

CareLink Home Health Care LLC

Employee Handbook

Empowering Independence. Providing Compassionate Care.

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CareLink Home Health Care LLC

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1. Introduction

Welcome to **CareLink Home Health Care LLC**. We are pleased to have you join our team of dedicated professionals committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. As a Personal Care Assistant (PCA), you play a critical role in helping individuals maintain their independence, dignity, and quality of life within the comfort of their homes.

This handbook is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide to your responsibilities, the policies of our agency, and the standards we uphold. It outlines what is expected of you as a CareLink employee and what you can expect from us in return.

At CareLink, we value compassion, integrity, and professionalism. We believe that every individual deserves to be treated with respect and kindness, and we are committed to delivering person-centered care that reflects these values. Whether you are new to the PCA field or bring years of experience, you are an essential part of our mission to provide high-quality, reliable, and respectful home-based services.

Please read this handbook carefully and refer to it whenever you have questions about your role, agency policies, or workplace practices. Should you need further clarification, our administrative team is always here to support you.

We welcome you to CareLink Home Health Care LLC and look forward to a productive and rewarding working relationship.

2. Mission & Vision

Mission: To support individuals in living independently and with dignity through high-quality personal care services.

Vision: To be Minnesota's leading provider of home-based personal care by empowering staff and respecting client choices.

3. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

CareLink Home Health Care LLC is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic under federal, state, or local law.

Employment decisions are based on merit, qualifications, and organizational needs. We are dedicated to ensuring that our work environment remains free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. All employees are expected to support this policy and contribute to a culture of inclusion and respect.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- Recruitment and hiring
- Compensation and benefits
- Training and development
- Promotion and advancement
- Discipline and termination

We encourage any employee who feels they have been subject to discrimination or harassment to report the incident to a supervisor or the Program Manager immediately. All complaints will be investigated promptly and confidentially to the extent possible.

CareLink strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee who files a complaint or participates in an investigation.

4. Employment Practices

CareLink Home Health Care LLC adheres to employment practices that are compliant with Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and federal employment laws. The following guidelines govern your employment with our agency:

Eligibility for Employment

- All PCA employees must be at least **18 years of age** (or 16 with DHS-approved exception).
- All applicants must complete and pass a **Minnesota Department of Human Services background study** before starting any work with clients.
- All staff must submit required identification documents and complete a W-4 form and I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification.

Employment Classification

Employees are classified as:

- **Full-time:** regularly scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week
- **Part-time:** regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week
- **On-call:** not scheduled regularly but available as needed

At-Will Employment

All employment with CareLink is considered “**at-will**,” meaning either the employee or CareLink may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, unless otherwise specified in a written agreement.

Orientation and Probation

New employees must complete:

- Orientation and training required by DHS and CareLink
- A **90-day probationary period**, during which performance and suitability for the role will be evaluated.

Employee Files and Records

- Employee records are maintained securely and confidentially.
- Employees must report any changes in name, address, phone number, emergency contacts, or work eligibility status.

Non-Compete and Conflict of Interest

Employees may not solicit CareLink clients for personal employment or work with clients independently outside of CareLink. Employees are expected to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain professional boundaries at all times.

5. Code of Conduct

As a representative of CareLink Home Health Care LLC, every employee is expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct. Our Code of Conduct ensures the safety, dignity, and well-being of the individuals we serve, while maintaining the integrity of our organization.

All PCA employees must adhere to the following standards:

- **Treat all clients with dignity and respect:** Every individual has the right to be treated with compassion, patience, and understanding. Discriminatory, abusive, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
- **Arrive on time and perform duties as scheduled:** Timeliness and reliability are essential. Unscheduled absences or habitual tardiness negatively affect client care and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Do not use client property or funds without written authorization:** Personal use of a client's phone, vehicle, credit cards, or money is strictly prohibited unless approved in writing by the client or their legal representative and documented in the service plan.
- **Maintain clear and professional communication with all stakeholders:** This includes clients, family members, coworkers, case managers, and CareLink staff. All communication should be respectful and focused on service-related matters.
- **No drugs, alcohol, or weapons on the job:** Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, or weapons during work hours or while on a client's property is grounds for immediate termination and possible legal consequences.

Additional expectations include:

- Keeping personal phone use to a minimum during shifts
- Wearing appropriate, professional attire
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Reporting any concerns or incidents to the Program Manager promptly

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

6. Job Description & Duties

As a **Personal Care Assistant (PCA)** at CareLink Home Health Care LLC, your primary responsibility is to support clients with tasks that promote their independence, safety, and well-being within their homes and communities. You will work under the direction of the client, their responsible party (if applicable), and within the parameters of the authorized care plan.

PCA Duties May Include:

- **Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs):**
Help with personal hygiene tasks such as bathing, grooming, dressing, toileting, and mobility (transfers, walking, repositioning).
- **Light Housekeeping Related to Client Care:**
Cleaning tasks directly related to the client's personal care, such as changing bed linens, laundry, washing dishes, and tidying living spaces used by the client.
- **Meal Preparation and Feeding:**
Preparing nutritious meals according to the client's dietary needs and assisting with feeding, when necessary.
- **Medication Reminders (Non-Administration):**
Reminding clients to take prescribed medications at scheduled times, without handling or administering medications directly.
- **Accompanying to Medical Appointments:**
Providing transportation or escorting clients to and from doctor appointments, therapy sessions, or other approved community activities, when included in the care plan.
- **Observing and Reporting Changes in Client Conditions:**
Monitoring for changes in the client's physical, emotional, or cognitive health and promptly reporting concerns to the Program Manager or designated staff.

Important Note:

PCAs are **not allowed** to perform skilled medical procedures, administer medications, or provide services not authorized in the client's PCA care plan. Performing unauthorized duties may result in disciplinary action or legal consequences.

7. Training & Orientation

All PCA employees of **CareLink Home Health Care LLC** must complete mandatory training and orientation in accordance with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) requirements prior to providing any services.

Initial Orientation Requirements

Before beginning work, each PCA must complete:

- **DHS PCA Online Training and Certification Test**
All PCAs are required by law to complete the DHS PCA training and pass the certification test. A copy of the certificate must be submitted to CareLink prior to client assignment.
- **PCA/CFSS support workers:** Individuals who help people with daily tasks in either PCA or CFSS (or current CSG workers)
<https://registrationtraining.dhs.state.mn.us/?BusinessUnitID=16>
- **Agency Orientation**
CareLink will provide an orientation covering:
 - Roles and responsibilities of a PCA
 - Client rights and protections
 - Reporting maltreatment of vulnerable adults and minors
 - HIPAA and data privacy laws
 - Emergency procedures and safety protocols
 - Cultural sensitivity and professional conduct

Ongoing & Annual Training

PCAs must complete a **minimum of 12 hours of training annually**. This includes:

- Annual refresher training on vulnerable adult and maltreatment reporting
- Review of emergency response and client rights
- Updates on DHS policy changes and CareLink protocols
- Any additional training deemed necessary for client safety and quality care

CPR and First Aid

CareLink strongly recommends current **CPR and First Aid certification**. In some client-specific cases, these certifications may be required.

Documentation

All training and orientation completion records are maintained in the employee file. Failure to complete required training may result in removal from the schedule or termination.

8. Client Rights & Confidentiality

CareLink Home Health Care LLC is committed to upholding the rights of all individuals receiving services. As a PCA, you play a key role in respecting, protecting, and promoting those rights at all times.

Client Rights

Each client receiving PCA services has the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect
- Make decisions about their care and daily life
- Receive services in a manner that supports independence and choice
- Be free from abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, and retaliation
- Receive services in a safe, sanitary, and respectful environment
- Privacy in personal care and communications
- Confidential treatment of all personal and health information
- Access their own records
- File grievances or complaints without fear of retaliation
- Choose or refuse a PCA

These rights are guaranteed under **Minnesota Statutes, section 245D.04** and the **Minnesota Home Care Bill of Rights**.

Confidentiality

All client information is **confidential** and must be protected in compliance with **HIPAA** and Minnesota privacy laws. As a PCA, you must:

- Not share any client information (medical, personal, financial) with unauthorized persons
- Refrain from discussing client information in public areas, with other clients, or on social media
- Keep all paper documentation and electronic records secure
- Report any suspected data breaches immediately to the Program Manager

Breach of Confidentiality

Any violation of client privacy or confidentiality policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under federal and state law.

9. Service Documentation

Accurate and timely documentation is critical for compliance with state and federal regulations and for ensuring proper delivery of services to our clients. All PCA employees are responsible for maintaining detailed and truthful records of the care they provide.

Daily Documentation Requirements

Each PCA must:

- Record all services provided to the client daily, as outlined in the client's care plan
- Use only **DHS-approved timesheets** or **electronic visit verification (EVV)** systems if applicable
- Ensure documentation is **legible**, complete, and accurate
- Obtain the **client's or responsible party's signature** to verify each shift worked

What Must Be Documented:

- Date and time of service
- Exact start and end times
- Tasks completed during the visit
- Observations regarding client health or behavior changes
- Notes on any incidents, refusals of care, or concerns

Timesheet Submission

- Timesheets must be submitted **by the agency's deadline** (typically bi-weekly).
- Incomplete or unsigned timesheets **will not be processed** until corrected.
- Late submission may result in **delayed payroll**.

Fraud Warning

Falsifying documentation, including timesheets or service logs, is considered **fraud**. This includes:

- Claiming hours not worked
- Overlapping shifts
- Altering or forging client signatures

Fraud is a **criminal offense** and will result in immediate termination, reporting to the Department of Human Services, and potential legal action.

Retention and Review

All documentation must be retained by CareLink for a minimum of **5 years**, per DHS regulations. Audits may occur at any time, and employees are expected to cooperate fully.

10. Abuse Prevention & Reporting

CareLink Home Health Care LLC is committed to protecting vulnerable individuals from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. As a PCA, you are legally and ethically required to report any suspected or known maltreatment immediately.

Definitions

- **Abuse:** Physical, emotional, or sexual harm inflicted on a client
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care or supervision, resulting in harm or risk
- **Financial Exploitation:** Unauthorized use of a client's money, property, or identity for personal gain

Mandatory Reporting

All PCA employees are **mandated reporters** under the **Minnesota Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Act (MAVA)** and the **Maltreatment of Minors Act**.

You must report any suspected or known:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Financial exploitation
- Inappropriate or dangerous behavior by staff or others

How to Report

1. **Immediately contact the Program Manager**
2. **File a report with MAARC (Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center)**
Phone: **1-844-880-1574**
Open 24/7
3. For minors, call the **county child protection agency** where the child resides

All reports must be made **as soon as possible**, but no later than **24 hours** after learning about the incident.

Internal Follow-Up

After a report is made:

- CareLink will investigate the concern in compliance with DHS procedures
- Findings will be documented and action taken as appropriate
- Cooperation in the investigation process is mandatory

Protection from Retaliation

You are protected from retaliation for reporting in good faith. Any attempt to intimidate or punish a reporter is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

11. Emergency Procedures

The safety and well-being of our clients is the top priority at CareLink Home Health Care LLC. All PCA employees must be prepared to respond to emergencies quickly, calmly, and appropriately.

Types of Emergencies

- Medical emergencies (e.g., chest pain, unconsciousness, seizures, falls)
- Fire or environmental hazards
- Behavioral or mental health crises
- Missing clients
- Natural disasters (e.g., severe weather, power outages)

Immediate Response Guidelines

1. **Call 911 First:**
In any life-threatening or medical emergency, dial **911** immediately.
2. **Ensure Client Safety:**
Remove the client from danger, if possible. Follow any client-specific emergency plans if one exists.
3. **Notify the Agency:**
After calling emergency services, report the situation to the **Program Manager** or on-call supervisor as soon as safely possible:
 - Phone: **(612) 459-8636**
4. **Stay with the Client:**
Remain with the client until help arrives, unless doing so places you at risk.
5. **Provide Information:**
Be prepared to give emergency responders details about the client's medical condition, medications, known allergies, and care plan if available.

Fire Safety

- Know the layout of the client's home and the location of exits
- Use "**R.A.C.E.**" in the event of a fire:
 - **Rescue** – Remove the client from danger
 - **Alarm** – Call 911
 - **Confine** – Close doors/windows to contain fire
 - **Evacuate/Extinguish** – Exit the home or use a fire extinguisher if safe

Incident Reporting

Any emergency event must be documented and reported to the Program Manager **within 24 hours**. The report must include:

- Date and time

- Nature of emergency
- Action taken
- Persons notified
- Outcome of the situation

Preparedness

All PCA staff are expected to:

- Be familiar with each client's emergency contact information and health history
- Maintain CPR/First Aid certification if required
- Participate in emergency preparedness training as provided by CareLink

12. HIPAA & Data Privacy

CareLink Home Health Care LLC complies with the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** and **Minnesota Data Privacy Laws** to protect the confidentiality and security of client information. As a PCA, you have a legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard all private data you access during your employment.

What is Protected Health Information (PHI)?

Protected Health Information includes any information related to a client's:

- Medical condition or diagnosis
- Medications and treatment plans
- Personal identification (e.g., name, address, phone number, Social Security number)
- Health insurance information
- Service delivery or billing records

Your Responsibilities Under HIPAA

As a PCA, you must:

- Access only the information needed to perform your job duties
- Keep client records secure and confidential
- Never share client information with anyone who is not authorized
- Avoid discussing client information in public places or with others not involved in care
- Report any suspected breach of privacy to the Program Manager immediately

Examples of Privacy Violations:

- Leaving documents with client information in plain sight
- Discussing a client's condition with another client or unauthorized person
- Posting about work or clients on social media
- Emailing or texting client information without secure methods

Penalties for Violations

Violating HIPAA or data privacy laws can result in:

- Immediate termination of employment
- Civil penalties and fines
- Criminal charges in serious cases

CareLink takes data privacy seriously. All employees will receive training on HIPAA and must sign a confidentiality agreement upon hire.

13. Cultural Competency

At CareLink Home Health Care LLC, we serve individuals from a wide variety of cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender, and disability backgrounds. Providing culturally competent care is essential to building trust, promoting dignity, and meeting the unique needs of each client.

Our Commitment

CareLink is committed to:

- Respecting the cultural identities, values, and preferences of all clients and their families
- Delivering services in a way that is sensitive to cultural differences
- Creating an inclusive and respectful work environment for all employees

Your Responsibilities as a PCA

As a PCA, you are expected to:

- Acknowledge and respect each client's cultural, religious, and personal values—even if they differ from your own
- Avoid making assumptions or judgments based on a client's appearance, beliefs, or background
- Use inclusive and respectful language at all times
- Be open to learning about different cultures, customs, and communication styles
- Communicate effectively, even when language or cultural barriers exist
- Request interpretation services if there are communication difficulties due to language differences

Examples of Cultural Sensitivity

- Asking a client how they prefer to be addressed
- Being mindful of dietary restrictions based on religion or culture
- Respecting personal space and gender preferences in care
- Avoiding slang or culturally inappropriate language

Discrimination or Harassment

CareLink has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, harassment, or bias based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or cultural background. Violations of this policy may result in immediate disciplinary action.

14. Work Hours & Scheduling

CareLink Home Health Care LLC is committed to providing consistent and reliable care to our clients while maintaining flexible and supportive scheduling for our PCA employees. Effective time management and communication are essential to ensuring quality service delivery.

Scheduling Assignments

- PCAs are scheduled based on client needs, availability, and location.
- Work schedules are typically created in advance by the Program Manager or Scheduling Coordinator.
- You will be informed of your assignment(s), including client name, address, authorized hours, and start/end times.

Reporting to Work

- Arrive on time and be prepared to begin duties as scheduled.
- You must **clock in and out accurately** using the method designated by CareLink (e.g., paper timesheet or electronic system).
- If you are delayed, lost, or unable to report for your shift, notify the office immediately at **(612) 459-8636**.

Call-Outs and No-Shows

- If you cannot report for a scheduled shift, you must notify CareLink **as soon as possible**, preferably at least **4 hours in advance**.
- A **no-call/no-show** (failure to report without notice) may result in disciplinary action or termination.

Shift Changes and Coverage

- Do not switch shifts or cover another employee's client without prior approval from the Program Manager.
- Unauthorized shift coverage or overtime is **not permitted** and may not be paid.

Breaks and Meals

- For shifts exceeding 6 hours, a **30-minute unpaid meal break** is allowed if the schedule permits.
- CareLink will work with you to accommodate breaks where possible, keeping client needs in mind.

Overtime

- All overtime must be **approved in advance** by management. Unauthorized overtime may result in corrective action and will not be compensated.

Client Absences

- If a client cancels or is not home during your scheduled time, notify the office immediately. Do not leave the premises without instructions.

15. Payroll & Timesheets

Timely and accurate payroll is a priority at CareLink Home Health Care LLC. To ensure you are paid correctly and on time, it is essential that you follow the agency's payroll and timesheet procedures carefully.

Pay Schedule

- Employees are paid **bi-weekly**, typically every other **Friday**.
- The pay period runs from **Thursday through Wednesday** of the second week.
- A payroll calendar is provided annually and is available upon request.

Timesheet Requirements

- All PCAs must use **DHS-approved timesheets** or an **electronic visit verification (EVV)** system, if required by the client's payer source.
- Each shift must include:
 - Client's full name
 - Date of service
 - Start and end time (to the minute)
 - Tasks completed (matching the care plan)
 - PCA's and client's (or responsible party's) **signature**

- Timesheets must be submitted **by the designated deadline** (usually Monday following the end of the pay period).

Submission Methods

- Timesheets can be submitted via:
 - Email to payroll@carelinkmn.com
 - Fax: (612) 564-7778
 - In person or drop-off at the office
- Late or incomplete timesheets may result in **delayed paychecks**.

Direct Deposit

- CareLink encourages all employees to enroll in **direct deposit** to ensure timely and secure payroll delivery.
- Paper checks are available for employees who do not enroll in direct deposit but may experience mailing delays.

Corrections and Disputes

- If you believe your paycheck is incorrect, contact the Payroll Department immediately.
- CareLink will investigate and correct verified discrepancies as quickly as possible.

Fraud Prevention

- Falsifying timesheets, including altering hours or forging signatures, is **strictly prohibited** and may lead to termination, legal consequences, and reporting to DHS.

16. Corrective Action & Termination

To maintain a safe, professional, and high-quality care environment, CareLink Home Health Care LLC expects all employees to adhere to agency policies, professional standards, and applicable laws. Failure to meet these expectations may result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

Corrective Action Process

Corrective action may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension (with or without pay)
- Reassignment or retraining
- Termination of employment

CareLink reserves the right to bypass steps in the disciplinary process depending on the seriousness of the violation.

Examples of Conduct Requiring Corrective Action

- Repeated tardiness or absenteeism without proper notice
- Insubordination or refusal to follow instructions.
- Breach of client confidentiality or HIPAA violation
- Providing services outside the care plan or without authorization
- Inaccurate or fraudulent timesheet documentation
- Use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or being under the influence during work hours
- Mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of clients
- Theft or misuse of client property
- Harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate conduct toward clients or coworkers

Immediate Grounds for Termination

Some actions may result in immediate dismissal without warning, including:

- Physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of a client
- Theft or financial exploitation
- Falsification of timesheets or documentation
- Working under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Violating state/federal laws or licensing regulations

Voluntary Termination

- Employees are asked to provide a **minimum two-week written notice** if resigning.
- Final paychecks will be issued according to Minnesota law.

Exit Process

- All CareLink property (e.g., ID badges, documents) must be returned on or before the last day of work.
- A final exit interview may be conducted to gather feedback.

17. Grievance Procedures

CareLink Home Health Care LLC is committed to maintaining a respectful, fair, and supportive work environment. We recognize that concerns or misunderstandings may arise during employment, and we encourage employees to bring forward issues so they can be addressed constructively and promptly.

What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a formal complaint or concern raised by an employee related to:

- Working conditions
- Scheduling or supervision
- Discrimination or harassment
- Disciplinary actions
- Violations of company policy or unethical conduct

Steps for Filing a Grievance

1. **Informal Resolution**

Whenever possible, we encourage employees to discuss concerns directly with their immediate supervisor or the Program Manager. Many issues can be resolved through open communication.

2. **Formal Written Complaint**

If the issue is not resolved informally or involves serious concerns (e.g., harassment, retaliation), employees may submit a written grievance to:

carelinkmn@gmail.com or deliver it to the office at:
10650 County Rd 81, Suite 205C, Maple Grove, MN 55369

The written grievance should include:

- The date of the incident
 - Description of the concern or problem
 - Names of individuals involved (if applicable)
 - Any steps taken to resolve the issue.
 - The desired resolution or outcome
- ### 3. **Investigation & Review**
- The Program Manager or designated HR personnel will review the grievance within **10 business days**.
 - An investigation may include interviews with involved parties and a review of documentation.
 - All efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality.
- ### 4. **Resolution**
- A written response outlining the decision and any action to be taken will be provided to the employee.
 - If the employee is unsatisfied with the outcome, an appeal may be submitted for further review by upper management.

Non-Retaliation Policy

Employees will not be retaliated against for filing a grievance in good faith. Any form of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be subject to corrective action.

18. Acknowledgement Form

This acknowledgment form confirms that you, as an employee of **CareLink Home Health Care LLC**, have received, read, and understood the contents of the **PCA Employee Handbook**. It also confirms your commitment to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards outlined in the handbook.

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the **CareLink Home Health Care LLC PCA Employee Handbook**. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

I understand that the policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of CareLink Home Health Care LLC and that I will be notified of any such changes.

I agree to uphold the standards of conduct, confidentiality, and professionalism expected of me and to provide care in a manner that reflects the values and mission of CareLink Home Health Care LLC.