

Security Procedures for the Van Program

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Knowledge and prevention are the best way to ensure that in the event of a security threat on board the van, you know proper procedures. These guidelines are to help you respond in a manner that is safe and orderly and that manages the risks at hand.

Security Check: When doing your routine pre-trip check, take a look around the inside and outside of the van for anything that looks unusual, out of place, or not normally there. If you notice something or have a question or concern, please come into the office to report it immediately.

Handling Conflict or Potential Acts of Violence: These behaviors could be caused by changes in medication or medical condition. The individual may become angry or distraught with you, the volunteer, or another.

Remain calm and do not overreact

Use a calm voice to diffuse the situation

Park the van in a public and safe place

Unload the other passengers if the situation is not resolved or escalates

If need be, have the assistant call: the client's emergency contact to come and assist or call the office to send out a staff member; or 911 in extreme situations.

Dealing with a Hostage Situation: If you notice any suspicious individuals near the van, keep the doors closed and drive away carefully.

These are general strategies to use in the event that the van is commandeered and the passengers are held hostage.

If someone manages to board the van and threatens to take the van and passengers hostage, do not confront the individual; rather, follow all instructions, unless those instructions would increase the actual or potential danger to you and the passengers.

Remain calm and do not show signs of outward panic.

Try to alert authorities, but do not antagonize the hijacker.

Try to build a relationship with the hijacker, and keep him or her talking with you. Be both patient and assertive.

You may be able to drive by the home of a neighbor who might be watching for the client and, in that way, alert the family that something is wrong when the van does not stop. The family may call the office and report the situation.

Remain in this mode until emergency help arrives.

In all cases, be sure that all actions are reported and calls are made as soon as it is safe to do so.

Van Evacuation Procedures: This is a procedure that must always--and only--be used when you determine that the risk of staying in the vehicle is greater than the risk of being outside the vehicle. The most common situations that call for evacuation are:

When a van breaks down in a very dangerous place with poor visibility for oncoming traffic (for example, on a sharp curve or on a steep hill)

Accident

Fire on board

Recommended Sequence of Actions

1. Communicate clearly and calmly that the van must be evacuated and let the passengers know where they will exit and where to meet after they are safely outside.
2. Evacuate all ambulatory passengers first, instructing one to take the fire extinguisher.
3. Next use van volunteers on board to help the frail or disabled passengers exit safely.
4. When evacuating non-ambulatory people:
 - Use the web cutter to cut through all securement straps.
 - Use the lift, if possible. You may need to use the manual hand pump.
 - If the lift is not working carefully drag passengers through the door.
 - If the doors are blocked, then use the emergency exit windows with help from the outside.
5. After everyone is outside, take the passengers to a safe place to assess everyone's condition and make emergency calls as needed.

Dust Storms: In the event of limited visibility, please pull off to the side of the road in a safe place and turn off your lights. Remain there until you feel that it is safe to proceed.