Driver Safety Training

Pikes Peak Respite Services

For employees and contractors who transport clients during service shifts. This training teaches providers to prepare for a trip, drive safely, support passengers, and respond to emergencies.

Implementation status: Prepared for PPRS adoption. Approval date: 10-1-26, Effective date: 10-10-26

How to complete this training

Proposed PPRS standard: Complete this course before transporting clients and repeat it annually. Complete additional instruction after a preventable incident, an identified safety concern, or a change in vehicle equipment or client needs. These are proposed agency standards, not statements of a state training interval.

- Allow about 45 minutes for instruction and the quiz.
- Read pages 1–6, and answer all 10 questions on page 7. Passing score is 90 percent or higher. Review and correct every missed answer before completion.
- Any safety-critical error requires instruction and successful reassessment before transporting clients.
- Complete the acknowledgment and keep the scored quiz, and training record in the provider file.
- PPRS instruction; it is not a state driver certification, car seat technician credential, or authorization to perform specialized transportation. PPRS must separately approve the driver, vehicle, insurance, and client assignment before a client is transported.

Before implementation

Pikes Peak Respite Services is responsible for implementing this training, verifying insurance eligibility, obtaining a new MVR every year, maintaining required records, and communicating incident reporting procedures. Apply the insurance disqualifications in the Client Transportation Safety Policy before approving a driver. Do not backdate training or authorization records.

1 Driver and trip readiness

Obtain approval before driving clients

- Provide a current valid driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance. PPRS must verify that coverage permits the intended client transportation. An insurance card alone does not establish coverage for business use.
- Complete required screening and MVR review. Drive only after PPRS confirms eligibility under the adopted driver policy and carrier requirements. Report an expired or suspended license, insurance lapse, citation, crash, or other change promptly and before the next client trip.
- Use only a vehicle approved for the trip. A replacement or borrowed vehicle must be reviewed before use. Transport only authorized passengers; personal guests and errands are not part of the client trip.

Be fit to drive

Do not drive when alcohol, cannabis, another substance, medication effects, illness, or fatigue could impair judgment or control. This applies even when a substance is legal or prescribed. Contact your administrator for another arrangement if you cannot drive safely. Do not rely on caffeine to overcome unsafe fatigue.

Plan for the individual client

- Confirm the authorized destination and service plan. Check communication preferences, mobility assistance, elopement risks, seizure response instructions, sensory needs, and the required level of supervision.
- Know who will receive the client and how to contact that person. Verify the pickup and handoff plan, emergency contacts, and any approved safety equipment before departure.
- Plan the route, travel time, weather, fuel or charge, accessible stops, and safe parking. Program navigation while parked. Keep necessary emergency information available and protected from public view.
- If the client needs more assistance than you can provide while driving, stop planning the trip and contact the administrator to arrange adequate staffing or another approved option.

2 Vehicle and passenger checks

Check the vehicle before each trip

- Walk around the vehicle. Check for obvious tire damage, low tires, leaks, broken lights, blocked visibility, or obstacles. Check mirrors, windshield, wipers, fuel or charge, and warning indicators.
- Verify that brakes and steering feel normal before entering traffic. Do not transport with a defect that could affect safe operation; arrange repair and another approved transportation option.
- Keep passenger areas clean and clear. Secure bags, walkers, oxygen equipment when authorized, and other loose items so they cannot move during a sudden stop. Keep exits accessible.
- Confirm working seat belts, appropriate car seats or booster seats, a charged phone, and accessible emergency supplies. Check weather supplies such as water, a blanket, and winter gear when appropriate.

Backseat seating and child safety locks

PPRS rule: All clients under age 18 and all adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities must ride in the backseat with child safety locks engaged, subject to the individualized review and written exception process below. This is an agency requirement, not a statement that Colorado law requires all adults with IDD to ride in the backseat.

Before applying child locks for an adult, Pikes Peak Respite Services must assess safety needs, informed choice, applicable rights requirements, accessibility, and emergency exit ability with the client and authorized representative as appropriate. Diagnosis alone does not establish a need to restrict independent exit. Obtain any required person-centered plan documentation and rights review. Resolve conflicts through a written, safe alternative before transport; providers may not create their own exceptions.

Check child locks before departure and know how to open each rear door from outside and assist evacuation. Never use locks as punishment or leave a client unattended. If no safe rear seat or compatible lock is available, stop and obtain an approved alternative.

Seat every passenger safely

PPRS rule: The driver and every passenger must use a seat belt, car seat, or booster seat appropriate for their age, size, and needs on every trip. Each person must have an individual seating position. No lap riding or sharing seat belts. Do not move the vehicle until everyone is properly buckled in.

Colorado requires car seats or booster seats through age 8 and a seat belt or booster for ages 9–17. Rear-facing requirements depend on age and weight. Select the car seat or booster seat using the current CDOT guidance and the child's measurements; follow the car seat and vehicle instructions. Children under 9 must use the back seat when one is available. See the source links on page 9.

- Check seat belts, car seats, and booster seats for damage and proper fit. Check car seat and booster seat expiration dates, installation, and crash history. Do not improvise or add unapproved accessories. Ask a qualified car seat technician if unsure; postpone transport until the seat belt, car seat, or booster seat is safe.
- Use seat belts for crash protection, never to control behavior. Any specialized safety harness needs separate review, applicable authorization, and equipment-specific instruction.

Mobility assistance

Ask before assisting. Use only transfer techniques and equipment for which you have been trained. Do not lift a client beyond your ability. Wheelchair transport requires an appropriate vehicle and documented instruction in its lift or ramp, wheelchair securement, and separate passenger lap and shoulder belt system. This course alone does not qualify a provider to perform wheelchair securement.

3 Safe driving on every trip

Drive defensively

- Obey speed limits and reduce speed for weather, traffic, visibility, and passenger comfort. Allow at least 3–4 seconds of following distance in good conditions and more when conditions worsen.
- Scan well ahead and around the vehicle. Check mirrors and blind spots, signal early, and allow time for gradual turns and stops. Yield to pedestrians and cyclists. Avoid sudden maneuvers, tailgating, aggressive driving, and arguments with other drivers.
- Do not rush to recover lost time. Notify the receiving person or administrator of a delay only after parking safely. A late arrival is preferable to an unsafe trip.

Keep attention on driving

Colorado prohibits holding or manually using a mobile electronic device while driving, including at traffic signals. Set navigation before departure. Proposed PPRS rule: Do not make routine calls, text, record notes, adjust apps, eat, or perform client care while driving. Pull into a safe parking area before attending to these tasks. Use emergency communication when necessary to obtain immediate help.

- Do not turn around, reach into the back seat, or retrieve dropped items while moving. Keep music at a level that allows you to hear traffic and the client.
- If passenger needs distract you from driving, signal, slow down, and stop in a safe location before providing support.

Parking and backing

- Choose a legal, well-lit space with a safe loading area away from traffic. Prefer a parking layout that reduces backing. Check surroundings before moving and back slowly; a camera does not replace looking.
- Put the vehicle in park and apply the parking brake as appropriate before assisting passengers. Keep control of keys. Never leave a client alone in a vehicle, even briefly or with the engine running.

Weather and road conditions

Postpone or stop a trip when ice, snow, flooding, smoke, visibility, road closures, or vehicle condition makes travel unsafe. Do not drive around a road closure or into floodwater. Contact the administrator for a safe plan. No schedule or service expectation requires unsafe driving.

4 Client supervision and safe handoffs

Preserve dignity and communication

Explain the trip and what will happen next using the client's preferred communication method. Offer choices that do not compromise safety, such as music or a comfort item. Protect privacy; do not discuss other clients or leave records visible. Follow the client's plan and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Prevent elopement and unsafe exits

- Review known triggers and prevention strategies before departure. Stay close enough to provide the required support during parking, loading, unloading, and walking through traffic areas.
- Use the backseat and child safety locks as directed on page 3 and in the individual transportation plan. Confirm the required rights review or written exception before transporting. Never use improvised straps or devices to hold a client in place or lock a client in an unattended vehicle.
- If the client unbuckles, reaches toward the driver, tries to open a door, or becomes unsafe, keep control of the vehicle and stop safely as soon as possible. Do not attempt physical intervention while driving.
- Once parked, provide trained, plan-directed support. Do not resume travel until everyone is safely seated and secured. Call 911 for immediate danger and contact the administrator for further direction.

Make a direct handoff

Park safely, assist the client as planned, and confirm that the authorized receiving person accepts responsibility. Do not drop off a client at an unattended home or program unless independent arrival is specifically authorized in the plan. If the receiver is absent, maintain supervision and call the administrator. Do not leave to stay on schedule.

After every drop-off, physically check all seating areas and confirm every client has exited or been handed off. Check for belongings, equipment, and records before leaving the location.

Practice scenarios

A client drops a tablet and asks you to pick it up while you drive.
Expected response: Reassure the client and wait until safely parked before retrieving it.

You arrive at a program and the doors are locked.
Expected response: Maintain supervision, contact the receiver and administrator, and arrange a safe handoff. Do not leave the client outside.

5 Emergencies and reporting

Crash or roadside breakdown

- Stop safely, put the vehicle in park, use hazard lights, and assess immediate danger. Call 911 for injuries, fire, a dangerous roadway situation, or other immediate threat. Give your location and the number of people involved.
- Keep clients supervised. Stay in a protected location; do not evacuate into traffic. If fire, smoke, or another immediate threat requires evacuation, move to a safer area if possible and follow dispatcher instructions. Do not move an injured person unless necessary to escape immediate danger.
- Provide first aid or CPR only within your training and follow emergency instructions. Do not leave clients to inspect damage or exchange information. Obtain police and other driver information when it is safe to do so.
- Notify the administrator or designated on-call contact as soon as immediate safety needs are addressed. Arrange an approved replacement vehicle and safe handoff. Do not continue using a vehicle that may be unsafe.

Medical or behavioral emergency

Pull over safely. Follow the client's emergency plan and your training. Call 911 for an immediate medical emergency, serious injury, or imminent danger. For a seizure, protect against injury, time the event, do not hold the person down, and put nothing in their mouth. Follow dispatcher and client-specific instructions. Rescue medication may be provided only when separately authorized and within your training and PPRS scope; this course does not authorize medication administration.

Report facts promptly

Report collisions, injuries, unsafe exits, missing clients, seat belt, car seat, booster seat, or wheelchair safety equipment failures, significant near misses, vehicle defects, and license or insurance changes. Complete the required incident documentation promptly under PPRS procedures. Record the time, location, people involved, observations, actions, notifications, and follow-up. Do not speculate about fault, alter records, or post incident information on social media. The administrator handles required external notifications.