



# Road-Based Transportation for Mental Health Consumers Policy

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## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the mandatory requirements for the road-based transportation of referred, detained or involuntary mental health consumers. Road-based transportation includes transports between hospitals, from home to hospital and from the community to hospital. The policy aims to ensure consistency and assist Health Service Providers to implement provisions within the *Mental Health Act 2014*.

This policy is a mandatory requirement for Health Service Providers under the *Mental Health Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(c) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

Legislation relevant to this policy includes the *Mental Health Act 2014* and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following:

- [MP 0012/16 Mental Health Consumers Who Are Missing or Absent Without Leave Policy](#)
- [MP 0180/23 Work Health and Safety Management Policy](#)
- [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards \(2nd ed.\)](#)
- [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care](#)
- [Statewide Mental Health Bed Access, Capacity and Escalation Policy](#).

## 2. Applicability

This policy is applicable to:

- Health Service Provider staff members who are responsible for organising the road-based transportation of referred, detained or involuntary mental health consumers
- Health Service Provider staff members who receive mental health consumers who have been transported under a transport order
- Health Service Providers who employ the abovementioned staff.

Requirements for staff relating to transport officers are applicable where a transport provider is contracted to deliver mental health patient transport services from the area.

The requirements contained within this policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider.

The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

### **3. Policy Requirements**

#### **3.1 Underlying principles**

Staff members must apply this policy in accordance with the following underlying principles:

- minimising and, where possible, eliminating the use of restraint
- delivering person-centred care
- using recovery-oriented practice
- being culturally competent
- using a trauma-informed approach.

#### **3.2 Determining the most appropriate means of transport**

The *Mental Health Act 2014* specifies that a medical practitioner or authorised mental health practitioner cannot make a transport order unless satisfied that no other safe means of taking the person is reasonably available (section 29(2)(b)).

Staff members must consider whether a mental health consumer can be transported without a transport order, in consultation with other staff, such as Aboriginal health workers and peer workers, where relevant. This includes consideration of the risks to the health and safety of staff who may be involved in the transport.

Where the mental health consumer is at low risk of harm to themselves or others, staff members may:

- engage a carer, family member or personal support person to undertake the transport or
- use a fleet vehicle to transport the mental health consumer themselves.

Health Service Providers must develop and implement local policies and protocols about the use of fleet vehicles when transporting consumers without a transport order.

#### **3.3 Using transport officers to undertake transport**

Where it is unsafe for a carer, family member, personal support person or staff member to carry out the transport, a transport order must be issued for transport officers or police officers to carry out the transport. In the first instance, staff must engage transport officers, where available, for road-based transport of mental health consumers subject to transport orders.

Health Service Providers must provide staff members with current information regarding the contact details and hours of operation of transport providers, as well as protocols for requesting road-based transport services.

In areas where transport officers are only available during specific hours, bookings may be made outside of these hours. Transport officers will then action bookings during operational hours.

The requesting public health service facility must cover the cost of the transportation service. Receiving services are not required to pay for the transportation of mental health consumers requested by private services – these services will be invoiced directly.

### **3.4 Engaging the WA Police Force to assist with transports**

Use of police officers in mental health consumer transports must be a last resort.

Where transport officers are available, WA Police Force assistance during road-based transport must only be requested when the consumer continues to pose a significant imminent risk of serious harm to themselves or others after the application of appropriate clinical management strategies to mitigate significant transport risks. Requesting public health service facilities must manage identified transport risks while awaiting attendance by the WA Police Force.

Health Service Providers must provide staff members with current contact information and protocols for requesting WA Police Force assistance for road-based transport of mental health consumers under transport orders.

### **3.5 Requesting road-based transports using a transport order**

#### **Transport risk rating**

The likelihood and consequences of any risks occurring during road-based transport must be assessed based on a clinical assessment of the mental health consumer using an approved transport risk rating form. An approved transport risk rating form is to be used by Health Service Provider staff members when requesting road-based transport for consumers. The approved transport risk rating forms are:

- [Mental Health Transport Risk Rating Form](#) for metropolitan Health Service Providers
- [WACHS Mental Health Transport Risk Assessment Form](#) for WA Country Health Service (WACHS).

The transport risk rating form must be completed by an appropriate health professional who has assessed or treated the mental health consumer. The risk assessment must consider the impact of any clinical interventions aimed at alleviating the transport risk, particularly the consumer's risk of causing harm to themselves or others. The risk rating must be reassessed if any controls to mitigate risks have been implemented.

Where one or more Health Service Providers seek to amend or replace an approved transport risk rating form or create an additional form for a particular cohort or region, they must collaborate with each other, transport providers and the WA Police Force, as appropriate.

New or amended forms must align with the terms and conditions of any relevant transport provider contract(s), relevant WA Police Force policies and protocols, and support consistency in:

- a) decision-making when making road-based transport arrangements for mental health consumers who are subject to a transport order
- b) facilitating effective communication and handover of transport risks between public health service facilities, transport officers and, when necessary, police officers.

A link to the new or amended form is to be provided to [mhu@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:mhu@health.wa.gov.au) for inclusion in this policy.

### **Issuing a transport order**

Before issuing a transport order to transport officers or the police, the requesting public health service facility must contact the receiving hospital to confirm that the mental health consumer can be sent there. The requesting public health service facility must provide the receiving hospital with an estimated time of arrival once transport officer and/or police officer availability is known.

Health Service Provider staff members must use the appropriate legal form, accompanied by the completed transport risk rating form to request the transport of a mental health consumer:

- [Form 4A \(Transport Order\)](#) is to be used where a medical practitioner or authorised mental health practitioner is satisfied that a mental health consumer needs to be taken to the authorised hospital or other place and no other safe means of taking the consumer is reasonably available.
- [Form 7D \(Apprehension and Return Order\)](#) is to be used where a mental health consumer is absent without leave from a hospital or other place and the medical practitioner or authorised mental health practitioner is satisfied that no other safe means of ensuring that the consumer returns to the hospital or other place is reasonably available.

Where both transport officers and police officers are needed to undertake a transport, the WA Police Force is to be contacted as per the [processes for requesting police assistance](#).

Staff members must provide a handover to transport officers, other health professionals involved in the transfer and, if applicable, police officers. At the point of handover, staff members must provide transport officers and, if applicable, police officers, with a copy of the relevant transport order and transport risk rating form. Staff must also take into consideration the consumer's access to their personal belongings before they are transported, balancing accessibility of belongings with the safety of those involved in their transport.

Health Service Provider staff members must follow mandatory system-wide and local policies and procedures in relation to information security and record keeping when transmitting forms. Staff must also include the transport risk rating form in the consumer's medical record.

### **3.6 Transport orders involving aerial transportation**

When a mental health consumer subject to a transport order is to be transported from a WACHS region to another WACHS hospital or the metropolitan area via aerial transportation, the requesting public health service facility in WACHS must liaise with [WACHS' Acute Patient Transfer Co-ordination Service](#), which will organise the transport.

When a police officer is responsible for carrying out a transport order under a Form 4A from a WACHS region, the WA Police Force retains responsibility for continuing the transport. This includes transporting the consumer from Jandakot Airport and delivering them to the receiving metropolitan hospital.

### 3.7 Reception of mental health consumers transported under a transport order

Health Service Provider staff members from the requesting and receiving public health service facilities must communicate and collaborate to ensure the safe and timely transportation of mental health consumers. The receiving facility must formally take over responsibility for the consumer as soon as practicable.

- No emergency department or authorised inpatient service has the right to refuse a mental health consumer referred on Form 1A under the *Mental Health Act 2014*. The consumer must be received by the authorised hospital or other place that is referenced on the form.
- The referring service is responsible for the clinical governance of a consumer until the destination service formally receives them.
- Any issues with the transportation of mental health consumers must be escalated as per escalation plans currently in place for mental health consumer transportation.

In emergency departments, any issues with the transportation of mental health consumers must be resolved using local escalation policies, protocols and/or processes.

## 4. Compliance Monitoring

The Department of Health's Mental Health Unit, on behalf of the System Manager, will monitor compliance with this policy by sourcing information from the Department of Health's Purchasing and Contracting Unit. Additionally, the Mental Health Unit will source information from the Patient Safety Surveillance Unit each December on the following:

- The number of incidents recorded during the previous 12 months in the Department's Clinical Incident Management System where transport was documented as a contributing factor to an incident.

The Mental Health Unit will undertake thematic analysis of data received to investigate the underlying causes for transport related delays or incidents.

The Mental Health Unit may investigate complaints received from transport providers or the WA Police Force to determine Health Service Provider compliance with this policy.

## 5. Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this policy:

- [Transport Order Form \(Form 4A\)](#)
- [Apprehension and Return Order \(Form 7D\)](#)
- [Mental Health Transport Risk Rating Form](#) for metropolitan Health Service Providers
- [WACHS Mental Health Transport Risk Assessment Form](#) for WACHS

## 6. Supporting Information

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of this policy:

- [Mental Health Patient Transport contact information and referral processes](#)
- [Metropolitan Inter Hospital Patient Transfer Framework](#)

## 7. Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this policy.

Term	Definition
Absent without leave	As defined under section 97 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> .
Authorised mental health practitioner	A person designated as an authorised mental health practitioner by an order in force under section 539 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> .
Culturally competent	Cultural competence enables clinicians to provide care in cross-cultural situations, including with Aboriginal people and those from ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. An awareness of the cultural values and beliefs about health and illness that are held by an individual and their family is an important consideration in the way that care is provided.
Health professional	As defined under Part 2, Division 1 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> .
Medical practitioner	A person registered under the <i>Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Western Australia)</i> in the medical profession.
Mental health consumer	A consumer who has had contact with, or been treated by, public mental health services, including mental health services provided in emergency departments.
Person-centred	Person-centred care is based on the principles of personhood, individualised care and empowerment. In providing clinical care, it is necessary to consider the whole person within their social context, recognising their unique needs, experiences, values, beliefs, age, gender identity, sexual orientation and preferences, and supporting self-determination in decision making.
Recovery-oriented	Personal recovery is defined within the Australian National Framework for Recovery-oriented Mental Health Services as 'being able to create and live a meaningful and contributing life in a community of choice with or without the presence of mental health issues' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). Recovery-oriented practice supports people in taking responsibility for their own recovery and well-being and pursuing their life goals.

Restraint	As defined under s227 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> (Bodily Restraint). This excludes voluntary compliance with the legal requirement for passengers in vehicles to wear a seatbelt under the <i>Road Traffic Code</i> (WA).
Staff member	For the purposes of this policy, staff member means a person – (a) employed in a health service provider by an employing authority pursuant to the <i>Health Services Act 2016</i> (HSA 2016) and includes: (i) the chief executive of the health service provider (ii) a health executive employed in the health service provider (iii) a person employed in the health service provider under section 140 of the HSA 2016 (iv) a person seconded to the health service provider under section 136 or 142 of the HSA 2016 (b) engaged under a contract for services by a health service provider pursuant to the HSA 2016.
Transport Officer	A person authorised under section 147 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> to carry out a transport order.
Trauma-informed	An approach to service provision based on understanding the ways trauma impacts people’s lives, service needs and service usage. It incorporates physical and emotional safety, empowerment, collaboration, choice, and trustworthiness (NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation. <i>Trauma-informed care and practice in mental health services</i> ).

## 8. Policy Contact

Enquiries relating to this policy may be directed to:

Title: Program Manager, Mental Health Unit

Directorate: Clinical Leadership and Workforce

Email: [mhu@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:mhu@health.wa.gov.au)

## 9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0063/17	9 August 2017	August 2020	Original version
MP 0063/17 v.1.1	6 September 2017	August 2020	Update to broken link
MP 0063/17 v.1.2	29 May 2019	August 2020	Minor Amendment – Fixed Broken Links
MP 0063/17 v.1.3	19 December 2019	August 2020	Minor Amendment – Fixed Broken Links and formatted Policy on to latest template

MP 0063/17 v.2.0	29 July 2020	August 2023	Major Amendment details summarised below
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title changed to emphasise applicability to road-based transport, noting policy scope excludes air transport.</li> <li>• Applicability section: updated to expand scope to include WACHS where applicable.</li> <li>• Policy requirements section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reworded to emphasise least restrictive care and minimising stigma.</li> <li>○ Contractor names and references to contractors removed.</li> <li>○ Guidance regarding how and when to request Transport Officers and the WA Police Force amended to align with guidance from key stakeholders.</li> <li>○ Health Service Providers now responsible for providing public health service facilities with Mental Health Patient Transport Risk Rating Form(s) and information about requesting services from Transport Officers and the WA Police Force.</li> <li>○ Transport Officers able to enact Apprehension and Return Orders (Form 7D) under the Mental Health Act 2014.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Compliance monitoring section: amended to align to system manager role.</li> <li>• Related documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Apprehension &amp; Return Order (Form 7D) added.</li> <li>○ Mental Health Transport Risk Assessment Form removed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Supporting information section: The following documents have been removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chief Psychiatrist's Standard: Seclusion and Bodily Restraint Reduction.</li> <li>○ National Standards for Mental Health Services Standard 2.2.</li> <li>○ Provision of Road Based Non-Emergency Inter Hospital Patient Transport Contract information (HCN) Mental Health Patient Transport Service Booking</li> <li>○ Reference Guide.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
MP 0063/17 v.2.1	23 August 2023	August 2023	Amendment as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy contact updated from Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Directorate to Governance and System Support Directorate, due to the Mental Health Unit transferring from the Clinical Excellence Division to the Strategy and Governance Division.</li> </ul>			
MP 0063/17 v.3.0	1 October 2024	October 2027	Policy review and amendment, details listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title updated from 'Requesting Road-Based Transport for Mental Health Patients Subject to Transport Orders Policy' to 'Road-Based Transportation for Mental Health Consumers Policy.'</li> <li>• Purpose section amended to clarify the purpose of the policy, relevant legislation and other documents.</li> <li>• Applicability section amended to clarify the scope of the policy and include a statement on contracted health entities.</li> <li>• Policy requirements section amended to remove duplication, improve readability, and incorporate current advice about the involvement of police officers in mental health consumer transports. The following subsections have been inserted: Underlying principles; Determining the most appropriate means of transport; Using transport officers to undertake transport; Engaging the WA Police Force to assist with transports; Requesting road-based transports using a transport order; Transport orders involving aerial transportation; and Reception of mental health consumers transported under a transport order.</li> <li>• Compliance monitoring section amended to align with mandatory policy governance requirements.</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related documents updated to include transport risk rating forms.</li> <li>• Supporting information updated to include 'Mental Health Patient Transport contact information and referral processes' and 'Metropolitan Inter Hospital Patient Transfer Framework.'</li> <li>• Definitions section amended to include 'absent without leave', 'authorised mental health practitioner', 'culturally competent', 'health professional', 'medical practitioner', 'mental health consumer', 'person-centred', 'recovery-oriented', 'restraint', 'staff member' and 'trauma-informed'. Definitions for 'transport officer' amended, and 'Transport Order (Form 4A)' and 'Apprehension and Return Order (Form 7D)' removed.</li> </ul>			
MP 0063/17 v.4.0	30 April 2025	October 2027	Amendment as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy requirements: section 3.5 and Related documents section: 'WACHS Mental Health Transport Risk Assessment Form' for the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) updated.</li> </ul>			
MP 0063/17 v.4.1	21 January 2026	October 2027	Amendment as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose section: Update to title and hyperlink for 'Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care'.</li> <li>• Policy contact details updated following the Mental Health Unit relocating from Governance and System Support, Strategy and Governance Division to Clinical Leadership and Workforce, Clinical Excellence Division.</li> </ul>			
MP 0063/17 v.4.2	5 March 2026	October 2027	Amendment as listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose section: Removal of MP 0165/21 <i>Use of Physical and/or Mechanical Restraint during Road-based Transportation of Mental Health Patients Policy</i> due to rescindment of the policy in October 2025. Replaced <i>Mental Health Bed Access, Capacity and Escalation Statewide Policy</i> with new SHOC policy: <i>Statewide Mental Health Bed Access, capacity and Escalation Policy</i>.</li> </ul>			

Note: Mandatory policies that exceed the scheduled review date will continue to remain in effect.

## 10. Approval

<b>Approval by</b>	Dr David Russell-Weisz, Director General, Department of Health
<b>Approval date</b>	27 July 2017

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.**

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