VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Version 2.0: June 2026

VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure the safety of staff, consumers, and other stakeholders when service delivery requires the use of vehicles. It is applicable when:

- staff transport consumers in Bilingual Care's owned, leased or hired vehicles
- staff use their private vehicle as part of service delivery,
- travel that occurs on the way to the work destination, between work destinations, and on the way back, and
- consumers are transported as part of outings, appointments, or program activities.

It applies to all staff, associated providers and volunteers, and meets relevant legislation, regulations, and Standards. It should be read in conjunction with Bilingual Care's *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*.

Applicable Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 1: The Person*
- *Standard 2: The Organisation*
- *Standard 3: The Care and Services*

Policy

The health and safety of all Bilingual Care staff, volunteers, contractors, consumers, and visitors are of utmost importance, including when service delivery requires the use of vehicles.

Bilingual Care is committed to ensuring that:

- vehicles used for transporting consumers are fit for purpose, roadworthy and appropriately maintained
- transportation of consumers is planned and conducted in a way that supports safety, comfort and individual needs
- staff who drive for work purposes are appropriately licensed, competent and fit for duty
- reasonable steps are taken to identify, assess and manage risks associated with vehicle use, and
- incidents, hazards and near misses related to vehicle use are reported and addressed promptly to support continuous improvement

Safe vehicle use is a shared responsibility. All staff are expected to comply with this policy, follow the procedures, and take reasonable care to protect the safety of consumers, themselves and others when using vehicles for work purposes.

Procedures

Roles and Responsibilities

The Leadership Team will:

- review the appropriateness of vehicles used by Bilingual Care staff for the types of work activities they are undertaking
- ensure comprehensive insurance and a roadside assistance scheme is in place for all Bilingual Care-owned vehicles and staff-owned vehicles used for transport services
- implement a maintenance program for vehicles used in its service delivery (owned, leased, and privately owned) to ensure safety, roadworthiness, reporting/clearing of defects and passenger comfort and
- review and analyse all vehicle incidents.

The Managing Director will:

- ensure relevant staff have valid driver's licenses and verify these annually in accordance with Bilingual Care *Worker Screening and Pre-employment Checks Policy and Procedure*
- ensure staff using their own vehicles have current registration and compulsory third party (CTP) insurance for their vehicles in place
- ensure staff transporting consumers have current criminal history checks in place
- ensure staff have properly maintained vehicles and all vehicles are checked prior to use
- escalate concerns about vehicles and staff driving capabilities to the Managing Director
- ensure all vehicles are supplied with equipment such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers (where required), reflective vests, reflective triangles, emergency contact numbers, torches, and other required emergency supplies and
- report all vehicle incidents to the Leadership Team.

Principles

- Consumer safety is the primary consideration at all times.
- Transport must be planned, risk-assessed and appropriate to the consumer's needs.
- Vehicles must be roadworthy, suitable for passengers and compliant with relevant laws.
- Staff must operate vehicles lawfully, responsibly and defensively, and
- Consumers must be treated with dignity at all times and be supported appropriately during transport.

Consumer Transport

1. Pre-Transport Requirements - before transporting consumers, drivers must:

- hold a current, valid driver's license appropriate for the vehicle type
- be fit for duty (not affected by fatigue, illness, alcohol, drugs or medication that may impair driving)
- be familiar with the vehicle's controls and safety features, and
- follow all road rules, speed limits and traffic laws

2. Vehicle Safety Checks - before use, drivers should ensure the vehicle:

- is registered and insured
- is suitable for the purpose and has enough fuel / battery charge to reach the required

destinations
- is clean, safe and mechanically sound, and
- has functioning seatbelts for every passenger, lights, indicators and horn are working

Vehicles must not be used if they are unsafe or unroadworthy. Staff must report to the Managing Director as soon as possible if there is an issue with the vehicle or its suitability so that the consumer can be informed and alternate arrangements made.

3. Consumer Suitability and Planning (Risk Assessment) - before transporting a consumer, consideration must be given to the consumer's *Care Plan* and *Risk Assessments* to identify:
- the consumer's mobility, comfort and support needs
- any behaviours of concern that need to be considered
- any assistance required for entry, exit or seating
- whether assistive equipment (e.g. mobility aids, wheelchairs or other equipment) is required and can be safely secured
- duration of travel and rest requirements, and
- weather conditions and route safety

Any identified risks and actions to reduce risks must be documented in the consumer's case notes. Transport must only occur where it can be done safely and appropriately.

4. Entry, Exit and Assistance - assistance should match the consumer's assessed level of independence and support needs. Where assistance is required:
- consumers should be assisted respectfully and safely when entering or exiting vehicles
- staff must determine how best to transfer mobility restricted consumers or handle wheelchairs or equipment, using good manual handling techniques to prevent an injury (see Bilingual Care's *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure* for more instruction), and
- staff must not attempt lifts or transfers that exceed their training or create unsafe manual handling risks.

5. During Transport

Seating and Restraints:
- all consumers must wear a seatbelt or approved restraint at all times while the vehicle is moving
- generally, consumers with behaviours of concern should not be seated behind the driver, and
- drivers must not commence travel until all passengers are safely seated and secured.

Safe Driving Practices - drivers must:
- drive to the speed limit, in accordance with road rules, and courteously
- adjust driving to suit road, traffic and weather conditions
- avoid distractions (e.g. mobile phone use, eating or playing excessively loud music), and
- not leave consumers unattended in a vehicle

Transport must prioritise smooth, predictable driving to support consumer comfort and safety.

6. Breakdown or Emergency Situations - in the event of a breakdown or emergency:
- prioritise safety of the consumer and yourself
- stop the vehicle in a safe location wherever possible

- contact Emergency Services (000) if required
- notify the Managing Director as soon as practicable with an update so that alternate arrangements with the consumer can be made (and rescheduling other consumers if required)

7. Accidents or Near Misses – any accident, incident or near miss that happens during transport services must be reported as per Bilingual Care's Incident Reporting policies and procedures (see Incident Reporting section below).

- prioritise safety of the consumer and yourself
- stop the vehicle in a safe location wherever possible
- contact Emergency Services (000) if required / seek medical treatment
- notify the Managing Director as soon as practicable with an update so that alternate arrangements with the consumer can be made (and rescheduling other consumers if required)

If the incident involves a collision/damage to other vehicles or property, then additional details of the other parties involved must also be taken, including:

- full name/s
- driver's license number or other identification
- registration number (if a vehicle is involved)
- details of the other party's insurer and
- contact number/s.

If Police attend the incident, staff are expected to provide them with all relevant information about themselves, the incident, and any details they have about the other party.

Depending on the severity of the incident, vehicles involved in accidents must not be reused until deemed safe by a qualified mechanic. The Managing Director may request a roadworthy certificate to confirm the vehicle is in sound mechanical condition and safe to drive.

Post Transport Actions - after transporting consumers:

- any safety concerns, vehicle issues or consumer distress should be reported to the Managing Director
- equipment or mobility aids should be returned or stored appropriately (depending on the consumer's needs)
- vehicles should be parked in a safe and legal parking area, and locked/secured.

Hazard Management

Staff must apply normal hazard and risk management techniques in their day-to-day work and whenever driving any vehicle.

Certain driving environments will present a greater hazard than others. Staff must take the following actions to manage the risks, such as:

- not drive unlicensed
- not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- conduct pre-use safety checks of vehicles (see below)
- where possible, ensure consumers being transported are not sitting behind the driver and are secured appropriately
- always follow all applicable road rules
- take regular breaks from continuous driving as required, and at least every two hours
- avoid driving vehicles in off-road environments
- report any vehicle accidents immediately to the Police and Managing Director

- inform the Managing Director when entering areas where there is an increased potential for vehicle immobilisation and
- report immobilisation events including breakdown and bogging as an incident in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Incident Management* policies and procedures, to enable better information to be gathered regarding the suitability of vehicles and the training provided to staff.

Vehicle Safety Checks

For business-owned vehicles, Bilingual Care will ensure the manufacturer's specified service schedule is being adhered to and any identified vehicle faults or wear and tear items are repaired. The vehicle must not be used if there is a mechanical concern, or where the pre-safety check identifies an issue with the vehicle's safety. The Managing Director will arrange for repair of the vehicle before it is returned to service.

In all cases, staff must undertake vehicle pre-use safety checks prior to driving. Staff must, at a minimum:

- ensure the manufacturer's specified service schedule is being adhered to
- inspect all external lights (grime can reduce their effectiveness by up to 40%)
- inspect wiper blades to ensure they clear the windscreen effectively
- clean the windscreen and rear window to ensure good visibility
- periodically check all fluid levels - engine oil, windscreen washer fluid and the radiator coolant
- check tyre pressure and condition and
- ensure mirrors are present and oriented correctly for use.

Seat Belts

By law, all occupants of a vehicle must wear a seatbelt. If a seat belt is starting to show signs of wear and tear, (frayed, not retracting back) the vehicle needs to be seen by an authorised repairer. For Bilingual Care-owned vehicles (where applicable), staff should refer the matter to the Managing Director.

If transporting consumers who can't wear a seat belt, the consumer must have a doctor's certificate and staff must carry this approval with them when transporting those consumers.

Mobile Phones

Staff must not use a hand-held mobile telephone when driving. Staff must pull over and stop the vehicle's engine before answering or making phone calls or reading or responding to texts.

Speed and Traffic Infringements

Staff must drive at a speed that suits the road conditions, vehicle, weather conditions and their driving experience. staff must not exceed the applicable speed limit for the road used.

In the event a staff member is issued with an infringement notice while driving as part of their usual duties for Bilingual Care, the staff member is responsible for payment of the infringement notice and any demerit points.

In the event a staff member is issued with an infringement notice while driving a Bilingual Care-owned vehicle, the staff member will be nominated as the responsible driver and will be accountable for payment of the infringement and any demerit points.

Incident Reporting

If a vehicle incident occurs, incident reporting procedures must be followed as per the *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure* (for consumer injury/harm) *and Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure* (for staff injury/harm).

Depending on the nature of the incident and outcomes of the investigation, a review of the risk assessment and strategies for preventing an incident will be conducted before resuming any further services using vehicles.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*
- Worker Screening and Pre-employment Checks *Policy and Procedure*
- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Care Plans*
- *Risk Assessments*
- *Incident Reports*
- *Vehicle Inspection Records*
- *Staff Records*
- *Risk Register*

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least every two years by the Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, consumer, and other stakeholder feedback, where relevant.

Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Bilingual Care's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No.	Issue Date	Document Owner
2.0	26/06/2026	MD
Version History		
Version No.	**Reviewed Date**	**Revision Description**