide a barrier to a child / young person easily obtaining the keys and taking the vehicle. In the event a child / young person obtains the secure storage device, having securely stored the keys will allow the support worker sufficient time to intervene or call for assistance. |
| What about keyless entry/start vehicles? | A Faraday pouch blocks the electromagnetic signal and would provide an additional safeguard from entering and starting a vehicle should a young person gain possession of the portable vehicle key padlock. |

Child restraints and staff training

| Question | Answer |
|--|---|
| What is the required standard for staff training in relation to child restraints? | Each organisation must ensure their duty of care is maintained for children and young people and that standards of care are met. Organisations must be satisfied their staff are capable of correctly installing, adjusting, and fastening any child restraint that is to be used before being rostered on shift with a child or young person that requires a child or other type of restraint i.e., a therapeutically prescribed vehicle restraints required to support a young person with a disability. |
| Will policies and procedures for staff training and child restraints be reviewed? | HSQF auditors will review organisational policies and procedures for the implementation of these requirements. DCSSDS Contract Officers will conducting environmental scans and may inspect child restraints if present in a vehicle. These officers may ask questions in relation to the organisational requirements and implementation, which may also require the inspection of documentary evidence. |
| Is training mandated? | Whilst no training is mandated by DCSSDS, formal training is available through Kidsafe QLD . |



Safety standards and roadworthy requirements

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| <p>How do we manage the safety standards and roadworthy requirements for fleet vehicles?</p> | <p>Organisations should have procedures in place for vehicles managed via a fleet arrangement which includes service and maintenance requirements. The following statement from a government manual regarding fleet vehicles provides an example:</p> <p><i>All vehicles are serviced and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommended service requirements and intervals and meet Department of Transport and Main Roads' Vehicle Standards.</i></p> <p>Organisations should also have documentation outlining the process in the event an issue is identified around performance or safety of a fleet vehicle (e.g. breakdown, brake failure etc).</p> |
| <p>What if we don't have a procedure currently in place for fleet vehicles?</p> | <p>If organisations do not have <u>vehicle safety and serviceability checks</u> in place for Fleet vehicles, please contact your Fleet provider to discuss.</p> |
| <p>My organisation utilises private use vehicles to transport children and young people. How do we manage safety standards and requirements?</p> | <p>Organisations should have policies and procedures that ensure safe and legal means of transport of children and young people in their care. Where an organisation requires youth workers to use their personal vehicles, the onus is on the organisation to ensure duty of care is maintained to children and young people and the standards of care are met. Organisations should seek independent legal advice regarding any implications for this decision.</p> <p>To provide additional clarity for organisations, DCSSDS has amended the Safety Standards and Roadworthy Requirements section of the guidelines to include the following:</p> <p><i>Organisations must ensure that all vehicles used to transport children and young people are registered and are appropriately maintained. This includes periodic vehicle safety and serviceability checks and regular servicing to ensure vehicles remain in a roadworthy condition. Organisations must have processes for reporting breakdowns, other performance issues and damage to vehicles. Queensland Government advice on periodic vehicle safety and serviceability checks, including maintenance of vehicles is available here.</i></p> <p>For organisations using private use vehicles to transport children and young people, the following requirements must be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all vehicles are registered and properly maintained • Conduct periodic safety and serviceability checks • Perform regular servicing for roadworthiness • Establish procedures for reporting vehicle issues. <p>While each organisations' policies and procedures may differ, a number of organisations PeakCare has consulted with who use private vehicles have a daily checklist which is completed by youth workers at the commencement of their shift. This checklist includes a requirement for the youth worker, as the owner of the vehicle, to confirm the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration and full comprehensive insurance is current • Seatbelts, windscreen wipers and tyres meet safety regulations • The vehicle is maintenance and serviced regularly. |

